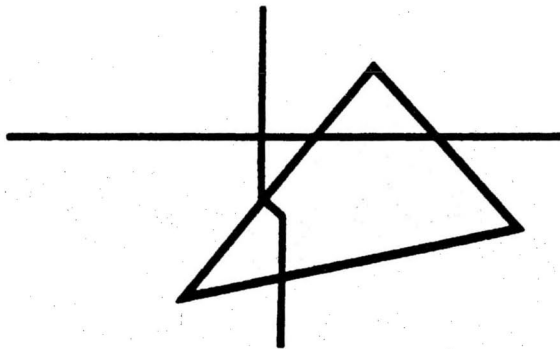


NI'HAU: A BRIEF HISTORY

Part 1

by **EDWARD R. STEPIEN**



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University of Hawaii at Manoa**

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mr. Edward R. Stepien's Ni'ihau: A Brief History was originally submitted as his M.A. thesis in Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1984. It warrants wider circulation than the usual M.A. research paper as Stepien has produced the most complete history of Ni'ihau. His manuscript is a solid piece of scholarly work, and it is well written. Minor changes have been made in the original thesis, and a short addendum has been added to cover events of 1987.

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NI' IHAU:
A BRIEF HISTORY

Edward R. Stepien

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There are many people to whom I am indebted for their assistance and generosity in helping bring this labor of love to fruition. It is not my intention to list any names, except one. Most were informants whose anonymity I swore to protect in order to gain access to information about Ni'ihau that was either previously enshrouded by mystery or clouded by rumors. To them, I will be eternally grateful. Also, the staffs at the University of Hawaii (Manoa), the Hamilton Graduate Library (Hawaii-Pacific Room), the Bishop Museum, the Hawaii State Library and the Mission House Museum deserve more platitudes than I can offer for their remarkable expertise and patience during my research.

The one person, however, that deserves special mention by name as one who uplifted my spirit when it waned and provided the moral support to continue and complete the commitment, is my wife, Jo Ann. While it is difficult to say that the project would never have been completed were it not for the assistance of a single person, I can attest to the fact that if any one comes closest to that description of indispensability, it is Jo Ann. I share this work with her and my beloved children.

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PART ONE: PRE-CONTACT TO 1941

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From the time it was purchased by the Sinclair family nearly 115 years ago, the island of Ni'ihau has remained in relative obscurity compared to the rest of the Hawaiian Islands. Each of the major islands in the archipelago has been the subject of extensive research which has resulted in a better and widespread understanding about them. Ni'ihau is the exception.

Owners of Ni'ihau, past and present, so guarded their possession from intruders and curiosity seekers that only fragmented reports about the island and its residents escaped from its protected shores. While factual data were contained in many of them, there were equally as many accounts, both written and verbal, that consisted on half-truths, speculation and outright fabrication. Yet, because there is a thirst for information when little exists about fascinating subjects, many myths and rumors about Ni'ihau became rooted in time. So many people believed them that they became erroneously accepted as documented evidence about the island, its inhabitants, and its owners.

The purposes of this thesis are threefold. No comprehensive history of Ni'ihau has ever been written. This work is intended to fill that void. It synthesizes information from various sources and describes Ni'ihau from its

bubbling volcanic emergence from the sea millions of years ago to its present-day problems as a struggling cattle and sheep ranch.

There was no choice but to treat some areas in a seemingly superficial or shallow manner due only to the paucity of information about them. To achieve the goal of historical comprehensiveness, it was necessary, therefore, to review as much about the island as was written or could be recollected by informants in whatever format it was presented. This ranged from private letters by early missionaries assigned to the Waimea Mission on Kaua'i which summarized the success of proselyting efforts on Ni'ihau to recent newspaper articles describing the effect of Hurricane Iwa on the island and its residents.

The second purpose of this work is an attempt to dispel some of the rumors and myths that have developed about the island over the past century. Critical to this objective was the search for original sources. Since these are extremely scarce, it was necessary sometimes to rely on the sheer volume of secondary source data as a badge of authenticity about an event. What is contained in the following pages I believe to be information as factually accurate as determinable under circumstances.

The third purpose of this work focuses on the owners of Ni'ihau. So much about this tiny island is unknown or misunderstood that it is extremely difficult to isolate a singularly dominant misperception. If pressed, however, the motive of the owners in maintaining the strict seclusivity of Ni'ihau seems to be the most recurrent mystery.

Many feel that with the sale of the island in the mid-nineteenth century, Ni'ihau moved from one monarchy to another. With the private ownership of the island secured in the hands of first the Sinclair and now the Robinson

families, Ni'ihau was and still is virtually shut off from the rest of the world. For this, the owners have been much maligned and criticized. They are frequently accused of being tyrants whose only motives are self-serving, that is, they must maintain a tight hold on the residents to ensure a work force for the ranch and thereby maintain what is left of the island's economic viability. Unquestionably, the truth to this accusation lies solely in the heart and mind of each individual who contemplates it. No single explanation can be found in letters, diaries, books, articles, or even interviews. This thesis, however, presents the argument that the owners have been motivated by humanistic concerns. The history of this dry, non-fertile island is replete with acts of generosity by the owners toward the residents. What becomes readily apparent is that the owners have never needed Ni'ihau to be profitable to ensure their own financial success. Other ventures, primarily sugar, kept "the family" economically secure. Ni'ihau has been an economic liability to every generation of owners, yet they tenaciously protect as much today as they did a century ago, the residents' individual and collective right to choose their own lifestyle. This historical account vividly portrays how the Sinclairs and their descendants have resisted attempted takeovers of the island by entrepreneurs, the Territory and the State of Hawai'i, and Mother Nature herself when it would have been so easy to set it adrift.

The difficulty in obtaining information about Ni'ihau is not only limited to the written record. Most present and former residents, as well as official visitors (of which there are few), are very reluctant to divulge much about their experiences. While many will say nothing at all, there are some who are valuable sources of information who will discuss Ni'ihau if their anonymity is protected. In deference to their request, many sources herein are referred

to anonymously in order that their story may be told. In most cases, the root cause for their reticence is fear of owner retribution. There seems to be a great concern among many that should the owners become aware of their "disloyalty," future visits will be denied. A spokesperson for the owners categorically denies that the family would rescind the visitation privileges of someone solely based on that person speaking publicly about Ni'ihau. There are others, however, who refuse to relate what they know about Ni'ihau in deference to the people who live there. In essence, they feel would be violating the rights of the Ni'ihauans if they contributed to making things public that heretofore were not. Whatever the reason, many who can speak authoritatively about Ni'ihau do not.

In the past, the owners have permitted scientific research to be conducted on the island, provided the scientists' motives were honorable and bonafide. Botanists and archaeologists have spent time on Ni'ihau collecting data that contribute to the scientific understanding of the archipelago. Many have published their findings and these were used in the preparation of this work. When I inquired as to the possibility of visiting the island, my request was politely, yet firmly, denied citing "insufficient reason."

Part One of this thesis is a description of the geology, climate, and general ecological condition of the island, and a chronological history from pre-contact to World War II. Hardly a nation in the world escaped the War's impact and, in the end, world order was virtually restructured. So great was the impact of World War II on the Pacific, that many writers use this period as a departure point to explain the modern development of the islands. This thesis follows suit.

Part Two addresses the profound and perennial social, economic, and political issues that surfaced in the wake of World War II. Some were direct outgrowths of the War, for example, the influence of soldiers stationed on Ni'ihau. Others were indirect, such as the effect of a 1946 Territorial Senate visit to and investigation of Ni'ihau. This investigation did more to focus the public eye on Ni'ihau than any previous event. Its findings and recommendations resulted in some major changes to the island's lifestyle. These changes cannot be simply classified as improvements because there are many people who feel any tampering with the island, its people or culture is wrong.

While what is considered essentially germane to the historical intent of this thesis is explained in the body of the work, the reader is encouraged to refer to the notes at the end of each chapter, and the appendices. Both contain interesting features, anecdotes, and general information about Ni'ihau that most certainly will add to one's understanding of the place and the people.

All Hawaiian words are as cited in the Hawaiian Dictionary compiled by Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL SETTING

Geography

More than 130 islands, islets, and atolls comprise the Hawaiian archipelago, some of which are no larger than a volcanic rock protruding above the surface of the ocean. Seven of the larger land masses are inhabited by nearly a million people (Census Information 1980), and to six of these flocked more than four million visitors in 1983.

To the northwest of the major islands are the lesser-known ones of the archipelago, sometimes called the Leeward Islands. Interestingly named places such as French Frigate Shoals, Gardner Pinnacles, La Perouse Rocks, Kure Islands, Pearl and Hermes Reef, and other small parcels span more than a thousand miles of ocean and are home to birds, sea turtles, and the Hawaiian Monk seal.

The stepping stone between the major islands and those in the northwest is, aptly enough, Ni'ihau. Aptly because in addition to its geographical position of being the last bastion of civilization before one encounters the desolation of the remote Leeward Islands, Ni'ihau's population-to-land ratio of three-people-per-square-mile eases one out of the burgeoning masses of the major islands into the wilderness of the Shoals, Pinnacles and Reefs.

In stark contrast to the lush, tropical splendor and paradisiacal allurements of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lana'i, and Hawai'i, Ni'ihau is dry, barren, and off limits to tourists or, for that matter, anyone who is not a resident.

Ni'ihau is located about eighteen miles southwest of Kaua'i. The two islands are separated by the Kaulakahi Channel which becomes extremely dangerous during the winter months. The distance between Ni'ihau and Honolulu is about 110 miles.

Geology

Ni'ihau's origin, like that of its sister islands, is volcanic.¹ Predominantly flat, with more than 78 percent of its seventy-three square miles less than five hundred feet above sea level, Ni'ihau's mean altitude is 530 feet. Only three of its forty-five miles of coastline have cliffs more than one thousand feet high. Its highest point, Pani'au, is 1,281 feet (State of Hawaii Data Book 1979:123).

Ni'ihau is considered to be one of the oldest islands in the archipelago (Hinds 1930:50). Its age is estimated to be five or six million years. While its volcanic origin is undisputed, geologists, volcanologists, and other scientists generally disagree on whether Ni'ihau and Kaua'i were formed from the same volcanic eruption. Below the surface of the Kaulakahi Channel, the two islands are linked at a depth of about 2,500 feet. However, opinions differ as to whether they were visibly connected above the water.

J. D. Dana suggested that at one time Ni'ihau was the northwestern edge of Kaua'i, but, due to faulting, it shifted laterally from a position adjacent to the famed Na Pali cliffs (MacDonald and Abbott 1970:398). However, as generally agreed by other geologists such as Hinds (1930:50-53) and Stearns (1947:7), the structure of Ni'ihau (direction of the lava flows, dikes, and so forth) disproves Dana's hypothesis.

The predominant theory is that two separate volcanic eruptions, totally independent from that which formed Kaua'i, formed Ni'ihau. The Highlands in the northeastern portion of the island are believed to be remnants of an ancient, dome-shaped shield volcano of the Pani'ai series,² while the low, broad plains of the southwest, west and north were formed by the Ki'eki'e volcanic series,³ probably of the Pleistocene era. Nine vents of the Ki'eki'e series are visible above sea level (MacDonald and Abbott 1970:399). These

... small, cliffed residuals, which were islands in the pre-emergence sea, project above the general level of the plain. The most conspicuous of these is a flat-topped eminence, called Kawaewae, one mile southeast of Nonopapa. The top of this residual now stands 290 feet above sea level (Hinds 1930:95).

At the southern tip of the island is the highest of these elevated terrain features of the plains area. It is called Kawaihoa Point and is 548 feet high (Ibid.). It is estimated that more than two-thirds of this cinder cone has been destroyed by wave erosion (Ibid. 96).

About one mile north of Ni'ihau is Lehua Island.⁴ While Ni'ihau was formed independently of Kaua'i, evidence suggests that Lehua Island's volcanic eruption did contribute to Ni'ihau's emergence by depositing tons of wind-blown ash to help form the island's northern coastal plain.⁵

Climate

Climatic conditions on Ni'ihau are vastly different from those of the other inhabited Hawaiian Islands. Subtropical and semiarid, the island is extremely dry with an annual rainfall totalling only twenty to twenty-five inches. In sharp contrast, only thirty miles north is Mount Wai'ale'ale on Kaua'i, purportedly the "wettest spot on earth" with an annual rainfall of nearly five hundred inches!

The moisture carried by the prevailing tradewinds is drained as the breezes creep over the Kaua'i mountain range putting Ni'ihau in a "rain shadow." The island experiences frequent and, at times, severe droughts that either dry up the few waterholes completely or reduce them to a bitterly brackish level.

From the years when explorers, whalers and traders first made the Hawaiian Islands a business and recreation stop, ships' logs and captains' journals contain numerous descriptions about the lack of adequate rainfall on Ni'ihau. During a stop there on March 14, 1792, the surgeon and naturalist aboard Captain George Vancouver's expedition of 1792-94 reported:

Having inquired (from some natives) for some fresh water, they showed us a place in the rocks, where a little oozed out by the drops, and the careful manner in which it was collected convinced us it was a scarce article on this end of the island (Menzies 1920:40).

Owing to his short stay on Ni'ihau, Vancouver's surgeon localized the water shortage when, in fact, it was endemic to the entire island.⁶ However, he wrote further that

Though we here and there met with little natural tanks in the rocks which were carefully shaded over with stones to preserve the water that fell in them in rainy weather, ... these were at this time either drained up or their contents not drinkable, so that for quenching our thirst we were chiefly indebted to some watermelons we obtained from the natives (Ibid. 41).

The frequent droughts produced famines which, at times, caused residents of Ni'ihau to leave (Waimea Station Report 1833:2). Vancouver, on May 29, 1793, consented to the wishes of two Ni'ihauans he had on board to land them at Kaua'i rather than their home island, because of the severe drought ongoing at the time (Menzies 1920:130).

The limited rainfall of Niihau gave the Niihauans incentive to search for ways and means of conserving moisture in the soil. (They solved this problem) by the use of mulch. Pili grass, used for building and thatching huts, was also one of the means of conserving moisture, by adding humus to the soil during the process of decomposition (Gay 1982:43).

Menzies also cites the resourcefulness of the Ni'ihauans in this regard when he describes how he saw sweet potatoes covered by grass "to preserve the little moisture of the soil being inhaled by the sun's powerful heat" (Menzies 1920:41).

... naulu (sudden) showers that ... are caused by clouds that form off the leeward coasts and then move inland, dropping their moisture apparently as a result of local convection currents. They fall during times when neither the northeasterly tradewinds nor southerly winds blow, and they are reported to occur chiefly in the afternoon during hot weather (Stearns 1947:31).

The island will always have a domestic water problem because of aridity, unfavorable geological structures, continuous deposition of salt spray, and abundant authigenic salts in the lake beds (Ibid. 3).

Man's most basic physical need and what the Hawaiians consider as the greatest blessing—good water—is what Ni'ihau lacks in sufficient quantity. This has and will continue to have a profound effect on the lifestyle of the Ni'ihauans.

NOTES

1. Hawaiian folklore claims that Pele, the unpredictable Goddess of Fire, first took up residence in the Hawaiian Islands on Ni'ihau before moving and finally settling on the Big Island of Hawai'i.
2. The caldera of this volcano was located about two miles east of the present cliffs, well onto the channel (Stearns 1947:7). Volcanic matter that comprise these highlands include both 'a'a (rough, jagged) and pahoehoe (smooth) lava types (Stearns 1966:209). Marine abrasion and downfaulting eventually eroded the western edge of the caldera, leaving the near vertical cliffs. Based on Ni'ihau's present size and shape, coupled with the findings and hypotheses of past geological studies, the island is believed to have been much larger than it is today, perhaps as big as eighteen miles long, ten miles wide and more than three thousand feet high. Its dimensions probably were similarly to those of Lana'i (Hinds 1930:93).
3. The plains are comprised mainly of pahoehoe lava (MacDonald and Abbott 1970:398).
4. Lehua Island is a tuff-cone crater 700 feet high and only one mile long. Its width is only one-half mile. It bears resemblance to the famed Diamond Head when viewed from certain angles.
5. During Lehua Island's volcanic formation, sea water entered its vents and caused violent eruptions, many of which are thought to have occurred during the high winds. As a result, ash from Lehua's eruptions are found up to eight miles inland on Ni'ihau's northern plains (Stearns 1947:7).
6. Although Ni'ihau has been plagued with chronic water problems, it is, ironically, home to the largest lake in the State. The lake is called Halali'i. It measures 841 acres (State of Hawaii Data Book 1979:9). The lake is located in the south-central portion of the island and named for one of the previous owners of the parcel of land it sits on. Of course, the lake is only filled during the heaviest of rainfalls which, on Ni'ihau, are rare, at best.

CHAPTER III

PRE- AND EARLY WESTERN CONTACT

Pre-Contact

The Ni'ihauans, as well as all Hawaiians, are descendants of the daring Polynesians who navigated from the Marquesas and Society Island groups in the time periods 300-500 AD and 1000-1200 AD, respectively. It is generally accepted, much to the dismay of Thor Heyerdahl, that the origin of all peoples of the Pacific is the southern part of the present day China and Southeast Asia.

Fornander (1878 Vol. I:2) posited that the Polynesian ancestors migrated from the Asian continent, but he went a step further by saying that these ancestors were "connected by kindred, commerce or by conquest with lands beyond, in Hindustan, the shores of the Persian Gulf, and even in Southern Arabia" (Ibid. 3). In support of his theory, Fornander made an interesting direct reference to Ni'ihau. In attempting to tie the language of Polynesian dialects to that of the Malaysians and thereby show an identification of the Hawaiian Islands with those of the present Indonesia and Malaysia regions, he said that Ni'ihau corresponds with "Lifas, a place on the island of Timor" (Ibid. 9).

Re-Discovery

Although the discovery of the Hawaiian Islands is technically and rightfully attributed to the Polynesians, it is to the brilliant British

scientific reporter, Captain James Cook, that westerners have historically given that title of "discoverer" of the archipelago. He achieved this recognition because when he set foot in the islands on January 18, 1778, he was believed to have been the first Caucasian to see or land in Hawai'i.

Cook first sighted O'ahu, but winds forced him westward toward Kaua'i. He stepped ashore there and was hailed by the natives as the returning Hawaiian god Lono. Shortly thereafter, while trying to shift the position of his ship in Waimea Bay, anchorage was lost and he could not return to Kaua'i due to high winds and rough surf. Still interested to see what the rest of the newly discovered islands were like, Captain Cook, who also sighted "Oneehow" during his initial approach to the chain, headed for it.

On January 30th, Cook sent an advance party to Ni'ihau "to trade with the natives for refreshments" and find a suitable place to anchor. Cook's instructions were for his men to return to the ship immediately and not spend the night. Once there, however, wind and surf conditions prevented the men from following his orders. They were "stranded" on Ni'ihau for two days and gained another opportunity "to improve their intercourse with the natives" (Captain Cook's ... 1906:334).

On February 1, 1778, Cook himself came ashore at Keanahaki Bay (Gay 1981:17). He stayed only one day during which he was again venerated as a deity and escorted on a quick but interesting tour of the island. What he saw he described this way:

The ground through which I passed was in a state of nature, very stony, and the soil seemed poor. It was, however, covered with shrubs and plants, some of which perfumed the air with a more delicious fragrance than I had met with at any of the other islands in this area. The habitations of the natives were thinly scattered about and it was supposed that there could be more than five hundred people upon the island. Our people had an opportunity of observing the

method of living amongst the natives, and it appeared to be decent and cleanly. They did not, however, see any instance of the men and women eating together, and the latter seemed generally associated in companies by themselves. It was found that ... as at Otaheite ... they baked their hogs in ovens. A particular veneration seemed to be paid to owls, ⁽¹⁾ which they have very tame; and it was observed to be a pretty general practice amongst them to pull out one of their teeth, ⁽²⁾ for which odd custom, when asked the reason, the only answer that could be got was, that it was eteeha (Captain Cook's ... 1906:335).

Such was Cook's account of his first and only encounter with Ni'ihau and the Ni'ihauans.

As tokens of his appreciation, Cook left with the Ni'ihauans a "ram goat and two ewes, a boar and sow-pig of the English breed, and the seeds of melons, pumpkins and onions" (Ibid. 334). ³ His men, however, left something far less hospitable—venereal disease!

Only eleven months later Cook was in the islands again, this time at the other end of the chain. He was mortified to find that the bad seed of venereal disease had travelled the 225 miles from Ni'ihau to Maui ahead of him (Daws 1963:49).

While Cook did his best to prevent his men from infecting the natives, the task proved too much for even the revered "Lono."

He was a man of broad sympathies, and he did not want to be responsible for spreading disease. It hurt him to think he had failed in his hopes so many times in the Pacific. He failed again at Niihau (Ibid. 6-7).

As he did throughout his voyages in the Pacific, Cook and his team of scientists discovered, chartered, sketched and studied Hawai'i and its inhabitants, including Ni'ihau. Subsequent to his visit in 1778, the islands rapidly became a popular rest and replenishment stop for military and commercial ships transiting the Pacific.

Yam Bay

With its limited rainfall, Ni'ihau's crop production was miniscule compared with the other Hawaiian Islands, excepting Kaho'olawe. Among the types that were grown in limited amounts were sugar cane, breadfruit and sweet potatoes.

The real sweet potato ('uala) of Ni'ihau was the subject of some interesting stories. One such account tells of a giant plant growing near Kawaihoa. Mrs. Pukui translated a story from the newspaper Ku'oko'a (March 29, 1868) about this plant.

The bark ... is rough like that of a tree ... The plant grows narrower in the middle, above this narrow part, it is smooth. Below the narrow part are two big roots, and they are again divided into six roots that bear good sized potatoes like real paha, those of Lana'i and Ni'ihau give to it a different name, the kupaha.

The paha is eaten in times of famine, it is baked in the oven and eaten. It tastes delicious when picked at the right stage, but when old it is no good, and it acts on the bowels just as epsom salts do (Handy and Handy 1972:148).

The sugar cane of Ni'ihau was grown in very limited quantities and only in the vicinity of Lake Halali'i. It, like the breadfruit, was said to grow quite peculiarly on Ni'ihau, that is horizontally in the sand" (Ibid. 434). One of the many famous sayings used by the Hawaiians to describe the island was "Ni'ihau of the burrowing sugar cane of Halali'i" (Ibid. 188). The cane was said to grow prone with only its leaves protruding from the sand. Also, one report claims there was an unusual variety of pineapple growing on the island.⁵

British fur traders were among the first to steer toward Ni'ihau "when the rigors of winter and fear of scurvy drove them from the shelter of Nootka Sound" (Damon 1932 Vol. I:228). Merchant and whaling ships usually called at Ni'ihau as their last stop. Sailors were lured to this lowly island by two

major things: sex and food. Once their passions were satisfied, the holds of their ships were filled. However, it was not with sugar cane, breadfruit or sweet potatoes with which they stocked, but rather the only staple grown in great quantity on the island—yams!

Ni'ihau once produced large, good tasting yams. Preferred over sweet potatoes because they keep much longer at sea, yams put Ni'ihau on the navigational charts of many a ship's captain. Although Ni'ihau's terrain is barren and relatively inhospitable, yams were "planted presumably in the large pockets of elevated coral at the southeast of the island, the bottoms of which are said to be filled with vegetable mold" (Handy and Handy 1972:434). Although Captain Cook claimed that the yams were poor in nutrients, they were of the size and quantity that seamen would trade vigorously to obtain. The Ni'ihauans, in return, obtained what they wanted in iron, cloth and firearms. So heralded was the island for its yams, that

... one indentation on the coast ... was called 'Yam Bay' by Captain George Dixon who visited the island on June 18, 1786, and twice again the following year. His purpose was mainly to secure a supply of yams which he asserted 'will keep for anytime' (Judd 1932:6-7).

On his first visit, Captain Dixon claimed that the yams were "in plentiful supply (and were) purchased for nails and such like trifles" (Dixon 1789:54). He took about eight tons and his fellow sea captain, N. Portlock, who stopped there about the same times, took ten tons (Portlock 1789:86).

One year later, Portlock returned to again fill the holds of his ship but, surprisingly, did not find many yams at all. He recorded it this way:

... since the stock we before carried from the islands, they (the Ni'ihauans) have neglected cultivating the land. Indeed, (this) information agreed with my own observations while on shore; for I walked over a great deal of land lying entirely waste.⁽⁶⁾ It appeared to me that a number of the natives that formerly inhabited the island have

quitted it to reside in Atoui (Kaua'i) ... probably the iron which they purchased from us formerly enabled them to purchase possessions in Atoui ... (Ibid. 198).

The trading of eighteen tons of yams only a year earlier could well have been the major cause of why Portlock found such a meager supply on his return trip. Portlock's speculation about Ni'ihauans moving to Kaua'i is surely in error, but it could be that there was a population decline because of introduced diseases.

The shortage of yams appears to have lasted for at least a decade. Broughton landed at Ni'ihau on July 28, 1796, for supplies, specifically yams. He spent four days there and found, much like Portlock seven years earlier, a short supply (Broughton 1804:74). What he did find was famine and drought, thereby suggesting the reason for no yams.

The dearth of yams experienced by Portlock, Broughton and others, however, was not permanent. Rather, in later years, the Ni'ihau yam still acted as a magnet to ships visiting or commercializing in the Hawaiian Islands. F. Beechey landed at Ni'ihau on June 1, 1826 (Beechey 1831:234). He recorded that he was "disappointed in the expected supplies (of yams); not from their scarcity but in consequence of the indolence of the natives" (Ibid.). This indolence of the Ni'ihauans about which Beechey reports was probably due to the fact that prior to embarking for Ni'ihau for his provisions, he was required " ... to make a bargain with the authorities at Woahoo (O'ahu) for what might be required, who in that case sent an agent to see the agreement strictly fulfilled" (Ibid.). With the Ni'ihauans conveniently eliminated from the trading negotiations because of these off-island agents, why then should they show the enthusiasm that characterized their turn-of-the-century bartering ventures when they controlled the trading? In deference to the

quality and supply of yams at that time, Beechey described them as "very excellent and of an enormous size" (Ibid.).

William Ellis, too, verifies the availability of yams as noted in his Journal of 1827:

The natives of these islands are also distinguished for the cultivation of yam, which grows very large, both on Tauai (Kaua'i) and Niihau, and contributes essentially to the support of the inhabitants. As they are not cultivated to any extent in the other islands, many ships are induced to visit there, principally for the purpose of securing a supply; they are not only an excellent root, but will keep a long time at sea without deterioration (Ellis 1963:15).

Eventually, the yam trade dissipated on Ni'ihau. This can be attributed to a shift in emphasis as to why ships visited the Islands. Once Kaua'i's forests were stripped of sandalwood, more and more ships focused primarily on the better-equipped taverns, the better-staffed brothels and the overall "action" of O'ahu and Maui. With Honolulu rapidly developing as the center of business activity, provisions were also more easily obtained there than trekking to Kaua'i, let alone facing the treacherous anchorages at Ni'ihau.

Mr. Aylmer Robinson, former owner and manager of the Ni'ihau Ranch, commented that, while he remembered yams being grown on the island at the turn of the century, in later years "the frequent droughts coupled with the spread of the koa shrub in their gardens made quick results in their plantings more important and the cultivation of yams was abandoned ... " (Judd 1938:9).

When the question of Ni'ihau's yams was put to a spokesperson for the Robinson family recently, it was indicated that strains of the plant can still be found on Kaua'i. The informant verified that they were as big as early Ni'ihau accounts claimed. The opinion was also offered that the yams are "horrible tasting." While the yams may not appeal to people today, the captains of sailing vessels in the past valued them because they could be

stored for long periods of time and, with the exception of the late 1790s, they were available in great quantity.

Developing Relations with the West

During the decade subsequent to Cook's visit, relations between visiting sailors and the Ni'ihauans were amicable, notwithstanding some petty thievery. George Dixon recorded that many of his men who became sick at sea in 1786 recuperated well when he put in at Ni'ihau. They found "great benefit from the land air, as they could walk about at their ease without being molested by the inhabitants" (Dixon 1789:54). Meares, on his visit to Ni'ihau on October 25, 1788, echoes Dixon's statements about the friendliness of the inhabitants:

On arriving off this island we did not experience the operations of any prohibitions against us; on the contrary, we were surrounded by a crowd of natives, among who were many of our old friends, whom we perfectly recollected, so that the ship was very shortly filled with visitors of all ages and both sexes (Meares 1921:255).

But as the invasion of the Islands by foreign ships increased, so did the demands by each side during the bartering procedures. High on the list of the Hawaiian chiefs were firearms. It was no different on Kaua'i and Ni'ihau. They did whatever was necessary to acquire these powerfully destructive devices. The acquisition process was sometimes accomplished in a business-like manner through trading, and, at other times, by outright stealing. Concepts and strategies of war among the island chiefs were drastically altered by the use of guns; so was their attitude towards westerners. They began feeling not so inferior. Higher demands, shorter supplies, and both sides having firearms resulted in increased tensions during

trading. No more were the Hawaiians to be the pawns. They began to assert themselves.

Using the same guns acquired from the haoles, the Hawaiians began attacking visiting foreign ships. These attacks continued for nearly twenty years. It was not until 1796 that natives ceased harassing the ships (or at least did it with much more selectivity). One of the last known attacks was conducted by Ni'ihauans on the ship Providence (Kuykendahl and Day 1961:35). The incident occurred during the previously mentioned Broughton visit to Ni'ihau in July 1796. With both Ni'ihauans and mariners apparently frustrated due to the lack of yams, tempers were short. When a Ni'ihauan said he himself could not obtain a good supply of yams but required a working party, Broughton dispatched his first mate, a botanist, two Marines and a small back-up crew to remain embarked on the boat should there be trouble ashore. Shooting was heard and the ship's party bid a hasty retreat to their landing craft. During the ensuing fight between the sailors and the Ni'ihauans, both Marines were killed, one stabbed with his own bayonet and the other drowned after being knocked unconscious in the water (Broughton 1804:78). Their bodies were stripped naked but recovered by the crew members.

Before departing Kaua'i to demand retribution from the King there, Broughton decided that the Ni'ihauans were in need of a stern "lesson." He detailed a contingent of Marines to go ashore and "burn every house, canoe and plantation within a mile from the beach where the boats were ... " (Ibid. 76). Broughton recorded in his journal the killing of the Marines "as unprovoked as any" incident that occurred in the Islands (Ibid. 77).

While firearms intrigued the ali'i, the less-destructive, simple implements such as nails, cloth and mirrors made impressions on the commoners

who scurried aboard vessels to be the first to trade for them. During his first visit to Ni'ihau, Cook recorded:

Six or seven canoes had come off to us before we anchored, bringing some small pigs and potatoes, and a good many yams and mats. The people ... seemed to be very well acquainted with the use of iron, which they asked for by the names of Hamaite and toe, parting readily with all their commodities for pieces of this precious metal (Captain Cook's ... 1906:334).

In the above quote, reference is made to Ni'ihau mats. They were one of three skillfully crafted Ni'ihauan items, gourds⁷ and shell leis being the other two, that were sought by visiting ships as well as by other Hawaiians. The fine-textured mats were the most valued, and chiefs throughout Hawai'i often demanded them. Only shell leis, however, have withstood the test of times, and they are described in Part Two and in Appendix L. For description of the mats, see Appendix A.

Not long after Cook's visit, Ni'ihauans began to experience the world beyond their island shores. Some voluntarily did so; others were kidnapped. In the latter case, Laheina and Kaimalo, were "taken away in the Jenny from Ni'ihau, without either their consent or that of their parents or relatives" (Menzies 1920:132). The two were kidnapped while the British sloop was anchored off Ni'ihau about 1790. They were kept for ten months as the Jenny sailed the coast of North America. The two washed dishes in the ship's galley and visited North American Indian tribes and Spaniards in California.

The Ni'ihauan women were eventually transferred to Captain Vancouver's ship, Discovery, in 1793. There they became quite ill and it is said their sickness was owed to their longing "for their former vegetable food, particularly poi-taro and yams" (Ibid. 13). Whether their illness was actually caused by a lack of home cooking or the merciless pitching and

rolling of the ship, "they recovered their strength and vigor remarkably quick" when Vancouver returned them to the islands May 1793 (Ibid.). They were the two Ni'ihauans mentioned earlier who opted to land at Kaua'i rather than Ni'ihau which was experiencing a harsh drought and famine at the time. Both were obviously well aware of the miserable hardship the Ni'ihauans were undergoing at the hands of Mother Nature and decided to avoid it at least for the time being.

On Kaua'i, they were considered "by far the richest" of people in the islands, for in their possessions were articles

... such as knives, scissors, looking glasses, beads, buttons, earrings, needles, tapes, nails, axes, fish hooks, pieces of iron, files, rasps and a variety of other tools, besides great quantities of different clothes and ornamental articles (Ibid. 130).

Virtually every article of "worth" was coveted by one and all, including chiefs. Vancouver, however, issued an ultimatum to the ali'i that if the women's presents were taken or they themselves were abused, he would personally deal with the perpetrators in his return the following year. That being the case, one of the village chiefs promptly proposed to the oldest girl (Ibid. 131).

Even before the adventures of Laheina and Kaimalo, a Ni'ihauan was taken aboard the sloop Princess Royal by its commanding officer, Mr. Charles Duncan in 1788. The young man was used to help navigate around the islands and did this for six months. Menzies records his name as "Kukeekeekane" (Ibid. 17). This young Ni'ihauan voluntarily remained aboard after his six-months tour of duty. He and another Hawaiian from Moloka'i were brought to England and are reputed to be Britain's first Hawaiian visitors.

Prior to 1800 there is only one other Ni'ihauan who was recorded by name in journals of ship captains visiting the Hawaiian Islands. Known as "Ku" in Menzies' account, the Ni'ihauan was said to have been the point of contact for business transactions during Vancouver's stop there on March 14, 1792 (Ibid. 40). He is described as one "whose authority over the natives and obliging disposition (were), on so many occasions, found extremely useful" in the bartering sessions (Ibid.).

Before Vancouver's stop, Meares cites in his journals what seems to be the same individual but accords him the more literary name of "Friday." His rather lengthy account is quoted in full for to do otherwise would risk losing some of the flavor that makes this story so interesting and gives Friday such character:

... among several who expressed their joy to see us, and who retained the remembrance of our kindness to them, was that affectionate islander to whom some of our officers have formerly given the well known, and I may add, honorable appellation of 'Friday'; and if any of the companions of my former voyage should peruse this page, they, I am sure, will recollect with somewhat of a grateful remembrance, the friendly and faithful services of honest Friday. Those services he now repeated; indeed, on the first sight of the ship, he swam off to make an offer to them, and they proved of the utmost importance to us.

We had at this time neither bread nor flour on board, and depended on procuring a quantity of yams sufficient to supply our wants during the remainder of the voyage. But as this was not the season for them, and they were too young to be dug up, we should have found it a matter of great difficulty to have obtained a sufficient quantity, if our friend Friday had not undertaken the important negotiation. We therefore provided him with such articles as were the most likely to forward our purposes; and, by his influence and perseverance, assisted with the bribes in his possession, he persuaded many of his friends to dig up the largest yams they could find, and bring them to market; so that we at length obtained several tons of these most necessary provisions ... I am really at a loss how to describe the very marked concern, both in words and looks, that the inhabitants of the island expressed, when they

were informed of our approaching departure. Friday, however, remained to the last, and with him I entrusted a letter to Captain Douglas, with the strictest injunction to deliver it into his own hands, whenever he should arrive; which commission he readily undertook, and faithfully performed ... I presented that good fellow with such articles as I well knew would afford him the satisfaction he deserved; when after securing them in his maro (malo) which is a cloth that these people wear around their middle, he plunged into the sea; and as he swam towards the shore, from time to time, turned his head toward us, and waived one hand, while he buffeted the billows with the other (Meares 1921:143).

Ni'ihau's Ties with Kaua'i

While there is no evidence to substantiate the theory that there was a land bridge between Ni'ihau and Kaua'i, Ni'ihau has, out of necessity, always maintained a close social, economic and political relationship with its closest neighbor island.

Late in the eighteenth century—toward the end of the pre-white period of Hawaiian history—there were four main political divisions in the islands. Kauai formed one of these, along with Niihau, which alternated between modified independence and subjection to its more populous neighbor (Daws 1963:49).

Further to this relationship, Fornander conjectures that before Kamehameha the Great silenced independent island monarchies and united the Hawaiian Islands, that

... the island of Niihau bore about the same political relation to the Moi (king) of Kauai as the island of Lanai to the Moi of Maui—independent at times, acknowledging his suzerainty at others. No historical event connected with Niihau during this period has been preserved, nor any genealogy of its chiefs. Springing from and ultimately connected with the Kauai chiefs, there was a community of interests and political adhesion which, however strained at times by internal troubles, never made default as against external foes (Fornander 1878 Vol. II:94-5).

There were times in the past, however, when Ni'ihau's ties with Kaua'i may not have been as close as one may be led to believe. When Kamehameha the

Great launched his island-unifying campaign in the late 1790s, the King of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau was Kaumuali'i. Refusing to acquiesce to Kamehameha's demands of subjection, Kaumuali'i incurred the wrath of the greatest of all Hawaiian warriors and rulers. It is conjectured that the Ni'ihauans, having not much of anything, including defenses, and being a somewhat peaceful lot, may have opted for another approach to the problem since Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i and O'ahu were already part of Kamehameha's domain. The future of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau was inevitable, so it seemed. However, as mighty as Kamehameha's army and fleet were, he was thwarted twice in his attempts to subdue Kaumuali'i and add these last two pearls to the string he had already amassed. A violent storm sank half his ships and war canoes on one occasion, and disease decimated his army on another. Ni'ihau and Kaua'i were spared, at least for a while.

In 1810, however, Kaumuali'i relented, albeit with great bitterness and reluctance. He peacefully accepted Kamehameha's authority and the Hawaiians were finally united under one ruler.

A Brush with the Russians

As early as 1804, Russian ships were visiting the Sandwich Isles but they had not established any settlements or any major business houses there. In 1815, however, a Doctor Georg Anton Scheffer of the Alaskan-based Russian-American Company was dispatched to Hawai'i. His mission was to retrieve the cargo of a Russian ship that sank near Kaua'i. Failing that, orders from Mother Russia were to get compensation from Kaumuali'i. He was also to attempt to secure sandalwood rights and trading privileges in the islands for the Russians.

The instructions were quite clear, and they had precise limits, but once (Scheffer) reached Hawaii he was seized by that peculiar vision of realms and islands which was to seduce a long line of political fanatics in the Pacific during the nineteenth century (Daws 1974:51).

Scheffer's misdirected ambitions coupled with Kaumuali'i's personal bitterness toward Kamehameha resulted in a mutual pact between the two. The deal called for Kaua'i and Ni'ihau to be placed under Russian protection while Russia was to enjoy a sandalwood monopoly on Kaua'i. Forts were built at Hanalei and Waimea. Place names on Kaua'i were changed to Russian and talks of attacking Kamehameha (with the split of his islands as the prize) were conducted by the two collaborators.

Once again, Ni'ihau was being dragged into an arena it may have chosen to avoid if it were independent. Since Scheffer had concluded these agreements without the approval of the Czar, he received no Russian government support, and his actions were denounced. Eventually he was abandoned by Kaumuali'i and banished from the islands in humiliation. Ni'ihau was spared violence (Joesting 1972:58-64).

Kamehameha died in 1819. Kaumuali'i was eventually invited to visit O'ahu in 1821 by Kamehameha's son and heir, Liholiho. It was an attempt to obtain from the High Chief of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau a total commitment of loyalty to the Hawaiian throne; much more than Kaumuali'i had rendered Kamehameha.

It was politely done, but Kaumualii was a virtual prisoner of state from then on, and soon he put in another kind of captivity when Kaahumanu (Kamehemeha's widow) ... married him. Kaahumanu took Kauai (and Niihau) further into her keeping by marrying as well one of Kaumualii's sons ... Kealiihonoiiu (Daws 1974:67).

So by a "triumphant piece of diplomacy," Ni'ihau's position in the realm was finally legitimized.

NOTES

1. While my research could not produce more evidence about Cook's statement about the homage paid to owls on Ni'ihau, it is interesting to note that the most prominent point on the eastern shores of the island is named Pueo Point. Pueo is the Hawaiian word for owl.
2. With regard to the missing teeth, it is undetermined what the term teeha means as an explanation for this occurrence. It was common, however, that upon the death of a chief, his loyal subjects mourned by inflicting upon themselves minor mutilations. Among these was the removal of teeth.
3. The goats were the cause of more trouble than they were seemingly worth. Not only had their ravenous appetite caused problems during much of the nineteenth century on Ni'ihau by destroying most of the vegetation, but it was also reported that when left as gifts by Cook, two cousins, who were chiefs on Kaua'i, fought for the supremacy of Ni'ihau in 1779 ostensibly for the goat ownership (Fornander 1878 Vol. II:227).
4. Confirmation of this story about the Ni'ihau 'ulu that resembled a sweet potato is found in a translation by Mrs. Pukui from the newspaper Ku'oko'a, April 1, 1868:

I will tell you of that famous potato of Niihau called "Na-Kiwi-a-Holei." I have seen and handled it. It is of the height of a salmon barrel from the ground to the top. Its bark is thick like that of an old kukui tree; the new tubers have skin like ... arrowroot; the leaves are like those of kowali and the blossoms resemble those of kowali.

The correct name (of this plant) is the paha and I have heard that it is common on the hills of north Kona, Hawaii. The natives there call it the ... ulu kupua. She described it as having leaves and fruit like the breadfruit, but as being nonedible. Mrs. (Mary Kawena) Pukui says that Niihau mele (chants or songs) mention na ulu nee i ka papa the breadfruit that creeps on the rocks ... it grows only on Niihau (Handy and Handy 1972:152).

5. Hawai'i is noted for its pineapple production. While each island, particularly Lana'i, grows them, Ni'ihau once shared in this glory and may, in fact, have had some of the best. An account in the Pacific and Commercial Advertiser of August 3, 1867, by an anonymous author who was aboard the ship Nettie which was delivering lumber to the owners of the island (the Sinclairs) for making additions to their ranch documented this:

We wandered up the inclined plain, towards the mountain ridge in the northeast, and came to many natural plantations of pineapples. They grew everywhere over the

island spontaneously, and with no other cultivation than that of nature; they are the juiciest and best-flavored of any in the tropics.

Whether the Ni'ihau pineapples were specimens at which the major pineapple corporations of today would marvel is speculative. However, the fact that arid Ni'ihau could sustain the growth of a great quantity of pineapples seemingly substantiated by Mr. Charles Gay, son of Captain and Mrs. (Jane) Thomas Gay, and grandson of Eliza Sinclair, matriarch of the Sinclair family. In describing them to his son, Lawrence, Mr. Gay claimed that the pineapples grew at the end of a stalk twenty to twenty-five feet away from where it was originally planted. Mr. Gay is reputed to have brought some slips to Waimea, Kaua'i and planted them along a picket fence near his home. The plants bore fruit in about eighteen months but were described by Mr. Gay as being smaller than to what they were accustomed at the time. The original pineapples were allegedly brought to Ni'ihau from the Marquesas Islands in 1850 (Gay 1981:62).

6. The fact that land lies fallow in Hawai'i is in itself unusual:

... shortly after the early migration, the island (Ni'ihau) was divided into several *ahupua'a*, each ruled by a high chief, usually a close relative of the King of Kauai. These chiefs made further subdivisions of land to chiefs of lower rank and the commoners.

All tenants were required to make their land productive in order to support the populace, because the rulers were very much against idle land (Gay 1981:43).

7. The gourds or "Ni'ihau calabashes" were water containers that were prized for the unique staining method used by the Ni'ihauans to decorate them in intricate geometric motifs (Handy and Handy 1972:434).

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIANITY COMES TO NI'HAU

Whitney and the Congregationalists

On March 30, 1820, Christianity came to the Hawaiian Islands with missionaries that arrived from Boston aboard the brig Thaddeus. They sailed via Cape Horn, a journey of five months and eighteen thousand miles.

Kamehameha the Great was dead only six months yet a major upheaval had taken place regarding the religious practices and beliefs of the Hawaiians. As somewhat of a forerunner to women's liberation, the widow of Kamehameha and then regent of the island kingdom, Ka'ahumanu, led the revolt against many of the old kapu or ancient taboos. When the kapu-breakers were not immediately punished by the gods, idolatry, as it was practiced then, suffered its most serious blow and gradually began to wane as a way of religion in the islands. The void was quickly filled by the recently arrived men of the cloth from Boston. Little did they realize how much easier Ka'ahumanu had made their job. However, they soon found out, and opportunistically garnered her under their collective wing. After she was nursed back to health by Hiram Bingham's wife from a serious illness, Ka'ahumanu became one of the potent supporters of the missionaries.

On the board the Thaddeus were a few ordained ministers, lay specialists, and a few Hawaiians who had been educated at the Foreign Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut (Daws 1974:63). Among the specialists were two teachers by trade, Samuel Ruggles and Samuel Whitney, who were both assigned to the

Waimea Mission on Kaua'i. Both fell quickly into the favor of Kaumuali'i who offered them chiefly status. They declined but accepted instead "the use of some land and the promise of protection" for their mission at Waimea (Ibid. 66).

With the exception of one year (1827-8) when he went to Honolulu, Samuel Whitney presided at Waimea from 1820-1845 (Missionary Album 1969:198-9). The religious jurisdiction of the Waimea Mission included Ni'ihau, but the tiny island was not the focal point of the new religious establishment. In fact, Ni'ihau, as has been its history, was paid only token appreciation.

The arrival of the missionaries resulted not only in learning about the Christian God, but also signified the start of what westerners commonly, and perhaps arrogantly, term the "civilizing" of the islanders through general education: reading and writing. The Kaua'i Mission did establish a few schools on Ni'ihau but could never spare a full-time, qualified teacher/preacher to take up residence there. To compensate, Whitney appointed teachers from among the Ni'ihauans who did what they could considering they knew very little more than those who they were instructing. It was, however, a beginning. As more missions on Kaua'i were opened, Whitney was able to direct more attention to Ni'ihau. Missionaries from Kaua'i continued to cross Kaulakahi Channel periodically to tend the Ni'ihau flock as "the want of canoes prevented Ni'ihau people from attending church and school very frequently at Waimea ..." (Damon 1932 Vol I:286).

In April 1829, Whitney inspected the Ni'ihau schools. His report indicated there were four on the island, providing instruction to thirty-three males and forty-three females. Of these, Whitney claims forty-four could read (Ibid. 274). Ten schools were reported on Ni'ihau in 1834, and this number

remained fairly stable for the next decade (Whitney 1834:2). Most, however, were administered rather indifferently by the Protestants (Ibid. 1842:2).

Walsh and the Catholics

While the Congregational missionaries at Waimea were seemingly content in conducting their religious and secular education responsibilities on Ni'ihau by proxy, the Catholics, in the early 1840s, seized the initiative and set up the first permanent religious settlement on the island. The catalyst was a feisty Irishman named father Robert Walsh who was the first Catholic priest to come to Kaua'i.

He arrived at Kolea (Kaua'i) in December 1841 and on Christmas Day of that year recorded in his diary: 'I have celebrated the first Mass that has ever been celebrated to my knowledge on the island of Kauai, and founded the mission of St. Raphael the Archangel' (Ibid. 223).

Throughout the Pacific the competition between Protestants and Catholics for souls has always been intense. At times, it has reached somewhat violent and certainly un-christianlike proportions. Ni'ihau was no exception. The Congregational missionaries watched the Catholics on Ni'ihau gain large followings of the population, which at that time numbered about one thousand (see Table I). Reports filed by Whitney substantiate and lament the Catholic successes:

They have a native teacher, who is said to be very zealous, and gaining quite a number of converts to the Catholic faith. It is with weeping eyes that we often look toward the ruffed cliffs (sic) of that Island and ask what can be done for its wretched inhabitants? (Whitney 1841:2).

TABLE I

CENSUS DATE FOR NI'IAU

1832 - 1,047	1860 - 647	1910 - 208
1836 - 993	1866 - 325	1920 - 191
1840 - 1,000	1872 - 233	1930 - 191
1847 - 453	1878 - 177	1940 - 182
1849 - 723	1890 - 216	1950 - 222
1850 - 714	1896 - 164	1960 - 254
1853 - 790	1900 - 172	1980 - 226

(Schmidt 1977:11 and State of Hawaii
Data Book 1979)

After spending a week on Ni'ihau during October 1842, Whitney reported:

... the prospects of the people on that Island are exceedingly dark. They are ignorant in the extreme and almost entirely destitute of the means of instruction. The catholicks (sic) are rushing in upon them, and leading them by scores into the delusions of the Man of Sin (Ibid. 1842:1)

In 1843, Whitney conducted six meetings on Ni'ihau. While he reported that Father Walsh was still gaining converts and still leading children away from schools administered by the Waimea Mission, he did express delight in the number of Ni'ihauans clinging to the Congregational belief (Ibid. 1843:1-2). "Not long after that, zealous Protestants tore down a house which had been serving as a Catholic chapel (Daws and Head 1963:50).

The crusade for Ni'ihau converts continued until mid-century. Neither faith could have been conclusively classified as victorious up to that period. Shortly thereafter, in 1851, the Catholics abandoned their schools on Ni'ihau (Ibid.) and the fire of that faith among the Ni'ihauans rapidly subsided. My research could not determine why the Catholics pulled out of Ni'ihau. Although the zeal of the Protestant missionaries had also waned with

respect to Ni'ihau, when the Catholics departed it was the remnants of the Congregational beliefs that survived. One thing for certain, however, is that the overall impact of the missionaries on the religious convictions of the Ni'ihauans was far-reaching and today forms the cornerstone of their outlook on life and the world.

CHAPTER V

FROM ONE MONARCHY TO ANOTHER

Prelude to the Sale

Prior to 1848, land ownership in Hawai'i was the right of nobility. Prompted by foreigners, primarily Americans "who needed clear land titles to secure their investments in the Islands" (Daws and Head 1963:50), and under the guise that a land redistribution would benefit the Hawaiians, the monarchy ordered, in 1848, the Great Māhele, or land division. The Crown set aside certain parcels and then offered what remained for outright purchase by chief and commoner alike. Foreigners were permitted to buy only under the most extreme circumstances, but with private ownership on a wide scale, long-term leases became readily available. It was this land tenure security that prospective plantation owners required before they would invest.¹

The Ni'ihauans quickly voiced their desire to purchase their portion of paradise. The 'āina (land) has always been important to the Hawaiians, as it is with most island peoples. When the opportunity to buy land was presented to the Ni'ihauans, they leapt at the chance. But because their barren land was not productive enough to secure eventual full payment of the loan they needed, Ni'ihauans were only authorized a lease agreement with the monarchy. By 1860, the Ni'ihauans were so far in arrears on their lease payments that the situation was getting unprofitable for the monarchy (Ibid. 51). The solution to this dilemma was in New Zealand and about three years in the future.

The Sinclairs

At a point midway between Kamehameha's two ill-fated attempts to secure Ni'ihau and Kaua'i by force, specifically on April 26, 1800, there was born in Glasgow, Scotland to the McHutchesons a girl whom they named Eliza. In the same year of Kamehameha's death (1819), this beautiful young woman met, fell in love with and married a distinguished officer of the Royal Navy, Captain Francis Sinclair. He is reputed to have saved the life of the Duke of Wellington in 1815 subsequent to the Battle of Waterloo while escorting the Duke of England in his frigate-of-war. For his "splendid seamanship," he was personally rewarded by the "Iron Duke" (Gay 1981:9).

Eliza and Francis resided happily at an estate, Bothwell Hall, in Stirling, Scotland. From this union came six children. Having heard exciting stories of the untold opportunities awaiting in New Zealand for the adventuresome, Eliza persuaded her husband to take advantage of the Crown's incentives for settlement there. The family departed in October 1839 (von Holt 1940:7).

Captain Sinclair had filed claim for land in New Zealand (North Island) prior to departing, but exact site selection was to take place upon their arrival. For more than four months the Sinclairs, along with other Scottish and English families, sailed the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. They arrived in Wellington in February 1840 about the time New Zealand became a British colony (Ibid.).

It took three years to sort the land claims as no one in the British government had fully considered the Maori point of view when it came to selling their land. The Sinclair family spent this time waiting in Wellington, having settled near a Maori village. They became acquainted and

friendly with the Maori even though the North Island natives were reputed to be a particularly fierce group. How fierce they were became apparent to Captain Sinclair when he, having his claim finally and clearly identified on paper, took his family to see what they were considering buying. During the excursion, he sensed increasing danger as the party moved further inland by boat. One evening as his family slept on shore, he quickly awakened them and ushered them to the boat. Minutes later "Literally a torrent of Maori men and women, all armed with spears and clubs" rushed from over a hill (Gay 1981:11).

Captain Sinclair returned to Wellington with his family and wisely exchanged his unseen claim on North Island for another on South Island. The new acreage he acquired was in Pigeon Bay near Akaroa, Canterbury. They arrived in April 1843 in a vessel built by the Captain. There, the family won the confidence of the Maori and eventually carved for themselves out of the wilderness a beautiful estate which they named "Craigforth" (Ibid. 12).

The Sinclairs fashioned for themselves a prosperous, happy lifestyle during the next three years. Desiring to purchase more land immediately adjacent to his property, Captain Sinclair, his eldest son George, and Alfred Wallace, fiancé to his eldest daughter, Jane, set sail for Wellington in 1846. It was the last anyone ever saw of them. "No trace not even a spar or sail, or evidence of any kind was ever found of the ship" (von Holt 1940: 14-15).

For the rest of her (Eliza's) long life, she never could entirely rid her mind of the remorse that she had somehow been indirectly responsible for the tragic deaths. She had been the one who so strongly argued to make the move from their home of Bothwell Hall ... to settle in this exciting unknown island ... (Menard 1982:49).

She was left a widow with five children ranging in age from seven to twenty-three. With help from friends and solace from prayer, she managed the estate fairly well.

About 1862, (two of her children) Frank (Francis) and Helen, both of whom were restless and unhappy, began to urge a departure of the family for wider fields and opportunities. The land which Captain Sinclair had set out to buy on his last disastrous voyage had never been purchased by Mrs. Sinclair (von Holt 1940:23).

The following year a handsome offer was made for Craigforth and the widow accepted. " ... stories of the huge ranchos of the Spanish Dons and their descendents had fired Frank's imagination" (Ibid.) and he persuaded his mother to set sail for British Columbia or California.

Jane had now married Captain Thomas Gay. He set about purchasing a three-hundred-ton barque called the Bessie. The clan, headed by its now sixty-three-year-old matriarch, was ready to complete the dream of their father: to own "an island all their own" (Menard 1982:49).

All sorts of supplies were put on board—a cow and hay and grain for her chickens, five merino sheep, jam and jellies made at home, quantities of apples from the orchard, also books, clothing and all the paraphernalia of home, even to a piano (von Holt 1940:25).

In April 1863, they set sail. Their first stop was Tahiti where Eliza was appalled by the licentiousness and debauchery of what was then the "queen" of whaling ports, Pape'ete. This, coupled with the lack of available land and the heat and humidity, dashed any thoughts she may have had about permanently residing there. It should be mentioned, however, that the sheer beauty of Tahiti (outside Pape'ete) and Mo'orea indeed made a favorable impression on Eliza (Menard 1982:51).

Weighing anchor, they sailed north toward Hawai'i. While they did not stop there, what Eliza saw from the deck of the Bessie became indelibly etched

in her mind and would eventually lead her back. Why the widow did not visit Honolulu is unknown. Some recorded accounts claim the family did stop in the Hawaiian Islands, but

... Eliza's daughter, Anne, was almost twenty-four years of age, with lucid impressions of the voyage, wrote only of seeing the mountains of the Hawaiian group as they sailed past (Ibid.).

By June 1863, they had made Vancouver, British Columbia. Damp weather, poor ranching prospects, mosquitoes and the uninviting appearance of the Indians of North America made for a short stay there.

California was next on their itinerary but before they could set sail, a Mr. Henry Rhodes of the Hudson Bay Company advised them to return to Hawai'i instead. He claimed the rains in California at that time of the year would make it difficult to take the long trip over the mesas to see the ranch lands there" (von Holt 1940:29). Acting on his advice, her own recollection of the beauty of Hawai'i, and a letter of reference Rhodes wrote for the family to be presented to his brother Godfrey in Honolulu, Eliza decided to return to the Sandwich Isles (Ibid.).²

The Sale of Ni'ihau

The Bessie arrived in Honolulu harbor on September 17, 1863. Kauikeaouli was king (Kamehameha IV). At the dock to greet the Sinclairs was the Reverend Samuel Chenery Damon who arranged for a temporary home for them in Honolulu.

Damon's memoirs report:

On going down to the wharf I came aboard a fine vessel with a beautiful and brilliant old lady at its head, books, pictures ... and all that could add refinement to a floating house about them; and cattle and sheep of valuable breed in pens on deck (Menard 1982:52).

Word quickly spread that people of substance had arrived with an eye toward staying. With that,

Honolulu society heartily welcomed the newcomers eminently respectable and wealthy as they appeared ... The Sinclairs were very receptive to Honolulu hospitality and even more to island real estate prospects. They were in the market for land (Daws and Head 1963:51).

The sequence of events that led up to the actual sale of Ni'ihau to Eliza was recorded by her daughter, Anne, and are as follows:

In looking about for ranches that would suit us ... it was difficult to find what we wanted, as a law, 'The Great Mahele' had recently been passed by the Hawaiian Legislature enabling the natives to take up little land holdings wherever they liked. Such numbers of these had been taken up all over the islands that it was well nigh impossible to find a large enough tract for our purposes. The holdings are called kuleanas and though they broke up the large ranchlands, no reasonable person could object to this law, as it was a fine thing for the natives.

After some months of looking, during which we were offered Kahuku on northern Oahu by Mr. Wyllie, Ford Island in Pearl Harbor by Dr. Ford, and the adjoining lands of Honouliuli and Ewa, all of which could have been bought for a song and which James Campbell bought in 1877, we gave up and decided to leave for California. When King Kamehameha (IV) heard of this he told us that if we would stay in Hawaii he would sell us a whole island, having a population of about three hundred natives. After my brothers (Francis and James) had investigated the place they were so enthusiastic that we accepted the King's offer, and for \$10,000 we bought the island of Niihau off the coast of Kauai (Ibid. 31).

Ten thousand dollars was the price upon which all parties had finally agreed. James and Francis had initially offered six thousand but the King's cabinet, after considering it, countered with the ten-thousand-dollar price tag for fee-simple purchase, or a lease of \$750 per year (Daws and Head 1963:81).

While the offer was made in the name of King Kamehameha IV, he died during the negotiations. His successor, Lot (Kamehameha V), who came to power in

December 1863, honored the original offer. This has been a source of confusion as some historical accounts of the purchase of Ni'ihau accord it to Kamehameha IV and others to Kamehameha V, when actually both were involved.

Thus on January 23, 1864, the following was entered into the records of the Hawaiian monarchy:

Kamehameha V, by the grace of God, King of the Hawaiian Islands, by this, His Royal patent, makes known unto all men that he has, for himself and his successors, in the office this day granted and given absolutely in fee simple unto James McHutcheson Sinclair and Francis Sinclair as tenants in common, for the consideration of \$10,000 ... into the royal exchequer ... (Dougherty 1930:193).

Then followed a physical description of Ni'ihau. So, for about twenty-two cents an acre, the Sinclairs became owners of Ni'ihau with the "warm appreciation of Foreign Minister Wyllie, who expressed his satisfaction at seeing people of such substance settle in Hawaii" (Daws and Head 1963:81). Everybody seemed pleased.³

NOTES

1. As part of the Great Māhele,

The king gave up his rights to all lands of the kingdom, except for certain estates which in time became known as the crown lands, reserved for the reigning monarch. The chiefs were given a chance to take out fee simple titles to land they had previously held in fief or as retainers of the king. Commoners were allowed to buy small lots, or kuleanas, in fee simple. Chiefs and commoners alike had to have their lands surveyed and pay a commutation fee in order to perfect their titles. For the most part chiefs paid their fees in land, and this became government or public land. Aliens were allowed to lease land for as long as fifty years, and in 1850 legislation was passed allowing them to purchase property on the same terms as subjects of the kingdom (Daws 1974:126).

2. A stop in California, however, seems to have been made before departing for Hawai'i. This supposition is based on two items. First, Eliza's daughter, Anne, recorded in her notes after arriving in Hawai'i the following:

Though land in California was so cheap we knew that that country was not yet in a settled condition, while here in Hawaii we were at home in a pleasant life and a settled community (von Holt 1940:31).

Secondly, a copy of the passenger list of the Bessie when it arrived in Honolulu indicated its point of departure as "Port Angeles, U.S.A." (Gay 1981:14). Assuming that the Port Angeles referred to here is the present day Los Angeles, the Sinclairs most certainly made a stop in California.

3. One account of the land negotiations between the Sinclairs and the Hawaiian government says:

The King offered land on Oahu stretching from the present site of City Hall to Diamond Head for \$10,000 in gold, but Mrs. Sinclair and her sons didn't care for this land because it was not suitable for ranching.

Most of Waikiki in those days was under water (Gay 1981:16-17).

If this is true, the Sinclairs probably refused what was to become the most expensive piece of real estate in Hawai'i.

CHAPTER VI

A DYNASTY IS FORMED

The Final Piece

Unbeknownst to the Sinclairs at the time of the Ni'ihau purchase was the fact that a few sections of land on the island were already sold to other individuals as part of the Great Māhele. The monarchy had apparently, or conveniently, forgot to mention this in its haste to conclude the deal with the Sinclairs. The new owners were left to resolve the difficulty and did so, with the exception of one fifty-acre parcel. The Hawaiian who owned this land was named Papapa. He "retained his lot for fifteen years while the sinclairs developed their 46,000-acre holding around him" (Daws and Head 1963:81).

One of the Sinclairs' nearest neighbors after they moved to Ni'ihau was a wealthy young man named Valdemar Knudsen. His well-established and prospering estate was on Kaua'i. He came to the immediate aid of the Sinclairs and "proved a most helpful friend, giving (theme) needed advice and interpreting for (them) to the natives" (von Holt 1940:31). He became more than just a friend after he married Anne, Eliza's youngest daughter. It was to Valdemar that Eliza turned when her efforts to entice Papapa to sell continually failed.

A shrewd businessman, Knudsen shelved the idea of trying to "talk" the Hawaiian into selling. Instead, his method was more direct. When they met, Knudsen dumped onto the table one thousand dollars in silver coins and promised the man and his wife security on the island for the rest of their lives.¹ It is believed that the sight of the money, not so much as the

promise of security, turned the deal (Daws and Armitage 1941:33). The Sinclairs finally owned the entire island.

A Ranch is Born

The nerve center of island operations was to be the Sinclairs' estate at Ki'eki'e. The site was personally selected by Eliza on the bluffs overlooking the western shoreline, a few miles from and midway between Nonopapa to the south (a main landing site) and the Village of Pu'uwai to the north where most of the Hawaiians lived (Franck 1937:314).

From Boston were shipped prefabricated sections of the new house which was

... a twenty-room, ranch-style mansion, bordered by wide verandas, passageways, servants' quarters, barns for splendid Arabian horses and sheds for elegant carriages (Menard 1982:52).

Shortly after the house was built, Eliza's beloved son-in-law, Thomas Gay (Jane's husband), to whom was entrusted virtually all of the sailing responsibilities on the family's trans-Pacific trek, died in 1865.

Captain Gay took the Bessie back to Honolulu and on south to Australia, there to sell the vessel. After consummating the sale in Sydney he unfortunately contracted pneumonia and died, never seeing his youngest child, Alice, who was born on Niihau on March 17, 1865 (von Holt 1940:32-33).

Having now secured their dream, the work of attempting to build it into a profitable venture commenced. Undoubtedly, the Sinclairs knew that Mother Nature was not as kind to Ni'ihau as she was to other islands in the archipelago. Just how harsh the conditions were on the island became clear to them quickly. Erosion caused by the perennial lack of sufficient rain and the eating habits of the unrestricted herds of descendants from the goats Captain Cook left in 1778 made agriculture on any great scale a virtual impossibility.

While the island was dry and unforested, it did offer prospects for ranching. So with their few cattle and prized Merino sheep, the Sinclairs established the Ni'ihau Ranch Company. While they realized ranching operations would not be easy because of the water shortage, Ni'ihau did offer

... one great advantage. Elsewhere in Hawaii the ubiquitous dogs of the Polynesians were a menace to sheep and cattle; on Ni'ihau, bounded by coastline rather than a fence, this problem was quickly mastered (Daws and Head 1963:81).

Formally establishing the Ranch Company was simple but making it financially solvent would be a more challenging task. In the beginning, however, the Sinclairs remained undaunted and their spirit positive. After all, they had succeeded in New Zealand against what they considered more formidable odds than Hawai'i.

Through the latter half of the 1860s, the Sinclairs laid the groundwork of their ranching operations. Much of the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Eliza's sons, Francis and James. Cattle and sheep increased in numbers. Beef, mutton and wool became the ranch's financial lifeblood. Through it all, however, the cruel heat and dryness of the island made the work tremendously difficult, and the matter of solving the water-shortage problem became one of increasing urgency.

... a Honolulu experiment was tried in the form of drilling an artesian well, the first on Kauai and the first anywhere in the islands to be used for irrigation. It succeeded beyond expectations, and with these satisfactory results the Sinclairs were eager to have (such an operation) in the island of Niihau, but it was never felt wise to pursue the project, since the supply of underground water on so small an island is, at best, problematical (Damon 1932 Vol. II:776).

Although the Honolulu experiment remained untried on Ni'ihau, the owners did attempt to tap, or at least test, the ground-water resources of the

island. The government of Hawai'i even assisted. In 1883, in response to Francis Sinclair's request for financial assistance, the Minister of Interior, J. E. Bush, agreed that the Hawaiian monarchy would subsidize the boring of wells on Ni'ihau but its share was not to exceed \$5,000 (Bush 1883:227).

Well digging on Ni'ihau met with limited success.

Borings into rocks of the lowlands have yielded small quantities of fresh water, but the flow soon became more or less saline because of the penetration of ocean water through the cavernous and porous rocks once the head of fresh water had been drawn off (Hinds 1930:91).

Well digging was all but discontinued on Ni'ihau. Reservoirs and livestock waterholes too were not very successful. The smaller waterholes near the northeastern highlands were fed by intermittent runoff, sporadic springs and infrequent rainfall. In any case, few of them provided sufficient potable water (Stearns 1947:31).

Death of the Matriarch

It would be only expected that during the periods of drought, the widow Sinclair would look toward Kaua'i, only eighteen miles across the channel, and see the verdant hills and pasturelands soaking up the cool, refreshing rain that Ni'ihau rarely experienced. Perhaps it was this that occasioned her purchase, in the 1870s, of a great swath of rich plantation land on Kaua'i's southwestern side, near Makaweli and Hanapepe. Or, perhaps, it was the thought that the Ni'ihau Ranch would never be the financial success for which she had hoped and therefore decided to hedge in order to provide for the family's future. Maybe she feared her grandchildren and their children required more direct access to better schools and religious education. Possibly she had a premonition that her own health would someday necessitate

her leaving the hot, dusty Ni'ihau plains even though a visitor to Ni'ihau in 1875 described her in these words:

A lady of the old Scotch type, very talented, bright humorous, charming, with a definite character which impresses its force upon everybody; beautiful in her old age, disdaining that servile conformity to prevailing fashion which makes many old people at once ugly and contemptible; speaking English with a slight old fashioned, refined Scottish accent, which gives naivete to everything she says; up to the latest novelty in theology and politics; devoted to her children and grandchildren, the life of the family and though upwards of seventy, the first to rise, and the last to retire in the house ... she rides on horseback, in a large, drawn, silk bonnet, which she rarely lays aside, as light in figure and steps as a young girl ... (Menard 1982:82).

For whatever reason, Eliza's purchase of the Kaua'i land proved to be a wise decision because in the late 1880s her health failed and her family relocated her to a magnificent estate in Makaweli. The acreage she purchased also became the cornerstone of a lucrative family sugar plantation that still flourishes today.²

While the move to Kaua'i improved her condition to some degree, the end came early in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Sinclair was a most remarkable woman, of Scotch birth, and possessed of an active business mind, which enabled her to be the ruling spirit and manager of her large property. She always enjoyed remarkably good health in her mountain home in Makaweli. A few weeks since she had an attack of grip from which she recovered, but it left her so weak and helpless that she felt it was of no use to make any effort to recover and prolong life in such a helpless condition. Then calling her grandchildren and friends to her bedside, she bade an affectionate farewell to each, closed her eyes and expired at the age of 93 years, with apparently no pain, but with a bright hope of eternal glory in the spirit land (Friend 1892:82).

Such was the written eulogy to the matriarch of the Sinclair family who died in 1892. She had outlived her husband and four of her six children.

Surviving her were the two youngest: Francis, then living in Alameda, California, and Anne (Knudsen) in Honolulu (Honolulu Gazette 1892:3).

Eliza did all in her power to maintain the "Hawaiian flavor" of Ni'ihau, even in the face of the modernization occurring on other islands.

She was very kind and helpful to the Hawaiians. She spent many hours nursing the sick and providing them with food and other necessities. The Hawaiians loved and respected her. She had always told her family that she wanted Ni'ihau to be kept in the true Hawaiian way of life (Gay 1981:17).

It was her desire to protect those who chose Ni'ihau as their home from the horrors the *haole* brought to the other islands: disease, mixed blood, greed, and so on. There seems to be no question that she would have liked to see Ni'ihau prosper financially as the Sinclairs were astute business people. While she did not see the Ni'ihau Ranch become a financial success, she did lay the foundation for the attitude of her descendants: love Ni'ihau and its people; protect them!

NOTES

1. When Ni'ihau was sold in 1863 to the Sinclairs, many Ni'ihauans left the island. Although their lifestyle was not dramatically altered with the change in ownership, those who desired to own land on Ni'ihau in fee saw their fate sealed. This caused deep resentment between some islanders and the new owners, yet future generations of Hawaiians would be thankful for the way things eventually turned out. A migration, however, did occur and the population was more than halved between 1860 and 1866 as Ni'ihauans headed for greener pastures.
2. An interesting sidelight to the land purchases made by the family in Hawai'i was that in 1902 Eliza's daughter, Jane, purchased the island of Lana'i at auction and gave it to her son, Charles (Gay 1981:5). He, in turn, kept it for twenty years and then sold it to the Dole Pineapple Company in 1926 (Ibid. 3). So, for a period of two decades, the Sinclair-Robinson-Gay clan owned outright two of the eight inhabited islands of the Hawaiian archipelago, and much of a third, Kaua'i!

CHAPTER VII

OWNERSHIP CHANGES

Aubrey Robinson Inherits Ni'ihau

Ni'ihau Ranch operations had been entrusted for some time before Eliza's death to the kind and capable hands of her grandchild, Aubrey. Born in New Zealand, he was brought to Hawai'i on the Bessie at the age of ten. As a result of the deaths of some of the direct heirs of the widow, as well as personal choices by other survivors not to accept responsibility for Ni'ihau, Aubrey became the sole owner of the island, as well as many of the family's holdings on Kaua'i. It was he and his cousin Francis who formed the Gay and Robinson Company on Kaua'i and, with Sir William Renny Watson of Scotland, also formed the Hawai'i Sugar Company (Hawaiian Gazette 1892:4).

Aubrey was the son of Charles Barrington Robinson and Helen Sinclair. He was a well-educated man who had received a law degree from Boston University. Before returning to Hawai'i to assume the management chores of Ni'ihau, he traveled quite extensively throughout the world.

In the tradition of his family, Aubrey was a good businessman and became a power in the cattle and sugar industries, particularly on Kaua'i (Frank 1937:315). He, like his grandmother, was extremely protective of Ni'ihau and wanted nothing more than to permit the residents to live in peace and contentment in whatever manner they desired. Always in the back of his mind, however was the goal to make the Ni'ihau Ranch Company a profitable business.

He tenaciously upheld the precepts laid down by his grandmother, particularly that of not permitting visitors to the island. Money, influence nor political power mattered then, nor does it now, in trying to get to Ni'ihau. A firm but polite "no" was always the response to the curious.

Under Aubrey's guiding hand many new rehabilitative and conservation projects were started on Ni'ihau. To make the island more livable and to concurrently improve its financial prospects, he initiated massive irrigation works and reforestation programs there, as well as at Makaweli.

He attempted to diversify the ecology of Ni'ihau. He imported purebred Arabian Horses in 1884, as well as exotic gamebirds and honey bees. He was the first to import tea from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Possibly as important as all, however, were his tree-importation and -planting measures which included new varieties of tropical flowering as well as fruit trees from India, China, and Mexico such as pear, mango, sapote, and star apple.

Aubrey's efforts had visible effects as described by C.S. Judd who first visited the island in 1897 and returned more than three decades later. Judd indicated that,

After an interval of 32 years ... I was deeply impressed with the thrift of the tree growth not only on the rolling coastal plain but also on the cliffs where the Kiawe trees have been fostered and are growing up abundantly in the verdant pili grass. A tree nursery is maintained at the (Robinson) Kiekie homestead where about 60,000 trees are raised annually. These are grown in bamboo joints and carried up the highlands where they are set out at the rate of 60 plants per man per day (Judd 1932:5)

The reforestation project was successful due to the eradication of the goats on Ni'ihau in the late 1800s. Their seemingly insatiable appetites denuded the landscape which resulted in widespread erosion and loss of valuable topsoil. Until these descendants of the billy and two nannies

Captain Cook so graciously left behind in 1788 were gone, or their propagation controlled, extensive plant growth had little chance on Ni'ihau.

During his visit in 1897, Judd participated in a goat hunt which he described as follows:

The task of exterminating them was not easy and I saw the work in 1897 when it was still at its height. During the one week of daily drives in which I participated about 700 goats were captured. We had taken our rifles with us to shoot stragglers and at the first report of our guns the timid Hawaiian goat drivers, evidently unused to firearms, would hide behind the rocks so that we could not know where they were and for the sake of safety had to desist from shooting further. The campaign against the goats was successful at last and the results in increased pasturage justified the outlay (Judd 1932:8).

Aubrey's tenure on Ni'ihau spanned the time in Hawaiian history when the islands were transformed from one monarchy under Liliu'okalani (1893) to a Republic under self-proclaimed President Sanford B. Dole (1894) and eventually to a Territory of the United States under Governor Dole (1900).

... the new territorial government failed to pick up responsibility for the Niihau as it began to do for the rest of the islands. As the old Hawaii faded and disappeared elsewhere, the Robinsons' will (with Aubrey at the helm) to keep Niihau unchanged grew in strength (Daws and Head 1963:82).

Aubrey had married his first cousin, Alice Gay, and with her had five children: Selwynn, Sinclair, Aylmer, Lester and Eleanor. He began to shed his Ni'ihau Ranch managerial responsibilities about 1920. By 1922, his sons, Aylmer and Lester, began sharing these. It would be older Aylmer who would inherit ultimate responsibility.

Aubrey lived until the age of eighty-two. His death in July of 1936 brought eulogies from his contemporaries much the same as his grandmother had four decades earlier. Newspaper accounts heralded him as "prominent in island affairs since the monarchy" (SB 1936); "a man who paid his debts and taxes

... a great patron of church and missionary work" (Daws and Head 1963:82); and, with obvious reference to Ni'ihau, "known throughout Hawaii for his preservation of native life of old" (SB 1936).

Aubrey's estate was valued at \$3,400,000 (Advertiser 1943b).

Of this, Ni'ihau contributed only \$225,000 and its economy was beginning to show signs of strain which were to become more pronounced as time went on. Clearly, strong reasons other than money guided the Robinsons in their defense of the island against the outside world (Daws and Head 1963:82).

Aylmer, like his father and great-grandmother, loved the island and the Ni'ihau people. He too was well-educated and had a Harvard degree. He spoke Hawaiian fluently and pledged to see to it that the Ni'ihauans were permitted to live a peaceful, tranquil existence, and thereby to preserve as much of the Hawai'i of old as possible. The latter was to be accomplished by continuing the ban on visitors to Ni'ihau. He was to manage the island's affairs for more than forty years.

Governor Judd Visits Ni'ihau

Not very much information is available in public records about Ni'ihau during the first quarter of the twentieth century. As mentioned, when Aubrey was nearing the age of seventy, Aylmer and Lester assumed the managerial duties on Ni'ihau. This transfer of responsibilities was of little importance to the general population of Hawaii and went by virtually unnoticed. An event, however, that should have captured the attention of most Hawaiian residents was the first visit ever to Ni'ihau by a Territorial Governor of Hawai'i, L.M. Judd. This too, however, received little publicity. The reason was that the visit occurred on October 22, 1929, only one week before the catastrophic financial news of America was trumpeted throughout the world—Wall Street Collapses!

The Governor's visit, nevertheless, was recorded for posterity through the diligence and persistence of Henry Dougherty. Through his enlightening reports, Hawai'i was kept apprised of the Ni'ihau visit.

Mr. Dougherty was a member of the Governor's official party that departed Honolulu Harbor on board the lighthouse tender Kukui on October 20th. They were greeted at Ni'ihau by Aylmer and the only other haole on the island, foreman John Rennie (ADV 1929). Although a carriage was available, the party took saddled Arabian steeds from their landing at Ki'i to Pu'uwai.

Dougherty's report was the first to document that pipes from the top of the cliffs carried water "from the only spring on the island—a tempermental spring that gushes a fitful stream at fitful intervals—mostly during the winter season" (SB 1929). His report was also the first documentation that, while smoking and the sale of tobacco was prohibited on Ni'ihau, a few of the residents did secretly smoke, having acquired the habit off island.

After a cursory look at the school in Pu'uwai, which conducted classes to the fourth grade and had twenty-nine students enrolled, Judd prepared to depart Ni'ihau feeling much more contented about the island than before he had arrived.

While the visit did not receive much play off-island, the Ni'ihauans unquestionably viewed it as something very special. At the conclusion of the visit, the Governor led the Ni'ihauans in a chorus of Aloha 'Oe. Not to be outdone, the Ni'ihauans responded with the Star Spangled Banner to which Judd remarked "they knew better than the visitors" (Ibid.).

Fifteen months after Aubrey's death, a small article appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser, datelined "October 1, Summerville, New Jersey." The article carried a denial by a Mr. James H. R. Cromwell that he was attempting

to purchase Ni'ihau from the Robinsons. Stating he was only building a vacation home in Black Point on O'ahu, Cromwell could not offer any reason how the Ni'ihau purchase rumor started (ADV 1937). It is mentioned here only because it was the first publicly recorded reference, fact or fiction, about someone seemingly interested in purchasing the island from the Robinsons. Nevertheless, thirty-three years later, claims that businessmen were offering to buy the island nearly resulted in the State's purchase of it. This will be discussed in detail later in this work.

By 1940, Ni'ihau was a financial liability for the Robinson family. It was getting progressively worse each year. The island's contribution to the multi-million dollar Robinson estate was estimated at only six percent. It was hardly worth keeping if profit was the only motive.

NOTES

1. Irrigation ditches constructed under Aubrey's leadership on Kaua'i were referred to as some of the "greatest engineering feat(s) ever accomplished in Hawaii" (SB 1936). An exaggeration, perhaps, but it is indicative of the esteem in which he was held among his peers and colleagues.
2. The party also included: High Sheriff John C. Lane, Colonel L.W. Oliver, U.S. Marshal Oscar P. Cox, Senator Robert W. Shingle, Senator Charles A. Rice, Colonel P.M. Smoot, Mr. Willis T. Pope, and Mr. Charles S. Judd. Three of the official party had visited Ni'ihau thirty years earlier (SB 1929).

PART TWO: 1941 TO PRESENT

CHAPTER VIII

THE INVASION OF NI'IIHAU

The Battle of Ni'iihau

Prior to World War II, Aylmer Robinson's attention was focused on trying to keep the military off Ni'iihau. This greatly disturbed many of the military brass on O'ahu who saw a vast chunk of land, presumably suitable for a sprawling military base and early-warning detection station, remain untouchable (Daws and Head 1963:82). Ni'iihau's efforts to stay out of "harm's way" in World War II failed. What eventually happened became known as the Battle of Ni'iihau and would be a saga that would be told time and again.

There are numerous accounts of the incident.¹ While most agree about what generally occurred, the versions differ in details to the degree that the actual story may never be conclusively known.² At Appendix B is a rather lengthy compilation of the Battle of Ni'iihau as derived from numerous written sources and interviews. A synopsis of the Appendix follows.

While returning from the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, a Japanese fighter aircraft ran out of fuel before it could locate its carrier. The pilot crash-landed on Ni'iihau but was only slightly injured. After Hawila Kaleohano, one of the island's residents, confiscated his official papers and pistol, the Ni'iihauans took the pilot to Ki'i landing to await the

weekly Robinson sampan that carried supplies from Kaua'i. Not knowing that the U.S. military in Hawai'i had banned all unofficial water transport, the pilot was confined on Ni'ihau for nearly a week.

Two Japanese were living on Ni'ihau at the time and were used as interpreters. After being held captive for about four days, the pilot cajoled and coerced one of the Japanese interpreters to assist him in finding his papers and pistol. Together they removed the machineguns from the disabled aircraft and began terrorizing the villagers.

As a group of Ni'ihauans frantically rowed across the channel to Kaua'i for help, the pilot burned houses and peppered the village with machinegun fire. One can only imagine the horror the peace-loving Ni'ihauans endured. The pilot eventually captured Beni Kanahele and his wife, Ella. He threatened to kill them if his papers and pistol were not returned. As the pilot's patience wore thin, Beni and Ella were in grave danger of becoming the first casualties of this horrible nightmare. Sensing that any more delay would be fruitless, Beni seized an opportunity and attacked the pilot who was then armed with a shotgun stolen from the Robinson's warehouse. Although shot three times, Beni managed to disarm the pilot. He then lifted him high above his head and rammed his skull against a lava-rock wall. Seeing this, the Japanese interpreter turned the shotgun on himself and committed suicide. By the time Aylmer Robinson arrived, the incident was over and Beni was taken to Kaua'i hospital where he recovered from his wounds.

News of the Battle of Ni'ihau first reached the outside world through a radio broadcast by station KTOH on Kaua'i (ADV 1941a). Even in the aftermath of the destruction to bases on O'ahu, the news of the heroism of Beni Kanahele and Hawila Kaleohano traveled fast through the Territory. Both men were

decorated by the American Legion and, in June 1943, both received war bonds from the Hawai'i Civic Club of Hilo (ADV 1943a).³ On August 15, 1945, the nation remembered Beni's bravery.⁴ By order of the President of the United States, he was awarded the Purple Heart and the Medal of Merit (ADV 1957c).⁵

The U.S. Navy came to Ni'ihau and took away the engine and other salvageable vital parts from the charred remains of the Japanese plane. After that, it became a target for souvenir hunters and scavengers.⁶ As bizarre as the incident was, it will surely live in the hearts of all Ni'ihauans much the same as Pearl Harbor will in us all.

"Camp Ni'ihau"

Before the people of Ni'ihau could recover from having their island invaded by the Japanese pilot, a second invasion occurred. This time the invaders were members of the federalized National Guard unit, the 299th Infantry Regiment. With the reluctant permission and assistance of Aylmer Robinson, the Guardsmen began to visit Ni'ihau in early 1942 to select a site for a base camp and observation posts.

By June 1942, the first permanent contingent had arrived on Ni'ihau. Thirty-one men comprised the unit: twenty-six local boys from Kaua'i and five haoles. Their mission was to provide security for and early warning to Kaua'i by manning the observation posts and searching the seas and skies for enemy surface ships, submarines, and aircraft. These observation posts were established initially at Ka'we'ewa'e and Po'oneone. Later, Pueo Point replaced Po'oneone because of better visibility of the eastern waters of Kaua'i (Costa 1982).

With only a rickety tractor on Ni'ihau before the contingent arrived, the three jeeps and one three-quarter-ton truck brought by the soldiers were the first passenger motor vehicles used on the island. One of the soldiers mounted his personal radio to one of the jeeps and it made a big hit with the villagers who revelled in being able to listen to Hawaiian music from radio stations on neighbor islands (Amorin 1982).

During the period June 17-24, 1942, David Larentsius Larsen was a guest of the Robinsons on Ni'ihau. Not much more is known about why he was invited or who he was. In a letter to his wife in Honolulu, Larsen wrote of life as he observed it on Ni'ihau. He is quoted frequently in this thesis because his descriptions are vivid and candid.

Just prior to the time he arrived on island, the Army had begun occupying the base camp and he was astonished at the extent of the Robinsons' assistance to the military.

They transport troops and supplies back and forth from Kauai, furnish camp sites for the soldiers and some buildings for headquarters; they lend them horses to ride ... and sometimes they send men out to hunt wild pig to supply fresh pork for the troops. They have plowed deep furrows over all the flat areas to prevent the landing of enemy planes. In fact, they had done a lot of these before the war or the Japanese aviator would have found many safe places where he could have landed and taken off without cracking up. This furrowing is on a much larger scale than anything done by our plantations or pineapple companies, and they (Robinsons) never bill the Government or make any charge for their services (Larsen 1942:8-9).

It is suggested that before the War, the "enemy" planes designed to be thwarted from landing by the furrowed fields also, if not exclusively, referred to those flown by inquisitive journalists and correspondents whose only interest in getting to Ni'ihau was a feature story on the Mystery Isle (see Part Two, Chapter XVI).

Also, the Robinsons were credited with assisting the war effort through their beef production. During the years of food shortages and rationing, the beef raised by the Ni'ihau Ranch was supplying both Army and Hawaiian markets at greatly less than retail prices (ADV 1943b).

Although Aylmer was willing to assist the war effort, he was unyielding in the standards of behavior he set for the military while they were on his island. Among them were no drinking and as little fraternization with the Ni'ihauans as possible within the limits of cordiality. The soldiers were permitted access through the village of Pu'uwai in order to get to Nonopapa landing (Amorin 1982). It was difficult for the soldiers not to associate freely with the Ni'ihauans because of the latter's characteristic kindness. "If you passed by the same people ten times a day, they'd shake your hand each time" (Costa 1982).

Sharing a meal with a local family at their home was permissible, but under no circumstances was a soldier to remain overnight in the village. Young women were particularly off limits. Protective mothers, while hospitable themselves, guarded their daughters from the soldiers. During the initial period of military occupation, the island women were very cautious and even discouraged from going to the beach to pick shells. They were very careful not to put themselves into any questionable situations (Gilman 1943:54). It seems there may have been a great deal of truth in the following statement that appeared in the Honolulu Advertiser after the war:

Uncle Sam's friendly, gum-chewing GIs have won the favor with the women of every nation in the world, including enemy nations, but they haven't even 'dented the surface' on Ni'ihau (ADV 1946d).

For the most part, the Robinsons' regulations were observed, but as would be expected, there were some violations. On occasions, the soldiers managed to smuggle in some "spirits with their supplies."⁸ Smoking was not prohibited for the soldiers, but the Robinsons have traditionally strongly discouraged it among the Niihauans. They too, however, sneaked it in and the soldiers contributed to the habit from their Post Exchange purchases.

The Robinsons never restricted the soldiers from hunting pig or fowl, and when the supply boat from Kaua'i was delayed because of inclement weather, they did supplement their diet with readily available pheasant, turkey, or pork. Fish, eel, and 'opihi were also much a part of their menu.

The Army's outposts on Ni'ihau were disbanded in 1944.⁹ However, the soldiers' departure did not signal the end of military occupation of Ni'ihau. Six months before the Army left, a forty-man construction detachment from the U.S. Coast Guard arrived to erect a Long Range Aid to Navigation (LORAN) station (Coast Guard ... 1946:61). It was located in the southern part of the island near the Nonopapa landing, and took more than a year to complete. Operations commenced in early 1946 (Pikarski 1982). It was staffed by one officer and fourteen enlisted men. Like the army, they were instructed by Aylmer in the standards of conduct and, for the most part, again complied. Some pastures around the station were transformed into makeshift baseball diamonds where friendly interservice competition between the Army and the Coast Guard provided entertainment for the villagers and helped break the monotony of duty on Ni'ihau for the servicemen. The military men on Ni'ihau likened duty there to a short term at Alcatraz (ADV 1946d).

After the War, the Coast Guard station became quite popular with the Ni'ihauans. As soon as the Robinsons' sampan was out of sight on its way back

to Kaua'i, they flocked to the station for movies and to drink from the water fountain, the contents of which were condensed from sea water (Senate Journal 633). Beer, not liquor, was available at the LORAN station but scrupulously kept from the Ni'ihauans. The young children found it especially enjoyable to suck ice cubes and eat ice cream (IBID.). The only other refrigeration on Ni'ihau at the time was at the Robinson ranch house in Ki'eki'e. The Robinsons were suspicious of the Coast Guardsmen. On one occasion, they accused them of smuggling some curious Ni'ihauans to Kaua'i to watch movies and shop (ADV 1946a), and vociferously complained to senior officials in Honolulu.

The LORAN station was closed in 1953 due to logistical problems, the hardship on the men at the station there, and most importantly, the Robinsons wanted an end to the military occupation of the island.

Thus for more than a decade, the U.S. military occupied portions of Ni'ihau. The only other military involvement with Ni'ihau occurred in 1965 when two U. S. Navy aircraft mistakenly bombed the island.¹⁰

Although their lifestyle was undeniably altered by this presence, the Ni'ihauans, by and large, maintained their traditional ways. They were still the directors of their own destinies, but that was challenged even before the departure of the Coast Guard.

NOTES

1. This incident is the subject of a recent book written by Allan Beekman entitled The Niihau Incident (1982, Honolulu: Heritage Press of the Pacific).
2. At least one person claims to be intimately knowledgeable about the entire affair and said to me that when someone is ready, willing and able to make a movie on the incident and "pay the price" for the inside information, then and only then will the "real story of the Battle of Ni'ihau be told" (Informant #5).
3. Hawaiila Kaleohano was not born on Ni'ihau. He was originally from Hilo, Hawaii and decided to stay on Ni'ihau after visiting his sister there in 1931 (ADV 1943a).
4. On May 26, 1962, the celebrated and decorated war hero, Beni Kanahele, died at the age of seventy-one. Beni's death was felt very deeply by the Ni'ihauans because he had always been respected as a leader in the cloistered community. Yet, Hawaiians throughout the State mourned his passing because, by his bravery on that fateful day in December 1941, he brought honor to and instilled immense pride in all Hawaiians.
5. Commanding General of the Mid-Pacific Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson, Jr., conducted a simple but moving ceremony and pinned the medals on Beni (ADV 1957c).
6. A piston of the engine that was originally housed in a museum on Kaua'i eventually found its way to, of all places, Fredericksburg, Texas. It is there now and will be included in an exhibit at the Admiral Nimitz State Historical Park presently being designed and constructed (Beekman 1982).
7. An interesting anecdote to this traumatic period of Ni'ihauan history was reported by Honolulu Advertiser columnist Bob Krause more than forty years ago. It tells of a woman who purchased a scrapbook at an antique shop on O'ahu in 1981 for fifteen cents. In it was a clipping about Beni Kanahele's feat of bravery. When Beni's grandson, Tom, came through Hawai'i on his way to Australia on business, he met the woman by chance. He said he would be very interested to view the scrapbook and clipping. It was left for him at the desk of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Tom stopped in American Samoa on his way to Australia and was staying at the Rainmaker Hotel. The annual independence celebration was ongoing and part of the festivities included a U.S. Navy skydiving exhibition. The plane carrying the jumpers struck a cable-car wire and smashed into the hotel. Virtually everything in Tom Kanahele's room was destroyed, except the scrapbook. The book was returned to the Honolulu woman with a letter, excerpts of which read:

To this day many people, including the Navy Department whose crashed plane it was, don't understand why the hotel was totally destroyed but the book survived. The hotel walls collapsed. We found the book under a large heap of rubble and nothing else left but ash. It was sitting right there where I had left it minus the table it had been sitting on. Truly the book was *mana* (ADV 1981) (Bold mine).

8. For those whose dependency on alcohol was so severe that the prohibition on Ni'ihau proved too much a match for their will power, there were, at times, drastic measures taken to satisfy their craving. A few particularly sad cases even saw Aqua Velva being used as a substitute for scotch, whiskey or bourbon. Also, when a ship was wrecked near Ni'ihau in 1943, a keg of wood alcohol drifted to shore. It quickly became the substance that made some soldiers' Rice Krispies go snap, crackle and pop in the morning (Costa 1982).
9. World War II drastically changed the Pacific. Island peoples throughout the vast expanse of this region had their lives and cultures permanently altered. Many experienced firsthand the horror of combat and seemingly merciless killing, while virtually all were introduced to western technology that heretofore was unknown or, at most, represented vague concepts or dreams in the islands. Ni'ihau can be counted among those islands that experienced change due to the War, although the degree of change was probably less drastic there because it had been an American territory since the turn of the century. Radios, trucks, different foods, and so on, became a part of the Ni'ihauan world during this time. Many of these implements of the "modern world" remained after the soldiers departed.
10. In the mid-1960s, the United States became embroiled in a conflict in Southeast Asia which would virtually bring the country to its knees—not by military defeat, but rather through unparalleled negative public opinion. Notwithstanding the growing anti-Vietnam sentiment in the streets and on the campuses of the United States, intensive training for the rigors of jungle warfare was being carried out on nearly every U.S. military installation. Military bases in Hawai'i were no exception.

At 9:15 p.m. on October 5, 1965, two Navy A-1 dive bombers had been catapulted airborne from the deck of the aircraft carrier Ticonderoga (ADV 1965b). Launched into the balmy night skies of Hawai'i, the pilots vectored their heavily armed aircraft toward the U.S. Navy practice bombing site of Ka'ula Rock, about twenty-two miles southwest of Ni'ihau. It was night training to sharpen their ordnance delivery skills before the Ticonderoga deployed to the Western Pacific and Vietnam.

Their approach was picture perfect. They had their target aligned and "pickled it." Eight 250-pound bombs wisped through the evening stillness. It looked like a short string of firecrackers from the air but on the ground the impact was thunderous and fiery.

The pilots pulled back on their sticks and the bombers disappeared into the blackness from whence they came. Mission accomplished; good training.

The word did not reach Senator Inouye's (Democrat, Hawai'i) office in Washington until three days later. How could two experienced Navy pilots bomb the wrong island? As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Inouye demanded an immediate stop to all bombing until an investigation was complete on why the bombs were dropped on Ni'ihau (SB 1965a).

The bombs detonated on a beach at the foot of the cliffs near Ki'i landing. The Robinson sampan to Kaua'i, with passengers on board, departed the landing only a few hours earlier. The northeast cliffs of Ni'ihau were between where the bombs were dropped and Pu'uwai which probably muffled the sound to the residents. The Ni'ihauans often felt the rumble when jets bombed Ka'ula Rock, so if they felt a slight earth tremor they most likely would have attributed it to that. In any case, they slept.

Expecting this to be the lawsuit to beat all lawsuits, the Navy Department geared up. Instead, Aylmer's response was: "This sort of accident could have happened anywhere, whether they were bombing French Frigate Shoals or a floating target in the sea" (ADV 1965b).

The Navy sent an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team to Ni'ihau to ensure that no duds remained. Confirming that, officials wiped their brows and eased out of the picture.

CHAPTER IX

THE PUBLIC EYE IS FOCUSED ON NI'IIHAU

Territorial Senators Visit Ni'iihau

The immediate post-war years witnessed a resurgence of idealism. The War had been fought to preserve democracy and American values, including the notion that all citizens should be able to realize their full potential and pursue the American dream. Some legislators in Hawai'i felt that not all their constituents were being afforded that opportunity and became determined to rectify the situation. The results of their efforts had an incredibly profound effect on the island, people and lifestyle of Ni'iihau and will be covered in more detail in subsequent chapters where specific issues and points of interest about the island are described.

It began with a rumor in June 1946 that Kaua'i County could not continue to subsidize the Ni'iihau School because it consisted of privately owned buildings on private land. When this caught the ear of the Territorial Legislature, a Senate investigation committee was formed and ordered to visit Ni'iihau.¹ Specifically, Senate Resolution No. 64 directed the committee

... to investigate what lands, roads, schools, parks, landing facilities, and other properties or improvements are owned by the Territory or the county on (Ni'iihau), and the welfare of the people there, and their employment or deprivation of the Four Freedoms ... (Brown 1947:1).

The committee consisted of Senators Francis H. Brown (Chairman), Francis Sylva, John B. Fernandes, C. A. Crozier, Charles H. Silva, and W. H. Hill (Ibid. 3). They arrived on Ni'iihau on July 30, 1946. In retrospect, it

appears that they had a preconceived notion about what they would find. However, in what may have been an attempt at objectivity, the committee did not rely on the Robinsons for transportation to or on the island. They hired a boat to take them to Ni'ihau and the Coast Guardsmen from the LORAN station provided the senators with on-island vehicular transportation (SB 1959e).

The preliminary statements of the senators upon their return were sharply critical of the management of the island. The education and health programs drew the most fire. Not only were the Robinsons implicated as negligent by the committee but also the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction and the President of the Board of Health were criticized for not ensuring that Ni'ihauans were afforded the same educational and health guarantees as the rest of the population.

On the basis of the committee's initial comments, both the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction, Doctor Harold W. Loper,² and Governor I. M. Stainback indicated they would visit Ni'ihau "in the near future" (ADV 1946c). The Governor never did. However, a representative from the U. S. Department of Interior who was to accompany the Governor did go. Upon his return he said:

The people look very happy and contented with their lot and fairly healthy.

I hope the people of Niihau are always fortunate enough to have the guidance of a man like Aylmer Robinson (SB 1946d).

Undaunted, the senate committee continued its own drum beating. They claimed drastic improvements were needed on Ni'ihau. Whether or not the situation on the island was as severe as the senators made it out to be, the fact remained that the public eye was certainly now on Ni'ihau, much to the dismay of the Robinsons and the Ni'ihauans. National magazines like the

Saturday Evening Post ran articles about the island, and national news broadcasts found the controversy sufficiently newsworthy as a human-interest story to give it air time (ADV 2947b).

An editorial in the Honolulu Advertiser contended that the Ni'ihauans have a "right to know" the advantages and disadvantages of living as other Americans. It continued that while the Ni'ihauans are seemingly content, they should be afforded the knowledge of what is available; then they could judiciously choose. The Robinsons, according to the editorial, were depriving them of the freedom of choice through their isolation (ADV 1946h). When asked about the charges made by the senatorial committee, Aylmer Robinson told them,

...that traditional Niihau isolationism is based as much upon the desires of the inhabiting Hawaiians as upon the inclination of the management. The management, he said, requests permission from the island inhabitants before an invitation is extended or permission granted for an outsider to enter to 'avoid imposition' (ADV 1946e).

There were many people who supported the Robinsons and demonstrated it by writing letters to the Advertiser opposing the paper's editorial stance on the issue. Highlighting that there was no crime or jails on Ni'ihau, only contented people desiring to be left alone, one Letter to the Editor had this suggestion for the Legislature:

Ablly reporting the Legislative Committee's investigation of Niihau, the Advertiser had rendered service to the Territory because, on the face of the Committee's findings, the next Legislature can do nothing less than appropriate enough to hire the Robinson boys to run the rest of the Islands (ADV 1946g).

The battle lines were drawn. It seemed the Territorial Legislature was gearing up for a systematic attack on the Robinsons and would not rest until Ni'ihau was brought in line with the rest of the islands, regardless of what the Ni'ihauans really desired.

Remarkably, all this was occurring without the Committee's final report being officially submitted to the full Senate.

The Senate Report

Weeks passed into months and still Senator and Committee Chairman Francis Brown had not filed the Committee's findings and recommendations. This was needed before any official consideration could be given to rectifying what were perceived to be serious problems on Ni'ihau.

During a senate session on March 20, 1947, where the subject of teacher retirement ages was being discussed, Senator Brown was asked about his report. Brown said it would be submitted "shortly" and that it would contain "enough bills on Ni'ihau ... to keep the Senate busy for the remainder of the session" (ADV 1947a).

Senator Brown kept his promise and finally submitted a three-page report on March 24, 1947, nearly eight months after the Ni'ihau visit. It was signed by all Senate Committee members and read in part:

There is no land on the island owned either by individuals (other than Gay and Robinson, the owners of the island), the Country of Kauai or the Territory of Hawaii, although once appropriations were made for road purposes on that island.

The tenants are permitted to own no property except their horses. The provisions for schooling are inadequate, the Department of Public Instruction having apparently withdrawn from unequal combat; there is no provision made either by the public or by the owners of Niihau to provide an education of the tenants up to the eighth grade. There is no medical attention, and while the people in the main are relatively happy and relatively well, there are occasions when they need medical supervision and assistance and their happiness arises largely, your committee believes, from the fact that they have been completely isolated from the development of civilization and do not know from what they are cut off.

Their situation is such that they must and do live in complete subservience to the owners of Niihau and, kindly and paternal as the dominion of their landlords is, it is still irreconcilable with the principles of liberty and the freedom of individuals upon which our Nation was founded and which it cherishes as a fundamental faith (Senate Journal 1948:248-9).

The report went on and listed the "necessities" which the committeemen felt were being deprived to the Ni'ihauans (and the Territory!). Among them were:

... no public landings or port facilities ... no publicly owned houses in which teachers or other government employees may reside either permanently or temporarily ... no land available for the establishment of motion picture houses or shops ... no newspaper or radio communication, and the tenants are not permitted to own radios ... no electric system or telephone system (Ibid.).

The Committee listed many recommendations in order to rectify these problems. In summary, the Committee concluded that,

The entire community is out of step with our local and our national concept of freedom of the individual and of government by the people, of the people and for the people. No one born and brought up on Niihau would have an opportunity of decent survival in the competition of free men which exists elsewhere in these Hawaiian Islands and in the Union generally. Even in such a primitive community, however, it is intolerable that spiritual solace and guidance, the administration of the rites of the church of their choice, should be denied the tenants, and that such is the case, the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church know only too well.

In short, your committee finds that either directly or by implication, three of the four freedoms, to wit, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from fear, either by name or in essence, are unknown upon the island of Niihau (Ibid.).

The very next day after this report was officially submitted to the Senate, Senator Brown surprised everyone by recalling it (ADV 1947b). It seems that a land survey engineer had made discovery that the Territory did,

in fact, have control and ownership over a portion of land on Ni'ihau through school and church land patents (see Part Two, Chapter XII). This discovery was considered significant enough for the report to be recalled and amended. Senator Brown resubmitted it in mid-April and, while the thrust of the report remained focused on bringing "civilization" to Ni'ihau (ADV 1947c), it made these specific recommendations: 1) sufficient land be acquired to provide for the establishment of a school; 2) that appropriate land approaches and the establishment of a landing pier for government use be acquired and that such be constructed; 3) that facilities for roads leading from the pier to the government center be acquired, and such roads be constructed; 4) that a small field for airplanes be acquired and connected with the public road system; 5) that land be acquired for, and a hospital and dispensary be established; 6) that land be acquired for a district courthouse and police station and a district magistrate be appointed; 8) that the Attorney General remit to the Tax Assessor the figures and value at which such lands were acquired; 9) that the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and his predecessor in office, be summoned before the Senate to explain why the Department has not made adequate efforts to educate the children of Ni'ihau; 10) that provisions be made for scholarships sufficient to provide for the living accommodations and expenses of graduates of the eighth grade of the Ni'ihau School, when it is established, who show scholastic promise to receive a high school education; and, 11) that radio or telephone communications between Ni'ihau and Kaua'i and the other islands of the Territory be established (Senate Journal 1948:410).

The amended report was adopted by the Senate on April 14, 1947, after two attempts to defer action on it failed (Ibid. 451). Senator Brown followed this immediately with the introduction of two Senate Bills based on the

report. These were Senate Bills 502 and 503 which were introduced on April 17th and 18th, respectively. They read:

S.B. 502: An act providing for the acquisition of lands by any lawful method other than exchange on the island of Niihau for certain public purposes and making an appropriation.

S.B. 503: An act making it a misdemeanor for any landlord or land owner to interfere with, prevent or penalize the administration of religious rites or spiritual comfort by the clergy to the tenants or other occupants of the land of such landlord or land owner (Ibid. 578).

The public center mentioned in the recommendations was to be located in Pu'uwai and include a grade school, teacher cottages, a district courthouse, a dispensary, police station, playground and living accommodations for a public health nurse (SB 1947d).

The two bills were approved by the Senate. The one calling for the acquisition of land passed its third reading by the surprisingly narrow margin 8-7 (Senate Journal 1948:787).³ Senate Bill 503, being more a general measure, passed 13-2 (Ibid. 933).

As the bills were making their way through the maze of required Senate committees and readings, many Hawaiian groups and thousands of individual citizens objected to the intentions of the Legislature. On April 21st, a lengthy letter (see Appendix C) from Aylmer Robinson to former Senator Charles A. Rice was introduced to the Senate (Ibid. 631-4). In it, Aylmer took each of the Committee's recommendations and either refuted them as unfounded or justified the condition as being the will of the residents, not solely of him. The next day, Senator Akana presented what became Senate Petition No. 21. It was comprised of three emotional letters submitted to the President of the Senate by Ni'ihauans. Each claimed to be expressing the

sentiments of the sixty-two adults on Ni'ihau and included a request that Governor Stainback veto any measures passed by the Legislature that would alter Ni'ihauan lifestyle or present conditions (ADV 1947c).

The Governor never saw the bills because the House, possibly influenced by the widespread public outcry against government intrusion into Ni'ihauan affairs, rejected them. While the Robinsons and the Ni'ihauans seemed to have defied the odds at least for the time being, ripples made by the splash of the 1946 senatorial investigation would continue to stir the controversial waters surrounding Ni'ihau for decades to come. Some heralded the investigation as the singlemost influential event in upgrading conditions on Ni'ihau. Others denounced it as an invasion of privacy and as a forcible imposition of the will of some on that of others.

NOTES

1. Two areas were specifically targeted to be investigated: Lana'i and Ni'ihau (SB 1946a).
2. Dr. Loper's visit to Ni'ihau did not take place until May 1947.
3. Included in the list of senators favoring the measure was Neil Blaisdell.

CHAPTER X

EDUCATION ON NI'IAU

Casting the First Stone

In Part One, the origins of formal western education on Ni'ihau were presented. The intense but short-lived efforts by the Catholics and the half-hearted attempts by the Congregationalists succeeded only in planting the seeds of a Christian education among the Ni'ihauans. As the population gradually declined, so did the number of schools. It is estimated that from the twelve schools that Wilkes claims were on Ni'ihau in 1840 (Wilkes 1845:64), there remained only one by 1867. At that time, the population of Ni'ihau was only about 300, a drop of nearly two-thirds in a quarter century.

The one school continued providing rudimentary instruction to Ni'ihau children into the twentieth century, but only up to the fifth grade. This was the situation when the Senate Committee visited in 1946. What the senators found were about sixty students in these five grades being taught by two dedicated but unqualified teachers: Mrs. Hannah Niau and Mrs. Miriam Hanaike.¹ All of the buildings and land on which they were located were believed to be privately owned just as the rumors on Kaua'i had indicated (ADV 1946c).

During the aforementioned Senate discussion on the retirement age of teachers (March 20, 1947), Senators C. A. Crozier and Harold Rice used the opportunity to criticize Ni'ihau's school system. It was reported that when

Senator Crozier broached the subject, many of his colleagues snickered to which Crozier sharply replied:

This is no joke. There are American children over there and if the superintendent of public instruction hasn't the intestinal fortitude to see that they receive education benefits, he should be fired (SB 1947a).

Senator Rice charged that "school books on Ni'ihau are locked up...and the students learn only from the Bible" (ADV 1947a). While the Senator probably acknowledged that there were some pretty good "lessons" to be learned from the Good Book, his sights were obviously set on the 3Rs.

To determine the reasons for Ni'ihau's educational system being so far behind the times, the Senate summoned the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Loper, and the Chairman of the Commission of Public Instruction, Oren E. Long, to testify. Both were asked if they had visited Ni'ihau and if they were able to accurately assess the educational problems there. Although Mr. Long replied negatively to both questions, a 1936 letter was introduced in which he allegedly characterized the Ni'ihau School as being in the "dark ages." When asked what he had done to rectify the situation (in eleven years), Long ashamedly admitted not much. Dr. Loper indicated that his intention to visit Ni'ihau after the senate investigation committee returned was overtaken by other important matters, but he still intended to seek the Robinsons' permission (SB 1947a).

Although the two senate bills that resulted from the investigation failed to become laws, there can be no question that as a result of the focus provided by the Committee, education on Ni'ihau was changed.²

One of the most important spinoffs of the 1946 senatorial investigation was that it drew support to increase the education level at the Ni'ihau School

to grade eight. Most of the people who criticized the government's encroachment into Ni'ihauan affairs did support, as a minimum, an eighth grade education for the children (ADV 1947d).

Follow-up by the Department of Public Instruction

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) took some serious lumps during the early 1947 Senate hearings. In a knee-jerk reaction, a trip by the DPI was planned to Ni'ihau as part of their regularly scheduled meetings on Kaua'i in May of that year. Making good on his statement to the Senate Committee, Dr. Loper was to head the delegation. Accompanying him and other DPI and Board of Health officials were the Chairman of the House Education Committee, Representative Flora K. Hayes, and Representative Walter McGuire (Minutes of the Meeting ... 1947:83).

From this trip came glowing reports by Representative Hayes on the contentment and happiness of the Ni'ihauans. She also said the islanders were quite well informed since they "knew of her and her (recent) trip to Washington D. C." (SB 1947f). It was her contention that the senators of the 1946 fact-finding committee were insensitive. She described it this way:

I do not believe the initial group of senators who visited Ni'ihau included a person who could speak Hawaiian. For this reason I believe that the residents did not express their views freely to the legislature (Ibid.).

In a more objective view, the DPI found that a grade level had been added since the senatorial visit and reported that there were sixty-five children being taught by two teachers in two classrooms (one needing replacement); that textbooks were in adequate supply; and that "character education" was being

given a prominent place in their schooling (Minutes of the Meeting ... 1947:83). They found there was need of supplementary reading materials and visual aids, and that teachers needed in-service training. Their recommendation was that within two years the school provide instruction to and including eighth grade (Ibid. 82). The DPI also recommended that encouragement is needed to get the children to attend high school in Waimea, Kaua'i (ADV 1947g).

The teachers, Mrs. Niau and Mrs. Hanaike, had been recruited from among the Ni'ihauan population in 1939 when the old, well-educated Hawaiian teacher, Mr. Edward M. Kahale, suddenly died. "Everyone somehow expected (him) to live forever and no one in the community of 200 was prepared to take his place" (SB 1947i).

Obtaining teachers for Ni'ihau has never been an easy task. They have had to be acquired from within the island's population since the Robinsons would not permit an "outsider" to reside there. Also, it is doubtful whether the islanders themselves would place their trust in one that was not of their kind. Added to this was the problem of finding a volunteer to work there for a year or more. Most crucial, perhaps, would be the language barrier. The teacher would need to be fluent in Hawaiian. Ni'ihauans speak very rapidly and their dialect is as close to the traditional language as there exists anywhere. Even the most fluent Hawaiian speakers have difficulty understanding Ni'ihauans unless the conversation is very slow (Apo 1982). See Appendix D for more on the nuances of Ni'ihau's language.

The two teachers in 1947 each instructed combined classrooms with three grade levels in each. Upon completion of the sixth grade, the boys supposedly began work on the ranch while the girls assisted their mothers. There was

always the opportunity to attend Kaua'i junior and senior high school, but few opted for it.

After the May 1947 visit by the DPI, a third Ni'ihauan teacher was found and hired. This was confirmed in December of 1947 when the President of Kamehameha Schools, Harold W. Kent, visited the island specifically to determine if an education at Kamehameha Schools would be beneficial to Ni'ihauan children. One was already attending. During Mr. Kent's visit, the seventh and eighth grades had not yet been established so each teacher had two classes (ADV 1947i).

The Ni'ihauans realized the problem that faced them. Unless they wanted an outsider as a teacher, some of the children needed to be encouraged to seek teaching degrees and return to Ni'ihau. Their hopes saw fruition in the likes of Jean Ku'uileialoha Kelly who, on June 1, 1952, became the first Ni'ihauan to graduate from Kamehameha Schools (ADV 1952). Her education was paid by the Robinsons. After graduation she returned to Ni'ihau to teach. Later, she also attended Honolulu Christian College.

When DPI officials again visited Ni'ihau on October 19, 1954, they considered it an historic event. They actually conducted their board meeting there, marking the first time that Ni'ihau had ever hosted such an event (Minutes of the Meeting ... 1954:6). The commissioners made much more of the event than did the humble Ni'ihauans. Their report reflected satisfaction with the improvements noted in Ni'ihau's education system (Ibid.). A third classroom had been constructed and fifty-four students were enrolled. Most importantly, "junior high school" classes had been established. Three teachers were responsible for the instruction: Mrs. Niau, grades one and two; Mrs. Jean Keale, grades three, four and five; and, the replacement for Mrs.

Hanaïke, Mrs. Gilbert Pahulehua, who taught grades six, seven and eight. The students were described as extremely well-mannered, well-dressed and speaking "good" English (SB 1954).

By this time the DPI visits to Ni'ihau became quite regular. The 1957 visit did not produce as complimentary and favorable a report as did previous ones. In fact, so little was mentioned in the official minutes of the Commissioners' regularly scheduled board meeting about the condition of the Ni'ihau School that it was conspicuous by its absence. At most, the comments centered on the lack of lighting in the classrooms and the fact that only two of the rooms were reported as being used (Minutes of the Meeting ... 1957). Personal comments by the commissioners indicated that the teachers were inadequately trained but "dedicated" and "doing the best job possible" (SB 1957b). The children were again described as happy, well-dressed but extremely shy in the presence of strangers (ADV 1957a). Possibly one reason for more personal rather than official comments was that the DPI commissioners and officials spent only one hour at the school. Six were spent visiting other parts of the island (Ibid.) and the rest, most likely, were in transit.

In October 1959, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Walter M. Gordon, headed the DPI delegation to Ni'ihau. The report that followed was not very substantive and little different than the previous.³

Criticisms Continue Against the Robinsons and the DPI

What seems to have occurred during the 1947-59 time frame was that interest in upgrading the education system of Ni'ihau went from a fever pitch by the Territorial Government to one of accepting the status quo, much like the attitude had been prior to the 1946 senate trip. Many say the Robinsons

were at fault by throwing up as many obstacles as possible in the path of the DPI officials. The validity of that statement is dependent totally on one's point of view. Some strong accusations, however, surfaced during that time which, when taken at face value, put the landlords in a bad light. For example, when the 1946 senatorial committee asked to see the school, they were allegedly told by Aylmer that it was locked and no teachers were available. That could have been correct because it was July and school was out. It was reported that Senator Crozier said,

... he would kick the door in when no one knew the whereabouts of the key to the school's door. The 'Robinsons notified (him) that the school was private property and (he) could not break in the door,' (SB 1959e).

The key was not found while the senators were there, and the veiled threat by Aylmer obviously worked since Senator Crozier did not damage the building. Also alleged by Crozier was that as soon as the senators tried to talk with a Ni'ihauan "Robinson would eye them ... (and) they would immediately turn and walk away" (Ibid.).

Whatever the reason, whatever the truth, the fact remained that Ni'ihau's education system was seen as a major flaw in the Robinsons' management of the island. Critics claimed that

... 8th grade graduates, for the most part, (were) simply incapable of taking advance schooling ... they may not be able to compete in organized society (ADV 1961a).

However, in 1959, it was the DPI that came under fire for its seemingly complacent attitude toward the education of Ni'ihauan children. Certainly twelve years was enough time for the DPI to upgrade the situation on Ni'ihau. The catalyst was an article published in the November 4th edition of the Honolulu Star Bulletin newspaper entitled "Nobody's Ever Been Drafted From

Niihau" (SB 1959b). The report alleged that "not one Niihauan man has (volunteered or) served in the armed forces." This was not to imply that the Selective Service on Kaua'i intentionally overlooked Ni'ihau as a source of recruits, but rather, that the young men from the island were rejected by the Army because they could not pass the literacy test because of the language barrier. The Bulletin reporter critically contended that "cowboys on the Robinson ranch still sat tall in the saddle" while many other young men saw their 4-F classification changed to 1-A during the War years (Ibid.).

Accusation that Aylmer was getting all his Ni'ihauans deferred as "agricultural workers" went unfounded.⁴ The article did, however, raise questions as to the efficiency of the Ni'ihau School since English was alleged to be the language of instruction.

In an attempt to determine the adequacy of the Ni'ihauan education system and, more importantly, if State laws were being complied with, a series of questions were put to the DPI by the Star Bulletin. Those questions and the DPI's responses follow:

- Q. Draft board statements that Niihau young men are all rejected because of illiteracy and inability to speak English would seem to indicate that Niihau children are not getting an eighth grade education. Shouldn't the D.P.I. investigate this? If not, why not?
- A. Children completing the eighth grade speak English reasonably well. Since English is not spoken in the homes and in the community it stands to reason that proficiency in spoken English will deteriorate through non-use by the time they are called up for military induction some six to eight years later.

The D.P.I. makes periodic checks on the program and is confident that acceptable work is being done. Efforts are being made to improve the program and is confident that acceptable work is being done. An investigation is not indicated and would serve no useful purpose at this time.

- Q. Dr. Deal Crooker (Superintendent) said the D.P.I. had not been able to get qualified teachers to go there. Has any real effort been made, perhaps attempts to interest some beginning teachers? If not, why not?
- A. The matter has been explored and it seems best to employ local residents. There is no housing available for a teacher from the outside and no public transportation available. Living conditions and social life would require a major adjustment for a person not accustomed to the mode of life. We have had no requests by teachers for assignment to Ni'ihau.
- Q. Are Niihuan youngsters using textbooks and other equipment equal to materials used in other D.P.I. schools? If not, why?
- A. The same textbooks, educational materials and equipment are provided Niihau as other schools.
- Q. Are attendance records, scholastic records and so forth kept by the Niihau teachers? Are reports made to the district office on Kauai? If not, why?
- A. The teachers keep records of attendance and scholarship as in any other school and reports are made to the district office.
- Q. Are there any records on how many Niihau youngsters have gone on to high school? How did they fare? Have any gotten as far as college?
- A. The D.P.I. has no records on the number of Niihau youngsters who have gone on to high school. We know a few have chosen to do so and apparently got along all right. One student from Niihau is now enrolled at the Church College of Hawaii at Laie. We have no information on how many others have attended college.
- Q. Is any effort made to keep youngsters in school until age 16, as required by law? If not, why not?
- A. The law requiring school attendance to age 16 specifically states that such attendance shall not be compulsory where the distance to the nearest school exceeds four miles and no free or commercial transportation is provided. Normally children will complete grade 8 at 14 years of age. Children on Niihau attend school until age 16 if they have not completed the 8th grade at an earlier age which most do.
- Q. Dr. Crooker said he 'felt sure' pupils were staying in school until age 16, as required by law. Does the D.P.I. KNOW this to be true?
- A. The law is being complied with as stated above.

- Q. Are Niihau pupils given dental and medical examinations as required in other schools? If not, why not?
- A. The Board of Health provide health services including inoculations required elsewhere. School dental health services are not provided by the D.P.I. because of housing and transportation problems.
- Q. Assuming that most youngsters finish eighth grade by age 13 or 14, it would appear that all Niihau children are NOT remaining in school until 16. It also would appear that no effort is made to enforce state statutes? Any comment?
- A. See above. No statutes are being broken.
- Q. This situation had obviously existed for several years, with no action taken by the D.P.I. to improve school facilities or the quality of instruction. Why not?
- A. The D.P.I. has done much to improve school facilities and the quality of education on Niihau. For details contact District Superintendent Clower on Kauai who has given the leadership and direction.
- Q. Doesn't the D.P.I. feel that Niihau pupils are entitled to the advantages enjoyed by other Hawaii children?
- A. Certainly, the D.P.I. feels that Niihau pupils are entitled to educational advantages enjoyed by other children in Hawaii and it is making every reasonable effort to provide same in light of existing circumstances.
- Q. And if the D.P.I. wasn't aware of conditions on Niihau, how is it possible that they were overlooked?
- A. The D.P.I. is aware of the school situation on Niihau. They have not been overlooked or neglected (SB 1959d).

Ni'ihau Qualifies for a Federal Grant

More about the education system came to light in the sixties due to continued DPI visits and pressure by critics. By early 1960s, Jean Kelly had married, and the new Mrs. Jean Keale enrolled in the University of Hawai'i to pursue her State-required teaching certificate (SB 1962a). She was also the first Ni'ihauan to attend the University and also instruct there as a teaching assistant. She taught a subject about which she had a great deal of expertise: the Hawaiian language.⁵

While Jean Keale was seeking her teaching certificate at the University, the other teachers on Ni'ihau were considered on a "temporary status" by the State because they were technically unqualified. They were paid accordingly (SB 1961a). Keale returned to Ni'ihau full time in August 1962.

Prior to her departure, she was interviewed by reporters and her comments reflect pretty much the sentiments of Ni'ihauans, then and now. She criticized modern living as too competitive. Having to carry a purse, money and keys with which to lock everything was an inconvenience about which on Ni'ihau she need not concern herself. Probably her most poignant comment dealt with a commonly held belief that Ni'ihauans were illiterate and ignorant. To this she replied that it depends on whose standards were being used. "We don't need to be rushed with your methods" she said (SB 1962a). Keale returned to the University during the following summers and eventually did become "certified" by the Department of Education.

In 1964, a DPI school lunch program was instituted on Ni'ihau after officials inspected the school on September 29th and saw children going home to eat lunch (SB 1964e). More changes, however, were still on the horizon.

When the State Superintendent of Schools, R. Yarberry, personally visited Ni'ihau in September 1965, he recommended a study be made to determine if a cooperative educational program could be developed between the Department of Education (DOE), formerly the DPI, and the Kamehameha Schools to upgrade the education on Ni'ihau through increased use of audiovisual materials and a learning center (ADV 1965a). The student enrollment at the Ni'ihau School was now seventy-four.

With Ni'ihau being classified as a "poverty" area because of the low average annual family income (\$4,000), the island seemingly qualified for

federal funds under President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" campaign and the Economic Opportunity Act (ADV 1965c). Yarberry made application for federal assistance with the aim being to,

... increase (children) skills in the use of English, improve their understanding of the modern Hawaiian culture and the Western World and ... raise their skill and employment capabilities (Ibid.).

Superintendent Yarberry saw this as an opportunity to implement his cooperative education system recommendation. Regarding the teachers, the funds were to enable them to attend workshops conducted by the Department of Education and Kamehameha Schools both on Kaua'i and in Honolulu, and among other things, be trained in the use of visual aids. The students stood to benefit from this increased teacher proficiency and by the two- or three-day trips to Kamehameha Schools on O'ahu for themselves and their parents. They would stay in the dormitories, eat in the dining halls, and attend selected classes (Ibid. A1A).

The federal grant amounted to \$51,623, a sum \$2,000 more than was requested, and the program was implemented as planned (ADV 1966a). Children and parents came to Honolulu in 1967 for a cultural and scholastic orientation visit. In addition to attending selected classes at Kamehameha Schools, they were taken to the Bishop Museum, the Academy of Arts, Iolani Palace, Pearl Harbor, the University of Hawai'i, canneries, plantations, the business district, Sea Life Park and more.

The grant also provided funds to purchase audiovisual and special teaching materials and books (SB 1965b), as well as a building to store them. Aylmer Robinson was quite cooperative and gave permission for the building to be constructed. It was completed in September 1966. In it was housed the equipment provided by the grant including movie, slide and filmstrip

projectors, and generators to operate them (SB 1967b). Additionally, the State gave the Ni'ihau School a television receiver and charged the Kaua'i District Elementary Curriculum Specialist to carefully select books for the Ni'ihau children. The DOE even conducted a special summer program on Ni'ihau in July 1966 where children and parents were presented classes on language, arts, crafts, speech, music, health and physical education (Ibid.).

As somewhat of a pat on its own back, the DPI inspected Ni'ihau in October 1967 and gave its education system high marks. Through the "outstanding contribution" being made by the dedicated teachers, the officials witnessed the "application of sound educational principles" to eighty-seven students (SB 1967g). The audiovisual room was being used by the students during the day and by the adults at night.

What Price Progress?

The Ni'ihau School was slowly being brought into educational modernity. The question that still loomed in the minds of many was whether all this improvement in education to a virtually impoverished people was the right thing to do.

In a commentary, the Honolulu Star Bulletin editorialized that Ni'ihau, as a whole, could be swept into the twentieth century on the basis of these new, modern, westernized education plans. The article drew a comparison between it and how the mainland was trying to cope with ongoing civil rights and demonstrations, as well as the government's attempts to set straight the record.

Perhaps this part of the overall 'civil rights' drive, this business of taking people from a feudal, somewhat primitive existence to which they have grown accustomed and exposing

them to the delights of a civilization to which they may aspire but which, for many, can only be a dream and a source of later discontent (SB 1965c).

This short, somewhat fatalistic, but penetrating, analysis presents a third view to the perplexing problem of a compulsory educational format. The Ni'ihauans contend they do not desire nor need it. They see it as a coercive attempt to have them abandon their language, and they regard it as inconvenient and unfair. The opposing side sees western education as a requirement necessary to function in a modern world. Thirdly, the editors of the Star Bulletin project a viewpoint that implies force-feeding western education to a society that neither wants it nor, most importantly, can use it will result in frustration, discontent and, ultimately, despair. In other words, it created an unobtainable goal. The United States learned this lesson quite vividly in the U. S. Trust Territory subsequent to World War II when those islands were placed in strategic trust of America. Today, the Micronesians suffer the consequences of a bloated government and administration without a substantial economic base. There are thousands of high school graduates who are products of the western education system imposed on them. They have acquired very western values, and yet they can find no work. In essence, the U. S. created a gigantic, elitist welfare case at the expense of local cultures. Although the situation in Ni'ihau may never rise to the proportions of a Micronesia, the two share many similarities. Simply stated, the critical factor that should be weighed into the equation on Ni'ihau education is not to impose the will of one on that of another.

Transient Families Compound Educational Problems

One of the most perplexing educational problems with which the DOE has had to cope concerning Ni'ihau involves the frequent moves made by Ni'ihauan families between their home island and Kaua'i. Whether it is for month or two to visit family, or for a growing season when the Ni'ihau ranch has less work than that needed to keep all the heads of household gainfully employed, children frequently accompany their parents. They are then enrolled temporarily in the Kaua'i school system.⁵ Critics claim that this aggravates an already unsatisfactory situation and the children usually end up suffering for it because of two reasons. First, the Ni'ihau education system, notwithstanding all the improvements during the 1960s, is not on a par with Kaua'i's. As reported in 1970, sixth grade Ni'ihauan students were nearly always placed in the fifth grade, but their level of proficiency was more on a second grade level (ADV 1970t). One would think this would be an embarrassing situation for the older student but this presupposes that the student cares about such things. That still is a very debatable point on Ni'ihau. Regardless, the fact remains that the speed and proficiency with which a student advances academically in such a migratory environment is considerably lower than if he or she were permanently enrolled in one institution.

The second reason is the ever present language barrier. Although a distinction is drawn between these two reasons, the demarcation is fuzzy in the case of Ni'ihau students. The latter is undoubtedly a prime contributing factor to the first. In the 1970s, as more Ni'ihauan children enrolled, albeit temporarily, in Kaua'i schools and the differential between their academic skills and that of Kaua'i children could be more closely observed, the critics became vocal again. As in the past, the Department of Education

and the Robinsons came to the forefront. Although the Robinsons were being accommodating to the DOE on its requests to visit the Ni'ihau School, the family was still accused of neglect. Also, reports criticized the DOE of approaching the problem "with timidity, not wishing to incur the ill will of the owners," (ADV 1970v). Then Superintendent of the Kaua'i School District, William Waters, allegedly admitted that the DOE had "fallen behind on record-keeping" concerning attendance of Ni'ihau children (Ibid.). The situation just never seemed to right itself.

Coping with the Language Barrier

English is a second language to the Ni'ihauans yet the DOE mandates that classes be taught in English, not Hawaiian. The lowest comparative scores achieved by Ni'ihauan students on State-administered proficiency examinations is English language comprehension. Marks in the mathematics portion, it being an "abstract" language, were more competitive, but still lower than State averages (Herman 1982).

Few will argue that English is not very important for the Ni'ihauan children to learn. Even residents recognize this (Informant #5). The Superintendent of Education for Kaua'i District remarked that one of the purposes of education on Ni'ihau is to teach English (Nakashima 1982). It is required because not all the children remain in the Hawaiian language-dominated society of Ni'ihau. To be competitive off island, being conversant in English is virtually mandatory.

A method by which the DOE is attempting to assist Ni'ihauan students to overcome the language barrier and its inherent impediment to learning is through the federally-funded Hawai'i Bilingual/Multi-Cultural Education

Project (Informant #6; Ongteco 1982). Ni'ihau was accepted into the Program in 1980 for grades Kindergarten through six. According to the Educational Specialist in charge of the Program, the native language can be used to explain curriculum concepts in school that cannot be communicated in English (Ongteco 1982). This is particularly significant and applicable in science, mathematics and the social sciences. The Program stresses that the native language is gradually phased out as the "language of instruction" as students become more proficient in English. It all depends on the progress of the students. This must be incredibly difficult for the youngsters who only speak Hawaiian at all other times.

The current federal funding for the Bilingual/Multi-Cultural Education Program terminated at the end of 1983. With the Reagan Administration sharply cutting federal education and social assistance programs, the chances of continued funding is in jeopardy. The DOE hopes that the State-funded Students of Limited English Proficiency (SLEP) Program will provide assistance beyond 1983 (Ibid.).

With the movement of Ni'ihauan families between Ni'ihau and Kaua'i as fluid today as it was in the 1970s, one of the places where the federal dollars involved in this Program has reaped great benefits is on Kaua'i at the Waimea Canyon School which transient Ni'ihau students frequently attend. Here two "teachers' aides/interpreters" assist the regular staff in instructing Ni'ihauan children. The two aides are Jean Beniamina and Paul Williams (SB 1982f). What generally occurs is that during the morning session the Ni'ihauan children are tutored by Beniamina and Williams in the English language, mathematics and social science. In the afternoon, they attend classes with the regular Waimea Canyon students (Ibid.).

Through the patient instruction of Beniamina and Williams, the Ni'ihau students are gradually breaking down the language barrier. According to Williams, the Ni'ihauan students do not have much trouble learning English. Where they stumble, he says, is grasping concepts and the significance of some historical events. "They learn to adapt and their learning attitude is phenomenal ... They persevere where a regular student might give up" (Ibid.).

As far as the parents' reaction to this Program, the School's Principal, Jacqueline Carpentier, says that it is very supportive. A great deal of trust and support is derived from the belief that the " ... program ... provides (the students) a cultural transition" (Ibid.).

The Board of Education Visits Ni'ihau

While DOE representatives are permitted to visit the island fairly regularly through "mutual agreement" with the Robinsons (Informant #4), members of the Board of Education have been accommodated less frequently. While no specific reason could be found for this, it is suggested that since the Board was comprised of elected officials whose future employment rested on how well they enforce State education laws and on how well they publicized how well they accomplished this, the Robinsons may have felt more comfortable with a less "visible" group. For certain, the Robinsons became upset with the Board when one of its members wrote an article about the island after the first official BOE visit there in 1967. Not much was documented about the Board's evaluation during that visit. However, the Robinsons' displeasure was most evident in that the next time the BOE was permitted to visit Ni'ihau was nine years later in 1976, even though they asked quite frequently (Pennebacker 1982). During that subsequent visit, the members were reminded by the owners

that they would prefer not to have them speaking publicly or writing articles about their experiences (ADV 1976). While this may seem like an unreasonable request since the BOE is a government organization, paid by State tax revenues, the warning was obviously effective as all members refused to be quoted when interviewed by the media upon their return (Ibid.). They did file an official report which, in summary, indicated that they "saw no real problems, no real needs ... (and that) Education was alive and well on Ni'ihau" (Ibid.).

It took another six years for the BOE to gain access to Ni'ihau (May 1982). That made a total of only three official BOE inspections in 15 years. This has always been a bone of contention between the Board and the owners (Pennebacker 1982).

One of the interesting features of the 1982 visit was the contrasting perceptions by the visiting BOE members. This was particularly true of their assessment of the Ni'ihau School, and it appears that their observations were greatly shaped by their preconceptions and own personal values. Perhaps reminiscent of the 1946 Senate Committee attitude, one member, Mr. John Pennebacker, seemed bent on attacking the "quality" of education and little could be said or done to make him see any positive aspects of education on the island.⁶ He claimed that changes were required in order that the

... kids are given the opportunity to have a quality education like any other kid in the State. Right now ... they're being deprived of a quality education because of the restrictions that are being placed on them by the Robinson family. They're not getting everything they need ... (Pennebacker 1982).

The restrictions to which Mr. Pennebacker was referring included the belief that the Robinsons

... will not allow the DOE to come in and modernize or update the facilities; they will not assist the DOE in getting quality teachers on the island (Ibid.).

Contrastingly, another BOE member stated that relevancy of education rather than quality should be given priority on Ni'ihau. This attitude, naturally, caused this Board member to view what he saw on Ni'ihau quite differently than Pennebacker. This official is of the opinion that the key to education on Ni'ihau is to "make it work" (Informant #7). The needs of the Ni'ihauans are different, as he sees it, and therefore the contribution of education to the welfare of the individual and the community there is a far cry from what is expected in other areas.

Still another BOE visitor stated simply "If you're going to live there, the education (they are presently receiving) is adequate" (Informant #6).

While they may hold many contrasting views, the 1982 Board members who visited Ni'ihau did relate experiences similar to those of past visitors, such as the shyness of the children. They claimed, also, that it was difficult to actually assess education because their time on the island was quite limited, and much of that was occupied with other discussions, welcoming ceremonies, tours, and so on.

The BOE members departed Ni'ihau with mixed emotions and varying opinions. Most do. They, however, are charged with administering one of the most important State responsibilities—the education of the young. On Ni'ihau, they see an immense gap between it and the rest of the State. Most BOE members do admit that they would prefer to see the educational system on Ni'ihau upgraded although some qualify the statement by saying the upgrading should and could not be done on a scale comparable to other islands.⁷

The Present and Future of Education on Ni'ihau

From its meager beginning as a virtually unsupervised, single-room, four-grade, one-teacher, country school, Ni'ihau's only educational institution has evolved into a regularly-inspected, three-building,⁸ eight-grade, three-teacher, country school with assorted audiovisual equipment and a State-funded lunch program.

The official 1981-82 DOE School Register listed forty-five students attending the Ni'ihau School. Instruction is still headed by the State-certified Mrs. Keale, who is assisted by two non-certified instructors, Blossom Kanahele and Abigail Shintani (SB 1982a), who are the successors of Mrs. Niau and Mr. Pahulehua. The State contends that it would like to see the teaching assistants become accredited, but claims that one certified teacher meets the minimum standards⁹ for the Ni'ihau School (Informant #7). While there is a possibility that the assistants or someone else from Ni'ihau may also in the future attain certification, it seems more likely that if Ni'ihau will ever exceed the minimum teaching standards and thereby "improve" the education, the Robinsons will need to rescind their order that only Ni'ihauans can teach there (Nakashima 1982).

In the tradition of its early missionary days when religious instruction took precedence over all else, the church, the community, and the school are inseparably entwined on Ni'ihau. The school buildings are located next to the village church and evidence of the effect of the latter on the former is unmistakable as one scans the classroom walls.

... you can tell the influence that the Church has on the school when you first walk in. There's a sign saying 'Pule' which means prayer; it's all around. There's all different types of prayers all around the walls (of the school), all in Hawaiian (Pennebacker 1982; Informants #6 and #7).

So, as controversies rage throughout the country on the issue of prayer in public schools, Ni'ihau remains unconcerned and so, it seems, do the DOE evaluators who probably feel that another rock of the boat may mean it sinks.

Whether Ni'ihau students today attend classes until they either graduate high school or reach the age of eighteen (as the State law requires) is still debatable. From interviews conducted during the course of this research, no one is absolutely sure. According to one source, Ni'ihauans may remain on the island for further instruction past eighth grade even though there is no established high school (Informant #3). This was corroborated by a Board of Education member who recently visited the island and reported that graduates of the Ni'ihau School who opt to remain on the island take "self-taught" courses. That is, they are given materials and they read themselves. The teachers do devote a portion of their time to the older students to guide them and suggest assignment and correct them. The BOE member observed four such students and learned that there was a requirement for these "high school students" to be at school from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. A special section of the classroom was set aside for them (Pennebacker 1982).

Those graduates of the Ni'ihau School who choose to attend high school off island do so predominantly on Kaua'i at Waimea High School, while a few attend Kamehameha Schools on O'ahu. In earlier years, the Robinson family paid the tuition and board for the Ni'ihauans at Kamehameha Schools, but this is no longer the case (Ibid.; Informant #4). A spokesperson for the Robinson family explained that there is skepticism and displeasure with Kamehameha Schools. The family contends that the institution is not doing for Hawaiian children what Bernice Pauahi Bishop intended but rather is only concerned in fostering "Hawaiiana," while education, per se, is being neglected (Informant #4). More

to the point, I believe, is their charge that some students have returned from there with an alleged drug problem. Assuming this to be the case (there is no documented evidence, however), one can understand the Robinsons' concern for the small community where liquor and cigarettes are virtually banned.

However, in defense of Kamehameha Schools, drug abuse there is probably much less than in public schools. It is only fair to say that that institution cannot be singled out as a predominant source of the abuses.

Enrollment records for Ni'ihau students at Kamehameha Schools for the last two decades appear as Table II, below:

TABLE II

NI'IIHAU STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT THE KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS

1960-62: 0	68-69: 1	76-77: 1
61-62: 2	69-70: 1	77-78: 1
62-63: 4	70-71: 2	78-79: 0
63-64: 4	71-72: 2	79-80: 1
64-65: 3	72-73: 2	80-81: 1
65-66: 2	73-74: 4	81-82: 0
66-67: 3	74-75: 4	82-83: 1
67-68: 2	75-76: 1	

(Kamehameha Schools 1982)

Most recently, on the opening day of the 1982-83 school year, the State Superintendent of Schools, Donnis Thompson, made an unprecedented visit to Ni'ihau to officially open the new school year. Thompson came away from her first visit ever to Ni'ihau saying that, while it was difficult to assess the situation in only a four-hour visit (which certainly sounds familiar), she felt that there was "a tremendous need to upgrade educational experiences of the students attending Niihau School" (SB 1982c). After seeing third graders

only practicing their Ks while learning the alphabet, she commented: "I did not see ... much teaching going on. I saw a lot of sitting, I don't think their educational needs are being totally satisfied," which is, again, a very familiar complaint (SB 1982b). Some of Thompson's other remarks were reported to be

If we put (educational) TV over there (as suggested by a former BOE visitor) it will just be an opportunity for students to sit and watch TV (Ibid.; SB 1982c).

We can't just leave it (the school situation) alone saying the island belongs to someone else (SB 1982c).

I just think we're going to have to come up with some avenues and options to challenge those students (Ibid.).

To accomplish the latter, Thompson asked Kaua'i District Superintendent Nakashima to forward some recommendations. It may not have been what Thompson expected but Nakashima's response put into perspective education on Ni'ihau:

When the students there look at textbooks, it's a different world to them. Ni'ihau is more similar to plantation life in Hawaii 50 years ago than any other community today,' he said.

So you just can't judge the school system on Ni'ihau by the same standards you would any other in the state, Nakashima said.

Nakashima, who visits the island twice a year, said officials have been aware of the need for improvement at the school but there are problems that have hampered them and need to be considered in writing his proposal.

A major one is that the inaccessibility of the privately owned island makes it difficult to communicate with the teachers regularly and to provide services and materials that other schools can easily get.

And because many students speak Hawaiian better than they speak English, the teachers, who have to be bilingual, need to teach some lessons in both languages.

Nakashima said the teachers need to be trained to handle these unique situations and may have to leave the island, one at a time, to get special instruction.

Nakashima said just because students may not be learning the same things as other Hawaii students doesn't mean they are being neglected.

'Some of these children will want to stay on Ni'ihau (for the rest of their lives). In order to survive on Niihau you don't need to know English.

On the other hand, he said, others will want to leave Niihau so they need to have an adequate preparation.

Nakashima said that while 'it calls for some unique ways to handle the situation,' he thinks the students there are adequately served considering the circumstances (SB 1982b).

What effect this response had on Thompson's initial attitude is unknown.

However, when the question about the future of education on Ni'ihau was later asked of a DOE spokesperson, a very sensible and less vitriolic approach was outlined. The intent is to take "a poll ... of the Ni'ihauan parents to see what their desires are" (Herman 1982). The DOE acknowledges that Ni'ihauan children who remain on the island do not have the same educational needs as children on other islands (Ibid.; Informant #11). What the DOE hopes to do then is to bring the Ni'ihau School into conformity with the State's educational goals but within the limits dictated by the environment.

NOTES

1. Mrs. Hanaike is the same lady figured in the Battle of Ni'ihau. She was terrorized by the Japanese pilot during the episode (see Appendix B).
2. It is difficult to describe it as being an improvement although it does seem quite reasonable to western minds to assume that reading and writing enhancement for children can only be interpreted as a step forward. After all, in this day and age it is considered required skills to be able to balance one's checkbook, read and understand a newspaper, and write one's congressional representative. If every child was not provided with these basic necessities of life, something was askew. It mattered not whether the child was from the backwoods of the Ozarks, the streets of Harlem, the swamps of the Bajou, the reservations of the southwest, the frozen wastelands of Alaska, or the kiawe-covered ranchlands of isolated Ni'ihau.
3. Interestingly, the 1959 DPI report noted that the Ni'ihau School was not the smallest in the State. Six others actually had lower enrollments with Maui's Kipahulu School taking "low" honors with thirteen students and a single teacher (SB 1959a).
4. All eighteen-year-old Ni'ihauan men today conform with required registration laws. One source believed that two Ni'ihauan men were currently serving in the Armed Forces (Informant #4).
5. Keale's teaching method was uniquely Ni'ihauan:

I teach the way I learned—by singing ... I learned my Hawaiian through the repetition of singing church songs. First, I learned the words to sing, then I learned what they meant, and finally I learned to read the printed words. That's the way I teach (ADV 1962b).
6. The number of Ni'ihau children attending the Ni'ihau School for two successive academic years reflect the fluctuation in enrollment. In 1968-69 it was eighty-five, and in 1969-70 it was sixty. Also, during the 1969-70 academic year, records show twenty-four Ni'ihau students enrolled in three Kaua'i schools (SB 1969b).
7. This is a personal assessment based on an interview with the Board members in 1982 during which he was very candid in his observations and views.
8. On most occasions, BOE visitors are deluged with requests by school administrators for supplies, money, equipment, and so on. The 1982 BOE visitors to Ni'ihau did agree on one point, and that was their collective surprise when the children and teachers on the island made only one request: a pump to inflate basketballs and footballs (SB 1982a). What particularly pleased the BOE officials was the teacher's report that there were no disciplinary problems (Ibid.).

9. One of the buildings is being used as a combination library and cafeteria (Pennebacker 1982). Also, there was a report that the foundation for a fourth building had been poured for some time but as yet remains only that, a foundation (Nakashima 1982). A spokesperson for the Robinsons denied that any such foundation exists (Informant #4).
10. The question frequently arises whether there are sufficient qualified teachers for the number of Ni'ihau students. There is not an exact formula that the State uses to arrive at a teacher-student ratio. What is often confused with this is a contractual agreement with the teachers' union which limits the number of students a teacher should be required to instruct.

CHAPTER XI

HEALTH PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES

Aftermath of the 1946 Territorial Senate Visit

The Robinsons have always maintained that they have provided adequate health care for the residents of Ni'ihau through the services of doctors on Kaua'i (Informant #4). These physicians either treated Ni'ihauans in their offices or visited Ni'ihau periodically to conduct routine check-ups there. It is unknown whether these doctors hired by the Robinsons were, in fact, their own family physicians.

One such doctor was Burt O. Wade who the Robinsons hired and transported to Ni'ihau at least twice annually during the period 1934-41. On the average, according to Dr. Wade, the Ni'ihauans were maintaining good health and there was very little serious or peculiar medical problems. After 1941, the war effort demanded more of Dr. Wade's time and energy, and his visits to Ni'ihau became more infrequent. The Robinsons then contracted the services of Dr. J. M. Kuhns (now deceased) who made monthly visits after the war.

When the Senate Committee arrived in 1946, they did not find wanton health neglect. Rather, Ni'ihau was similar to many other rural areas in the United States during and just after the war. It needed general improvements in many areas but certainly could not be classified as a place ridden with death and disease as some reports indicated. Recalling Senator Brown's final report, the only recommendation regarding health or health services was that land be acquired for the establishment of a hospital and dispensary (see Part ONE, Chapter II).

What led the senators to conclude that the Ni'ihauans were not being properly cared for was probably the responses they received from the islanders when questioned about medical practices. The Ni'ihauans must have shown a deep mistrust of modern techniques because Senator Brown was quick to solicit the assistance of Hawai'i's civic clubs in teaching Ni'ihauans that modern medical procedures were "not the work of the devil" (ADV 1946d).

The senators said the health program on Ni'ihau was in a sorry state and charged there was evidence "of a tuberculosis menace ... and a high mortality rate" (Ibid.). Not much evidence was introduced to support this, however, there may have been some legitimacy to the second charge. Statistics for the period 1936-45 indicate that twenty-four deaths had occurred on the island during that time with infants under one year accounting for 54.2 percent of them (ADV 1946f). Aylmer Robinson's counter to these figures was included in a letter he sent to the former Senator Charles Rice which read:

The vital statistics used for the Senate Committee, although based on an 11-year period which appears so selected to include one year of more than average number of deaths (and which on the more normal period of a decade would be much more favorable) shows that the excess of births over deaths and the rate of population increase in Niihau is the highest in the territory (Senate Journal 1948:632).

The dust had not settled on these charges when a doctor on Kaua'i claimed a Ni'ihauan child, who died as a result of injuries suffered by what the Honolulu Star Bulletin reported as an accidental explosion from a "shell" or grenade, may have been saved if the wounds were treated quickly and professionally (SB 1946F). The six hours it took to get the child to Kaua'i may have been the difference. The tragedy occurred within thirty days of the senatorial visit.

The Senate called the President of the Territorial Board of Health, Dr. Charles L. Wilbar, Jr., to testify on the Committee's findings. Although he concurred with Drs. Wade and Kuhns that health conditions on Ni'ihau were in compliance with minimum Territorial standards, he did say that "he would be grateful if a spotlight were thrown on the island." By this he wanted to stress that things could be improved on the island if the health laws were interpreted by the letter rather than the intent (SB 1946b).

At the time, he did not announce any immediate plans to visit Ni'ihau. However, shortly after the DPI visited the island in May 1947 in the aftermath of the Senate accusations, Dr. Wilbar scheduled his sojourn. He spent June 13, 1947 on the island and was accompanied by Dr. Kuhns (SB 1847g).

Upon his return, Dr. Wilbar indicated there were "no serious health problems" on Ni'ihau. He did cite a few areas, however, that needed corrective action. He claimed that the diet of all Ni'ihauans needed improvement and that a fly problem caused by outdoor toilets and a mosquito problem caused by the water-catchment system had to be eliminated (SB 1947h). Dr. Wilbar also was sharply critical of the communications and transportation facilities between Ni'ihau and Kaua'i. He said they were simply inadequate to handle emergencies efficiently. In response to this, Aylmer Robinson promised to increase the size of the engine on his sampan and to install a radiotelephone (Ibid.). With regard to the infant mortality rate on the island, Dr. Wilbar attributed it to "inadequate" pre-natal care and lack of ... child health care supervision" (ADV 1947h).

Immunizing the Ni'ihauans

Through the 1950s, the Robinsons continued to arrange for regular visits by Kaua'i physicians and strictly enforced the ban on liquor and smoking, contending that it was primarily for health reasons (Informant #4). While these actions undoubtedly contributed positively to the well-being of the Ni'ihauans, officials said much more was required even though nearly every group that visited the island commented favorably on the healthy appearance of the Ni'ihauans.

In 1955, health officials notified the Robinsons that they were ready to immunize all the Ni'ihauan children with the Salk polio vaccine. Consent slips were sent to the parents through the Robinsons. They were never returned. When queried about it, the Robinsons said they delivered them, explained what they meant to the Ni'ihauans, then left the decision entirely to the islanders. The Ni'ihauans were assured that if they consented to having their children immunized, the Robinsons would assist in getting it accomplished (SB 1955). It took a few visits by the Health Department to convince the parents of the benefits of the vaccine. However, whether all children were immunized is questionable. It may have been that the Ni'ihauans simply saw no reason to inject an unknown substance into their bodies to prevent contracting something about which they knew even less. The Robinsons were sharply criticized by the health officials for what was believed to be their lack of support for the program. They felt that if the Robinsons were more supportive, the vaccine could have been administered more quickly and with a better assurance that all children received it.

Nearly thirty years later it seemed that the Ni'ihauans had not overcome their skepticism and fear of inoculations. It was reported that in the summer

of 1981 when the Health Department tried to immunize the Ni'ihauan children, they only managed to finish twenty. The others got so petrified they scattered and could not be found. Sympathetic parents claimed ignorance of their children's whereabouts. Later, a Health Aide and Bruce Robinson were said to have assisted in the immunization efforts by reassuring the parents of the benefits of the injections. A projector was brought and health films were shown to parents and children. While they were engrossed in the films, the children were coaxed out individually, immunized and then returned to watch the remainder of the films (Informant #8). This was a significant accomplishment because when the health officials arrived on Ni'ihau, they found nearly two-thirds of the 120 infants and youths behind on their immunizations. Health records were nonexistent for many. This was all corrected to comply with State laws.

Diet and Nutrition

A State Department of Health official who visited the island in 1980 reported that many of the Ni'ihauans were overweight (Informant #3).¹ This opinion was shared by a physician who has, at the Robinsons' invitation, visited Ni'ihau frequently (Informant #9). Both cited dietary inadequacies and the lack of regular exercise as the causes of the problem. This is no different than the rest of the Americans suffering from an overweight condition.

Statistics show that of the State's total population, full-blooded Hawaiians are twice as likely to contract diabetes, heart diseases and high blood pressure than any of the other races (Health Surveillance 1975). The concern for diet deficiencies among Hawaiians was taken a significant step

further when the American Cancer Society published a booklet entitled "Cancer Facts and Figures for Minority Americans, 1983." It showed that "both Hawaiian men and women had higher rates of cancer than other ethnic groups" (ADV 1983). The reason cited in the report as the "one element of Hawaii's environment that varies enough to explain differences in the incidence of different types of cancer" was dietary factors. Fat and cholesterol intake, and vitamin deficiencies were specifically identified as chief causes of the higher rates of cancer (Ibid.).

Starch is a great part of the Ni'ihauan diet, as is salt. With limited refrigeration, many foods are salt-preserved or canned so intake of sodium is high. This has contributed to hypertensiveness which is also alleged to be a characteristic of Ni'ihauans (Informant #9).

The Ni'ihauans obtain much of their food from the sea while great quantities of poi are shipped from Kaua'i by the Robinsons (Informant #2). Each family maintains a small garden where sweet potatoes are raised because it is one of the food items that can survive Ni'ihau's dry climate. Also, a small convenience store is operated by the Robinsons on Ni'ihau where the residents can purchase, at cost, staples such as coffee, sugar, canned meats and vegetables, and the like (Informants #1, #2, #4 and #10).

Fresh meat, particularly pork, is available on island. Wild pigs roam the grasslands and are free game throughout the year. Beef is also available but usually reserved for special occasions and major holidays, such as Christmas and New Year. Hunting wild turkey is permitted only at Thanksgiving and seems to be one of the more protected animals on Ni'ihau. With only a handful of gas-operated refrigerators on Ni'ihau, meat that is freshly slaughtered must be consumed before it spoils.

The Ni'ihauans order some of their food from Kaua'i, but there is a lack of awareness of many types of nutritious foods that are available. According to a State Department of Health official who accompanied two young Ni'ihauan women into a supermarket on O'ahu a few years ago, they were familiar with most food items but some about which they seemed to know nothing were: broccoli, squash, pears, eggplant, turnips, bean sprouts and radishes (Informant #3).

It is this lack of awareness about the variety of nutritious foodstuffs that concerns health officials most. Educating the Ni'ihauans about this and other health problems has been the responsibility of the Health Aide that resides there.

The Resident Health Aide

Ni'ihau is part of Kaua'i County and receives its emergency medical support from that County's District Public Health Office. While seriously ill patients are now medivaced to facilities on Kaua'i, routine health care had been, up to this year, provided by a Health Aide, Miss Lulu Kelly (Informants #3 and #8). Miss Kelly is bilingual and employed directly by the State Department of Health. In addition to her routine medical responsibilities, Miss Kelly is bilingual and employed directly by the State Department of Health. In addition to her routine medical responsibilities, Miss Kelly did much in the way of outreach and social work, including counselling and medical referrals (Ibid.).

Through her training she recognized the potentially harmful effects that could result from the lack of regular exercise and a balanced diet among the Ni'ihauans. To combat this, she initiated, with the assistance of Department of Health officials, various programs to educate the people about nutrition,

hygiene and general health care and disease prevention measures. According to one informant, Miss Kelly started a jogging clinic and presented health films on a regular basis, translating them into Hawaiian if needed (Informant #3). At the time of this writing, the effectiveness of these programs could not be determined.

Miss Kelly was considered an invaluable assistant to State Health officials. Recently, however, the Robinsons reportedly offered her a lucrative job to work directly for them. It is speculated that her new job will deal with the administration of the Ni'ihau ranch. If so, the Department of Health will have to compete for her services as needed (Ibid.).

"Medicine of the Voice"

The Robinsons take precautions to reduce the possibility of serious communicable diseases being introduced on Ni'ihau. Visitors are required to undergo a medical check on Kaua'i by a Robinson-selected physician (Informants #1, #4, and #10). Notwithstanding these precautions, the Ni'ihauans do contract typical illnesses that, at times, require medical attention more than that which the Health Aide can offer. In these serious cases, as well as for child deliveries,² professional treatment is sought on Kaua'i. Many times, though, the Ni'ihauans have been known to rely on what the American Medical Association would hardly classify as scientific, proven, safe and effective medical methods. Those ancient treatments range from herbal concoctions to something called la'au kahea. The latter is viewed by some as a form of sorcery, and by others as faith healing. Yet, at least one physician familiar with the Ni'ihauan techniques of using it claims he personally witnessed its

effectiveness and would have difficulty not encouraging its use for certain, non-serious illnesses (Informant #9).

A former resident of Ni'ihau explains that *la'au kahea* literally means "medicine by calling" or "medicine of the voice." In essence, it is a form of prayer where the supplicant invokes a Supreme Being to heal another (Informant #5). The informant said it is an act that not everyone can practice and it is therefore incumbent upon practitioners to pass it on so that it may live in future generations.

Mary Kawena Pukui explains *la'au kahea* in this manner:

(It) not only administered *la'au* plant medicine, it (also) called (*kahea*) directly and specifically to the gods, asking them to help the patient. Evidently, these were positive, certain-of-success prayers. We have not been able to obtain them. One Western physician who knew them in his lifetime wrote that, 'Our sugar pills cannot possibly (be) as strong a psychic force as the beautiful and positive prayers of the *kahuna kahea*, poetically calling for the disappearance of pain.'¹⁹

La'au kahea made full use of *ho'upu'upu* (suggestion) and 'positive thinking.' The patient had to believe completely in the *kahuna* and his *mana*.

... *la'au kahea* in the Hawaiian context, seems to have healed through the *mana* of prayers, of the plants, and of the *kahuna*. In the present day popular term 'faith healing' (Pukui, Haertig and Lee 1979:157).

All in all, the health of the Ni'ihauans is good and this is attributed to the responsible attitude of both the State Department of Health and the Robinson family. The Robinsons, like most of us, are not doctors and depend on those in the medical profession to advise and recommend methods of maintaining proper health standards. Most physicians, educators and politicians who have visited Ni'ihau have commented on how healthy, cheerful and fit an appearance the Ni'ihauans present overall.

NOTES

1. Being overweight is not viewed with as much concern by the Hawaiians as it is by many others. Hawaiians have always associated size with authority.
2. Pregnant women from Ni'ihau are taken to Waimea Hospital on Kaua'i to bring their baby to term. One member of the medical profession who was personally familiar with Ni'ihau and the lifestyle of the people says that it was not too long ago that deliveries took place within the confines of the Ni'ihau homes with an "obstetric team" composed of relatives. Many deliveries were accomplished with the mother either squatting or kneeling and being assisted, in ancient times, by her husband (Informant #9). Additionally, the father probably adhered to the traditional custom of cleaning and secretly disposing of the placenta so that no harm would come to the infant should the afterbirth be neglected (Ibid.).

CHAPTER XII

THE STATE VIES FOR OWNERSHIP OF NI'IIHAU

Early Efforts to Secure Land Rights

When Senator Francis Brown recalled his initial recommendations to improve conditions on Ni'iihau subsequent to the 1946 Senate Committee visit there (See Part ONE, Chapter IX), he did it because of a startling discovery made by a land survey engineer, James M. Dunn. At Senator Charles Crozier's request to have the Territorial Land Department check its books on whether any land patents existed on Ni'iihau, Mr. Dunn found just such a patent. It allegedly granted a deed to the Ministry of Education for 14.76 acres on the island for church and school lots (SB 2947b). Royal Grant No. 42 was signed by King Kalakaua on September 30, 1882 (School Grants, undated, 165-167).

With the original purchase of the island by the Sinclairs in 1864, it would seem that the monarchy had encroached on the private property of the Sinclairs by deeding land after it was sold without a condemnation process, if there was such a process then. To substantiate the Territory's claim to the acreage on Ni'iihau, Mr. Dunn also introduced other evidence which stated in part

... an 1855 royal patent which conveyed 50 acres to a Mr. Papapa. In the deed it specified the deduction of 'church and school lots and reversed rights of the government landings' (SB 1947b).

Mr. Papapa, as previously mentioned (see Part ONE, Chapter VI), was bought out by the Sinclairs. Mr. Dunn's argument was that it was practice in the 1850s to set aside land for schools and churches. Therefore, when Ni'iihau was

sold, all but the royal patent lands became Sinclair property. The monarchy retained rights over the 14.76 acres and the Territory would have those same rights in the 1940s.

The Senate, on March 26, 1947, adopted a resolution to have the Territorial Attorney General take immediate action to confirm the Territory's right to nearly fifteen acres of Ni'ihau land (SB 1947c). Instead of being conducted with the immediacy demanded by the Legislature, the Attorney General's probe of whether Royal Grant No. 42 was the Territory's legitimate right to land on Ni'ihau moved at a snail's pace.

In addition to the actual question of legitimacy, that of location of the land claims had to be established. Neither proved to be an easy research assignment.

The project languished for years, jolted with vitality only on rare occasions. It was pursued with earnest in 1954. In December 1955, the Attorney General reported that

... the government's records show it has title to land on the isolated Island under two royal grants.

It also holds mineral rights on all of Ni'ihau's land under a third royal grant ... (ADV 1955).

The study revealed the Territory had legitimate claim to the school and church lots originally discovered by Mr. Dunn. However, left unresolved was whether the 1882 Royal Grant to the monarchy's Ministry of Education was proof that "no conveyance of Government holdings was intended" when Ni'ihau was sold in 1864 (SB 1959c). The report filed by the Attorney General after nearly a decade of research read in part that " ... the Government did have claim to the lands but before a final option ... further abstract work, or additional title studies (were required)" (Ibid.).

The additional research was conducted a few years later but still no final report was made. When statehood was achieved in 1959, the status of the land claims was still unresolved. A few months later a frustrated Mr. James Dunn, who had uncovered documentation about the original claim, substantiated his research. He obviously raised enough political dust to start the wheels rolling again on the issue. What eventuated was a report that "someone" titled as "final." It was the hope of proponents of the State's claim that this report would be the "wedge leading to freer access to Niihau ..."
(SB 1960a).

In February 1960, the State Attorney General reported to the Governor that there were four lots involved in the Ni'ihau case. They were supposedly at Kamalino (1.7 acres); Kamoamoa (two acres); Ni'ianiau (two acres); and Makoli Bay (1.46 acres). There were actually six sites included in the original Royal Patent. In addition to the four listed by the Attorney General, the other two consisted of a site of generally four acres at Makoli Bay and one at Ka'ali Lehua of about four total acres, two for church and two for school (Land Book, undated, 415-20). However, the State's right to this land rested squarely on its ability to exactly locate it (SB 1960c). This proved to be a formidable task as the sites were delineated in the patents by reference points that were long gone. They included, for example, "piles of stones," "edge of a salt pond," "marked rock on the shore," and "makai (toward the sea) corner of present meeting house" (Ibid.). These were obviously very meaningful to those on Ni'ihau in the 1840s and 1850s, and it may be assumed that schools actually existed on the sites based on early mission reports. However, once these schools closed and huts disappeared, land marks and reference points became obscure or non-existent.

The following year, the Attorney General geared up for a court battle with the Robinsons to acquire the school lots unless a reasonable out-of-state court settlement could be reached (SB 1961a). Before legal action was initiated, Governor Quinn, who visited the island in 1960, announced that he would not like to see the situation settled through condemnation or judicial processes, but rather resolved through negotiations (SB 1961f).

Neither negotiations nor condemnation took place. Fifteen years of research and reports concluded the State had land claims on Ni'ihau, but no one knew exactly where the locations were. The school sites are still not located today (Real Estate 1982:3).

- Although this page of Ni'ihau history had been turned, the issue was hardly dead. A new State Administration under Governor John Burns resurrected the land claims issue and nearly succeeded in not only securing them but the rest of the island as well.

The Beaches of Ni'ihau

A statute that became closely associated with the State's investigation had to do with the fact that all of Hawai'i's beaches below the high-water mark are considered public. It was this very point that opponents of the Robinsons added to their list of grievances in the hope of gaining leverage. They perceived it as a weak spot in the armor the Robinsons were using to shield their island and its people from intrusion.

For many years 'opihi pickers and fisherman from Kaua'i occasionally sailed or motored to Ni'ihau's shoreline to pick, net, spear or hook the bountiful marine delicacies in Ni'ihau's waters. As peculiarly protective as the Robinsons have been regarding Ni'ihau, they were much more lenient toward

these "trespassers" providing they were reasonable in their catches and did not make an attempt to go inland.

To ensure that no one would ever be harassed or prevented from using Ni'ihau's beaches, State Representative David C. McClung, Chairman of the House Lands Committee, sought to dovetail an investigation of State claims to beaches with that already ongoing, yet languishing, about school and church sites (SB 1960b).

In March 1961, the Legislature requested that the Attorney General check into claims the State may have on Ni'ihau's beaches, up to the high-water mark (SB 1961a). Two months later, the Attorney General ruled in favor of public access to Ni'ihau's beaches. The opinion stated that

U. S. and Hawaii courts have ruled that whenever the government sells public lands to a private party, the deed must specifically state that the beaches below the high water mark are excluded in the sale.

Unless expressly stated, such beachfront areas remain in the public domain (SB 1961b).

With that declaration missing in the Sinclair deed of 1864, theoretically the beaches remained public after the sale of Ni'ihau. The Robinsons, to this day, refuse to accept this proposition (Informant #4). Then Deputy Attorney General John Chinen drew on some historical facts and then interpreted them to further the opinion and make it pertinent to the Sinclair purchase.

The King's cabinet in 1850 had adopted a resolution specifying that beaches below the high water mark belong to the King and no private rights can be obtained.

With 800 people living on Niihau at the time (1864), it is unlikely that it was the intent of the King to cut them off from the ocean upon which they relied for their daily subsistence (SB 1961b).

This was a very plausible argument. Only one thing was missing: what were the limits of the high-water mark?

According to the Director of the Lands Management Division, Department of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i, this issue is still being challenged in the courts (Deter 1982). Whether it be the upper wash of the waves, the first line of vegetation, or some other criteria, the limits have yet to be conclusively established and until such time as they are, the issue remains cloudy, much to the benefit of the Robinsons and the Ni'ihauans. Perhaps it is these undefined points that have softened the Robinsons' attitude toward those who use the beaches for fishing.

When the question of public beaches on Ni'ihau was put to a Robinson spokesperson recently, the answer was an unequivocal "No!" The premise of the argument, according to the spokesperson, was based on the traditional "konohiki" rights. These unwritten rights supposedly gave the residents of the island ownership of water and beaches. Apparently, in 1926, the Territorial Government suddenly required all people claiming konohiki rights to register them during a certain period of time in order to validate them. The registration period, however, was "conveniently and coincidentally" scheduled while Aubrey was out of the Territory on business. The Robinson family strenuously objected to the fact that a proxy was not acceptable, but for some reason never really pushed the issue (Informant #4).

Death of the Robinsons Cause Concern

To understand one of the primary causes of the State's attempts to gain control of Ni'ihau in the early 1970s, it is first necessary to review the rapid changes in ownership and management responsibilities of Ni'ihau that occurred within the Robinson family.

Aylmer's tenure as manager of the Ni'ihau Ranch was the longest of any other family member, nearly half a century.¹ During this time, he continued to preserve for the Ni'ihauans what has been called the "missionary culture of the nineteenth century" (Daws and Head 1963:85). For this, he was accused by some as being a feudal lord obsessed with the madness of maintaining his self-serving baronial estate at the expense of the islanders who knew no better. Yet, the Ni'ihauan saw him as a gentle, kind master and friend.

On April 2, 1967, "Ka Haku Makua," the Old Boss, died of cancer at the age of seventy-eight (SB 1967f;ADV 1967b). It was a devastating blow to the Ni'ihauans who constantly looked to and received from Aylmer sympathetic understanding, and discipline and sage counsel (SB 1967f). His long affiliation with the people of Ni'ihau produced a bond that, for those who grew old with him, transcended mere friendship.² In his will, Aylmer left one-half of his share of Ni'ihau to Lester and Lester's wife Helen. (Lester had already had inherited one-half ownership upon Aubrey's death). The other half went to Lester's sons, Bruce Beauclerk Robinson and Keith Pomeroy Robinson (SB 1969b).³

Aylmer's death produced grave uncertainties for the Ni'ihauans. Someone for whom they prayed would never die was now gone. They could not predict the future but there was apprehension (SB 1967f). Would Lester be as compassionate, as understanding, as wise, as interested? Most importantly, would Ni'ihau be sold?

Lester accepted full management of Ni'ihau willingly. He had assisted his brother since 1927 (SB 1969b) and was intimately familiar with the island, the people, and the problems. While he was not a mirror of Aylmer in his approach to things, the Ni'ihauans began to feel themselves in good hands.

Lester was protective of the Ni'ihauans and their chosen lifestyle. The concerns of the islanders when Aylmer died were greatly reduced and Lester, like his brother, had gained their respect and admiration. He too had had a long association with them and it had now begun to pay dividends. As the relationship between them began to take a shape of its own, tragedy struck again. The Ni'ihauans saw another light of the future extinguished when, on October 24, 1969, Lester died at the age of sixty-eight (ADV 1969b).

Lester's will heired fifty percent of his share of Ni'ihau to his wife, Helen, and twenty-five percent to each of his sons, Bruce and Keith (SB 1969b). Helen was designated to select a manager from the two. Bruce was eventually chosen for the task, as well as co-executor and co-trustee of his uncle Aylmer's estate (SB 1969e).

With Lester's death and the management reigns being passed to a young man of twenty-six years, again there was bridled yet widespread concern for the future of the island and its inhabitants. It was safe to assume that Bruce and Keith had inherited much of their father's and uncle's care and compassion for the island, but the question was for how long would that concern remain with them and their mother.

Rumors that Ni'ihau was for sale began floating throughout the State shortly after Bruce became manager. In 1968, even before Lester's death, there was an unconfirmed report that the Robinsons had rejected an offer of eleven million dollars to sell Ni'ihau (ADV 1968c). However, even if Bruce, Keith, or their mother was inclined to sell each's share, Lester had put a clause in his will, as it had been in his mother's, that prior to anyone of his heirs selling a portion of the estate to an outsider, an opportunity must first be afforded to the other heirs at a fair and reasonable price

(ADV 1969c). This was done to ensure that family lands, including (and maybe most importantly) Ni'ihau, stayed in the family unless it was by consent of all members.

Seeing what was perceived as turmoil created by the rapid succession of deaths in the Robinson family, the State dusted off its land claim file of Ni'ihau. An attempt was made to have all steep cliffs, beaches, and valleys in the State zoned as conservation districts. This would then put these areas under the jurisdiction of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. The ownership, in the case of Ni'ihau, would remain with the Robinsons but the reclassification would give the State access to the areas (ADV 1969a). The Robinsons fully understood what implications this would have for Ni'ihau and formally and strenuously objected to the proposal. It, like past State attempts, failed.

As the decade of the seventies dawned, the Old Guards (Aubrey, Aylmer, and Lester) were gone. Uncertainty became paramount in the minds of the Ni'ihauans and the State. Each wanted something different for the island but the controls were still at Makaweli. State pressure to get those controls began again soon after the smoke from the New Year's Eve cleared.

Governor Burns Leads Assault on Robinson Ownership

Whether it was the unconfirmed 1968 rumor about Ni'ihau's sale or another plan⁵ to purchase the land to which Governor John Burns claimed to have been privy, the State's Chief Executive launched an all-out assault on the Robinson's ownership of Ni'ihau. On February 10, 1970, Burns sent to the Legislature a proposal for the State to take immediate steps to buy Ni'ihau.

Burns' letter to the Legislature called for the island to "be preserved as an example of the natural Hawaiian environment that existed before the advent of Western culture" (ADV 1970b). Intending to restore it to its primeval state, he said it was an

... unparalleled opportunity to establish a controlled natural preserve while, at the same time, giving the residents of Niihau a choice of moving into the mainstream of contemporary life ... a real choice (Ibid.).

The Governor had referred to the Ni'ihauans as the "forgotten" people and obviously felt they were restricted from freedom of choice, which was similar to the accusations contained in the report of the 1946 Senate Committee.

As far as the future of the Ni'ihauans under the Burns plan, it called for them to have complete freedom of remaining on the island or leaving.

We don't want to upset the Hawaiians there but it would be better for them than the present conditions that exist ... We would restore the island to what it was before; reforest it and replant it, and use the people there in the undertaking. We would let them be there with some injection of modern society without harming them (ADV 1970g).

What was included in the phrase "some injection of modern society" was that visitors would be permitted under controlled conditions to visit (ADV 1970a). In other words, it was to be sort of a human zoo!

What followed in the next two months was as intense an attempt on the part of the State to control Ni'ihau as any in the past. It seemingly became the Governor's personal crusade to lead the Ni'ihauans out of the darkness of tradition and into the light of modern times. Like the senators of 1946, it did not matter that he failed to learn what the Ni'ihauans desired; after all, how can they be expected to render a rational and reasonable opinion? He already knew how the Robinsons would react, so why bother them? It was time to get the political machine in operation and that he did.

The Governor's proposal drew reaction from virtually every segment of society. Politicians who had always had thoughts of State ownership of Ni'ihau, or "party" men who saw a boost to their political futures if they supported the "boss," went to the drawing board to develop strategy.

The Robinsons had no immediate comment on the Governor's proposal only to say that things on Ni'ihau would continue as usual and that no changes were imminent or being planned long range (SB 1970b).

On the basis of Governor Message No. 135 to the Legislature (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:128) on February 10th, bills were introduced in both the Senate and House of Representatives within twenty-four hours. House Bill 1678-70 (Journal of the House ... 1971:138) and Senate Bill 1516-70 (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:129) called for an act making an appropriation to acquire the island of Ni'ihau. Copies of these bills are at Appendices F and G, respectively. Among the senators who introduced the Senate Bill was present Governor of Hawai'i, George Ariyoshi (Ibid.).

The House Bill was referred to the Committee on Lands immediately after the First Reading (Journal of the House ... 1971:140) while the Senate version was referred to the Committee on Lands and Natural Resources (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:140). The House Lands Committee, as part of its deliberations, conducted a public hearing on Kaua'i (ADV 1970d). The council room was standing-room-only as Kaua'i's residents, some of them former Ni'ihau residents, came and voiced their opinions and opposition to the Governor's plan. Joining them were 14 actual residents of Ni'ihau. It was the first time that such a large number of Ni'ihauans had attended any public meeting. At stake here, however, was their future so they took this unprecedented step to ensure the politicians heard their desires directly. During the

emotionally charged meeting, the majority opinion was to keep the status quo (SB 1970e; SB 1970f).

A Kaua'i visitor who opposed not only Governor Burns' plan but also considered the proposed \$300,000 (1967 assessed tax value) condemnation price as an insult to the owners directly and Kaua'i realtors in general, stated that if and when the Robinsons ever decided to sell the island, he hoped the asking price would be considerably more. As he so aptly put it: "The shells on your beaches are worth more than \$300,000!" (Garden Island 1970a).

Coming just as the seeds of the Hawaiian Renaissance were being sowed, the Burns proposal evoked sharp criticism from the budding activists as well as the stoic elders of the Hawaiian community throughout the State (SB 1970d). Yet there were others who considered it a foregone conclusion that the State would acquire possession of Ni'ihau simply because the Governor was involved in the fracas. They, therefore, began to speculate for what purpose the island could eventually be used. The Mayor of Kaua'i, Antone Vidinha, saw the possible realization of his three-year old suggestion to turn Ni'ihau into a State Park and resort community (SB 1970a). The AFL-CIO State Secretary, William Abbott, was reported to have suggested that the State charge admission to get there (ADV 1970c). Of course, "What would be placed on the island would be decided upon by the Ni'ihauans themselves, meeting in council and voting by referendum" (Ibid.).

There was even speculation that House Bill 463⁷ would be resurrected.

This measure was

An act providing for the care of juvenile delinquents and for such purpose making an appropriation for any or all of the following: acquisition of land on Niihau for the establishment there of a training school for such delinquents (Journal of the House ... 1947:359).

By the end of February 1970, however, one of the parties from which nothing yet had been heard was the Robinsons. They accurately determined that if they were to convince anybody that Ni'ihau was secure in their possession it would have to be the Senate. In a March 3rd letter to John C. Lanham, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Lands and Natural Resources, Helen Robinson, who owned controlling interest in Ni'ihau, and her sons, Keith and Bruce,

... strenuously opposed the (State's) plan to seize and nullify the results of more than a hundred years (four generations) of hard work ... (T)he island ... has not been, is not, and is not expected to be up for sale to anybody, anywhere at anytime (ADV 1970e).

They contended further in their argument that "if (their) continuous efforts (were continually) rewarded by the summary seizure of (their) land, who then will be encouraged to preserve and improve his own property?" (Ibid.).

They also challenged Governor Burns' reforestation intentions as "inaccurate and, unfortunately, (tending) to create a false impression about Ni'ihau's ecological and social condition" (SB 1970g).

A ray of hope for the Robinsons and the Ni'ihauans shone forth on March 4th when House Bill 1903-70 was introduced. It suggested something less than outright State purchase of Ni'ihau (Journal of the House ... 1971:236). Generally, it proposed that anyone who had title to all or substantially all the property of any island in the State, would give the State first purchasing rights before it would be offered to anyone else (ADV 1970f). In other words, the State would have the right of first refusal. It was a measure which many people, including the Robinsons, saw as a way to quell the furor now raging over Ni'ihau and circumvent Governor Burns' takeover intentions.

With the more critical debate occurring in the Senate, House Bill 1903-70 never came to a vote. It was referred to the Committee on Judiciary (Journal of the House ... 1971:235) the day after it was introduced. After debate, that Committee, via standing Committee Report 807-90 (Ibid. 612-13), sounded the death knell for the proposed measure by "filing" it (Ibid. 1184).

On March 22, the House Lands Committee concluded their evaluation of House Bill 1678-70. In Standing Committee Report 182-70 (Journal of the House ... 1971:818), the full text of which appears at Appendix H, the representatives challenged the Governor's contention that Ni'ihau was once a rich, botanical preserve and home of an abundance of endemic animal species. The Committee members drew much of their rationale to amend the Bill from comments voiced on Kaua'i at the public hearing. The amendment that was proposed, in effect, changed the title of the measure from one seeking appropriations for the outright and immediate acquisition of Ni'ihau to "making an appropriation for acquiring an option to purchase the island ..." (Ibid. 819). Specifically, the option meant,

... the state should immediately negotiate for an option to purchase the land to forestall any conveyance to others or the development of the island for commercial or other non-commercial purposes, and that the option should be for a 25-year period and the purchase price of Niihau should be settled during the negotiation of the option (Ibid.).

The Committee's recommendation was approved by the House, passed Second Reading and was referred to the Committee on Finance (Ibid. 346). The Bill never made it back to the full floor for a vote.

Knowing that the crucial Senate vote was rapidly approaching and seeing the House initiating less-threatening measures toward acquiring Ni'ihau, Governor Burns offered two "developments" why, in his opinion, immediate State

acquisition of the island was required. Both reportedly implied a distrust of Robinson motives.

The first concerned the old Russian Fort Elizabeth near the mouth of the Waimea River on Kaua'i. The Fort was constructed in 1817 during the period when George Anton Scheffer and then king of Kaua'i, Kaumuali'i, were cohorts in the ill-fated scheme to overthrow Kamehameha the Great and divide the spoils (see Part ONE, Chapter III). In the process of Sinclair land purchases, the family came into possession of this area. Apparently, the Robinsons offered the land to the State (7.6 acres) if, according to Burns, he and the State would guarantee not to make any future attempts to take over other Robinson property (ADV 1970g). Burns rejected the offer. The State eventually acquired the Fort and 17.26 acres of Robinson land condemnation. The Robinsons classified the land the State acquired as a "glorified weed patch" (Informant #4).

The other development concerned Selwyn Robinson, last surviving son of Aubrey.⁷ The State wanted to purchase some of his property in Kalalau Valley. The Governor claimed that while the State was appraising the land, Selwyn sold it to a private party (Ibid.). Selwyn reportedly contended that the State was notified one year before the property went on the market and felt that period of time was sufficient for the State to decide if it wanted it (Garden Island 1970b). The Governor discounted Selwyn's accusation that the State procrastinated, but rather intimidated that the Robinsons were certainly capable of going back on their word especially when money is involved. He implied that if the family could do this with Kalalau Valley it could also do it with Ni'ihau.

Both opposing forces sensed greater anxiety as each worked toward improving its position before the voting in the Senate. Those opposed to the Burns plan could feel the House becoming more sympathetic to the Robinsons.

A petition signed by seven former and 102 present residents of Ni'ihau was received in the Legislature in the closing days of March. It was made public through KUAI radio (ADV 1970i) whose management had already taken a stand against Burns. In an editorial, the station manager challenged the Governor to surface the "other" reasons he had for wanting Ni'ihau since those offered thus far lacked substance (SB 1970e). Restoring the native flora was a virtual impossibility since most of it was extinct and the lack of water would prevent any extensive vegetation from taking hold except what was already there. The Governor's plan was simply unworkable.

The petition, in essence, decried the Burns plan saying he was grossly misinformed. The Ni'ihauans prayed that the Governor would be enlightened and see the travesty that would result if the Senate approved his proposal (ADV 1970k). Also included in the petition was that gambling casinos would be built on their island.

To solidify his position with the legislators, Governor Burns hosted a group of them on an aerial tour on Ni'ihau on March 31, 1970. The National Guard aircraft circled the island twice giving many senators and representatives their first view of that which was occupying a great deal of their time during the past six weeks (ADV 1970l). Some of the legislators likened it to Kaho'olawe, although it is probably doubtful that any of them had personally seen that island either.

With the House languidly considering the "option" measure, the Senate Lands and Natural Resources Committee, on April 7th, approved Burns' plan in

an amended fashion (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:1215). The Committee's full report (513-70) is included at Appendix I. In it was highlighted testimony by zoologist Doctor E. Allison Kay of the University of Hawai'i and noted botanist Doctor St. John who had done field research on the island. They supported State acquisition solely on the grounds of scientific and ecological reasons. Testimony by former Ni'ihau residents who opposed the measure was also cited.

Unlike the conclusions reached by the House Lands Committee after the public hearing on Kaua'i, the Senate Lands and Natural Resources Committee found "that the public purpose in acquiring (the) island (was) well established by testimony" they took (Ibid. 1216). The banner used to favorably endorse the measure was "preservation, ecological balance and the restoration of the things that were old Hawaii" (Ibid.). The Committee also favored the option that once the State acquired possession of Ni'ihau, the present owners would be permitted to lease it back to continue their present agricultural endeavors.

The amendments tacked on to Senate Bill 1560-70 included filling in the sum of the projected appropriations (\$1,300,000), real property tax exemption to areas of the island that would continue to be occupied by present residents, and prohibition of the use of any portion of the island for commercial or hotel purposes (Ibid.). The Committee also listed their reasons for not considering the option package on which the House was deliberating. The amended version passed reading in the Senate (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:373) and went to the Ways and Means Committee. There, another amendment was added. This Committee's report (768-70) is at Appendix J and, in essence, agreed in principle with the already amended measure but recommended "a more

studied approach to the problems and that acquisition causes" be accomplished first (Ibid. 1351). To that end, \$100,000 was recommended to the appropriations already sought. The Bill with both amendments passed Third Reading on April 14th (Ibid. 419). The Senate vote was scheduled for the following day.

As a sidebar, the Burns plan drew criticism from his gubernatorial opponents, as any such controversial issue would in an election year. Lieutenant Governor Thomas Gill termed it "futile" and quipped that if a resort was ever established on Ni'ihau a drink of Scotch may cost three dollars, but a scotch and water would cost six! (ADV 1970m). Candidate Samuel P. King said the entire attempt to takeover Ni'ihau was a lot of nonsense (ADV 1970u).

Still another gubernatorial candidate, State Senator Hebden Porteus, claimed to have received a reply to a letter he sent to the Robinsons through their attorney. On the Senate floor, he said the reply reiterated earlier claims that

...there were no plans to sell the island and (the Robinsons) do not intend to make a sale but should the family ever change its mind, the State would have the right of first refusal (Journal of the Senate ...1971:456).

It was also reported that the Robinsons would give the State a year in which to make its decision (ADV 1970o). The claim that the State had Robinson assurance of right of first refusal probably had a significant impact on the Senate vote.⁸

After final debate (see Appendix K), and needing thirteen votes to pass, the measure failed when the senators voted: twelve ayes and twelve noes, with one senator excused (Journal of the Senate ... 1971:457). Among those who voted for the Burns plan was Senator (now Governor) Ariyoshi.

The aftermath of the Senate defeat of the Burns plan drew stinging accusations from the Administration. Myron B. Thompson, State Director of Administration, lashed out saying the defeat was tantamount to a "denial of equal rights" for Ni'ihau's residents (ADV 1970q). He said,

Several hundred citizens of Hawaiian blood—people descended from those who settled these islands many hundreds of years ago—have again been denied the chance to move up and out ... the chance they may have not been able to articulate for themselves, but which I know is deep in their hearts.

What has been done is tantamount to the social injustices we thought our people would be spared after Statehood and forever (Ibid.).

Thompson sharply criticized environmentalists whose support for the Governor's plans was expected yet conspicuous by its absence. Also on the Administration's black list were the seven Republicans who voted "no" on the measure and whose actions were reportedly labeled "typically Republican 'Western feudal standards and paternalistic practices' " (ADV 1970r). The 1970 attempt by the State to acquire Ni'ihau failed. The Robinsons' attorney took Governor Burns' pending request to visit the island, which was being considered by the Robinsons during the legislative session, and "filed it" (ADV 1970s).

Governor Burns was down but not out. Later in the year, he was reported to have claimed that wealthy investors had asked him to serve as intermediary in their attempts to purchase Ni'ihau. It was said that \$10 million was the sum to be offered and that Burns feared that the sale of Ni'ihau was a virtual certainty (ADV 1970w). This renewed attempt by the Governor to generate support for State acquisition fell on deaf ears. However, two years later an interesting development occurred. It concerned the Hawaiian

Homes Commission which was relatively silent during Burns' earlier attempt to obtain control of Ni'ihau.

The Commission petitioned the Governor and the Legislature to acquire Ni'ihau and turn it over to the Commission with funds "to assure land tenure for the Hawaiians living there" (ADV 1972d). The goals of the Commission once it gained control of the island was to provide 99-year leases to the Ni'ihauans, establish a rehabilitation program and initiate restoration programs for native flora and fauna (Ibid.). The last two aims were sure to strike a chord with the Governor and believed to have been included solely for that purpose. It certainly worked because within a week Burns was reportedly ready to ask the Legislature for funds (ADV 1972e). With the help of the Commission, coupled with a change in political climate and a facelift in the Senate occasioned by the 1972 elections, the Governor probably felt confident of the new attempt at State acquisition.

The action by the Hawaiian Homes Commission was peculiar and surprised many people in the State. Many of Hawai'i's civic groups and leading citizens vehemently opposed the 1970 Burns plan and there was no reason to expect any reversal of attitude. The Hawaiian Renaissance had begun to flower and any attempts to upset tradition would surely draw the wrath of the activists.

Undaunted, Governor Burns made his plea in early 1973. It eventuated the introduction of House Bill 1085-73 by State Representative Kenneth Lee on February 23rd (Journal of the House ... 1973:221). The measure was referred to the Committee on Water, Land Use and Development, then quickly to the Committee on Finance (Ibid. 223). It was never heard of again. It can only be assumed that, like Burns' other proposals to condemn Ni'ihau, this bill too was buried.

In 1975, at a weekly press conference, Governor Ariyoshi also expressed his approval for a State acquisition of Ni'ihau plan. He qualified it by stating it was a "personal belief" and not an official State policy. He did, however, use the same rationale as when he voted in favor of the Burns plan: protect the island from future development (ADV 1975a). Ariyoshi was reported to have said: "I personally think the acquisition of Ni'ihau is a very, very good thing ... We ought to preserve it for Hawai'i and Hawai'i's people" (ADV 1975b). The statement did not evoke the introduction of any measure in the Legislature. Many lawmakers had probably had enough with the issue.

To obtain Governor Ariyoshi's current desires on the acquisition on Ni'ihau, the question was posed to him through his Press Secretary in October 1982. In keeping with his 1975 opinion, the Governor's response indicated that he favors, theoretically, the acquisition by the State of many areas, and Ni'ihau is but one. He considered, however, the question moot since it presupposes a funding base from which the purchase could be effected. Other spending priorities preclude an immediate acquisition. Generally, the Governor said it "would be nice" for the State to acquire Ni'ihau but when queried on the actual method he would prefer to accomplish this, he was non-committal (Wernet 1982).

NOTES

1. Although Aylmer and Lester became equal owners of Ni'ihau upon the passing of their father, Aubrey, in 1936, Aylmer had assumed primary managerial responsibilities since about 1922. When Aubrey's wife, Alice Gay Robinson, died on December 6, 1960, Aylmer, Lester and their sister, Eleanor, became heirs to the entire estate, including 51,000 acres on Kaua'i and 42,000 shares in thirteen business firms. The estate was valued at more than \$4.5 million (ADV 1962a).
2. Aylmer was fluent in Hawaiian and a Harvard graduate like his father. He even kept his records on Ni'ihau in Hawaiian (SB 1967e). He took Ni'ihau through the hardest of times and constantly dipped into his personal funds to keep Ni'ihauans working while also paying for many of their children to attend Kamehameha Schools.
3. When the estate appraisal of Aylmer's holdings was concluded and published in April 1968, it showed Ni'ihau to be valued at more than \$1.1 million (ADV 1968c). Interestingly, however, the State Department of Taxation took exception to the figures. Its computations indicated that \$390,000 was a more reasonable and accurate appraisal (SB 1968a). The market value of the land and improvements was one-third lower than the original appraisal which meant Ni'ihau's "selling price" was about \$273,000 (Ibid.). This was much less than some homes on O'ahu. The lower appraisal would certainly make the island easier to purchase and one can only speculate whether this considerably lower appraisal was tied to any future plans by the State to acquire Ni'ihau. The disparity of estimated values between the paid appraisers and the Department of Taxation is cited below:

<u>DESCRIPTION OF ACREAGE</u>	<u>APPRAISER</u>	<u>STATE</u>
51,000 of good pastureland	\$100/acre	\$14/acre
6,950 acres of medium pastureland	\$50/acre	\$7/acre
35,000 acres of poor pastureland	\$10/acre:poor \$5/acre:very poor \$1/acre:waste	\$3/acre
2 acres of residential land	\$500/acre	\$350/acre
10 acres of village land	\$1,000/acre	\$175/acre

4. The actual breakdown of who owned what percentage of Ni'ihau by this time was quite confusing and difficult to determine during my research. Suffice to say, that upon Lester's death, his wife, Helen, controlled majority interest in the island, and his sons split the remainder.
5. The Governor claimed he was approached by a mainland millionaire who "expressed an interest in buying Ni'ihau from the Robinsons" and that "price was no object" (ADV 1970g).

6. Although placed "on file" by the House Committee on Finance in 1947, this measure was considered to still have some life by its proponents if only the State had control of Ni'ihau.
7. Selwyn Aubrey Robinson died in March 1984 at the age of 91.
8. The right of first refusal which Senator Porteus claimed was in a letter he received is an interesting aspect to the proceedings inasmuch as there is question whether any such assurance was ever provided by the Robinsons. To this day, the Robinsons claim that they never explicitly gave the State that right but somehow it was interpreted differently and became part of the public record. As long as it solved the problem and did not legally bind the family, the Robinsons let well enough alone (Informant #4).

CHAPTER XIII

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Transportation

Another aspect of the 1946 Senate Committee visit to Ni'ihau that was included in the final report was the lack of adequate access to the island, either by transport or communications. Of course, access to the island by whatever means has been tightly controlled and purposely limited by the Robinsons and is the reason for Ni'ihau's seclusion and intrigue. The senators argued reasonably that more reliable and speedy communications and transportation were needed to handle emergencies.

In addition to the construction of government pier facilities and road improvements, the senate report called for an airport to be built on Ni'ihau. However, few of these improvements have been made even to this day. Aylmer promised to get a more powerful engine for his sampan and to install a radiotelephone on Ni'ihau in response to Dr. Wilbar's recommendations (see Part TWO, Chapter XI) in 1947 (SB 1947h). Whether these promises were immediately kept could not be determined during the course of my research. Those that have been implemented were primarily for the safety of the residents.

The only "official" transportation to the island has been and still is the Robinsons' boat that operated from Makaweli, Kaua'i. The craft has seen successive stages of upgrading due more to fulfilling the Robinsons' needs than in response to any governmental criticisms or suggestions. From the

sailing canoes and large outriggers of the past, transport to the island progressed to rickety motorized sampans and finally to a United States Navy Craft Medium (LCM) which is being used today.

The LCM, or as it is called in military jargon "Mike Boat," was purchased by the Robinsons as government surplus (Informant #4) and, like its predecessors, is rigged primarily for hauling livestock and supplies. The most that has been done to accommodate people making the trip was to construct a platform over the well deck area on which they could sit.

One of the characteristics of the LCM that has assisted ranch operations is the bow ramp. The boat is much like those used during World War II beach assaults. Flat-bottomed, the launch is literally beached on the sand, drops its ramp, and this greatly facilitates the task of leading livestock. Prior to this, cattle were swum and tied to the side of large rowboats which then ferried the cattle to large steamers anchored offshore in deeper waters. Sheep were carried aboard the rowboats for transport to the steamers.

The beach landings used today on Ni'ihau are predominantly Ki'i on the northeast coast and Lehua on the northern coast. Weather and surf conditions dictate which is selected. The Nonopapa landing was frequently used in the past because of its proximity to Ki'eki'e and the Robinsons' ranch house. Supplies were unloaded there and put on a flat rail car that was pushed up a short track to a warehouse 500 feet away (Larsen 1942:2).

The trip from Makaweli to Ni'ihau is something about which most visitors lament. Although the average boat ride across the channel lasts about three-and-one-half to four hours, surf conditions could make it a five- or six-hour trip.¹ The Kaulakahi Channel is not known for its placidity and therefore the trip is not only long but rough. Couple this with the earthy

smells of a well deck full of livestock and one has all the makings of a truly nauseous experience.

While there are no airfields on Ni'ihau, there is ample room to accommodate helicopters. The Robinsons, however, do not permit the use of helos to transport invited guests to the island claiming that the aircraft causes too much of a disturbance to residents and wildlife (Informant #4). Looking beyond this stated objection to aircraft use, one can only speculate that if permission was frequently granted for helicopters to land, access to the island would be a much more convenient experience and probably result in many more visit requests. Presumably, the Robinsons feel that keeping prospective visitors constantly aware of the long and discomfoting boat ride may cause them to think twice about planning official visits more often than is presently done. Also, the use of helicopters would permit government officials more time on the island for evaluations. This again is something the Robinsons may not desire, not necessarily because they are hiding something but rather in defense of the residents. A spokesperson for the Robinsons did emphasize that for an emergency, a helicopter would be summoned immediately (Ibid.).

Communications

Ni'ihau's ancient distress signal, fire, is discussed in Appendix B. After World War II, carrier pigeons delivered messages and mail between the island and the Robinson estate on Kaua'i. These birds continued to be used extensively as the primary communication link to and from Ni'ihau well into the 1950s.

Although Aylmer said he would install a radiotelephone communication system on Ni'ihau in 1947, it was not until December 1959 that it was finally announced that a two-way radio link to Kaua'i was installed by Motorola Communications and Electronics (ADV 1959).² When the Robinsons radioed Ni'ihau's voting results to Kaua'i the following election year, it marked the first time Ni'ihau's votes reached the District Headquarters on the same day as the election. Up to that time, the pigeons flew the results at dawn the following day (SB 1960d). After the installation of the generator-powered radio, the birds were kept as back-up, and they were still being used into the 1960s for routine message traffic (SB 1961e).

While the radio link provided direct communications between the Robinsons and the Ni'ihauans, the State considered it imperative that it be able to notify all residents of an impending disaster or emergency without relying on a middle man.

In the 1950s preparing for the possibility of an atomic attack became quite commonplace throughout the United States. Building bomb and fallout shelters; stockpiling food, water and supplies; and rehearsing what were hoped would become reflex actions after the "flash" was seen, were concerns of many Americans. It took a few years before this concern had an impact in Hawai'i, but it eventually did.

Civil Defense officials visited Ni'ihau in November 1966 as part of a statewide inventory of fallout shelters and disaster preparedness. Even though Ni'ihau was considered relatively safe from fallout (due to prevailing winds) and assuredly safe from blast should an attack be directed at O'ahu, Aylmer Robinson was said to have been considering digging a trench in Pu'uwai which would provide some protection to the Ni'ihauans from manmade or natural

calamities. If ever completed, it would have made Ni'ihau the only island able to afford all its residents fallout protection (SB 19671). Even if, however, the trench was built, its value would not ever be fully realized unless there was a foolproof and rapid means of alerting the residents of an imminent disaster.

With the generator on Ni'ihau only cranked up to operate the two-way radio at certain times during the day, something more responsive and immediate was required. One suggestion that surfaced during the 1966 trip was to launch a helicopter from Kaua'i with a siren and loudspeaker (SB 1967c).

State officials and the Robinsons finally settled on a siren to be installed on Ni'ihau. It was to be activated by a cadmium battery. The signal would then activate the siren and alert the "luna" (foreman) to call Makaweli to obtain instructions (SB 1969a). This system, according to one source, failed to operate as expected. The plan was abandoned (Informant #4).

Through the years, communications between the Robinsons and Ni'ihau have been improved to the point where the State Civil Defense officials are now convinced that the Ni'ihauans will not be forgotten in an emergency. Part of the reason for this optimism is that, in addition to the base station in Pu'uwai that is normally manned by the luna in the evening, many mobile units are carried by the cowboys for intra- as well as inter-island communications (Ibid.). The foreman also carries a pager at all times for instant communications. Significantly different from the past, however, is the fact that the present system is solar-powered. It is a proto-type which the Robinsons opted to try and, thus far, is reported to be providing "absolutely exceptional communications." The Robinsons claim they can notify the Ni'ihauans faster than Kaua'i Civil Defense Officials can notify other county residents (Ibid.).

NOTES

1. To spend any appreciable time on the island necessitates an arrival at the Makaweli pier will before dawn—two or three o'clock in the morning. With the voyage consuming four to five hours and allowing a couple of hours for travel between hotel and the boat landing on Kaua'i as well as travel from the boat landing on Ni'ihau to the town of Pu'uwai, one could expect to spend up to twelve hours in a car, boat or truck. Since the Robinsons do not permit overnight visitors, except invited family members of the residents, return trips depart Ni'ihau in the early mid-afternoon in order to ensure a daylight arrival in Kaua'i.
2. The fact that the island did not have a reliable security alert system would not have set well with U. S. government officials had the alleged plan of former President Franklin D. Roosevelt been implemented. In what some have called an aberration, Roosevelt was reported to have proposed one of the most bizarre plans for the utilization of Ni'ihau that anyone had ever heard.

The State Department regularly releases some of its classified historical documents twenty or more years after events have occurred. One such release in 1966 which turned out to be the diary of Under-Secretary of State in the Roosevelt Administration, Edward R. Stettinius Jr., had many people, particularly in Hawai'i, scratching their heads (ADV 1966b). An entry in the diary alleged that Roosevelt, considered as the "Father of the United Nations," indicated to his aides at a meeting in Dumbarton Oaks, California, that the U. N. Security Council "should meet in different places from time to time" (SB 1966a), not just in New York. The President suggested the Azores and Hawai'i because of their respective climates.

The once-secret records claimed Roosevelt's choice was an island "northwest of Oahu and owned by an old sugar plantation family" (SB 1966b). It is said that the President is not alleged to have specifically recalled the name of the island to which he was referring but it was presumed by Stettinius, on the basis of his description, to be Ni'ihau rather than Kaua'i because of the reference to the entire island being "owned." Roosevelt referred to his prospective Hawaiian hideaway as one of the "most interesting and heavenly spots" on earth he knew (SB 1966a). While about 250 Ni'ihauans would have and still do agree with the former Chief Executive's description, most others, after hearing the account, speculate Roosevelt really did mean Kaua'i. Except perhaps for the residents, it would be quite difficult for anyone to ascribe "heavenly" to Ni'ihau. Even Aylmer Robinson laughed when he heard about the proposal (or at least its interpretation) and said he could not "imagine the President, accustomed to a luxurious life, being very happy (on Ni'ihau)" (SB 1967f).

Interestingly, Roosevelt never visited Ni'ihau, or Kaua'i for that matter, during his two visits to Hawai'i in 1934 and 1944. If Ni'ihau is what he meant, it can only be surmised that he saw it at its greenest from the air just after rainfall. Parched, arid areas are known to "green up" quickly after only a little rain. A history professor at the University of Hawai'i, Doctor Walter Johnson, suggested that Roosevelt may have seen Ni'ihau from a ship, the cruiser U.S.S. Baltimore, when he was making his way to the Aleutians after strategy sessions in Honolulu in 1944 (SB 1966c).

Notwithstanding if, when and how President Roosevelt ever saw Ni'ihau, or if he was even referring to that island when he considered alternate venues for the Security Council meetings, the fact remained that it was about Ni'ihau that was recorded in Stettinius' diary. Had he known about the unreliable communications that existed to and from the island, it is doubtful if Ni'ihau would have remained one of the viable choices. Or, on the other hand, the tiny island would have received a communications facelift by the U.S. government the likes of which would have been truly beyond the comprehension of most people in Hawai'i, let alone Ni'ihau!

Humorous as this may all seem, to the Robinsons it was upsetting because it again drew undesired publicity to the island.

CHAPTER XIV

A FRAGILE ECONOMY

Nature: A Formidable Foe

For centuries nature has been cruel to Ni'ihau. Drought and famine were commonplace in old Hawai'i and agriculture on any great scale on Ni'ihau was and still is virtually impossible.

The Ni'ihau Ranch has struggled to survive economically since the day it was formed. Climatic conditions have proven to be more than a match for the resolve and initiative of each generation of managers. Aubrey's goat eradication, reforestation and conservation programs were positive steps that helped sustain the island into the twentieth century (see Part ONE, Chapter VII). These efforts were continued under Aylmer's tenure, but the economic situation he faced in the post-War years had reached a critical stage. The future of the island was in serious jeopardy.

The primary economic ventures of the Ni'ihau Ranch for the past forty or fifty years have been cattle, sheep, charcoal and honey. All depend in varying degrees on climate and rainfall. There were several severe droughts during the 1950s that crippled the Ranch's business operations. For example, herds of cattle and sheep that numbered, at the turn of the century, as high as thirty thousand and three thousand, respectively, were reduced by the late 1950s to about seven thousand and fifteen hundred due to the water shortage (ADV 1959a), (see Figures 39, 40). Also contributing to the sharply diminishing herds at that time was a blight that almost completely destroyed

the singlemost important source of nourishment for livestock during drought conditions, cactus.

The blight was deliberately introduced on Kaua'i to kill cacti growing rampantly there but was not confined to the Garden Island. Rather, it made its way across the Kaulakahi Channel and proved quite effective in killing Ni'ihau's edible cacti which had been one of the principle stock feeds on the island's arid grazing lands (ADV 1961; Daws and Head 1963:85).

Further, wool from the prized Merino sheep, which had been a big export commodity, became extremely hard to market in drought years. Burr-laden and stained with the characteristic dry, red dust of Ni'ihau, the wool was at a marked disadvantage against competitors. With insufficient water, it could not even be washed prior to export (Daws and Head 1963:85). Because it could not be profitably marketed, it was stored in warehouses for as long as two years (ADV 1961b).

The production of honey has been a successful business enterprise on Ni'ihau for many years.¹ It suffered a serious setback, however, in the 1950s when a parasite attacked the blossom of the kiawe tree. One estimate reported that honey production fell from twenty thousand gallons annually to as low as five hundred gallons (Ibid.), and the industry never fully recovered. The exact origin of the parasite was never determined but some have claimed the military contingent stationed there during the war years was inadvertently responsible (SB 1961e).

Aylmer Robinson Kept Ni'ihau Viable

Aylmer Robinson tried to revive the island's failing economy by growing Egyptian cotton. It was adaptable to Ni'ihau's climate but any hope of it being a profitable export was dashed when the Federal Government refused to grant him a quota (ADV 1961a; SB 1961e). However, a more successful diversification effort was the production of charcoal. It is a product which, perhaps, may be least affected, although not immune from, the island's incredibly dry climate. Using the hearty *kiawe* scrub which grew all over Ni'ihau, Aylmer capitalized on the fact that *kiawe* charcoal is a time-honored cooking fuel of the island people. A long, slow-burning charcoal that is used both in an *imu* (earth cooking oven) or a modern barbecue, *kiawe* seemed to be something on which the Robinsons could depend to help balance the books. Yet, as well-known, dependable, and efficient a heating material as charcoal is, it too faced initial marketing difficulties due to the high transportation costs and being undersold by Japanese competitors (SB 1961e). Today, the *kiawe* wood is being "charcoalized" in hollowtile ovens by the Ni'ihauans, bagged in five- or twenty-five-pound sacks, and sold under the Sunset or Ni'ihau labels (see Fig. 41). There has been some success in expanding the export market to the mainland which, of course, will help business, providing the production and transportation costs can be profitably balanced by sales volume (Informant #4).

A final venture which Aylmer tried that is worth mentioning here is a fish-supply business. While Aubrey concentrated on stocking some of Kaua'i's rivers and streams with fish in order to raise and sell them, Aylmer tried it in the salt and brackish ponds of Ni'ihau using mullet. While it cannot be classified as an overwhelming success because it too depends on adequate rainfall, mullet raising on Ni'ihau has enjoyed some success over the years

(Hawaii Business 1954:51) and, according to a Robinson spokesperson, is seen as a bright spot on the horizon (see Fig. 42).

So the economic situation that Aylmer faced on Ni'ihau in the 1950s and early 1960s was certainly not the envy of the business world and of great concern to the Robinson family who has always been proud of its business acumen and success.² Beset by all of these economic woes, Aylmer was determined not to let the Ranch fold. Driven as much by his love for the Ni'ihauans as anything else, he kept the Ranch operating and the Ni'ihauans employed. One estimate alleged that the annual cost deficit for the Ni'ihau Ranch approached fifty thousand dollars (ADV 1969b). While this may have been an overestimation, Aylmer is, nevertheless, suspected of contributing as high as ten thousand dollars from his personal funds rather than tapping the family to keep Ni'ihau solvent (SB 1969c).

Accusations of Forced Migration and Labor Law Violations

Upon Aylmer's death in 1967, those familiar with the plight of the Ni'ihau Ranch speculated that things would become worse. While Aylmer did much to alleviate the economic difficulties of Ni'ihau, he could not eradicate them and they now became the burden of Lester who inherited this "financial albatross" (SB 1969c).

There were many spinoffs of the Ni'ihau Ranch's problems. The first and foremost involved the Ni'ihauans themselves. Profits from the Ranch's operations were to pay the salaries of the workers.³ When this was not possible, other employment opportunities were needed. The family's sugar plantation on Kaua'i was always available should a Ni'ihauan desire a change of location. The important point here is that it was the decision of the

Ni'ihauans not the Robinsons whether or not an island family or head of household relocated. After Lester became "haku," it was rumored that many families were being forced to move to Kaua'i (ADV 1969a; SB 1969d; SB 1969b).

This intentional manipulation of the island's population to keep it in ratio to employment opportunities and water supply is a charge that has been leveled at the Robinsons well before Lester became manager of the Ni'ihau ranch.⁴ Certainly, it would be humanitarian to assist families in evacuating an area where their lives or health would be in jeopardy due to drought or famine. Reports in the late 1960s, however, seemed to intimate that forced migration was tied solely to the Robinsons' financial sheet of the Ni'ihau ranch. That is to say, families, whole or partial, were being relocated to Kaua'i with or without their consent, based on whether it was to the Robinsons' economic benefit to do so. These claims seemed to have been most common shortly after Aylmer died. It was alleged that Lester was not willing to subsidize Ni'ihau's losses with his personal funds as Aylmer was suspected of doing. So he was thought to have brought Ni'ihauans to work on Kaua'i because of the persistently poor economic conditions on the island (SB 1969b). One estimate of the number of people moved from Ni'ihau was one-third of its total population at one point (SB 1969d).

Present owners insist that any movement by Ni'ihauans to other islands is on a strictly voluntary basis since their care, comfort, and security will always be guaranteed on Ni'ihau (Informant #4). A spokesperson for the Robinson family said that if there was a shortage of labor on Kaua'i, the family will always ask the Ni'ihauans if anyone desired to work there temporarily. Only after this was done and a sufficient labor force could not be assembled, would the Robinsons seek employees from Kaua'i residents

(Ibid.). As far as intentionally manipulating the island's population for any personal gain, the Robinsons categorically deny the accusation (ADV 1968b).

The spokesperson went on to say that a couple of people have been asked to leave strictly for unsociable behavior, that is, they were misfits and causing trouble for the rest. Those that become unsuited will always be asked to leave for the betterment of the whole. The Robinson spokesperson argued that Ni'ihau is one of the few places where Hawaiians can choose to live as they wish and anyone who does not want to take part would be asked to move somewhere else better to his liking (Ibid.).

Wages paid to the Ni'ihauans by the Robinsons sparked another controversy in the early 1970s that resulted in the State investigating the owners for default of payments to its employees and other possible violations of State labor laws. Speculated to have been triggered by Governor Burns' warnings that the social welfare of the Ni'ihauan people was not being protected, as well as by rumors about pay discrepancies for sugar workers on Robinson plantations on Kaua'i, State Administration officials decided to investigate (ADV 1971a). Specifically, the inspection team wanted to check "... compliance with State laws on job safety, overtime, minimum wage, employment security and workmen's compensation—areas where there may be an 'unawareness' by the employers" (Ibid.).

Coming so quickly on the heels of the defeat of the Burns acquisition plan, the inspection seemed almost like a backlash against the owners—a witch hunt with almost predictable results. Yet, no one could or should find fault with the sense of responsibility of the State in ensuring that all its citizens were afforded equal protection under existing laws. Too often, government officials are criticized for not showing a commitment to those to

whom they are ultimately responsible. Whether this move by the State was a vendetta or not may never be known.

A two-day visit was planned but completed in one. This should come as no surprise since no one is permitted to spend the night on Ni'ihau, and who in their right mind would want to make the channel crossing four times in two days?

No comments were made publicly about the results of the inspection (ADV 1971b). In fact, nothing much was heard until more than a year later when, based on a State audit of payrolls of the Robinsons' firms, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations filed suit against the family. Reportedly, the charge was violation of the State's labor laws, specifically, "... the owners of the island neglected to pay the great majority of their Niihau employees within the (State required) seven-day period (after the pay period officially ends)..." (ADV 1972b).

The case was heard in Waimea on July 5, 1972. The attorney for the Robinsons claimed mitigating circumstances due to bookkeeping problems at the time of the audit, January 1-February 19, 1972 (ADV 1972a). The Robinsons also reportedly claimed that the amount of unpaid wages was inaccurate owing to the credit many employees had run up at the Ni'ihau company store. The law, however, reads that in these cases a one-dollar "good faith gesture" must be paid within the seven-day period (ADV 1972c). The result was that Helen Robinson pleaded "no contest" and was fined \$4,500, all but \$500 being suspended (Ibid.).

In 1973, one of the worst droughts in the island's recorded history occurred and all but paralyzed an already crippled livestock ranch. No rain fell on the island for more than eleven months (ADV 1973). Water rationing

was critical and hundreds of head of cattle died of dehydration. There were estimates that two or three head of cattle per day were being lost. If true, this could have accounted for a total of more than 800 head of cattle dying as a direct result of the drought. The Robinsons saved many by shipping them to feedlots on O'ahu and also sold many of the young to salvage something from their investment. All of this resulted in the normal herd of two thousand being reduced to a mere six hundred or so by the end of the drought.

One informant who visited the island during this time said water was barged from Kaua'i to help ease the situation and that many of the sheep and cattle that did not die were reduced to skin and bones (Informant #1).

When the drought lifted and sheep began to regain their health, the Robinsons were dealt another severe blow when the Honolulu slaughterhouses that handled Ni'ihau's sheep changed only to beef. This meant that only the wool was marketable and, of course, its condition during the drought years has already been described (Hawaii Business 1974: 51).

Attempts at reviving Ni'ihau's economic state have been positive but the island's businesses are still operating in the red. Notwithstanding that the State Land Use Commission (1979) classified all of Ni'ihau's 46,000 acres as "agricultural," it has been shown that, except for kiawe, scrub brush and a few sweet potatoes, not much grows on Ni'ihau. The income derived from the sale of wool, mutton, honey, beef and kiawe charcoal is simply inadequate to keep the island solvent.

Aubrey, Aylmer and now Bruce have attempted to upgrade these conditions. Their efforts, however and for the most part, have been unsuccessful, not because of faulty business practices, but rather the forces of nature.

As far as the future goes, a spokesperson for the Robinson family said they are determined to realize a profit from Ni'ihau. The spokesperson added, however, that care of the Ni'ihauans would never be tied or dependent on the financial success of the island's businesses. This implied, of course, that the security of the Ni'ihauans was a virtual guarantee so long as the Robinsons owned the island.

NOTES

1. Larsen estimated that prior to World War II as much as "twelve hundred cases (eighty tons) were being shipped annually in addition to several tons of wax" (Larsen 1942:8).
2. The overall business history of the Sinclair-Robinson family is one of outstanding success. Sinclair Robinson, brother to Aylmer and Lester, was manager of the Gay and Robinson Sugar Plantation on Kaua'i for fifty-two years before his death on June 26, 1964. He employed many Ni'ihauans on the plantation which was said to have been one of the most productive (in yield) cane fields in the world (SB 1964c).
3. The estimated salary for a Ni'ihauan ranch hand after the War was about \$90 - \$100 a month (SB 1946f).
4. Subsequent to a visit in 1929, one writer claimed that:

... when the number reached the limit (160-175), a poll is taken to learn if anybody would like to go to Kaua'i to live. Usually a sufficient number of adventuresome young men accept the challenge. They take with them their wives, if they are married (Dougherty 1930:196).

CHAPTER XV

POLITICAL LEANINGS

Ni'ihau's political affiliations during pre- and early-western contact have been described earlier. In short, they were closely tied to what occurred on Kaua'i (see Part ONE, Chapter III). As once it was an area subject to the King of Kaua'i, so today it is that county's First Voting Precinct and is included in the 27th Representative District and 8th Senatorial District.

The political leanings of the Ni'ihauans are as predictable as the tides and tradewinds. Since their first participation in a territorial vote, Ni'ihauans have unquestionably supported every national Republican candidate, and most state Republicans. Voting on Ni'ihau was accurately summarized by the title of an article that appeared in the Honolulu Star Bulletin in 1938 which read "Niihau Casts 59 Votes All For GOP As Usual." The Republicans have fared well on Ni'ihau for as long as memory serves. The owners have been traditionally Republican and so have the Ni'ihauans. It is this very point that has caused Kaua'i Democrats to level accusations at the owners of political manipulation and intimidation.

With the number of registered voters rarely, if ever, exceeding one hundred, there may be a tendency to belittle the impact Ni'ihau's votes can make on any county election, let alone at the state or national level. One politician who certainly did not forget the meaning of Ni'ihau's staunchly Republican voting was Senator Charles A. Rice, the same Senator Rice who

championed the Ni'ihau cause against the 1946 senatorial investigation recommendations. During the 1920s, Senator Rice was so used to being re-elected that he came complacent and over-confident.

During one of those early elections, a Democrat of Hawaiian ancestry ran against him. There was also a Democratic resurgence occurring across the political spectrum. The margin of victory for Senator Rice was twelve votes. Ni'ihau cast sixty, all Republican (SB 1946e).

A similar occurrence took place in 1946 when it was reported that two Republican County Board of Supervisor candidates won by such a slight majority that Ni'ihau's votes could have been interpreted as being the determining factors (Ibid.).

As mentioned, Democrats on Kaua'i have, on occasion, questioned the election practices on Ni'ihau. Such an event occurred in 1958 when the nearly flawless ballots returned from Ni'ihau and caused the Democrats to cry "fix!" Kaua'i's error rate was about ten percent. There were accusations that election inspectors (Ni'ihau residents charged with that responsibility) were helping voters fill in the ballots (ADV 1958). Aylmer Robinson was reported to have denied any wrongdoings, saying that he only delivered the voting supplies and the Ni'ihauans did the rest via their duly elected officials.

Also alleged during the voting in 1958 was that there was "one Niihau Democrat (who) voted in the primary but failed to get his ballot tallied ...," (SB 1958).

All of these Democratic allegations were challenged by the publisher of the Garden Island newspaper, C. J. Fern, himself a Republican. He claimed the charges were a hoax designed solely to get the Chairman of the Democratic Party Platform Committee on the island (ADV 1958). Whether the charge or

countercharges were true, or whether the Platform Committee actually made it to Ni'ihau were not substantiated during my research. The fact remained quite obvious, however, that what the Republicans had on Ni'ihau they wanted to keep, and that the Democrats would have liked to make a dent in their opponents' stronghold—something they eventually did at the state level.

One of the most startling political events in Ni'ihau's history occurred in 1959 when the residents there thumbed their collective noses at the vote for Statehood. Having cast seventy of its eighty-eight votes against becoming the fiftieth star on Old Glory, Ni'ihau was the only precinct of the 240 in Hawai'i to do so (ADV 1959d).

The voting on Ni'ihau through the 1960s maintained its Republican character on the national level with a stray Democratic vote or two randomly showing up. For example, in 1964 it was the Goldwater-Miller ticket getting ninety-seven Ni'ihauan votes while the Johnson-Humphrey ticket garnered but one (General Election, November 3, 1964).

A former resident of Ni'ihau, Mileka Kanahale, expressed her political leaning in 1964 by saying:

I'm used to being Republican. That's the way we are from way back. If I don't like a Republican running, I leave it blank. Otherwise, I feel funny. That's the way we are (SB 1946d).

With that attitude, it is easy to see why ballots from Ni'ihau are error-free.

When asked about the peculiarities of Ni'ihauan voting, Jean Keale is reported to have said in 1962 that voting Republican among the older voters who could not read English well was a tradition they maintained over the years. She suggested that if Democratic candidates printed their campaign platforms and promises in Hawaiian, attached a photograph of themselves, and

crossed their fingers they would have a fighting chance on Ni'ihau (SB 1962a). Although it is hardly likely that the Democrats took the suggestion, there were reports of the formation of the first Democratic group on Ni'ihau in 1968 (ADV 1968c). However, in that election year, the Nixon-Agnew ticket took all but one of the fifty-five votes cast on Ni'ihau (General Election, November 5, 1968). If there was a Democratic Party forming on the island, this turnout certainly showed no evidence of it.

Down but not out, the Democrats saw a glimmer of hope when fifty-six Ni'ihauans who were working on a sugar plantation on Kaua'i could not get back to Ni'ihau to vote on that 1968 election day. They were reported to have asked and received Democratic ballots (SB 1968b). The Democratic candidates patted each other on the back for conducting some good campaigning. Three days later they were charged with "grave balloting irregularities" and all the ballots were recalled (SB 1968c). It was even alleged that some of the absentee ballots were already marked before the Ni'ihauans received them. Explanations on how the ballot box almost got "stuffed" lacked substance and Ni'ihauans then were permitted to choose their ballots again. No one can be sure exactly how each of them "re-voted" but very few Democratic votes were cast that year for either state or national candidates which means the Ni'ihauans either changed their votes or, most likely, never cast the first ones themselves.

In 1972, the Nixon-Agnew ticket was again the choice on Ni'ihau, taking all fifty-seven votes cast. In 1976, Ford and Dole took seventy-six of the seventy-seven votes (General Election, November 2, 1976) and it seemed the Republicans were well-entrenched on Ni'ihau. However, the 1976 election proved interesting on the state level where Democrat Daniel Akaka, candidate

for the United States House of Representatives, broke the long-standing Republican tradition on Ni'ihau by taking all of the seventy-seven votes cast for that post. In 1978, Akaka did the same thing, plus Democrat George Ariyoshi took seventy-four of the eighty-six gubernatorial votes (General Election, November 7, 1978). In 1980, the Ni'ihauans continued their Republican support on the national level giving Reagan and Bush fifty-six, with one to the Carter-Mondale ticket, and, surprisingly, six to the Communist Party ticket of Gus Hall and Angela Davis. On the state level, however, the Democrats running for the U. S. Senate, Akaka and Daniel Inouye, swept the voting (General Election, November 4, 1980). The votes to Inouye take on even more meaning when compared to the results of 1959 when the Ni'ihauans gave all but two of their ninety-six voted not to Inouye but rather to his opponent, Republican R. Charles Silva (General Election, July 28, 1959).

In summary, the Ni'ihauans have been traditionally straight Republican but in recent years have shown a preference for Democrats on the state level. Although the reasons for this are unclear, one thing that seems predictable is that once your name is on the wrong side of the Ni'ihauan political ledger, you would be very fortunate to capture even a single vote!

The Robinsons have always maintained they only deliver the election paraphernalia to the Ni'ihauans, then transmit the results to Kaua'i. Of course, family members of the past have admitted leaning to the Republican Party without being, as Aylmer once said, a "party man" (ADV 1958).

CHAPTER XVI

ACCESS TO NI'IAU

During the course of researching material for this thesis, a request was made of the Robinson family by myself to visit Ni'ihau. The intent, of course, was to gain firsthand knowledge of the island and its inhabitants so that this project could be as factual and as comprehensive as any written to date. My request was denied. Insufficient cause was cited as the basis for the denial as the Robinsons did not consider my endeavor to "un-mystify" Ni'ihau as a legitimate reason to invade the privacy of the Ni'ihauans. So be it.

Although the 1946 senatorial investigation of Ni'ihau resulted in more frequent visits to the island by medical and educational officials, the fact remains that the longer the Sinclair-Robinson family has owned Ni'ihau, the more stringent the rules have seemingly become regarding access to it.

It is indeed surprising that when Governor Judd visited Ni'ihau in 1929, it was the first recorded official visit to Ni'ihau by an island head of government (see Part ONE, Chapter VII). The second occurred after nearly a full century of private ownership.

On September 29, 1961, three helicopters from the Kane'ohe Marine Corps Air Station on O'ahu touched down in a field adjacent to Lehua Island carrying the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, William F. Quinn, and his official party (SB 1961c; ADV 1961a). They were warmly greeted by Aylmer and Lester.

Their stay on Ni'ihau was short, as most are. Upon their arrival, the Robinsons only asked that the Governor and his party be objective in what they were to see, and not smoke (SB 1961c). Governor Quinn visited the Ni'ihau School and was entertained by students. He lunched with the Robinsons at their Ki'eki'e ranch house and toured the island in an open truck, during which he was informed about the harsh climatic conditions sometimes experienced on the island. He also met war hero Ben Kanahele (SB 1961e).

It appears that the Governor came away with some understanding about the Robinsons and their motives. As previously mentioned (see Part TWO, Chapter XII), he returned to Honolulu and publicly said he favored a "negotiated" settlement to the State land claims issue raging in the Legislature (SB 1961f). His statement had a dampening effect on the State's effort to vigorously pursue the project.

The fact that Governor Quinn accepted the Robinsons' invitation to visit Ni'ihau in itself was surprising. Even more startling was that the Robinsons also permitted reporters to accompany the State's Chief Executive. This was totally out of character for Aylmer, and the first time in decades that newsmen had acquired "official" access to Ni'ihau.

Documented accounts of Ni'ihau were, for the most part, authored by scientists, usually for scholarly purposes, not for general public awareness. Geologists like Stearns and Hinds, or botanists like St. John were permitted access to Ni'ihau specifically to record the natural science of the island. Newspaper and magazine articles about Ni'ihauan life in general appeared frequently and were usually authored by invited guests of the Robinsons who probably did not know at the time that a public documentary would result from the visit. Still other sources were private letters and diaries that were

eventually donated to various archives and museums. One individual who made the most of his single visit there was H. E. Dougherty who has already been frequently quoted in this presentation. He accompanied Governor Judd in 1929 and subsequently had his description of the visit published in both major Honolulu dailies, the Honolulu Mercury, Paradise of the Pacific, and others. Most other accounts of Ni'ihau, including this thesis, have been compiled from interviews with visitors and residents, and secondary sources.

The landlords and managers of Ni'ihau have always shunned publicity in deference, so they say, to the residents. Such is still the case today (Informant #2). It therefore stands to reason that newsmen, reporters and the otherwise curious would be at the top of the exclusion list.

The guise under which the long-standing policy excluding the press and other non-essential-to-the-island personnel is best summarized in the following response by Aylmer to a newspaper reporter who requested to accompany a Department of Instruction visit in 1957:

We have made it a practice not to add others to (official) parties. We have felt when they have been kind enough to limit their own numbers for our convenience, it would be discourteous on our part to add others of our own selection.

If we were to make an exception in your case, I think that you can readily see that we might as well be overwhelmed with applications in another year.

It is unpleasant to be in a position of refusing requests such as yours, but under the circumstances I feel that such is the correct course to take and I trust you will be willing to recognize the reasonableness of the decision (SB 1957a).

It seemed by using this "courtesy-to-the-official-party" reasoning that the Robinsons hoped not to appear indignant to the press and the public at large. Similar logic was used in 1946 when a reporter requested to accompany Governor Stainback (who never went). The reporter was told by the Robinsons

that he was included in the official party, and that he was welcome. What, however, Aylmer told the Governor about restricting the size of the party is unknown. The end result was that the reporter was told by Stainback he could accompany if he could "make his own arrangements" to be invited (SB 1946c). It was a no-win situation for the reporter.

Feeling the heat of possible State land claims as well as the poor report card on its health and education programs in the post-war years, the Robinsons may have felt the best thing to do was avoid publicity, pro or con. The opposite reaction to this by those whose profession it is to search out and report the news was to get more daring in their attempts. Their main obstacle, of course, was that Ni'ihau was private property.

A few incidents occurred in the fifties which show the lengths to which enterprising or "desperate" reporters will go to "get a scoop." On November 9, 1957, a Piper Cub aircraft, with pilot Joe Prigge at the controls, made a "forced" landing on Ni'ihau due to, what was determined later as, water in the fuel (ADV 1957b). Having "splintered the propeller and smashed the landing gear," he and his passenger, Warren Roll, chief photographer for the Honolulu Star Bulletin, had to remain overnight to await spare parts from Kaua'i (SB 1957c).

Presumably, the crash landing occurred in a location what went unnoticed to the Ni'ihauans in Pu'uwai or the cowboys on horseback around the island. No one showed up at the site. Prigge and Roll slept near the plane that night. The next morning, Roll, with pen and Pentax in hand, walked toward the village. The result of his day in Pu'uwai among the Ni'ihauans was a lengthy article about life on the island, supported by many exclusive photographs. The Ni'ihauans were most hospitable to the reporter. Particularly gracious

was one of the teachers, Mrs. Hannah Niau, who served him dinner. Prigge and Roll spent more than a full day on the island and departed after their plane was repaired.

Two years later, another Star Bulletin photographer, Shideler Harpe, was allegedly sent secretly to Ni'ihau to photograph the island and people. After taking about six photographs, he was caught napping on the beach before he even made it to the village. He was escorted off the island, but kept his photographs (ADV 1959b). It was a month after Harpe was humiliated by being caught that he filed the previously mentioned controversial story about Ni'ihauans never having been drafted into the armed forces (see Part TWO, Chapter X).

There were many other attempts by curiosity seekers to gain access to Ni'ihau; most unsuccessful. Interestingly, one of the newsmen that accompanied Governor Quinn in 1961 actually felt intimidated during the visit. Here he was on the island, one of the precious few reporters to have been officially invited, yet he reported that he had great difficulty in asking the Ni'ihauans some of the hard-line questions he had formulated. The reasons he cited were: first, Aylmer kept the official party quite busy with tours and lunch at Ki'eki'e; second, as the reporter put it, "I had the feeling I had just entered the privacy of someone's home, almost uninvited" (ADV 1961a).

Exactly why the Robinsons permitted the newsmen on the Governor's trip is unclear. It was a marked departure from their previous operating methods. Perhaps they were feeling more confident with education and health program improvements and needed an "image enhancement" for themselves and the

Ni'ihauans. Regardless, the permission was granted then and again during the 1962 DPI visit (SB 1962b).

It is the deep desire of many people who live in Hawai'i to visit Ni'ihau, but there is little chance of them succeeding. Because of this, the question is often posed: Why keep the island off-limits to so many people? Why are the Robinsons so afraid to share Ni'ihau with the rest of the world?

The Robinsons claim that it is not so much a matter of wanting to hide anything as it is to respect the wishes of the Ni'ihauans who cherish their privacy, as well as an attempt by the Robinsons to run a business venture rather than a tourist attraction (Informant #4). One former Ni'ihauan resident put it this way: "It is really not the Robinsons who say 'no' to visitor requests but rather we ourselves" (Informant #2). Oftentimes, the Robinsons will inform the residents of requests to come to the island and they will offer their opinion. The Robinson family, as the announcer of the final decision, gets most of the wrath. The Ni'ihauans DO NOT want to be made a public showcase; and the Robinsons will see that they are not.

With regard to the present State Administration and its access to Ni'ihau, the Robinsons claim that they have been trying to arrange a mutually agreeable time for Governor Ariyoshi to visit. Although still concerned and cautious about State attempts to gain control of the island, the Robinsons still feel confident and comfortable with the present Ariyoshi government. Only the Governor's "busy schedule" has precluded him from visiting. The Robinsons have a deep respect and admiration for the Governor and believe he is not the type of man who would put aside work for a sightseeing trip (Informant #4).

Probably the closest Governor Ariyoshi got to retracing the steps of former Governors Judd and Quinn in the sands of Ni'ihau was during the

helicopter surveillance trip he took on November 25, 1982 of the damage caused by Hurricane Iwa.¹ There were rumors that the Governor had asked permission to land on Ni'ihau to better survey the damage, but was refused. According to the Honolulu Advertiser, a Robinson spokesperson said this was false as "nobody ever asked" to land (ADV 1982c). The Governor's Press Secretary also confirmed the fact that the Governor had not asked to visit. He said, "No one was intending to land on Ni'ihau" (Wernet 1982).

NOTES

1. The massive storm, packing winds of more than 100 mph, passed directly over Ni'ihau at 5 p.m. on November 24th (TenBruggencate 1982:4). Flying over the island, Governor Ariyoshi, along with Kaua'i County Mayor Malapit, said Ni'ihau's damage looked confined to roofs of houses. There was great concern, however, since there was no word from Ni'ihau or the Robinsons for nearly three days after the storm. Finally, a Robinson spokesperson told the Honolulu Advertiser that no one was homeless and all was okay. The Advertiser's report added:

Niihau's nearly 300 residents were aware of the storm well ahead of time. They stayed in their homes during the blow (the spokesperson) said.

Crews are clearing roads, but there has not been a survey of the storm's damage to the economic base of the island. These include cattle, sheep, honey and kiawe charcoal production. Many residents also make the prized Ni'ihau shell leis.

Four buildings were demolished and eight more damaged, but no residents were injured. The damaged buildings are covered by insurance, and adjusters will inspect them, the (spokesperson) said.

The family has not applied to any government agencies for assistance, but will not rule out the possibility it could apply later (ADV 1982c).

CHAPTER XVII

TODAY'S LIFESTYLE ON NI'IIHAU

It is obvious, I think, from the preceding pages that Ni'iihau has been steeped in controversy and intrigue for scores of years. Many of those who advocate a hands-off policy do so because, to them, Ni'iihau is all that Hawai'i was, a la Governor Burns. For that reason, it should be preserved and the Robinsons deserve the credit for doing just that. If what is meant by these proponents of traditionalism is the preservation of ancient Hawai'i with its grass shacks and pagan ritualism, they are clinging to shreds of history that are long gone. This was Governor Burns' argument in 1970 and it drew widespread criticism which helped defeat his takeover efforts.

The Ni'iihauans have no more sense of their past before 1864 than do other Hawaiians. Even before Eliza Sinclair purchased the island, a great transformation of Hawaiian lifestyle and culture had taken place. In fact, even before Western man first visited the islands, Hawai'i was growing, evolving and changing. It was not a static environment. Unquestionably, however, white man did hasten changes and it was, perhaps, those hardy, strong-willed men of the cloth that had the most profound effect.

The evolutionary process of the Hawaiian Islands progressed steadily during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. World War II and statehood, however, provided an impetus to modernization the likes of which no one could have anticipated. Quiet, palm-lined streets were transformed into multi-lane boulevards crammed with an ever-increasing number of automobiles.

Buildings soared skyward and there was a population explosion on O'ahu. The slow pace of the islands was suddenly shifted into high gear, yet Ni'ihau, except for the introduction of a few conveniences of "necessities" as we now call them and were mentioned earlier, remained relatively unaffected by it all. The island maintained its status quo and the gap between it and the rest of the islands widened.

The Sinclair-Robinson family has been virtually unyielding in its resistance to change. As a result, Ni'ihau's time clock was stopped, or at least slowed, at about the time of Hawai'i's plantation era. It is this missionary and plantation-day culture of the nineteenth century rather than the pre-western culture of Hawai'i which has been preserved to a great extent on Ni'ihau. Twentieth century paniolos (cowboys) herd cattle, mend fences and shear sheep in 1983 much the same as their 1883 counterparts and ancestors. The difference today is the presence of a few tractors and trucks on the island that are used in ranch chores, as well as to haul supplies and people from boat landings to Pu'uwai.

Upon landing on Ni'ihau, visitors board a large, open-bed, windshieldless truck for the thirteen-mile, forty-five-minute trek to the village of Pu'uwai. A plank stretched across the width of the bed of the truck is provided for seating. Then you "hold on for dear life" (Pennebacker 1982) as the truck winds its way through Ni'ihau's northern plains area over an unimproved road, making the trip much the rival and a virtual extension of the uncomfortable channel crossing.

During the trip, stops are made at significant points to help the guest get a feel for the uniqueness of the island including the way climatic conditions adversely affect life there (Ibid.).

The ranges are home to a variety of wildlife such as wild turkey, peacock, pheasant and sheep. From the open plains of the north, the road skirts the western shoreline much of which is frequently obscured from vision by enormous sand dunes that have accumulated from the winds and rough surf. At times, the feeling one receives when traveling this portion of the road is that one is in a trough with the ocean brimming at the top of the dunes perilously close to spilling over.

Along the road is a series of wood and wire gates, each meticulously opened and closed as the truck passes. These are portals through the fences that encircle the village in order to keep the roaming livestock out. Ni'ihau's case is certainly an interesting arrangement because there the people are "caged" and the animals roam freely.

At the end of the bouncy, dusty truck ride lies the serenity of Ni'ihau's only village, Pu'uwai, which means "heart." This small, rural community which all Ni'ihauans call home, has a distinct western flavor; characteristically turn-of-the-century plantation days (see Figures 45-49).

L. David Larsen's description of Pu'uwai is as accurate today as when he wrote it more than forty years ago:

The village of Puuwei is the principal settlement on Niihau and except for Robinson homestead at Ki'eki'e, some two miles away, is the only inhabited part of the island. the homes are widely scattered through the village among the keawe trees and cactus thickets and rocks. The main street is about three-quarters of a mile in length and the homes sometimes a thousand or more feet apart. All of them are surrounded by individual stone walls forming ... private yards, which are cleared of cactus and rock. In the middle of the village is the church, settled picturesquely among old keawe trees in a spacious yard surrounded by a Cereus-covered stone wall (Larsen 1942:14).

The houses are simple, elevated, predominantly wood-frame buildings owned by the Robinsons who provide them rent-free to the residents. "If a person

needs a house or a bigger home ... the Robinsons will pay for the new house or the enlargement" (Blanchard 1982:7A). Often, the Robinsons' gift to a newly-married couple that chooses to remain on Ni'ihau is a home of their own.

Cooking is done outside the homes in small pits enclosed by concrete blocks and protected by a small, metal roof (Informant #2). These detached cooking facilities are a precaution against an accidental fire that could raze the town.

The blocks used to construct these cooking facilities are made on the island by the Ni'ihauans (Informant #4). These are also used to build new homes or renovate older ones. According to a spokesperson for the Robinsons, adobe blocks are being evaluated as possibly being more efficient than those presently being made and used (Ibid.).

Every man on the island is an employee of the Robinsons, if the individual desires. No one is "made" to work, nor is there any violation of child-labor laws (Ibid.). For the men, work on Ni'ihau is typical of any large ranching operation.

In keeping with the ranch atmosphere of Ni'ihau, the primary mode of transportation on the island is horseback. A few bicycles are used but it is the descendants of the Arabian steeds that Aubrey Robinson imported that keep the *paniolos* moving.

In addition to household chores and garden upkeep, the women collect, clean and string tiny, rare shells into beautiful leis as did their ancestors. The Ni'ihau shell lei (*lei pupu o Ni'ihau*) is, indeed, one of the distinctive art treasures of the Hawaiian Islands and one of the Hawaiian crafts that has survived the steamroller modernization of western man.

In the last decade or so the men of the island have become very interested and involved in the making of the shell leis. The extra money women traditionally earned by selling the leis increased over the years to where it is now possibly more than their husbands' ranch wages. "The men now help gather the shells and prepare them for stringing. They have even developed their own designs ..." (Ka'ohelauli'i 1973a:6).

The task of Ni'ihau shell lei-making is incredibly meticulous. This, coupled with scarcity of the shells, account for the high cost of certain leis. Some are valued at more than ten thousand dollars. See Appendix L for more on the art of shell lei-making.

Since firearms are not permitted on Ni'ihau, the method used by the islanders to hunt pig is both ingenious and unique. One man who spent half his seventy years on the island and now regularly visits family still residing there remembers the hunt usually takes place in the late afternoon or, sometimes, by moonlight. The hunter rides into the flatlands and gives his mount free rein. When the horse picks up the scent of a pig, a wild chase ensues. Once the pig tires, his last defiant act is to charge the horse, much like a bull in the ring. The rider, at the precise moment, quickly dismounts and kicks or wrestles the pig to the ground where he binds its feet and takes it back to Pu'uwai where it is prepared (Informant #10).

Nearly every family owns horses. In 1942, each home had about four in addition to one for the wife and each of the children over the age of eleven years. Back then children learned to ride at an early age, sometimes practicing on wild pigs, with a saddle (Larsen 1942:2). While today they may not practice on pigs, their riding skills are developed well before the age of ten (Informant #5).

The importance of religion in the individual and collective lives of the Ni'ihauans cannot be overstated. From the days when the Congregationalists from the Waimea Mission made periodic trips across the channel and brought the "Good News" to the Ni'ihauans, up to the present day, the people of the island have embraced and virtually structured their lives around the teachings of Jesus Christ (Informants #2 and #5). Although they maintain a respect for the multi-deity beliefs of their pre-contact ancestors, it is the resignation to the will of the Christian God that now binds them together and gives substance to their lives. From an early age, children are taught the two great laws of the Lord: love Him and each other. They practice them with unbounded zeal.

The source from which springs hope eternal for the Ni'ihauans is the Bible, particularly the Hawaiian version. According to one informant, the copies used on Ni'ihau have never been reprinted. There has never been an updated page entered into them and, because of that, Ni'ihauans consider their Hawaiian Bibles as the only "True Word" of God (Informant #5).

Most Ni'ihauans firmly believe that everything that does or does not occur is attributable to the will of God. Most feel and will quickly say that it was the Lord who extricated the Ni'ihauans from the terrible events of December 7, 1941, and the downed Japanese pilot (Ibid.) (see Appendix B). Others believe that the reason for the terrible drought of 1973 was that the Robinsons did not fix the roof of the Ni'ihau Church as they promised (Informant #1). That church is located in the center of Pu'uwai and is the site of many spiritual services during the week. On Sunday, services may last for many hours. The men occupy one side and the women the other, as they did a century ago. One resident of the island is selected by the others to serve as "pastor" and it is he who conducts the services and leads the people in

prayer. While formal religious training would be desired, it is not a prerequisite.

Since musical instruments are not permitted in church, the old hymns, many of them composed by the Ni'ihauans, are sung a capella. The Robinsons had an old Hawaiian hymnal reprinted for the residents and it is said not to be available any longer or on any other island (Informant #5).

With religion having priority over most everything else on Ni'ihau, prayer is part of almost every activity (Informant #2). Family prayer meetings are conducted today as they were decades ago. Forty years ago L. David Larsen reported

... every home has a prayer meeting every morning and evening. Even when the father has to get out at four o'clock in the morning, the family gets up in time for a prayer meeting and singing before he leaves (Larsen 1942:25).

Needless to say, Sunday is a special day on Ni'ihau. Most everyone attends services. With the exception of required household chores, work is forbidden on the Sabbath. The church is also filled after work on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays when shorter services are conducted (Informant #2).

As much as ancient Hawaiians knew and loved the sea, and depended on it for their very existence, so, too, do today's Ni'ihauans. As their ancestors did, today's islanders have developed the skills necessary to exploit it. Many of these skills were passed down to each succeeding generation.

The waters contiguous to Ni'ihau have always been regarded as some of the best fishing grounds in the islands (see Figure 56). Using traditional equipment, such as string lines, spears, casting nets and traps, Ni'ihauans never wanted for a supply of fresh fish, lobster, or 'opihi (a Hawaiian shellfish delicacy).

Ni'ihauans claim that not many years ago they could drop an unbaited hook into the waters around the island and catch a day's supply of fish, such was the abundance (Informants #4 and #10). Although the fishing is still good, the days of unbaited hooks are gone forever. Commercial fishing companies, using modern, mass-catch methods, are slowly depleting the Ni'ihauans waters of marine life, including coral.

While the supply of fish around Ni'ihau has been reduced considerably, there are still some lucrative areas. It is reported that certain species gather in specific locations. So the daily seafood desires of a Ni'ihauan family usually dictates where they cast their nets and hooks (Informants #1 and #10).¹

To leave one with the impression that Ni'ihauans are absolute traditionalists in their fishing would be misleading. Many of these ancient methods have been lost in time and superseded by more modern techniques. There are boats on the island powered by outboard motors which permit the islanders to fish in deep waters. They also have some modern tackle and equipment that result in larger catches which, of course, are shared with their neighbors.

At the mention of sharks, most people experience a fearful shudder as scenes from "Jaws" flash through their minds. Peculiarly, Ni'ihauans exhibit a totally different reaction: they smile and show no fear of this infamous predator of the ocean.

The Ni'ihauans describe the sharks around their island as "friendly" (Informants #1 and #10). Numerous stories are told of how Ni'ihauans all but play with sharks. "Hawaiians on Ni'ihau believe wholeheartedly that Ni'ihau sharks would never attack them" (Gay 1981:61). This has been borne out over

the years as there has never been recorded a single shark attack in the waters of Ni'ihau.²

It is said that any Ni'ihauan that leaves the water after a shark is sighted becomes the target for ridicule for not having the courage to stay (Informant #3).³

Today's children of Ni'ihau pass their time much as others did decades ago—without the aid of toys as we know them. A game of tag or hide 'n seek; a tire swing suspended from the bough of a large kiawe tree; swimming and crabbing; or just imaginative but simple games using readily available implements form the basis of child recreation. Volleyball used to be popular among the teenagers but, surprisingly, is reported to be discouraged today by parents and teachers. They feel it is too dangerous (Informant #2).

While they may not be as proficient in sports as their counterparts on the other islands, the children of Ni'ihau do shine when it comes to something on which they place more importance—their genealogy. Hawaiians have traditionally memorized their family tree, and I have personally known some who could cite names and relationships as far back as six or seven generations without the aid of a written note. While this may not be as prevalent in today's world, there is still great emphasis on knowing one's kupuna (ancestors) among the Ni'ihauans.

Sprinkled around the grounds of the Ni'ihau Church are stones. These are special stones as any Ni'ihau child is eager to show. Carved on them are the names of deceased members of the Ni'ihau community. The children are proud to take a visitor on a trip into the past, lovingly pointing out the rocks that bear the names of their ancestors (Pennebacker 1982; Informant #1).

Chanting was an integral part of ancient Hawaiian life. By way of chants the knowledge of many things about the culture and the traditions of the Hawaiians were preserved for future generations. For example, legends of creation, celestial navigation techniques, and ancestry were put in chant form. With the Portuguese in 1879 came the 'ukulele and this transformed Hawaiian "music." While the 'ukulele is still a popular instrument among Hawaiian music enthusiasts, it is the guitar, the electric bass and even violins and brass instruments that are being used extensively in more contemporary island songs.

Ni'ihauans love their music as much as, if not more more than, anyone in the islands. Using the traditional 'ukulele, well as guitars and basses powered by the few generators on the island, self-taught musicians compose songs, and combine their talents to often fill the evening air of Pu'uwai with a melodic blend of music and harmonizing voices (Ka'ohe'lauli'i 1973a:3). Some notable entertainers have come from Ni'ihau. Among them is Moe Keale (formerly with the popular group "Sons of Hawaii" and a regular on the Hawaii Five-0 television series).

One of the modern conveniences particularly appreciated and owned by most Ni'ihauans today are tape recorders. Battery-powered machines are used frequently to record the singing and the music so all can enjoy it when it is replayed.⁴

Another modern device that has been accepted by the Ni'ihauans is the radio. Transistorized portables are owned by many. The radio provides the Ni'ihauans a window on life off their island as well as a link to the famed KCCN radio station on O'ahu—the only all-Hawaiian music station in the world. Music preferences, however, differ among the Ni'ihauans as they do

among most people. Age, invariably, is the determining factor. While Hawaiian music is appreciated by all, the strains of a soft rock number can often be heard from places where the younger generation congregates (Informant #2).

Ranch hands carry radios and small tape recorders with them during their daily ranch chores (SB 1967e). Radios on Ni'ihau date back, surprisingly, more than three decades.⁵

Television too has found acceptance, albeit limited, on Ni'ihau. Like the radio and the tape recorder, television sets are battery-operated. They can only receive strong signals and present clear pictures from the side of the island that faces Kaua'i, which is exactly opposite of where Pu'uwai is located. For that reason, televisions get little use on Ni'ihau.

The last "luxury" that Ni'ihauans seem to have accepted is the camera. "Nearly every family has a camera. Homes are decorated with pictures and snapshots of children, parents, and relatives" (Ka'ohelauali'i 1973a:3).

There is neither plumbing nor commercial electricity on the island. Water for drinking, cooking and minor washing needs of each family is provided by a "catchment" system off the roofs of the houses. Large one-thousand-gallon tanks catch the rain water and provide adequately for the needs of the families. A cloth over the spigot of the tank provides a crude filtration system (Informant #2).

The Robinsons have all but abandoned well digging. It is said that large land catchment reservoirs are the most effective way to store water for the animals (see Figure 58). There have been four such reserves dug on the island since 1971 (Informant #4). For the residents, there are still a few small wells that provide a backup supply of water which can make a difference during

the severe droughts. Rainfall for the last few years has been measuring ten to twelve inches annually. In 1982, it was sixteen (Ibid.).

Supervision of day-to-day ranching chores on the island is entrusted to a foreman or "luna." There is a "head luna" or "luna nui" on Kaua'i who is considered the Foreman for Operations of the Ni'ihau Ranch. That person, at the time of this writing, was Mr. Gilbert Pahulehua (Informants #2 and #4). There are other luna on Ni'ihau who take their orders from Mr. Pahulehua. According to one source, selection of the luna involves "politics" (Informant #1). In this day and age, very few positions of authority do not.

One of the most consistent statements (written or verbal) one encounters when doing research about Ni'ihau concerns the remarkable hospitality and contentment of the people there. A State Department of Health inspector could not find adequate words to describe the genuine feeling of love she experienced when she visited Ni'ihau. She was met at the landing by the Ni'ihauan men who work the small dock and was greeted as if she was a returning family member rather than a complete stranger. Her comments coincide with those of former visitors.

... the outstanding quality of these people is their friendliness. Everyone you meet shakes hands with you and smiles. Even when the whale boat pulled up alongside our sampan at Lehua Landing the first thing they did was to reach up and shake hands with everyone on board Then when we came ashore to Nonopapa the same thing happened. There were a dozen or so Niihau citizens at the landing. Everyone of them came up to shake hands—with a friendly smile (Larsen 1942:2).

Or,

The boat took us through small breakers to a short stone pier where we were welcomed by Mr. Aylmer Robinson . . . and by a dozen fine-looking Hawaii cowboys who seemed a little shy of the invaders but who displayed a friendliness in their greeting which was genuine (Judd, H. 1938:5).

According to all reports and interviews, crime is virtually non-existent on Ni'ihau. There are no police or law-enforcement officials, because none are needed. A former resident and now occasional visitor to the island marvels at being able to leave one's wallet or purse anywhere on Ni'ihau, reassured that everything will be left untouched (Informant #5). A locksmith would be hardpressed to make a decent wage on Ni'ihau.

There is, however, an unwritten code that governs behavior and is policed by the Hawaiians themselves. Violations of this code could cause expulsion and banishment from the island, rare an occurrence that it is. Tied to their strong religious convictions, the code is described by one former resident as being

... rigid, based on the new testament and on the ten commandments. A resident of the island is subject to being made to leave the island if he or she breaks one or more of the strict rules, with adultery considered one of the heinous infractions. Having booze (sic) or being drunk can also result in expulsion from Niihau. However, if a rule breaker has a good record or large family and maintains a good record after he is transferred to Makaweli for a 30 to 90 day probation, he or she might be allowed to return to Niihau (Garden Island 1082b:7A).

One of the particularly controversial questions that arises regarding Ni'ihauans who leave their island (and Kaua'i) is whether they are permitted to return. Dougherty contended that those who "perchance may drift to other islands" were not welcomed back on Ni'ihau for fear that they may "contaminate" the Ni'ihauans by introducing habits, manners, vices, diseases, tales and innovations not suitable, desired, or compatible to living on Ni'ihau (Dougherty 1938:196). The Robinson family has firmly denied this. The qualification the Robinsons add, however, concerns spouses these wanderers may take while off the island and want to bring back. A former Ni'ihauan resident claims

You can't marry an off-island girl and bring her back to Niihau if she is not 100% Hawaiian and even if she is, it is difficult. (Ni'ihauans are) supposed to marry only girls on Niihau. Other girls are liable to influence residents with foreign ways of living (Garden Island 1982b:7A).

The Robinsons' retort to this charge is that a newcomer would be permitted to come to Ni'ihau providing the person is judged to be adaptable to the lifestyle (Informant #4). It was inferred that the Ni'ihauans would make that decision. The Robinsons' main concern again is that problems do not result for the majority.

For the past century the Robinsons have remained a very private clan, shunning the public and steadfast in their determination to maintain the seclusion of Ni'ihau. For this, the family has often been criticized for what is believed to be their strong-handed, monarchical management of the island. This constant malignment is not the work of compassionate Hawaiians, but rather predominantly that of others who, either in their capacity as elected officials or self-appointed "saviors" of what they perceive as a depressed people, are striving to correct a "gross deprivation of human rights."

As to the question of the reluctance of Ni'ihauans, and others knowledgeable about the island, to speak about it or to be tied directly to information they may confidentially provide, most outsiders believe that it is the Robinsons who stifle this freedom of expression. The Robinsons say this is not so and they claim they would not hold it against any person who discussed Ni'ihau, according to a spokesperson for the family (Informant #4). There are reasonable personal matters that the Robinsons could and should expect Ni'ihauans privy to them to honor. Beyond that, no pressure is said to be exerted on present or former residents in an attempt to curtail their desires to speak about the island. However, personal observations during

interviews for this thesis show that this disclaimer by the Robinsons is not understood by all, and it is speculated that the Robinsons take no overt action to clarify the confusion.

This intimidation, real or not, is shared by more than just residents. Even visitors claim there are innuendoes during the Robinson briefing to them that undeniably attempt to discourage speaking publicly about their experiences on the island (Informant #9).

The Introduction to this thesis addressed some of the reasons why people are hesitant to speak about Ni'ihau. However, a far more compelling reason than any of those listed thus far was given by a former resident who hopes to return to Ni'ihau permanently someday. This individual says the reluctance to go into depth about the island is a fear that something may be revealed, innocuous as it may be in substance, that has never been publicly mentioned about Ni'ihau before. In essence, there is a feeling that as more and more is revealed, the less the Ni'ihauans will have that can truly be called their own (Informant #2). With everything that has been taken from the Hawaiians since western contact, whatever they still might call their own (even if it is not their land) is individually cherished and protected. For this reason, they are willing to talk on the periphery, but not in depth. They will respond to general questions, but offer no initiatives. They absolutely refuse to be tape-recorded or photographed (Informants #1, #2, #5 and #10).⁶

The Ni'ihauans respect the Robinsons. As one young Ni'ihauan said: "The people of Ni'ihau feel deeply indebted to the Robinsons." They truly believe that the purchase of the island by the Sinclairs in 1864 and the fact that that it has remained in the family's possession all these years, is an act of Divine Providence (Informant #2). Without the Robinsons, the Ni'ihauans see

no way that their privacy and opportunity to live as they see fit would have been possible. For this reason, they are glad to see the Robinsons own the land on which they live. This was vividly portrayed during a recent visit of the Native Hawaiian Study Commission to Kaua'i. With their contention being that there was a "grave wrong" committed against the Hawaiian people with the overthrow of Queen Liliu'okalani, the Commission was attempting to garner grass-roots support for their cause. They intended to petition the U. S. Congress to admit that gross wrongdoings had occurred, extract an apology from them, and ask to have restored the rightful ownership of all the land that was taken from Hawaiians during and after the overthrow of the Queen (ADV 1982a). The Commission was asking for two billion dollars to be administered to the native Hawaiians by the newly formed Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). Public hearings throughout the State did obtain great support for the Commission's efforts and proposals. Of course, to have the backing of the Hawaiians on Ni'ihau would greatly contribute to their cause. That, however, was not to be.

Many of the commission members were taken aback when they heard from Niihau-born OHA trustee Moses Keale, who told them a little about Niihau ...

When asked, Keale said Niihau's residents do not want to own their own land, nor do they want anyone else to own it. 'I don't think they want to change,' he said.

Commissioners probed the mystery: that the one Hawaiian-speaking community in the state, with so much of the old Hawaiian culture intact, would not want freedom from non-Hawaiian landowners.

'Everything in life is politics,' Keale said. And Niihau's residents, in keeping with their old traditions, have failed to learn many of those of the modern world. They haven't learned to deal with government and other agencies, since the Robinsons have done it for them, he said (Ibid.).

NOTES

1. H. Carrington Bolton, in an article from the Journal of American Folklore, describes a peculiar method the Ni'ihauans once used to catch squid:

On Niihau they fish for squid with two strong hooks (formerly made of bone, now of English manufacture), attached to a line that is weighted in a particular fashion. The hooks are fastened between a cowry (cypraea) shell and a hemispherical mass of granular olivine (grooved on the convex surface to secure the line). The stones are about the size and shape of half an orange; the material is sought by the men of Niihau on the neighboring tiny island of Kaula, which is occasionally visited for the purpose of collecting a supply. The Hawaiians believe that the shell and the green stone attract the squid, and is necessary to their capture; certain specimens of the stone are regarded as very choice and are highly treasured. They also have the superstition that the stones lose their charm if you cook a squid caught with a given stone ... Squid fishing is commonly practiced on all the islands, but the use of olivine and the cypraea shell is peculiar to Niihau.

(Note) Olivine is a common constituent of certain lavas, but this material is quite peculiar, consisting of a mass of olivine intermingled with a little pyroxene ... the brilliant green makes it attractive to the natives and if it has any virtue in aiding them to catch fish, it probably comes from the same brilliancy in color (Mr. Arnold Hagur—U. S. Geological Survey) (Bolton 1892:24-4).

2. One informant related his belief on why the Ni'ihauan sharks are not aggressive toward the islanders:

The belief goes back to a legend of "Kuhaimoana" which is a big shark god under Ka'ula Rock, and takes care of all the sharks in Ni'ihau waters. According to the legend, Kahaimoana had two small 'opelu that guarded where the Kaula'i waters and the Ni'ihau waters slap. They run the rim and guard against all the bad sharks that come past there and do anything bad. These two 'opelu would go run and tell Kuhaimoana. What happened was that one time the big, bad shark, Kahapahau, came into Ni'ihau waters and ate two crabs off the rocks. He knew he did something wrong so he took off and the two 'opelu went and told Kuhaimoana.'

Kuhaimoana and the two 'opelu followed Kahapahau to Pearl Harbor, but Kuhaimoana was too big to fit into the entrance, so he sent the two 'opelu in. Kahapahau saw the two 'opelu and decided to make a meal out of them. But the 'opelu, when inside of Kahapahau, ate all of his intestines.

Kahapahau was crazy with pain and came out of Pearl Harbor where Kuhaimoana killed him (Informant #1).

3. In the days of Francis Sinclair's management of Ni'ihau, sheep were abundant but the demand for mutton was low. After shearing, the sheep were slaughtered and boiled down for tallow which was more in demand. During the boiling process, the offal was thrown into the sea to attract sharks so they could be caught. On one occasion, a Ni'ihauan offered to take an offal-baited hook out to a mooring about one hundred feet from shore. While swimming to the mooring, a shark took the hook from the Ni'ihauan on two successive occasions, never once harming the man who laughed heartily at the greed of the shark (Gay 1981:61). One informant, who after having spent more than two decades away from Ni'ihau, returned to visit family there. His long absence had caused him to forget some of the beliefs of the people. He recounted a story about the Ni'ihauans' attitude toward sharks:

Ni'ihauans don't believe sharks will hurt them. I've seen it. When fishing one time with my sons and cousins, I was in a boat and the two boys were spearfishing; one with a spear and the other was the bagman for the catch. When the bagman brought up the catch, I looked beneath him in the water and saw sharks. I warned him to give me the bag and quickly get in, but he waved off my concern saying there was nothing to fear.

Another time, I saw a shark break water and actually bite off part of a fish a Ni'ihauan was holding above his head showing it off to the people on the shore. All the Ni'ihauan did was swear at the shark saying, 'Goddamned *mano* (shark), took my fish.' He went back down laughing to get another.

The Ni'ihauans believe that Ni'ihau sharks won't bite anybody. They are more afraid of eels than sharks—moray eels (Informant #1).

4. The recorders were much in evidence at the party. Each time a tape was filled, the music stopped while the tape was played back for all present to listen to and compare. (That may be one of the reasons why the party is reputed to have lasted one whole week) (Ka'ohelaui'i 1973a:3).
5. One interesting story about radios on Ni'ihau occurred in the 1950s:

... a California scientist collecting shallow-water fish off Niihau was (uncommonly, but sociably) waved ashore for a conversation with two (Ni'ihauan) cowboys. One had his radio with him. It was broadcasting Dow-Jones industrial indices. But the information must have been esoteric, since the (Ni'ihauan) had no clear idea where the American Mainland was (Daws and Head 1963:83).

6. The reluctance of Ni'ihauans to be photographed seems to be pronounced off island only. A State Department of Health official who visited Ni'ihau in 1979 did not take her camera on the trip in deference to the islanders who she had heard were shy, and also due to the restrictions she had heard the Robinsons put on the use of them on their property. To her surprise, the Ni'ihauans asked her if she brought her camera as they were most willing to pose.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION

Since it purchased Ni'ihau in 1864, the Sinclair-Robinson clan has been the target of constant public scrutiny. It has been described as monarchical, feudal, baronial, paternalistic, egotistic, and self-serving by some; caring, loving, devoted, and unselfish by others. In most cases, how one classifies the clan is invariably linked to the perception of how good or bad it has been for Ni'ihau. This, of course, means that it is largely a subjective judgement and, therefore, there cannot be a single correct answer. Instead there is a confusing wealth of opinion, often wrong, combined with a disheartening poverty of facts.

After having done extensive research about Ni'ihau, most of which has been presented on the previous pages, and to state the obvious, I feel that without the Sinclair-Robinson family there would be no Ni'ihau as it exists today. It would be naive to think that Ni'ihau is representative of ancient Hawai'i. It is not, pure and simple, and this has previously been addressed. However, it is the only substantial enclave of native Hawaiian speakers in the world. Some say that language is culture. If so, then what the Sinclair-Robinson family has done is to preserve a rich portion of the culture against overwhelming odds of missionaries and modernization. For their efforts, the family has enjoyed the support, love and respect of the Ni'ihauans.

The Robinson family has always maintained a deep, abiding love for the Ni'ihauans. Family members have gone to great lengths and personal sacrifice

to respect the Ni'ihauan's desire to live privately and protected. There has always been a great deal of family expense involved in trying to maintain the viability of the Ni'ihau ranch so that the Ni'ihauans would always be employed and capable of earning a decent wage. The tight control of the island, rather than being dictatorial, is more accurately described as a benign protectorate.

Of course, it is for this very reason that many have criticized the family. The claim is that the Robinsons, in their intense desire to protect Ni'ihau, for whatever reason, have virtually stifled the creative thought processes and independence of the Ni'ihauans. One recent visitor to the island expressed his sentiment in this manner.

The Ni'ihauans have the attitude that they're going to be taken care of for the rest of their lives, which is probably true. But there's no independence; there's no free thinking on their own; everything has to be okay'd by someone else. I find that a little disturbing (Pennebacker 1982).

As a School Board member, Mr. Pennebacker would most certainly find fault with anything that may, in his opinion, have a deleterious effect on the development of young minds. During his 1982 trip to Ni'ihau with the Board of Education, he saw things which he may have felt should never be accepted in our free society. For example, when asked if he spoke to any of the citizens there, he said he had but "they would only speak to us after they got the O.K. (in Hawaiian) ... from the teacher" (Ibid.). These charges, as the previous pages have described, are not new or uncommon. Many visitors have said similar things. Yet, I think, as much has been said to counter this.

Mr. Pennebacker's first comment about the Hawaiians believing that they will be taken care of until they die warrants more probing. It is precisely this thought that strikes at the very heart of the controversy. The Robinsons have continually assured everyone that the interests of the Ni'ihauans are

first priority (Informant #4). This is borne out by the simple fact that the Robinsons, against every kind of natural or human-generated adversity, have tried to make the Ni'ihau ranch profitable. This drive is not, in my opinion, being fueled by some grandiose scheme to reap millions from Ni'ihau's meager resources, as the two thoughts are mutually exclusive. Nature has withered the island to a bowl of red dust and scraggly kiawe trees. The Robinsons could all live quite comfortably without Ni'ihau. In fact, there are times when it must feel like a gigantic financial millstone around their necks. If only half of the reported estimated money the Robinsons are said to have invested in Ni'ihau was returned, it would surely be a handsome sum. The fact that the Robinsons desire Ni'ihau to be profitable is motivated by their hope to achieve solvency for the island and thereby guarantee employment and security for the Ni'ihauans who want to remain there.

The Ni'ihauans deeply respect their protectors. Some claim that since they know no better, they are incapable of rationally choosing among alternatives. Yet, as has been described, the Ni'ihauans know much about the world off their island. Many have chosen to leave Ni'ihau with their families to embrace new lifestyles (Informants #5 and #10). Some find success while others return. This does not mean that the returnees do not possess marketable skills. There are no data to substantiate such a charge. However, knowing how much the Ni'ihauans love the peace and solitude of their islands, there is good reason to believe that that is the primary reason they choose to stay or return.

Proponents of the deprivation theory have used many tactics to attempt to wrest control of Ni'ihau from the present owners. The education of the young has probably been the most constant criticism. Arguments that favor State

control under the guise of providing "quality" education to children need only turn to American educational initiatives and innovations in Micronesia to see what drastic results that could bring. The United States force-fed western education to the Micronesians thinking that was the answer in making them successful in the modern world. The only problem with that reasoning is that Micronesia is not the modern world and it is doubtful that it will ever become a portion of it politically, socially, and, most importantly when speaking of western education, economically.

In the infinite wisdom of American educators and the American government, atoll dwellers read about Dick and Jane and Spot not in their primary language, but in a foreign tongue. Instead of learning things that would benefit them in their own environment, they were taught subjects that would be virtually meaningless to them later or for which jobs did not exist.

It can be argued that for education to be effective it should be functional. It is this same philosophy that both critics and supporters of Ni'ihau's rudimentary educational system use to support each of their respective arguments. Those who support this reasoning caution against too much sophistication, saying it could ruin a culture. They claim the Ni'ihauans do not need it if they stay on their island. The critics, on the other hand, say Ni'ihau is part of the 50th State and to deprive the children there of the skills they need to balance a checkbook, read and understand a newspaper, or write their congressional representative is unjust and un-American. They argue that these are skills all Americans need.

It is acknowledged that with Hawai'i being a state of the Union, the opportunities to use educational skills may be greater than say in Truk, Ponape, Palau or Yap. Again, however, the question is who gets to play God

and decide for the Ni'ihauans? The interest by the DOE to improve education on Ni'ihau never blossomed, although it did take root. The reason was because access to the island was difficult. It is again stressed, however, that the Ni'ihauans had as much to do with that as the owners themselves. Yet, it has always been the Robinsons who have taken the heat. The family has been accused of desiring to maintain a covey of illiterates only to ensure a non-disruptive, cheap labor force on Ni'ihau.

The numerous attempts by the State to obtain Ni'ihau, including Governor Burns' miracle cure for which there was no known disease, failed to rally much support, especially from the Ni'ihauans and other Hawaiians. In fact, these moves turned many against a State takeover. This can only be viewed as an endorsement of the Robinsons.

The Robinsons know full well that many of the Ni'ihauans would have some difficulty competing in today's world. However, were it not for their (the Robinsons) benevolence, what is being preserved in the way of the Hawaiian race and language would have even more diminished than it is today. Indeed, many young people who leave Ni'ihau and attend high school on neighbor islands are not returning once they experience the world of pizza and Pac-Man. The actions the Robinsons have taken to help preserve the race and its culture have been done with sincerity, and without violating human rights.

So among the rapidly modernizing islands of the Hawaiian chain, there is still one that refuses to keep pace. Ni'ihau has stood the test of time and is a preserved page of Hawaiian history, albeit only the plantation era. The island abounds with the true meaning of "aloha"—a word so often associated with the 50th State, but, unfortunately, losing its substance as the quest for the almighty dollar remains paramount.

Although touched and influenced in small ways by the modern world, the Ni'ihauans are determined not to be overrun by it. They are a special breed of people who love the simple things in life—the things that our society has a tendency to gradually erode and ultimately destroy. Their lifestyle is one of contentment and tranquility; one which places a high value on compassion, respect and love for their fellow man and the 'aina (land), rather than on fortune-seeking with its accompanying greed, jealousy and hatred.

Volcanologically, that which is dormant or extinct in the Hawaiian archipelago lies west, while eruptions which account for the birth of new land and keep the chain a "living" geological entity are in the east. Even as these words are being penned, Madame Pele is most vociferous on the Big Island of Hawai'i as Kilauea enters its twenty-third phase of its present eruptive activity. At the opposite end of the archipelago, this activity has been extinct for millions of years, with once great islands now reduced to sand spits and coral atolls. As the westernmost major island in the chain, Ni'ihau is already withering and slipping into the sea.

In addition to the physical indications of deterioration, certain aspects of Hawaiian culture show that the westward direction has been associated with death. On O'ahu, for example, the "leaping off" place to the next world for the spirits of the dead was the westernmost jut of land (Ka'ena Point) on the island. All of this is almost prophetic with respect to Ni'ihau. One would only hope that the demise of its culture will not precede by too much its inevitable physical fate. Can the island remain as the standard bearer of what is left of Hawaiian culture even though it cannot pre-date the plantation days? Can it remain a secure niche for those who call it home?

The answer, I believe, is yes, providing the Robinsons own Ni'ihau and there are at least a few Hawaiians who choose to maintain the legacy of the kupuna.

For those compassionate to the plight of the Ni'ihauans, the sentiments of Reverend Abraham K. Akaka, recently expressed in a letter to the editor of the Honolulu Star Bulletin, must be particularly encouraging. Reverend Akaka, who is the pastor of the renowned Kawaiaha'o Church in Honolulu and brother to one of Hawai'i's representatives to the U.S. Congress, wrote the letter subsequent to the Department of Education visit in 1982 and reports that emanated from it about how Ni'ihau must be changed. The letter eloquently described Akaka's beliefs about Ni'ihau and the Robinsons.

While this thesis is primarily an historical effort and since nothing of this magnitude has ever been attempted regarding Ni'ihau, it is hoped that through the maze of facts and figures readers can see and feel an underlying compassion for the Ni'ihauans. It is fitting, therefore, to conclude this work with selected portions of Reverend Akaka's expressive and impassioned plea on behalf of the Ni'ihauans.

With all due respect and aloha for our state Department of Education, it was with mixed emotions that I read reports of a recent visit to Niihau and its school, and felt two assumptions implicit in the article: (1) that Niihau's children, teachers, people and the Robinson family have much to learn from the outside world; and (2) that the outside world has little or nothing to learn from Niihau and its people. There is a trace of arrogance that came across to me that was both disturbing and a little amusing.

On Niihau there is no jail, police, locked doors, guns, crime, little if any drug abuse and mental illness, 100 percent voter turnout, no people and institutions hanging on the brink or moral or material bankruptcy. Is it not the better part of wisdom to pause and ask: Who has the superior lifestyle, society and school? Niihau or Honolulu? Who should be learning from whom?

It is on the side of prudence and wisdom to heed the advice of the mechanic to his apprentice: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." And we might add: Find out what is right about Niihau and use that knowledge to fix what is really broken in the outside world.

We on the outside of Niihau are part of a world whose political, economic and social systems are fragile and in many places broken.

Our leaders and many of us are highly educated, speak fluent Reaganese, Brezhnevese, Beginese, Arafese, Computerese, Robotese, Secularese, Religiese, Legalese, etc.

We are the people who sell and buy at Armaments Supermarkets as nonchalantly as wives shop at food markets.

And with all our education, we have brought mankind and our planet into the greatest peril of and anxiety about extinction in history.

What needs fixing and direction? Niihau or this wild running outside world?

I began my ministry in 1943 in Waimea, Kauai. Dear ones from Niihau came to Kauai to shop, worship, ho'olauna (visit) with relatives and friends. I will always cherish the memory of beautiful people, worshipping, eating, and visiting with the Kanaheles, Kahales, Kaohelauliis, Kaleohanos, Wailiulas, and others—times when I was refreshed and strengthened by their deep Christian faith and integrity, their childlike purity of heart and life.

The keikis (children) of Niihau who wished for schooling beyond the offerings of their Niihau School went to Waimea High School and Kamehameha Schools. Young people and families of Niihau were and are free to leave the Island if they wish, and to make their lives in the outside world.

Moe Keale, musician; Moses Keale, OHA trustee; Kanahele, art critic, are examples. They are neither prevented from leaving nor urged to leave. I found them free to choose the course they wanted. But in all of our Niihau folk is a deep love for their island ...

The Robinson family deserves great gratitude for their faithfulness, courage and love in fulfilling the responsibility given to them ...

The Robinsons have placed humanitarian considerations above economic ones. There have been many bad years when the price of wool, cattle, and other products earned returns on investment that were below cost of production ...

Said Valdemar Knudsen, who married Anne Sinclair, daughter of Elizabeth, when he was courting Anne on Niihau: 'They are a wonderful race, superior to us in many ways. It never occurs to them to 'tolerate' us. After all we are the malihinis, the haoles. We have come and taken over leadership of them. And they do not mind, as long as we are just and fair.'

If anyone wants to see a truly beautiful face, look into Niihau eyes. You will see a purity of soul in which there is no guile or greed, racist intolerance or hate or fear, but only great love and acceptance. That Niihau face speaks of the love and wholeness that most of us wish we could achieve.

While we know that no one is perfect, and that even Niihau is open to improvement, I hope that our Department of Education will be very humble, loving and gentle on this one, to try to find out what Niihau would like, not impose.

Let us try very hard to be sure that we are not trying to fix what ain't broke. Niihau is the last spot of native purity Hawaii has left. We all share responsibility for its preservation and perpetuation (SB 1982d).

CHAPTER XIX

EPILOGUE

One of my goals during this project was to obtain a critical appraisal of it by the Robinson family. A rough draft was forwarded to Mr. Bruce Robinson who, in turn, sent it to his mother, Helen, and she responded. A copy of her letter is at Appendix M.

When I received Mrs. Robinson's response my initial reaction was one of bitter disappointment. More than a year of research was seemingly for naught. Not only did she not comment directly on the accuracy of the information presented, but she took liberty to chide me as one of the many who were "delving deep for sinister schemes" the Robinsons were using to keep Ni'ihau private and secluded. To this day I find her comments incomprehensible, as her insinuations were far off the mark.

My efforts were purely scholarly. I believe that the study of Ni'ihau has much to offer students of the Pacific and its islands. There are truly not many isolated, protected places in the Pacific where the last remnants of an ethnic group or culture are located. It is also a classic study of the resistance of a people to the forced injection of western ways. While some aspects of western culture are being absorbed by the Ni'ihauans, it is being done on the terms and timetable of those most affected by it rather than by the will of an overseer.

I venture to say that if Ni'ihau was void of the 240-250 native Hawaiian speakers, none of us would care about the island or the Robinsons' ranching

endeavors there. If the ranches of the mainland's northwest or southwest were somehow enclaves of cultural rarities such as the Ni'ihauans, these places too would be the subject of extensive research.

Although Mrs. Robinson's remarks were disconcerting, this was, to some degree, expected. To date, no expose on Ni'ihau has evoked anything except critical or non-committal remarks from the owners. Why would mine be looked upon differently? But there was still hope ...

APPENDIX A

NI'IAU MATS

One of the articles used by the Ni'ihauans as a lucrative trade item was their skillfully crafted mats. These fine-textured, woven mats were much in demand not only by foreigners but also by chiefs throughout the kingdom.

There were two types: pure white ones made from the makaloa weed, and the pawehe made from the deep red basal sheaths of the kohekohe plant. For the pawehe mats, the islanders plaited the sheaths to "form ornamented geometrical patterns, mostly small triangles, near the border of the plait It appears that the 'pawehe' mats were only made on Niihau" (St. John 1959:162). William Ellis also described the mats:

... sometimes very large, measuring eighteen or twenty yards in length, and three or four yards in breadth, yet they are woven by hand, without any loom or frame, with surprising regularity and exactness. They are made with a fine kind of rush, part of which they stain of a red colour with vegetable dyes, and form their beautiful patterns by weaving them into the mat at its first fabrication, or weaving them in after it is finished (Ellis 1963:14-15).

It is assumed, although no specific mention is made in Ellis' account, that he is indeed, referring to the pawehe mat.

As far as the makaloa mats go, the straw from which they were made was

... an extract from the Makaloa plant, a species of Cyperus found only on Niihau and Kauai. It is a perennial sedge found in or near fresh or salt water. By a process known only by the women of Niihau and Kauai, they are able to utilize the upper and lower parts of the stem, to produce a product as flexible as cloth. It is from this product that floor and bed covers, clothing, capes, cloaks, and even the finest loin cloths for Kings Kaumualii, Kamehameha I and Lihua were made (Gay 1981:43-4).

A further testimony to the skill with which the mats were designed and the craftsmanship with which they were constructed, as well as to the esteem in which they were held throughout the islands is contained in the following article that appeared in an 1874 edition of the Hawaiian Gazette:

His Majesty received on Monday last a choice Niihau mat, presented to him by Mr. George Gay of Niihau. In this mat is wrought in red letters, a petition, praying that the taxes may be removed on all animals, and for other changes in the law. The petition which in Hawaiian is quite lengthy, and when copied off covered a page and a half of ... paper. It is the handiwork of an old woman named Kalai, who has been occupied 11 months in making it. She commenced it to give to the late Lunalilo, but on hearing of his death and the elevation of Kalakaua, sent it to the latter. His majesty has requested her to work two mats for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition—one to show the American coat of arms and the other the British coat of arms, designs of which will be sent to her to copy. Should she execute the order, these will be very attractive specimens of Hawaiian handiwork.

Some years ago a Hawaiian brought to us a Niihau mat three fathoms in length and less than one in width, in which was wrought in red letters the Lord's Prayer in Hawaiian. It was beautifully done and must have cost him many months of labor. We engaged to take it at his price, offered him just double what we had valued it at. Such specimens are very rare, and of course valuable. If made by days' work, it would be valued at hundreds of dollars (Hawaiian Gazette 1874:3).

The termination of the art of mat-making on Ni'ihau is attributed to the destruction of the makaloa weed and other plants by sheep, as well as the fact that the makaloa grew in swampy areas and could not withstand the constant droughts.

As far as actual cost of the mats, one is mentioned in the above article. One other reference was found in a Paradise of the Pacific article which stated that

They are very rare, and of late years, the price, which formerly ranged from five to eleven dollars or so a piece,

has advanced in an almost exorbitant degree since the industry was abandoned (Paradise of the Pacific 1893:51).

When one realizes that a single American dollar in the mid- to late nineteenth century brought considerably more than it does today, the five to eleven dollars paid for a mat back then says much for how they were appreciated and valued.

APPENDIX B

THE BATTLE OF NI'IAU

The following account of the "Battle of Ni'ihau," as it came to be called, is a montage pieced together from numerous references and interviews. Only direct quotes or unique theories about the events will be specifically referenced.

December 7, 1941 was a Sunday like any other on Ni'ihau—quiet and peaceful. The people were walking to church.

The Ni'ihauans knew their island and its sounds well. Certainly, a sputtering airplane engine was not common. Looking up against the bright morning sky, two planes were sighted flying low and heading west-southwest. One was smoking badly and both had large, red dots emblazoned on their fuselages. There was stirring and speculation among the island residents. The minister even complained of an inattentive congregation during the services.

After church, the Ni'ihauans quickly exited and again checked the sky closely as they returned to their homes for a day of rest and relaxation. Not much of anything is done on Ni'ihau on Sundays. Certainly, none of the residents expected to be part of the gruesome episode that was about to unfold on their tiny island.

Living there at this time were three Japanese people: Mr. Ishimatsu Shintani, and Mr. and Mrs. Yoshio Harada. The former was married to a Ni'ihauan woman. After living for a short time on Kaua'i, Shintani and his

bride moved to Ni'ihau in 1910. "... when bee culture was introduced on the island, he showed a talent for the work and became head-beekeeper" (Chickering 1941:5). After Shintani complained to the Robinsons that he needed assistants and that the Hawaiians did not seem to be interested in bee-keeping, Harada was hired and moved to Ni'ihau with his wife in 1938. It is said that the real purpose of the Robinsons hiring Harada "was to provide the old Scotch foreman (John Rennie) with a good cook and housekeeper for his declining years, and Mrs. Harada filled the bill" (Ibid.).

Born on Kaua'i, Harada and his wife were American citizens. He was a former employee of the Shell Oil Company there (Ibid. 6). Shintani was born in Hiroshima, came to Kaua'i in 1900 and worked on the sugar plantation of Makaweli (SB 1960e). At this time, Shintani was sixty-one years old.

At about 2 p.m., the serenity of the island was again disturbed by the sound of an airplane overhead; this time only one. It was one of the two that passed earlier on the morning, after the attack on Pearl Harbor. It could not locate the aircraft carrier from which it was launched, and was returning to Ni'ihau, nearly out of fuel. Some believe that Japanese pilots had been instructed to head for Ni'ihau if they were in trouble, thinking the island was uninhabited. There, it was thought, a Japanese submarine would pick them up (Beekman 1972:A8).

The pilot circled the village of Pu'uwai and surrounding pastures looking for a suitable landing area. The islanders watched from their hammocks and porches as the plane was guided to the ground, slid through a rocky field, into a fence, and came to rest twenty-five yards from the home of Hawila Kaleohano.

Most accounts of the incident claim there were no radios on the island and therefore the Ni'ihauans were unaware of the carnage at Pearl Harbor and other

places on O'ahu. However, the Robinsons, it is said, had a radio at their ranch house in Ki'eki'e which was powered by a generator. Mrs. Harada was housekeeper and it is speculated she may have known about the attack (Beekman 1982a).

Hawila ran to the downed plane and jumped on the shattered wing. In the cockpit he encountered a dazed naval airman by the name of Shigenori Nishikaichi, Petty Officer First Class. Suspecting the worse, Hawila grabbed the pilot's revolver. When the pilot made a move to grab his maps and official papers inside his flight suit, Hawila beat him to it. The pilot vehemently demanded Hawila return the incriminating papers, which he refused to do. Instead, he hid them. For now, the Japanese pilot was prisoner and may have been the first captured by an American in World War II in the Pacific.

As the startled but curious Ni'ihauans congregated around the downed aircraft, the fuselage was observed to have been peppered with bullet holes. There was no great anxiety among the islanders. The pilot was involved in action not at Pearl Harbor, but rather at the Kane'ohe Naval Air Station and Bellows Air Station on the windward side of O'ahu. These military installations were two of the many secondary targets during the coordinated Japanese attack.

The Ni'ihauans barraged the pilot with questions. "To all these ... the pilot shook his head as if to say, 'No speak English,' although it later developed that he not only understood it, but spoke it fluently" (Stroven and Day 1949:503).

Chickering's account claims Shintani was the first to be called to serve as interpreter. During the questioning, the pilot acknowledged the attack on Pearl Harbor. Upon hearing this, Shintani left the area with his wife fearing

that his Japanese ancestry would now make him very suspect in the eyes of the Hawaiians. Harada then became the primary interpreter.

On Monday, December 8th, Aylmer Robinson was expected to arrive from Kaua'i on his regularly scheduled supply and livestock run. The Japanese pilot was taken in a carriage to Ki'i landing to await the Robinson sampan. They waited all day and into the night before the Ni'ihauans carted the pilot back to Pu'uwai. All the while, the Ni'ihauans treated their "guest" courteously.

On Tuesday, the sequence of events was repeated with the same results. That night, however, they did not return to the village but remained at Ki'i. Surely Wednesday the Robinsons would come. They did not; nor on Thursday.

What the Ni'ihauans did not know at the time was that the Robinsons were besieging the Kaua'i Army District Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Eugene Fitzgerald, to permit them to make their supply run. However, "he was unable to allow a boat to leave since the navy had ordered all boats off the water" (ADV 1941b).

Having the Japanese pilot in or near Pu'uwai was becoming a very disruptive situation to the villagers. He kept demanding to have his official papers returned. On Thursday afternoon, it was decided to keep the pilot at Ki'eki'e near the Robinson ranch house, which is also where Harada and his wife resided. Her being the housekeeper and he being the ranch handyman, they had their own cottage nearby. Some reports said Harada suggested the change in venue for the prisoner (Larsen 1942:17; Clark 1942:504). Yet Harada seemed to have "begun to fear for his own integrity" (Chickering 1941:9), as Shintani had on the first day. Harada tried to convince Shintani to assist him as interpreter and in staying with the pilot. Shintani refused. When later they

met, Harada (and possibly the pilot) frightened Shintani "out of his resolve" and convinced him to take a bribe of a few hundred dollars to Hawila to obtain the pilots' papers. The aviator desperately wanted them destroyed, more for his honor than for what they contained. His convincing discussion to Shintani revolved around the perceived invincibility of Japan and the veiled threat of being charged with treason after the Emperor rules the world (Beekman 1972:A8).

Shintani arrived at Hawila's home and requested the papers after flashing the money, the origin of which is unsure. Hawila was adamant in his refusal. Shintani spoke of the possibility of Hawila (and himself) being killed if the papers were not returned. Shintani brandished a knife (Amorin 1982). "Hawila turned cold with rage. If he was to die, he said, he would rather die an honest American than disgraced as a traitor" (Chickering 1941:10).

Hawila allegedly made a move at Shintani who ran petrified out of the house and into the fields, fearing now for his life because of his failure. He was not about to return to Harada and the pilot.

By Friday of that week, Harada was greatly concerned about Shintani not returning. He feared that Shintani had now implicated him as a cohort of the pilot. This, coupled with whatever fear of reprisal the pilot was able to inject into him, caused Harada to switch allegiance. He and the pilot then planned how they would recover the papers.

In the afternoon, the pilot was being guarded by a huge Ni'ihauan named Hanaike Niheu. With the pilot unarmed and seemingly cooperative, the three-hundred-pound Hanaike needed no weapon. The pilot was able to convey to Hanaike to permit him to go across the yard to the honey house where Harada was working. There, Harada and the pilot conversed briefly in Japanese. All three men then went to a warehouse where the bee equipment was stored. Harada

pulled a pistol and the pilot a shotgun that was hidden behind the door. Hanaike was now their prisoner. They took the big Ni'ihauan to a sturdier shed in which they locked him. The two Japanese left for the village to get Hawila and the precious papers.

Hanaike ran to the loft of the warehouse and escaped by grabbing a tree limb that quickly broke under his weight (Amorin 1982). He then went to the ranch house to warn the elders of the village who were meeting there. When they looked for the revolver and shotgun that the Robinsons kept in the ranch house, they found both missing.

As Harada and the pilot walked through the underbrush along the road to Pu'uwai, they came upon a carriage being driven, ironically, by Hanaike's wife. In the carriage were also Hanaike's six children. Their seventeen-year-old cousin, Laika, was astride the horse pulling the carriage. The two Japanese stopped the carriage. Harada ordered all but Laika off and lined up the rest in close single file. "Putting the gun's muzzle between Mrs. Hanaike's shoulders ... (he) said one shot would kill all" (Chickering 1941:13). The implication was all too clear.

The pilot and Harada got on board and, with Laika still on the horse, went to Pu'uwai. As they stopped to unlatch a gate to the village, Laika ran away. Nearing the wrecked plane, the two saw a young man named Kalihilihi Niau standing guard. The pilot forced Kalihilihi to lead them to Hawila's house. Hawila saw them approaching and left by the back door.

Harada and the pilot entered the house and searched for the papers. Kalihilihi saw his chance to escape and did. Unable to locate the papers, the two decided to take some tools from an old tractor nearby and return to the plane to dismantle its two machineguns.

Hawila was joined by Hanaike and others. The situation was becoming critical. Hawila decided if the Robinsons weren't coming, then they would have to go to Kaua'i for help. After telling Ka'ahakila Kalimahuluhulu and Naulu Kanahele to warn the other villagers, Hawila hid the papers in a very secure place and headed for Ki'i landing.

Earlier that morning, the chief cowboy, Kekuhina Ka'ohelauli'i, went with others to the cliffs to prepare the ancient distress signal—fire. They prepared the materials and waited until dark. Kekuhina decided on the fire because of the length of time that had elapsed from when the Robinson sampan was expected, which was now five days overdue. He did not know that the Japanese were terrorizing the village.

That night the fire was lit. It was reportedly observed on Kaua'i and the Civil Defense notified. No action, however, was taken because those who saw it did not understand its meanings (Ibid. 16).

Hawila came upon the fire and told Kekuhina of events taking place in Pu'uwai. Descending from the cliffs to Ki'i, the whaleboat was boarded by Hawila and Kekuhina, along with others named Akana, Willie and Inoka Ka'ohelauli'i, and Hokulua Kanahele. They left Ni'ihau about 1:30 a.m. Saturday, December 13th. After fourteen grueling hours of rough-water rowing in the Kaulakai Channel, the whaleboat arrived on Kaua'i at 3:20 p.m. What they did not know was that the situation back on Ni'ihau had already come to a bloody end.

In Pu'uwai the two Japanese had captured two villagers named Kalanipio Niau and the aforementioned Ka'ahakila Kalimuhuluhulu. Both had returned to the village on mercy missions. Kalanipio was trying to find his half-brother,

Keuao; and Ka'ahakila was trying to assist his elderly and sickly mother-in-law, Mrs. Houaulani.

Ka'ahakila was tied to a carriage. By this time, the Ni'ihauans had had an opportunity to unhitch and free the horse. Kalanipio was forced to help take the machinegun out of the plane and place it and ammunition on the carriage. A few short bursts were fired and reverberated through the village with deafening staccato roar. Almost everyone had now evacuated their homes and were hiding in the thickets behind the village, down at the beach, or in caves in the hills.

After the machinegun burst, the pilot tried to convince his prisoners that unless Hawila was found and the papers returned, people would be killed. The pilot manipulated the radio in his aircraft to where screeches were heard emanating from it. His unknowing prisoners certainly believed now that he could communicate with other Japanese to get help. Harada, too, was beginning to fear greatly. It seemed he may lose no matter which way things turned out.

Ka'ahakila, with his hands still tied, was given a message to take to Mrs. Harada at Ki'eki'e. A short way down the road, Ka'ahakila disappeared into the brush and met Benihakala Kanahele near the beach. He told Beni of events thus far.

When the Japanese went for more tools from the tractor in order to securely mount the machineguns to the carriage, they lost another prisoner. Kalanipio ran for the fields and was gone.

Beni and Ka'ahakila had returned to the village. At the carriage they stole virtually all of the machinegun ammunition and hid it since neither of the Japanese returned with tools they needed. When they did return, the pilot was beside himself with anger and started through the village again. They

were being watched from the bushes by the Ni'ihauans. Everyone was gone from the village except Mrs. Houaulani, who Ka'ahakila never had a chance to help before being captured. She exemplified the religious conviction of the Ni'ihauans when, while reading her bible on her front porch, the pilot approached her and, with a pistol pointed at her, threatened her life. Calmly she looked at him and said: "There is only one who has the power of life and death, and anyone who interferes with his purpose will bear his punishment" (Ibid. 20). The Japanese left cursing, but never harmed the elderly lady.

The two Japanese continued their rampage through the village well into the early morning hours of Saturday. At dawn, they set fire to the plane and Hawila's house. As Hawila and his companions were rowing to Kaua'i, the glow from the burning house dimly lit the sky behind him. They feared for their families not knowing what was ablaze.

Beni was a leader among the Ni'ihauans. He was wise and powerful, although not as nimble as he once was. An accident had seriously injured him when he was in his thirties (Ibid. 22). However, he had slowly regained his health and his feats of strength had become almost legendary as this description indicates:

He could carry three one-hundred-and-thirty-pound cases of honey at a time; he could grab an attacking wild boar by the ears, throw him, and finish him off with a knife; he had often slipped into a quiet bay where sharks slept in shallow water, leaped onto a shark's back and had the thrill of a fast ride for as long as he could hold on ... (Stroven and Day 1949:509).

Larsen verified Beni's strength but claimed the aging Hawaiian could only handle two cases of honey at a time (Larsen 1942:8). The method of pig hunting on Ni'ihau and the docility of the sharks in Ni'ihauan waters has already been discussed in the body of this work.

While Beni and his wife were on their way to the village to see what the Japanese were doing, they were both captured. The pilot demanded Beni search for Hawila or Beni's wife would be killed. Beni then said to Harada in Hawaiian: "We ought to disarm that man. He's dangerous" (Chickering 1941:21). Harada, now extremely fearful that the pilot would kill him first if anything went wrong, told Beni that he could not. Beni feigned a search for Hawila knowing that he had already gone to Kaua'i for help.

The limits of the pilot's patience had long been exceeded, and it is reported that he then threatened to kill every Ni'ihauan starting with Beni and his wife, Ella. They were to die in the parlor of their own home.

There in their 'lumi ho'kipa,' their most personal place where all their simple treasures were, their bodies would lie, the blood soaking into the lauhala mat, a dreadful lesson to all villagers (Ibid. 22).

As the pilot, Harada, Beni and his wife were about to move toward Beni's house, the final, deadliest and most confusing chapter of the story occurred. At this point, only a few things can be stated with any reasonable degree of certainty. First, a scuffle took place; secondly, Beni was shot by the pilot three times—in the stomach, groin and thigh; thirdly, after being shot, Beni picked the pilot up like he would a sheep and dashed his head against a stone wall; fourthly, Harada committed suicide in a somewhat awkward (he needed two opportunities) manner; and lastly, the Japanese pilot died during the confusion. Harada did not die instantly after his second suicide attempt. He tried to get Beni to help him, but Beni, fearing he himself would die shortly, walked back to the village. Harada died where he lay a few hours later (Larsen 1952:24).

The question that has never really been accurately answered about that fateful afternoon of December 13, 1941 is: Who actually killed the pilot?

Here are a few of the theories postulated by those whose accounts coincide enormously up to that point. Larsen claims the pilot's skull was crushed by the force of the blow against the wall. "The story that appeared in the paper that Beni's wife hit the aviator with a big stone, they say, is not true as she was struggling with Harada at the time" (Ibid. 23). Larsen also alleges that he got his account from Beni himself after spending a week on Ni'ihau in 1942 (Ibid. 22.).

Chickering says after Beni threw the pilot against the wall "... he fell on the body, picked up a rock and with one mighty blow made pulp of the man's head" (Chickering 1941:23). No source is given for Chickering's account.

Clarke (Stroven and Day 1949:511) claims that after Beni slammed the pilot against the wall, Ella picked up a rock and "started right in to beat the pilot's brains out. She did a pretty good job." This was allegedly told by Beni to an interpreter in Kaua'i immediately after it happened. This version is also similar to the reports in both major Honolulu daily newspapers on December 16, 1941.

Mr. Allan Beekman concludes that Ella was the culprit. She, he claims, allegedly admitted killing the pilot during an interview afterwards (Beekman 1982).

One man who was stationed on Ni'ihau from 1942 to 1944, and claims to have spoken directly many times with Beni, Ella and other Ni'ihauans about the incident says Ella was not even at the scene and that all accounts that say she was are incorrect (Amorin 1982).

Finally, one Ni'ihauan claims to possess a tape which recounts the details of the incident in Beni's own Hawaiian words. The person says that translations have given rise to inaccuracies and distortions. The "true"

story is alleged to be on tape, of which one duplicate also exists, and that when someone desiring to write the true version or make a movie about it is found, a "sale" can be arranged!

The incident gave rise to a famous saying to "warn the Japanese not to shoot Hawaiians more than twice. The third time, they get mad!" However, the truth about the actual killing of the pilot will, most likely, never be known conclusively as all the participants are now dead. Beni passed away on May 26, 1962 (SB 1964b), at the age of seventy-one, and Ella a few years later.

Aylmer and Lester arrived on Ni'ihau on Sunday, December 14th. With them were the six Ni'ihauans who rowed across the channel and a contingent of thirteen men from the 299th Infantry Regiment. The contingent was under the supervision of then Lieutenant Jack Mizuha who later went on to gain fame as a captain in the 100th Infantry Battalion during the Italian campaign, and then become an Associate Justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court (SB 1964a). He is now a practicing attorney in Honolulu.

Mizuha is reputed to have said that his small group of "Niseis" (second generation Japanese) distinguished themselves well during the Ni'ihau mission and proved their loyalty to the United States. They showed no sympathy about the death of the two Japanese, nor did they hesitate in arresting Shintani and Mrs. Harada when ordered to do so. Mizuha felt that this incident "may have helped President Roosevelt and military commanders accept Niseis in the armed services in World War II" (Ibid.).

In Mizuha's contingent was also Sergeant Solomon Holi who removed the uniform of the pilot before he was buried. Holi claims that the bodies were found close together and, due to the heat, both were in the process of decomposition by the time they arrived. Maggots were already at their grizzly

work (Beekman 1982a). There was also an account that "wild cats had already eaten away both their faces" (Chickering 1941:23). The bodies were not taken to Kaua'i but buried that evening on Ni'ihau by the islanders whom they terrorized (Holi 1982). Each grave was two feet deep and horse blankets served as caskets. A large lava rock served as a headstone (Beekman 1972:A10).

Shintani and Mrs. Harada were taken into custody and were interned for the duration of the war (Beekman 1982a). In 1945, Shintani was released and returned to Ni'ihau. On November 30, 1960, he became a naturalized citizen of the United States at the age of seventy-eight (SB 1964a). Years later, Mrs. Harada made arrangements to have the remains of both Japanese removed from their Ni'ihau graves and cremated. The U.S. Army, however, retrieved that of the pilot. The urn was then sent to the Japanese Government marked "unknown." The pilot was posthumously promoted after the war to "Special Duty Ensign" (Beekman 1982a).

To close this intriguing story of how the World War found its way to Ni'ihau, it is interesting to note that the throat of the pilot was cut (Holi 1982; Beekman 1982a; Amorin 1982). This fact was never publicized in any of the early accounts. Beni is thought to have done it to insure, after he had been shot, that the pilot would not harm anyone again (Holi 1982). Most of the Ni'ihauan men carried a knife and were quite skilled in using it since they hunted wild pig with no more than that and a lasso.

APPENDIX C

AYLMER ROBINSON'S LETTER TO SENATOR CHARLES A. RICE
DEFENDING LIVING CONDITIONS ON NI'HAU

Makaweli, Kauai
April 15, 1947

Hon. Charles A. Rice
Lihue, Kauai

Dear Charlie:

As it seems that the Senate Committee is again trying to agitate for changes on Niihau which would materially alter living conditions for the Hawaiian community on that island, it seems advisable to follow up our recent conversation with some written notes to present to you in more condensed and definite form of our reasons for believing that change, such as appears to be contemplated, would be very detrimental as well as distasteful to the Niihau people:

The Committee's recommendations seem to be directed towards:

1. Government ownership of school site and building
2. Government ownership of a wharf or pier
3. Government owned road from wharf to school and government building
4. Government ownership of an airplane landing field
5. Government hospital and dispensary
6. Government ownership and construction of a church or churches of several faiths, or acquisition of land to be made available for such
7. Government ownership and operation of a courthouse and police station

A good deal seems to be said about raising the standards of the school, but that could appear to be an administrative problem, rather than legislative. I will deal with each of these points under their respective headings.

Nos. 1-4: The essence of the whole matter seems to be contained in the move for government wharf, government landing field for planes, and government road. Government ownership of the school buildings and site would seem to be mainly an excuse for the acquisition of facilities to get to the site. So long as the school buildings are placed at the use and control of the school authorities, I fail to see where the matter of ownership adds anything to the adequacy of the school service. You will recall too that the school buildings in this community center would be very upsetting to the people of the island.

These public facilities above listed would seem to be of value only to those who have no reasonable necessity of being there. They are not needed for the government administrative departments, as they have always been accorded access. In fact we have gone much further than passively allowing access, and over the years have always extended cooperation and assistance to all government departments in the performance of their duties. This is true in our dealings with the school authorities, the Public Health authorities, the Bureau of Entomology, Survey Department (Territorial, Federal, and Military), Geological Survey and Water Resources Survey, the Army, the Navy and the Coast Guard, the Police Department, Election Authorities, etc. To all of these we have extended assistance, without charge, in supplying transportation on our boats and sampans for their personnel and supplies, and also transportation on the island and guides to assist them on the island in carrying out their work.

Help has also given to various scientific organizations in conducting studies on that island. Friends of the Niihau people have always been allowed access, but to avoid abuse of this privilege, the people have requested that they make application for their friends so that they would not be put upon by intruders seeking to abuse the traditional Hawaiian hospitality.

Niihau is about the only place in the Territory, I think we are safe in saying, where the population of the island is practically entirely Hawaiian, and where all operations are supervised and conducted by Hawaiians. When Lester or I are on the island we work with our people in the same spirit of cooperation that has customarily prevailed on Hawaiian ranches. When we are away, control is exercised by a group or committee of Hawaiian overseers. We have all seen, during our lives, the gradual decrease and submergence of the Hawaiians on the other islands. Thirty or forty years ago there was a large Hawaiian population in this part of Kauai, today there is a comparative handful. But on Niihau the course of the population trend has been the other way, the Hawaiian Community being stronger and more numerous, a trend which has been particularly strong in the last 10 to 20 years. The vital statistics used for the Senate Committee, although based on an 11-year period which appears so selected to include one year of more than average number of deaths (and which on the more normal period of a decade would be much more favorable) show that the excess of births over deaths and the rate of population increase on Niihau is the highest in the Territory.

Very important in maintaining this favorable state of affairs is the fact through the island's isolation and the unity of ownership and control we and the Niihau people have been successful in keeping out liquor. I think it needs no argument to show that liquor has been a serious menace to the

Hawaiian people. Even apart from that, liquor in a small isolated community of any race would be a dangerous source of disorder and disunity. Once a government road is established, or government wharf or landing field, the control of this item is destroyed, and with that gone, it and many attendant evils will begin to creep in to undermine the life of the Hawaiian community. We are therefore fundamentally opposed to the condemnation of any property on the island. There is no denial of freedom in thus keeping out liquor as it is in full accord with the solid opinion of the community. But opening the way to irresponsible access opens the way too to an insidious breakdown of such community opinion and solidarity. If the lack of government roads be rated as isolation, isolation in itself is not un-American. Army officers and Geological Survey men who have worked over the Western States have often stated that on Niihau they feel more at home than in almost any other part of the Territory on account of its strong similarity to ranching operations in the West.

As to improving the standards of education there is no disagreement, and we are in cordial cooperation with the Department of Public Instruction toward that end. The Department has already accomplished much and is, I believe, steadily moving on a gradual and wisely planned improvement. Within comparatively recent years the school has risen with the increase of population from about 25 children to an enrollment of about sixty, and the number of teachers increased to two, and the grades taught have also, I believe, been increased. The Department has often told us of its intention to build up these grades until a full eight grade program is accomplished, and we have expressed our willingness to cooperate toward this end. That it has not yet been achieved is due to the very real difficulties to be overcome, a

matter which the Senate Committee, with only a few hours on Niihau in the calmest part of the year, could hardly be expected to realize.

Lack of water is a factor not to be overlooked. The island is the lowest inhabited island of the group, and lying to the lee of Kauai which takes so much moisture out of the trade winds with its high mountain rainfall, the island is very lacking in rainfall. As is usual in arid areas, comparatively small rains often bring such a rapid growth of vegetation that a visitor seeing it only at such times, can get little or no idea of the real aridity of the island. Dr. Stearns of the U. S. Geological Survey in his recent study of the geology and ground water resources came to the conclusion that the rainfall was so slight and the ground water supplies so unfavorable that little benefit could be obtained over the years from that source. The Coast Guard has found it necessary to condense its water supply from the sea water, and we are not unlikely to have to follow suit, not only for persons but also for stock. But this source of supply is as yet highly unsatisfactory, and is a constant source of discontent in its personnel as the supply is precarious, being dependent on machinery which takes a great deal of care and attention, and the water obtained from it is not too good at the best. Not only is the plant expensive to install, but it uses an immense amount of fuel and takes a great deal of care of mechanics and operators. To equip a school and teachers cottages etc. from such a supply would be indeed a major problem and one that, without supply ships such as used by the Coast Guard, would be almost impossible to maintain.

The statement is attributed to the Senate Report that the Niihau people, born and brought up on Niihau, would be unable to survive decently in competition with free men elsewhere. The fact is that there are Niihau people

now living on Kauai and Honolulu, etc., and all make a very good living and find that their services are sought for at a premium, owing to sound character, sound physique and a high grade of intelligence. The way in which Niihau people met the emergency of the Japanese plane landing there on December 7, 1941, and the subsequent events proved that in intelligence, alertness and sturdy independence they are fully equal to the best standards of American traditions anywhere. They regard it as very unfair that, whereas during the way their record was held up as something to be emulated, the Senate Committee should now so completely condemn the type of their community life and aim at destroying it by throwing it open to influences which have so widely changed living conditions generally in recent years.

No. 5: In regard to health, much more medical attention is supplied than has been realized, or is indicated in the Senate Report. To place a resident doctor or nurse on the island would be to put so heavy a ratio to the population as either to be unattractive to the doctor and get only the poorest caliber, or to cause an undue interference with the daily lives of the people. They are self reliant and do not want this. However we do supply complete medical attention, either sending it to Niihau in emergencies or bringing the people to Kauai for attention. This includes not only ordinary medical, but also the attention of specialists on Kauai and in Honolulu, and eye, ear and throat specialists, etc. For a number of years past Dr. Kuhns and Dr. Wade have made trips to Niihau from time to time, and latterly, in order to meet the views of the Board of Health and to make sure that no unfavorable health conditions could arise on the island without the knowledge of the Board, we have arranged with Dr. Kuhns for a regularly scheduled monthly trip and clinic service to the people, with an office building

specifically set apart for the purpose, which service, due to Dr. Kuhns understanding of and long acquaintance with the Niihau people, has been very well received. For a number of years past we have been endeavoring to arrange for the installation of radio telephone communications between Niihau and Kauai, both for emergency and business. This has been difficult owing to stringent licensing restrictions, but it looks as if this might soon be able to be arranged. If it does not prove practicable, we may use carrier pigeons between Niihau and Kauai as we did during the early years of the war when we carried them regularly on our sampan to supply information to Army headquarters in event of emergency. Of course, for the present there is radio communication between Niihau and Kauai which is supplied by the Coast Guard, and such communication has been in existence through the Army and later through the Coast Guard since the early days of the war. We are very hopeful that by the time the present connection is removed, we will be in a position to replace it by a system of broader utility. As you know, we operate a large power sampan between Niihau and Kauai, and on Niihau, where no boat can be anchored for any length of time we keep a whaleboat drawn up in a boathouse, that being the boat which brought over word at the start of the war of the landing of the Japanese aviator. In order to speed up the time of delivery of any emergency cases to Kauai, we are studying the possibility of installing auxiliary and removable power to this whaleboat. A four-wheel-drive truck (Dodge power wagon) greatly speeds up delivery to the landings. Formerly all hauling was done by wagon or tractor, but now since the war with four-wheel drive available in commercial cars, the use of the trucks is at least practicable, and has at once been put into effect. It is planned to build up the health service to the Niihau people by education and by making it

appreciated, rather than by authority and we feel that this can be best accomplished as a private undertaking but in cooperation with and full understanding of the situation on the part of the Board of Health. Dr. Wilbar has been pretty fully advised of our program and I believe is in sympathy with it.

No. 6: As to religious freedom, the Niihau people have it in the fullest sense. They conduct their own church without interference and without the domination of any outside governing body. It is a church of the type established by the early missionaries from New England, and is a strong church representing the whole community life. To have government aid accorded to outside churches to attempt to break into the community life would come very near to setting up a State church, and would be un-American in the extreme. No Niihau person has at any time been refused by us a visit from his or her spiritual advisers, nor have any expressed to us a desire for it.

No. 7: As to a court house and police station, this seems a bit elaborate. Niihau is a part of the Waimea district, and for the present seems sufficiently cared for. The community is too small to call for anything as elaborate as indicated in the report. A policeman would have so little to do as to prove very trying to any efficient man who would be suitable for the position. On the other hand with the increase in commercial fishing boats operating so close in on the coast and even raiding the shores for various purposes apart from their legitimate fishing business, the need for police may become greater than in the past, and we are giving careful consideration to your idea of appointment of special police from among the Niihau people on a basis that would not constitute exclusive employment. This idea has much merit, but the people are proud of their record of freedom from crime and the

lack of need of law enforcement agencies, and consideration for their feelings may make it well to defer action on this point for the time being, a point which we have not yet finally ascertained.

One more point, and that is in connection with the bill in the House of Representatives to establish on Niihau a School for Juvenile Delinquents. The thing is so grotesque as to be unthinkable, but would be so disastrous that it cannot be ignored. Apart entirely from the injustice of putting all of the youthful criminals from the other islands in upon a community that has been free from crime, there is also the practical problem of supply and transportation and that of water and many others. I can hardly think that this bill would get any serious minded support, but with the present tendency to try to upset conditions on Niihau any such bill is disturbing in the extreme, and we certainly hope that its defeat can be made certain.

It is also to be noted, that in spite of the belief of the Senate Committee that the people are only happy because they are ignorant of conditions elsewhere, the people of Niihau do not live there because of not knowing any other life on the other islands, they prefer life on Niihau. At least 40% of the Niihau working people have spent considerable periods of time working on Kauai or on Inter-island steamers, but have returned to Niihau because they find living conditions there preferable to those elsewhere. We have four men on Niihau who were born on Hawaii I believe, or at least came from there. Of these, three came to Niihau as grown men and have preferred to live there, even though at least one of them is a land owner on Hawaii. Some of the Niihau people own lands on the other islands but do not care to live on them, liking Niihau better. The Niihau people travel a great deal to and from Kauai and to and from Honolulu, and also to Hawaii, etc. They have friends

and relatives in all parts of the group with whom they are in continual correspondence. A considerable number of them subscribe to the Honolulu newspapers, Star Bulletin or Advertiser. There are a number of radios on the island, although during the war this was not possible on any great scale owing to the lack of batteries. Kerosene refrigerators are also in use. The people order their supplies from various houses all over the Mainland, as well as from local stores on Kauai, which is another proof of their ability to conduct such transactions as they consider desirable for their welfare and comfort. Among the Niihau people who have taken up employment elsewhere, with only the background of Niihau bringing up and Niihau schooling, some have taken up work on ships and in connected work, and have done very well, at least one rising to be captain in the Inter Island in Honolulu.

I have written at some length, although from your long familiarity with Niihau and with Niihau people you will realize that a great deal more could be said on each point. I have just recently returned from Niihau. The people there are greatly disturbed over the prospect of legislation to break up the type of their community life, and they look very much to you to help them. They and all of us appreciate all that you have done for us and we hope that, with others who have kindly promised to stand by us, you will be able to withstand any of the changes suggested by the Senate Committee as noted above.

With aloha,

Ever sincerely,

Signed Aylmer Robinson

(Source: Senate Journal 1948:631-634).

APPENDIX D

THE LANGUAGE OF NI'IIHAU

Many non-native Hawaiian language speakers have visited Ni'iihau and have expressed difficulty in communicating with the Ni'iihauans. Most problems occur in trying to understand the Ni'iihauans as opposed to them understanding the guests. Ni'iihauans must speak slower for the non-native speaker to fully understand the conversation.

Book-learned Hawaiian is different than that spoken on Ni'iihau. For instance, the Ni'iihauans still use the traditional "t" instead of the "k" in many words. The way a University of Hawai'i student is taught to pronounce the number seven is *ehiku*. For the Ni'iihauan, the correct pronunciation is *ehitu*. Another example is the word for "table." The non-native speaker says *pakaaukau*, while the Ni'iihauan says *patautau*. The Ni'iihauans claim that use of the letter "t" gives more feeling to the language (Informant #2). This difference may not seem like something that could confuse a fluent, non-native speaker, but that little nuance coupled with a few peculiarities in vocabulary and word meaning, not to mention a much faster rate of speaking by the Ni'iihauans, and one can readily understand how there may be some difficulties in communication by those who speak the same language.

The Ni'iihauans are also said to write in the "traditional" manner, that is, without the use of punctuation marks. In both their speech and in their writing, the use of the glottal stop ('okina) and the macron, which for the non-native speaker are important symbols that indicate vowel length and stress that do not conform to the predictable pattern (Pukui and Elbert 1979:xxviii),

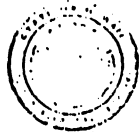
are used very loosely. The lack of them causes difficulties in comprehension for non-native speakers, since these marks also change word meanings.

These differences in dialect are not only frustrating to those who speak Hawaiian as a second language, but also to the native speakers from Ni'ihau who attend school (high school and college) off island. Because of these dialect differences, the Ni'ihauan students are said to have difficulty in Hawaiian culture and history courses. Many times it is the Ni'ihauan student who is made to conform in order to achieve correct answers and a passing grade. For a people whose lifestyle has been, for the most part, static, it is a difficult adjustment.

One young Kamehameha Schools student from Ni'ihau still has vivid memories of an admonishment she received when she spoke Hawaiian at a school assembly. The student was publicly corrected for grammar in that it was not that which is in common usage on O'ahu (Informant #2) or taught in schools there. The person doing the admonishing was a book-learned linguist. Albeit exceptionally fluent in his own right, one wonders about his audacity to correct a "native" speaker. Therein lies the dynamics of the language.

Many people on Ni'ihau speak English. Even more understand it but are not proficient in using it themselves. Visitors to the island often remark about the children's difficulty in using the second language. The fact that it is a second language for them and rarely, if ever, used outside the classroom accounts for the overall lack of proficiency. There is no reinforcement. Moreover, there is little desire to learn the language it seems. One source said that many fear if English is used too often, Ni'ihau may become unduly influenced or even dominated by the haole "civilization" (Ibid.).

APPENDIX E



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

HONOLULU

February 10, 1970

JOHN A. GURNS
GOVERNORGOVERNOR'S MESSAGE TO THE STATE LEGISLATURE
NIIHAU: A PROPOSED NATURAL PRESERVE

This is a wild land, country of my choice,
 With harsh craggy mountain, moor ample and bare,
 Seldom in these acres is heard any voice
 But voice of cold water that runs here and there
 Through rocks and lank heather growing without care...

Rocky Acres, by Robert Graces

From the time the Hawaiian Islands were discovered, Hawaii has been regarded and envied as the prime example of natural beauty. In the mountain forests exotic birds flew among trees found only in Hawaii. The offshore sea life presented a marine biologist's dream.

This primeval environment no longer exists. Man's intrusion has wrought irrevocable changes throughout the Islands.

There are, however, a few areas in the State where our biological and botanical riches are relatively undisturbed. These areas should be preserved and protected from further encroachment.

One such area, still relatively unspoiled by the physical trappings of progress is Niihau. This island is sometimes referred to today as "the Forbidden Island;" its people as the "the Forgotten People."

This Administration submits Niihau presents an unparalleled opportunity to establish a controlled natural preserve while, at the same time, giving the residents of Niihau a choice of moving into the mainstream of contemporary Island life, and I mean a real choice.

- 2 -

I propose we immediately take steps to acquire the entire Island of Niihau. This should be done before any private offers for the purchase of Niihau are entertained by its present owners. The possible sale of Niihau for commercial development would result in a tragic loss of a priceless treasure--a complete Island which could be restored to its primeval condition and maintained as a natural preserve for the enjoyment of all who cherish the old image of Hawaii.

Early acquisition would be well within our present means. The Island's present assessed tax value, at 100 per cent, is roughly \$300,000.

Niihau lies about 17.5 miles west of Kauai. It has an area of 72 square miles and an altitude of 1,281 feet. Rainfall ranges from 18 to 26 inches per year.

Niihau once had extensive forests. Much of this growth has been ravaged by the goats, first introduced in 1794 by Captain Vancouver, and by the sheep and cattle introduced later. Through proper management and conservation practices, these forests can be regenerated, providing the environment necessary to support indigenous and rare birds such as the Elepaio, the Kauai Thrush, and Amakihi, the Creeper (*Paroreomyza Bairdii*) and the Akepa (*Loxops caeruleirostris*).

Controlled regrowth would also create condition favorable to the further seeding of the *Brighamia insignis*, one of the most beautiful plants found in the Hawaiian chain. This plant is endemic to Niihau, growing only on the cliffs around the spring on Kaali Cliff on the northern part of the island.

Additionally, there are only a few areas in the State where lowland, shorezone and shallow water marine life still exist in a natural state. The waters around Niihau are among the best examples of such marine life, undisturbed by pollution and man.

Public acquisition of Niihau will also give the State an opportunity to offer additional services to the people who presently live there as employees of the island's owners. They should not remain "forgotten." It is our view that they should at least be given the choice of moving into the mainstream of Island life today. The State will give all who so desire special assistance to ease their transition.

The residents who prefer to continue their present mode of life can continue to do so under a leaseback system with the owners of the Island. It should be emphasized that the intent in this respect is to give the residents a free choice in their way of life.

- 3 -

I view the proposed acquisition of Niihau as part of a total effort to preserve, protect and enhance our total quality of life.

Too much of what is really native Hawaiian has already been irretrievably lost.

Accordingly, I herewith submit for your early and favorable consideration this proposal for the public purchase of Niihau.

John A. Burns

APPENDIX F

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 1970
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 1678-7
H.D. 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR ACQUIRING AN OPTION TO PURCHASE
THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. Findings and declaration of necessity.

The Legislature finds and declares that: (a) the island of Niihau offers an unparalleled opportunity for the preservation of Hawaiian flora and fauna and to return unique environmental areas to their original pre-European condition; (b) the waters around Niihau possess some of the best examples of shallow water and shore-zone marine life; (c) these unique and rare flora and fauna, both marine and terrestrial, must be preserved for future generations of our people; (d) the land and waters surrounding Niihau could be used for aesthetic, historical, educational, and scientific purposes; (e) Niihau affords the last reasonable opportunity to preserve examples of the lowland and dryland native environments, most of the lowlands in the State having been pre-empted with non-conservation uses; (f) the State should immediately negotiate for an option to purchase the land to forestall any conveyance to others or the development of the

Page 2H.D. NO. 1678-76
H.D. 1

island for commercial or other non-conservation purposes;
(g) the option should be for a 25-year period and the purchase price of Niihau should be settled during the negotiation of the option; and (h) the reason for the option is to protect the interest of State and at the same time protect the interest of the residents of Niihau. They and the owners of Niihau have expressed their desire that the State forego the acquisition of Niihau. They are happy living under the present peaceful conditions and the owners have indicated that they have no intention of selling Niihau. The State by acquiring an option would protect its interest should circumstances change and would at the same time comply with the desires of the residents and owners of Niihau.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$_____, or so much thereof as may be necessary, to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. Expending agency. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Governor for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective Date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

APPENDIX G

S B. NO. 1516-70

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE
ISLAND OF NIIHAU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. Findings and declaration of necessity.

The Legislature finds and declares that: (a) the island of Niihau offers an unparalleled opportunity for the preservation of Hawaiian flora and fauna and to return unique environmental areas to their original pre-European condition; (b) the waters around Niihau possess some of the best examples of shallow water and shore-zone marine life; (c) these unique and rare flora and fauna, both marine and terrestrial, must be preserved for future generations of our people; (d) the land and waters surrounding Niihau could be used for aesthetic, historical, educational, and scientific purposes; (e) Niihau affords the last reasonable opportunity to preserve examples of the lowland and dryland native environments, most of the lowlands in the State having been pre-empted with non-conservation uses; and (f) acquisition by the

S B. NO. 1516-70
Page 2

State should be immediately initiated to forestall any conveyance to others or the development of the island for commercial or other non-conservation purposes.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the acquisition of Niihau as a natural preserve.

SECTION 3. Expending agency. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Honolulu, Hawaii

Dated:

INTRODUCED BY:

James K. Hottel
William C. Fong
John K. Kawahara
Maunaloa Kamae
Small Ching
Kenneth J. Brown
Allen H. Lunn
John C. Loh
Frank Nijima
Donald H. Chase
George J. Bickman
Amos W. Yano
George R. Buijs
Delene J. Jankovich

7/10/70

(To be made one and eight copies)
FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 1967-70
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO.

1516-70
S. D. 1

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 Section 1. Findings and declaration of necessity. The Legislature finds
2 and declares that: (a) the island of Niihau offers an unparalleled
3 opportunity for the preservation of Hawaiian flora and fauna and to
4 return unique environmental areas to their original pre-European
5 condition; (b) the waters around Niihau possess some of the best
6 examples of shallow water and shore-zone marine life; (c) these unique
7 and rare flora and fauna, both marine and terrestrial, must be pre-
served for future generations of our people; (d) the land and waters
surrounding Niihau could be used for aesthetic, historical, educational,
and scientific purposes; (e) Niihau affords the last reasonable
opportunity to preserve examples of the lowland and dryland native
environments, most of the lowlands in the State having been pre-empted
with non-conservation uses; and (f) acquisition by the State should be
immediately initiated to forestall any conveyance to others or the
development of the island for commercial or other non-conservation
purposes.

Page 2S. D. NO. 1516-70
S. D. 1

1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of
2 the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,300,000, or so much thereof as may
3 be necessary, for the acquisition of Niihau as a natural preserve.

4 SECTION 3. The Board of Land and Natural Resources, with the
5 approval of the Governor, is authorized to enter into, without public
6 auction or bids, a leaseback agreement with the present owners of the
7 Island of Niihau wherein the State will permit the present owners to
8 use such portions of said island as do not interfere with the State's
9 purposes in acquiring said island. Such lease shall provide that the
10 lessees shall use such land only for agricultural purposes, as they
11 are now used, and, any other public land laws to the contrary not-
12 withstanding, may provide for such lease rental payments and other
13 terms as may be mutually agreed upon within the intent and purpose of
14 this Act. Such lease shall contain, among other matters agreed upon,
15 the right of the State to withdraw from the lease at any time such
16 portions of the land as are necessary or desirable for the carrying
17 out of the State's purposes in acquiring the land and no compensation
18 shall be paid for any such withdrawals.

19 SECTION 4. No real property taxes shall be levied or collected
20 on any portion or portions of Niihau so long as that portion or
21 portions remain occupied and under the control of a resident employee
22 of the present owners of the island or of the State of residence.

S.B. NO.

1516-70
S. D. 1Page 3

1 Such present residents shall have the right to live in the dwellings
2 they now occupy on Niihau as long as they so desire.

3 SECTION 5. Any provision relating to the disposition of public
4 lands to the contrary notwithstanding, no disposition shall be made
5 of all or any portion or portions of Niihau, except as set forth in
6 Section 3 of this Act, and no portion of said Island shall be used by
7 the State for resort hotel or commercial purposes.
8

9 SECTION 6. Expending agency. The sum appropriated shall be
10 expended by the department of land and natural resources for the
11 purposes of this Act.

12 SECTION 7. Effective date. This Act shall take effect upon its
13 approval.
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(To be made one and eight copies)
FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 1970...
STATE OF HAWAII

S.B. NO. 1516-70
S. D. 2

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 Section 1. There is hereby appropriated out of the general revenues
2 of the State \$100,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary,
3 for appraisals to determine the cost of purchasing the island of
4 Niihau or any interest therein which would assure ultimate control
5 of the island by the State for purposes of conservation and resto-
6 ration.

7 SECTION 2. The sum appropriated shall be expended by the
8 department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this
9 Act.

10 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.
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APPENDIX H

818

HOUSE JOURNAL — STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

pend permits; (4) issue rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this bill; and (5) file suit to compel compliance with the provisions of this bill. To aid the Director in these tasks, provisions have been made for an advisory committee made up of one person from the CATV industry, one person from the utility company servicing the industry and three persons not connected with either the industry or the utility company.

The appropriation of \$40,000 will be used to implement the franchising and regulatory procedures of this Act.

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H. B. No. 1922-70, H. D. 1, and recommends its passage on third reading.

Signed by all members of the Committee except Representative Kunimura.

SCRep. 181-70 Printing and Revisions

Informing the House that House Resolution Nos. 221 to 229, House Concurrent Resolution Nos. 85 and 86, Standing Committee Report Nos. 182-70 to 185-70 and Special Committee Report No. 11 have been printed and distributed.

Signed by all members of the Committee except Representative Morioka.

SCRep. 182-70 Lands on H. B. No. 1678-70

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate a sum of money for the acquisition of the Island of Niihau as a natural preserve. Acquisition by the State would prevent or forestall any conveyance to others or the development of the island for commercial or other non-conservation purposes.

It has been said that the island of Niihau offers unparalleled opportunity for the preservation of Hawaiian flora and fauna and to return unique environmental areas to their original pre-European condition. It has also been reported that extensive forests once covered the island, providing an environment necessary to support rare and indigenous birds. In a public hearing on Kauai, Catherine Stauder, a historian

engaged in research from primary sources, testified that in the course of her studies she failed to come across any mention of extensive forests on Niihau. In fact, she quoted Cook on Niihau (February, 1778) as saying, "The ground through which I passed, was in a state of nature, very stony, and the soil seemed poor." Others in the expedition had time to inspect the entire island and they gave the same report. There was no appearance of any running stream, and though they found some small wells in which the fresh water was tolerably good, it seemed scarce. About all that covered the land were stunted vegetables and small trees and shrubs. She further testified that the 1840 U.S. Exploring Expedition reported the following on the island: "Its eastern side is rocky and unfit for cultivation; the inhabitants, therefore, reside on its western side and are for the most part miserably poor." Portlock and Dixon (1786 and 1787) also reported: "Indeed this place produces no great plenty of anything besides yams and ti."

From the preceding it is debatable as to whether Niihau is or was an island endowed with rich botanical and animal life. Therefore, to purchase Niihau for the purpose of restoring and/or preserving its once abundant flora and fauna population may be misleading. More appropriate may be to purchase it as a replica of old Hawaii, perpetuating a culture and way of life which have since disappeared from other islands in the state, and in this respect preserving it from encroaching urbanization and commercialization. However, the committee found at the public hearing on Kauai that the owners of Niihau do not intend to sell and further that the owners have publicly stated that they have no intention of selling Niihau now or in the foreseeable future. In addition, former residents of Niihau, who were living on Kauai but who presumably represented the residents of Niihau, stated that the residents preferred their present mode of living — no unemployment, welfare, or housing problems — and did not desire a change. They also stated that the paternalistic relationship existing between the owners of the island and the residents did not hinder travel between islands nor did it prevent them from living in some other locality.

In fact, under this relationship the residents were never in want and felt that a change at this time would not be to their benefit.

Accordingly, to protect the interests of the state and at the same time protect the interest of the residents of Niihau, the title of the bill has been amended to read: "MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR ACQUIRING AN OPTION TO PURCHASE THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU." Section 1 has also been amended to provide that the state should immediately negotiate for an option to purchase the land to forestall any conveyance to others or the development of the island for commercial or other non-conservation purposes, and that the option should be for a 25-year period and the purchase price of Niihau should be settled during the negotiation of the option. Section 3 has been amended to provide that the sum appropriated shall be expended by the governor for the purposes of this act.

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H. B. 1678-70, as amended herein, and recommends its passage on second reading in the form attached hereto as H. B. 1678-70, H. D. 1, and its referral to your Committee on Finance.

Signed by all members of the Committee.

SCRep. 183-70 Government Efficiency and Public Employment on H. B. No. 1594-70

The purpose of this bill is to allow public employees from and after January 1, 1971, to use his three highest years of credited service to determine his average final compensation. However, since he is allowed to use his three highest years of credited service, no payment of salary in lieu of vacation shall be included in the computation.

The old provision relating to the five highest paid years of credited service is retained in the bill to protect those individuals that have left public service and are waiting to retire under the provisions

of Chapter 88. Under the five highest paid years of credited service vacation accumulated would be included in computing his five highest paid years of credited service.

The bill was amended to eliminate the option clause since your Committee felt that if an option were granted between the five highest paid years of credited service or to select his three highest years of credited service provided that no payment of salary in lieu of vacation shall be included in the computation, that it would defeat the purpose of granting the privilege of the three highest years of credited service.

Your Committee has converted the form of the bill to comply with House Rule 24(2).

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purposes of H. B. No. 1594-70 as amended herein and recommends its passage on second reading and that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H. B. No. 1594-70, H. D. 1.

Signed by all members of the Committee.

SCRep. 184-70 Hawaiian Homes on H. B. No. 1620-70

The purpose of H. B. No. 1620-70, is to appropriate out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$15,000 for the development of a playground facility at the Hawaiian Homes Panaewa subdivision in Hilo. This appropriation is in addition to any other monies which the Department of Hawaiian Homes lands is entitled to receive under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, as amended.

Your Committee finds that a playground facility at Panaewa Subdivision will greatly benefit both Hawaiian homestead children and all children in the Panaewa area.

Your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H. B. No. 1620-70, and recommends its passage on second reading and its referral to your Committee on Finance.

APPENDIX I

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 513-7c

Honolulu, Hawaii

~~March~~ 7, 1970
~~April~~

The Honorable David C. McClung
President of the Senate
Fifth Legislature
Regular Session, 1970
State of Hawaii

Sir:

RJ: S. B. NO. 1516-70

Your Committee on Lands and Natural Resources to which
was referred S. B. No. 1516-70 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
ACQUISITION OF THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to acquire title to the whole
of the Island of Niihau, County of Kauai, for the purpose of
restoring it to its original pre-European condition, and to
preserve it as a natural reserve.

The Island of Niihau lies about 17.5 miles West of Kauai.
It has an altitude of 1,281 feet and is 72 square miles in area.
Its rainfall ranges from 18 to 26 inches per year. Before the
Europeans came, it once had extensive forests. Since 1794,
when goats were first introduced on the Island, the forests
have been ravaged, but through proper management and conservation
practices these forests can be regenerated, which will in turn
provide the environment necessary to support indigenous and
rare birds such as the Elepaio, the Kauai Thrush and Awakiki,
the Creeper (*Paroreomyza Bairdii*) and the Akepa. Also, there
are only a few areas in the State lowland, shorezone and shallow
water marine life still exist in a natural state, and the waters
around Niihau are among the best examples of such marine life, as
they are undisturbed by pollution and man.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 513-7c
Page 2

The Governor has submitted to the Legislature (Governor's Message No. 135) a succinct account of why it is in the best interests of the State that it acquire the Island of Niihau as a Natural Reserve since that Island only presents an "unparalleled opportunity to establish a controlled natural preserve while, at the same time, giving the residents of Niihau a choice of moving into the mainstream of contemporary Island life". In this document the Governor suggests the possibility that after purchase of this Island by the State, "The residents of Niihau who prefer to continue their present mode of life can continue to do so under a leaseback system with the owners of the Island. It should be emphasized that the intent in this respect is to give the residents a free choice in their way of life".

Testifying in favor of this measure were biologists and scientists, namely: Dr. E. Allison Kay, Dr. St. John (Botanist), Dr. Charles H. Remoureaux, and others. They pointed out that for ecological and scientific reasons it is very desirable that the State acquire this land, as it is rich in marine biota. It was stated that Niihau has 34 species of Hawaiian plants, about 17 of which are known to exist only on Niihau. It was also noted that Niihau supports 10.2% of the world's population of Hawaiian stilt and 8.1% of the world's population of Hawaiian coot. Also testifying in favor of this measure were Myron B. Thompson, Administrative Director of the Office of the Governor, and the Hawaiian Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. The latter stated: "Niihau should become a public domain to remind all the world that there once was a pristine natural glory in Hawaii and that we had better stop ravaging our environment or nothing of the natural will be left."

Several former residents of Niihau testified against the bill. In their testimony they brought out how well they were treated by the Robinson family while there, and how nice all of the people there were. We were asked not to disturb this Island's pattern of life. Also your Committee has received letters of assurance from the owners of the island that they do not intend to sell or lease the island, nor develop resort hotels thereon.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 513-7c
Page 3

Your Committee finds that the public purpose in acquiring this Island to be well-established by the testimony. In this day and time the issues of preservation, ecological balance and the restoration of the things that were the old Hawaii are the most widely discussed issues. The Federal government, in its "Wilderness" legislation, has sought to do the same on a broader scale. Your Committee is in favor of the acquisition of the Island of Niihau, with the provision that after the State has acquired the full fee-simple title to the Island that it should lease back to the present owners such portions of the island (for continuation of the present agricultural uses) as do not interfere with the State's restoration and preservation plans. So far as the use by the present owners is compatible or helpful to the State's plans, the lease rental could be for a nominal sum. This would give the present employee residents of the island and their families the choice mentioned in the Governor's message.

Your Committee has amended the bill in the following respects:

- (a) In Section 2 of the original bill the appropriation was left blank. Your Committee has found that the appraised value of the Island for a real property tax purposes in 1968, when computed to 100% of market value, was roughly \$300,000. In 1968 there was an appraisal made for estate and inheritance tax purposes which established fair market value at \$1,182,000. Your Committee has therefore filled in the amount at \$1,300,000.
- (b) Sections 3 and 4 of S. D. 1 of the bill adds to the bill the hereinbefore expressed leaseback concept, and also exempts such portions of the island as is inhabited by the owner's employees from real property taxes and has provided that the present residents of Niihau can continue to occupy their present dwellings there as long as they desire.
- (c) A new Section 5 has been added to the bill to make sure that the Island is not disposed of or used for commercial

or hotel purposes, but that its uses shall be limited to agricultural and conservation only.

Your Committee has considered the desirability of the State condemning only an option to purchase Niihau in the event the owners decide to sell same, but has concluded that the immediate purchase of the Island with the leaseback concept as being the better means for the following and other reasons:

- (a) The option to purchase method does not take cognizance of the fact that the purpose of the bill is not only to preserve but to restore. The restoration would become less feasible as time goes by and deterioration in some aspects would continue. Restoration and preservation must begin now, not at some unknown future time;
- (b) An option to purchase later would cost the State immeasurably more money, because at the time the option is exercised it would mean that some high offer had been made to the owners for the land or else they would not depart from their avowed purpose not to sell;
- (c) The option to purchase method would not stop the development of hotel and commercial buildings on the land by the owners themselves. Although the land is now zoned agricultural, there is no assurance that the State could legally hold the owners to that use of the entire island for any long period of time.
- (d) While the condemnation of an option may be constitutional, it is at least unusual and may be construed as a tacit admission that there is no immediate need to condemn the Island for the purposes of the Act unless it is so worded as to accomplish those purposes.

Your Committee, therefore, believes the straight condemnation with leaseback solution is better than the option to purchase method.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 513.7c
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Your Committee on Lands and Natural Resources is in accord with the intents and purposes of S. B. No. 1516-70, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass second reading in the form attached hereto as S. B. No. 1516-70, S. D. 1, and that it thereafter be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means for further consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Lanham
JOHN C. LANHAM, Chairman

Donald S. Nishimura w/r
DONALD S. NISHIMURA, Vice-Chairman

Sakae Takahashi I do not concur
SAKAE TAKAHASHI, Member

John T. Ushijima
JOHN T. USHIJIMA, Member

Richard Henderson w/r
RICHARD HENDERSON, Member

Frederick Rohlfing I do not concur
FREDERICK ROHLFING, Member

APPENDIX J

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 768.70

Honolulu, Hawaii
April 14, 1970

The Honorable David C. McClung
President of the Senate
Fifth Legislature
Regular Session, 1970
State of Hawaii

Sir:

RE: S.B. NO. 1516-70, S.D. 1

Your Committee on Ways and Means to which was referred
Senate Bill No. 1516-70, S. D. 1 entitled:

"MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE
ISLAND OF NIIHAU.",

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to enable the State to acquire
the Island of Niihau with the intent of establishing a
"controlled natural preserve while giving the residents a
choice of continuing the present mode of life on the island or
moving into the mainstream of contemporary island life."

Your Committee has considered the review of arguments and
options toward this end and agrees in principle with the
conclusions on your Committee on Lands and Natural Resources
contained in Standing Committee Report No. 513-70.

Your Committee, however, mindful of the variations in value
and method relating to the county of Oahu's proposed acquisition
of Diamond Head recommends a more studied approach to the
problems that acquisition causes.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended the bill to provide
an appropriation of \$100,000 for the purposes of conducting
appraisals to determine the cost of acquisition.

The appraisals shall consider the cost of outright purchase,
the cost of purchasing the remainder interest, and any alterna-
tives that may be recommended.

The Administration shall make efforts during the interim to
negotiate an option agreement at a predetermined price.

The results of the appraisals and recommendations by the
governor shall be submitted to the Legislature prior to the
opening of the 1971 session.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 768-70
Page 2

Your Committee on Ways and Means is in accord with the intent and purpose of S. B. No. 1516-70, S. D. 1 as amended herein, and recommends that it pass third reading in the form attached hereto as S. B. No. 1516-70, S. D. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

John J. Hulten
JOHN, J. HULTEN, Chairman

DUKE T. KAWASAKI, Vice-Chairman

Percy K. Mirikitani
PERCY K. MIRIKITANI, Member

D. G. Anderson (I do not concur)
D. G. ANDERSON, Member

Donald S. Nishimura
DONALD S. NISHIMURA, Member

Excused
TOSHIO ANSAI, Member

FREDERICK W. ROHLFING, Member

Donald D. H. Ching v/r
DONALD D. H. CHING, Member

Mamoru Yamasaki
MAMORU YAMASAKI, Member

William E. Fernandes
WILLIAM E. FERNANDES, Member

NADAO YOSHINAGA, Member

Stanley I. Hara
STANLEY I. HARA, Member

APPENDIX K

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SENATE JOURNAL—54th DAY

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 762-70 (S. B. No. 603, S. D. 1):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 762-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 603, S. D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DISTRICT COURTS", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 763-70 (S. B. No. 932):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 763-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 932, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO COUNTY CHARTERS", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 22. Noes, 2 (Porteus and Rohlfing). Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 764-70 (S. B. No. 1147-70, S. D. 1):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 764-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 1147-70, S. D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 765-70 (S. B. No. 1196-70, S. D. 2):

On motion by Senator Lanham and seconded by Senator Nishimura, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 765-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 1196-70, S. D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC LANDS", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 766-70 (S. B. No. 1231-70, S. D. 1):

On motion by Senator Hulten and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep.

No. 766-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 1231-70, S. D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 767-70 (S. B. No. 1509-70):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 767-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 1509-70, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR CERTAIN HOSPITALS" having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 768-70 (S. B. No. 1516-70, S. D. 2):

Senator Hulten moved that Stand. Com. Rep. No. 768-70 be adopted and S. B. No. 1516-70, S. D. 2, having been read throughout, pass Third Reading, seconded by Senator Kawasaki.

At this time, Senator Kawasaki, questioned the Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means as to how the figure of \$100,000 was arrived at as the appraisal cost to determine the cost of purchasing the Island of Niihau.

Senator Hulten replied that the appraisal cost of \$100,000 was arrived at through the experience and background of the Chairman of Ways and Means Committee.

Senator Porteus then rose and said that he has written to the Robinson family through their attorney and received a reply that there were no plans to sell the island and they do not intend to make a sale but should the family ever change its mind, the State would have the right of first refusal. He said he believes that the family that has kept the island in the form that it has remained in for so many years shows interest in the customs and Hawaiian ways of the people who are living there and their best interest can be served by not spending \$100,000 and in trying to acquire the island. He concluded by saying that there is no good reason to take the island away from them and therefore will vote "no" on the measure.

Senator Hulten then called attention to the committee report which indicates that the purpose of the bill is to enable the State to acquire the island with the intent of establishing a controlled natural preserve while giving the residents a choice of continuing the present mode of living on the island or moving into the mainstream of contemporary island life. He said that the bill is not for acquisition of Niihau but for putting the State in a position to acquire the island if it has to and it is not the intent of the bill in any way to upset the present situation.

Senator Fernandes then reminded the members of the Senate of what happened to Parker Ranch which was also not for sale. He said Niihau is looked on as a forbidden island where even the Governor of Hawaii is deprived of going to talk to the people and furthermore the people of Niihau don't know the walks of life when they go to Kauai to work. He said that everyone must look to the future, then asked whether any of the Senators have ever talked to the people of the island to find out what they really think about living there.

Senator Anderson spoke against the measure. He said there is no mandate holding the people to Niihau, that they are free to move to Kauai or to any other island of the State and from all indications from their testimony at the legislature they are happy and content as it is. He said when a family such as the Robinson's say through their attorney that they will in writing give the State the first option to buy the island should they ever decide to sell, he feels it is a different situation from Parker Ranch and there should be nothing the State could ask for.

Senator Ariyoshi said that the real question is whether the State is going to buy Niihau or not and if it is then he feels it should be done now before prices go up in the future.

Senator Rohlfing also spoke against the passage of the bill saying that the only responsibility of the State is to preserve the fauna and fish and marine resources of the island.

Senator Hulten said that the whole idea of the bill is to get the sense of the legislature on the issue and to suggest to the administration that it should make negotiations with the owner for a price now.

Senator Anderson argued that the State does not need Niihau today nor tomorrow, that it is private property and the State has no right to buy the property. He said the money should be used for the need of the

majority of the people such as school sites, right of ways, construction of libraries and schools and for Magic Island and Kahana.

Senator Kuriyama said that a bill such as this makes him worry about whether the State will be buying Lanai and Molo-kai, which is almost privately owned, next. He asked where the state intends to stop.

The motion to adopt Stand. Com. Rep. No. 768-70 and to pass S. B. No. 1316-70, S. D. 2, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THE ISLAND OF NIIHAU", having been read throughout, on Third Reading was put by the Chair and failed to carry on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 12. Noes, 12 (Anderson, Ching, Forbes, Henderson, Kawasaki, Kuriyama, Mirikitani, Porteus, Rohlfing, Takanashi, Yano and Yee). Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 769-70 (S. B. No. 1584-70, S. D. 1):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 769-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 1584-70, S. D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE REGULATION OF THE PRACTICE OF NURSING; TO PROVIDE FOR A STATE BOARD OF NURSING AND TO DEFINE THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD INCLUDING LICENSURE OF PRACTITIONERS OF NURSING AND ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS PREPARING FOR NURSING PRACTICE, AND TO PRESCRIBE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

Standing Committee Report No. 770-70 (S. B. No. 2002-70, S. D. 1):

On motion by Senator Ushijima and seconded by Senator Yano, Stand. Com. Rep. No. 770-70 was adopted and S. B. No. 2002-70, S. D. 1, entitled: "A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CEMETERIES AND CEMETERY SALESMEN", having been read throughout, passed Third Reading on the following showing of Ayes and Noes:

Ayes, 24. Noes, none. Excused, 1 (Ansai).

APPENDIX L

NI'IAU SHELL LEI-MAKING

One of the most distinctive items of Hawaiian handicraft that has survived the turbulent centuries of the islands' history is the precious Ni'ihau shell lei. Lee Mendonca, who is reputed to be the only woman in the islands licensed by the State to appraise the value of the shells, says the names of the four types that are predominantly used in the making of the of the Ni'ihau leis are: (1) *momi o kai* (pearls of the ocean); (2) *kahelelani* (the royal going); (3) *laiki* (rice); (4) *kamoa* (SB 1982e). The *momi o kai* are also called the *pupu* of Ni'ihau or *pupu momi*. However, the names of the shells vary according to whom one is speaking. One study using information from three Ni'ihau shell lei makers resulted in Hawaiian names for more than twenty-two different shells, yet the informants only agreed on the names of three (Ka'ohelauli'i 1973b:6).

The Hawaiians have traditionally used very descriptive terms when naming objects and organisms. This too was true of the Ni'ihau shells. For example, in the aforementioned study, the shell referred to as *Papale Pake* is "literally translated to Chinaman's hat (and) is very descriptive of what the shell looked like" (Ibid.). Further, "A small, yellow cowry shell that looks like a cats (sic) eye was identified by one informant as *pupu* (shell) *poleholeho* (small cowry) *make* (eye) *popoki* (cat)" (Ibid.).

The shell nomenclature is further divided by the color of shells within one specific type or genus.

To the casual observer, there appear to be five or six colors of the small *kahelelani* shell. Informant #3 gave me a list of ... twelve colors. The same informant provided five names for the colors for the shell

identified as alilea. The dove shell or pupu momi which is the shell most commonly used in making shell leis, is found in six or seven different-colored markings. Each of the informants identified this shell in categories according to the coloring of the shell (Ibid.).

The Hawaiian names for the colors are sometimes found within the name of the shell itself. These include: ke'oke'o, white; melemele, yellow; 'ula'ula, red; 'ele'ele, black; and, 'onikiniki which is used to describe a speckled shell, but which has been explained as meaning "black and white to Niihau people" (Ibid. 13).

By far, the most expensive Ni'ihau shell today is considered to be the yellow kamoā. Mendonca owns a lei she purchased for forty-five dollars in 1972 and today is reputed to be valued at a remarkable twelve thousand dollars (SB 1982e). Overall, her sixty-six leis are valued at about \$160,000. The total cost to her was \$8,725.

The kamoā is the most expensive shell because of the time it takes to prepare the shell for stringing. The bottom of the shell has a mauve (purple) spot which is filed off to get the pure yellow color like that of the feather cloaks of the alii (Ibid.).

The Ni'ihauans pick empty shells from their beaches after they are washed on shore from the nests in the reefs off island. Some types of shells do wash up on Kaua'i and have been found on the beaches of O'ahu's north shore. Those that are found on other islands, however, have been subjected to brutal channel conditions, harsh currents, and tumbling wave action. Those few that survive the cross-channel journey are, inevitably, severely damaged and quite worthless. As Mendonca explains,

'The most expensive shells are on the windward side of Niihau, the side that faces Kauai. No one lives there. The people live on the lee side and to gather the yellow kamoā shell they have to climb over the mountain to get to the beach' (Ibid.).

She goes on to describe the collection and stringing process:

'Whether they are gathering the coveted kamoā or the other Niihau shells, the families begin hunting before dawn because the sun affects the shell's luster and bleaches out the color.

'At 4 a.m., as soon as the tide goes out, they go out with kerosene lanterns. You lie down on your stomach on the beach and just sort through the sand for shells! Then they sort the shells by size and color and begin the tedious preparation of the shells for stringing. This includes the cleaning, the filing and clipping—which today is done with a sharpened ice pick. This used to be done with a sharpened bicycle spoke (or a needle inserted into a wooden handle).

'The stringing today is done with nylon fishing line. Out of a gallon of shells, only about one-third will be stringable. The stringing of a 36-inch double pikake strand of *momi o kai* shells will take about a day, but the smaller *kahelelani* and kamoā could take longer.

'Prior to 1946, the leis were single strands, but after World War II, Kuuleialoha Keamoai Kelley . . . learned to string Hawaiian seed leis. Adapting this method, she developed the double pikake way of stringing Niihau shells. From her method, the four-thread *poepoe*, or round method, was developed (*Ibid.*).

Mendonca claims that shell lei-making is almost a pre-historic craft with the shells one strung using *pili* grass. They, among other gifts, were given to *ali'i* in ancient Hawaiian days. They were always a popular gift but it was during the 1974 "puka shell craze" when the value of Ni'ihau shell skyrocketed. Two factors now account for the continuing increase in the value of the leis: the decreasing number of quality shells and shell lei-makers. Once ubiquitous to the Pacific, the craft is more of a "dying" than "living" art form. In Ni'ihau's case, the skill is still alive today, however, this ominous note prevails:

As young people leave the island, there are fewer people to pass the art on to. Mostly elderly women string the leis, and when they're gone, the art will be to (sic), Mendonca says. 'Eighteen or 20 years from now, we may not have any Niihau shell leis' (Ibid.).

On May 2, 1923, the Governor of the Territory, Wallace Rider Farrington, approved a Joint Resolution of the Hawaiian Legislature making the indigenous hibiscus the official Territorial flower. The Resolution also assigned flowers as emblems for each of the islands; that is, all except Ni'ihau and Kaho'olawe (Webb 1940:3). For Ni'ihau, this was later corrected when the island's official "flower" became the pupu o Ni'ihau, its famous shell.

APPENDIX M

Makaweli, Kauai
Hawaii 96769
April 18, 1983

Mr. E. R. "Rick" Stepien
903 Kaip'i Street
Kailua, Oahu, Hawaii 96734

Dear Mr. Stepien:

The manuscript of your proposed thesis on Niihau has been referred to me by my son, Bruce, for comment.

Each time another individual decides to write still another article about Niihau and the Robinsons—always for some "extremely important" purpose—the thought comes to mind of the many privately owned cattle and/or sheep ranches in the Northwest or Southwestern United States, many of which are far more extensive than Niihau, and also have been owned and operated by succeeding generations of the same family. One envies them their privacy and anonymity.

Running a ranch—when it is done as a business and not as a part-time hobby—is a serious, strenuously demanding and, all too frequently, discouraging undertaking. An 8-hour day with work being completed as scheduled, is practically unheard of. Usually daylight doesn't last long enough to finish what had been planned to accomplish. And ranch operations continue throughout the year.

While one wonders why "solving the motive of the owners in maintaining the strict 'seclusivity' of Niihau" can be of any great importance to Pacific Island Studies, (or why it should be necessary to give reasons whatever they may be) they have just been spelled out for you in the paragraph immediately preceding this one—just as it has been explained innumerable times to many others. However, unless one is a rancher himself, he dismisses the reasons above as far too simple and completely irrelevant, and continues digging deep for some more devious motive.

So now you are saved hours and hours of more research, and pages and pages of further conjecture, surmises, and delving deep for sinister schemes—if you will just re-read and consider carefully the reality of those seven lines.

Interestingly enough, it isn't ranchers who pester us about access to Niihau, to write articles, etc. They themselves know how full the days are and what a nuisance requests can be. It's the people from other walks of life, especially communications media and certain types of tourists who seem to think they should have access everywhere.

I am not taking the time to correct spelling errors—as many are probably just "typos", or to explain the reasons for certain incidents or reactions on

our part. However, one does question whether the story of Beni and the aviator, or whether or not Governor Ariyoshi asked for and received permission to land on Niihau after the hurricane has any relevance or value to "Pacific Island Studies".

We appreciate your sending this manuscript to us, and hope our comments have been helpful.

Sincerely,

Helen M. Robinson

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- 1937. "Cromwell Denies Purchase of Niihau," October 2.
- 1938. "Niihau—Sometimes Called the Island of Mystery," March 20.
- 1941a. "Pilot Clubbed to Death by Hawaiian Pair," December 16.
- 1941b. "Niihau Story Revealed in First Official Version," December 17.
- 1943a. "Hawaiians Who Killed Japanese Aviator on Niihau Isle Honored," June 7.
- 1943b. "Once Isolated Niihau Greets Army; Joins Nation's War Effort," June 19.
- 1946a. "Kauai Anecdotes," March 26.
- 1946b. "Niihau Facing Inroads of Modern Living Trends," August 1.
- 1946c. "Dr. Loper Plans Personal Study of Niihau School," August 2.
- 1946d. "Isolated Niihau like 17th Century Island," August 3.
- 1946e. "Niihau Called Alcatraz by Military Garrison," August 14.
- 1946f. "Vital Statistics of Niihau: 1936-45," August 7
- 1946g. "A Suggestion from George Mellen," August 11.
- 1946h. "The Isolation of Niihau," August 19.
- 1947a. "Niihau Education Setup Attacked in TH Senate," March 21.
- 1947b. "Niihau School Grant Bared," March 27.
- 1947c. "Report Asks 'Civilization' for Niihau," April 12.
- 1947d. "'Leave Niihau Alone' Sen. Rice Pleads," April 23.
- 1947e. "Senate to Act on Niihau Land Seizure Bill," April 25.
- 1947f. "Senate Votes 8-7 to Acquire Public Lands on Niihau," April 26.
- 1947g. "U.H. Training Sought for Apt Students," May 26.

- 1947h. "Niihau's High Infant Death Rate Reported," June 22.
- 1947i. "Hawaiians Are Happy on Niihau, Kent Finds," December 21.
- 1952. "Teacher for Niihau," June 15.
- 1955. "Territory Stakes Claim to 15 Acres on Niihau," December 17.
- 1957a. "Niihau Life Centers Around School, Church," October 11.
- 1957b. "Cold Niihau Reception for Pair in Downed Plane," November 2.
- 1957c. "Niihau Hawaiian Used Bare Hands to Kill Japanese Pilot,"
December 8.
- 1958. "Niihau Voting Irregularities Denied," April 17.
- 1959a. "Certain Parts on Amazing Niihau," October 11.
- 1959b. "Spy on Niihau? No, Just Sound of Harpe," October 25.
- 1959c. "Niihau Rejects Statehood by 17 to 18 Vote," June 30.
- 1959d. "Two-Way Radio to End Long Silence from Niihau," November 30.
- 1961a. "Frontier Days Still Alive Amid Niihau Dust," October 1
- 1961b. "Nature Blows Bring Hardship to Niihau," October 2.
- 1962a. "Robinson Heir Get \$4.5 Million," May 18.
- 1962b. "U.H. Gets First Niihau Teacher," May 30.
- 1965a. "Niihau Joins List in War on Poverty," September 11.
- 1965b. "Navy Planes Bomb Niihau by Mistake," October 8.
- 1965c. "Anti-Poverty Plan Mapped for Niihau," November 2.
- 1966a. "Niihau Gets \$51,623 Grant to Fight Poverty," April 12
- 1966b. "Niihau Would Host UN Had FDR Had His Way," December 16.
- 1967a. "A Disaster Alert Siren on Niihau," March 13.
- 1967b. "Aylmer Robinson, Niihau Owner, Dies," April 3.
- 1968a. "Niihau Exodus Is Denied," January 11.
- 1968b. "Demos 'Growing' on Forbidden Isle," April 2.
- 1968c. "Estate Appraisal Gives Unusual Peek at Niihau," April 24.

- 1969a. "Fight Expected As State Moves to Zone Niihau," June 27.
- 1969b. "Lester B. Robinson," October 28.
- 1969c. "Wife Inherits Niihau Control," November 5.
- 1970a. "Robinsons Deny Niihau for Sale," February 11.
- 1970b. "Niihau a Priceless Treasure," February 18.
- 1970c. "How About Niihau As a State Park?" February 20.
- 1970d. "First Hearing Tomorrow on Niihau Plan," February 26.
- 1970e. "Plans to Sell Niihau Denied," March 4.
- 1970f. "Bill Gives State Niihau Option," March 5.
- 1970g. "Burns Urges Quick State Action to Acquire Niihau," March 24
- 1970h. "Niihau: Option, Not Purchase," March 24
- 1970i. "Niihauans Ask Burns to Halt Takeover," March 26.
- 1970j. "KUAI Station Opposes Burns Over Niihau," March 27.
- 1970k. "Residents of Niihau Fear Gambling," March 27.
- 1970l. "Lawmakers Want Niihau; How, When Questioned," April 1.
- 1970m. "Gill Calls Niihau Acquisition 'Futile'," April 9.
- 1970n. "Porteus Says Niihau Is Not for Sale," April 10.
- 1970o. "State Gets Niihau Vow," April 10.
- 1970p. "GOP Senator Denies Niihau Vote Coalition," April 17.
- 1970q. "Official Assails Foes of Niihau Purchase," April 17.
- 1970r. "Robinson Backed by Kam Friends," April 21.
- 1970s. "Burns Won't Visit Niihau," May 2.
- 1970t. "Niihau School Upgrading Sought," June 25.
- 1970u. "King Scoffs at Purchase of Niihau," September 4.
- 1970v. "Niihau Children Discover a Swinging World on Kauai,"
November 2.
- 1970w. "Burns Warns Eventual Sale of Niihau," November 21.

- 1971a. "State Officials Plan Niihau Visit," March 4.
- 1971b. "State Ends Its Inspection Of Niihau," March 6.
- 1972a. "State Sues Robinsons in Wage Case," June 26.
- 1972b. "Niihau Owner Must Pay Help," July 6.
- 1972c. "State Labor Law Case on Niihau Results in \$500 Fine,"
July 6.
- 1972d. "State Is Asked to Purchase Niihau," November 23.
- 1972e. "Burns to Ask for Money to Buy Niihau," November 25.
- 1973. "Droughts Way of Life on Niihau," October 12.
- 1975a. "Ariyoshi Resurrects Plan to Buy Niihau," October 12.
- 1975b. "Purchase of Niihau Suggested," October 2.
- 1976. "BOE Peeks at Niihau," September 24.
- 1981. "The Indestructible World War II Clipping," May 3.
- 1982a. "Kauai Hawaiians Tell Panel Plenty," January 14.
- 1982b. "Hurricane Destruction Far Worse Than Believed," November 25.
- 1982c. "Niihau's Doing Okay, Thank You," November 30.
- 1983. "Cancer: Hawaiians Most Susceptible," April 28.

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- 1936. "Niihau Owner Dies at Kauai Home, Aged 82," July 8.
- 1938. "Niihau Casts 59 Votes All for GOP, as Usual," October 14.
- 1941a. "Japanese Pilot Killed on Niihau After Taking Island,"
December 16.
- 1941b. "Here Is the Official Version of Niihau Incident," December 18.
- 1941c. (no headline), December 25. p. 4.
- 1946a. "Niihau School Held Private Institution," July 31.
- 1946b. "Health Official Is Concerned About Niihau," August 2.

- 1946c. "Officials Ready for Niihau Trip: Press Brush Off," October 2.
- 1946d. "Beecroft Finds Niihau People Happy, Healthy," October 17.
- 1946e. "Lack of Niihau Medical Needs Cost Child Life," August 29.
- 1946f. "Niihau GOP Vote Holds Crucial Kauai Balance," November 8.
- 1947a. "Crozier Quizzes DPI Officials on School Facilities at Niihau," March 21.
- 1947b. "Kalakaua Land Patent May Give Territory a Foothold on Niihau," March 25.
- 1947c. "Measure Asks Confirmation Of Niihau Title," March 27.
- 1947d. "Niihau Land Bill Is Introduced," April 18.
- 1947e. "Rice Asks Senators to Leave Niihau Alone," April 22.
- 1947f. "Rep. Hayes Says People of Niihau Seen Happy, Contented and Informed," June 3.
- 1947g. "Wilbar to Visit Niihau Wednesday," June 13.
- 1947h. "Niihau Needs Sanitation, Health Education: Wilbar," June 21.
- 1947i. "Life on Aloof Niihau Described by Teacher," July 17.
- 1947j. "Life on Niihau Is Happy, Normal Teacher Reports," July 18.
- 1954. "D.P.I. Officials Impressed by Progress in Niihau School," October 20.
- 1955. "Niihau Children Apparently Won't Get Salk Shots," October 14.
- 1957a. "All of Niihau Is Private Bali Hai," September 28.
- 1957b. "Niihau—The Forbidden Island—Visited by School Commission," October 11.
- 1957c. "They're Happy on Niihau," November 16.
- 1958. "Kauai Democrats Ask Niihau Election Probe," April 16.
- 1959a. "Gordon Sees Niihau Pupils—Neat, Orderly—and Shy," October 3.
- 1959b. "Nobody's Ever Been Drafted from Niihau," November 4.
- 1959c. "State's Niihau Land Rights Vague," November 4.
- 1959d. "D.P.I. Answers Questions on Niihau School," November 6.

- 1959e. "Former TH Senator Recalls 1946 Investigation of Niihau," November 6.
- 1960a. "Ruling May Say State Owns Church, School Sites on Niihau," January 28.
- 1960b. "McClung Favors More Vigorous Niihau Inquiry," January 29.
- 1960c. "Attorney General Says State Has 'Good Claim' to 4 Niihau School Lots," February 12.
- 1960d. "Democrats Draw Blank on Private Niihau Isle," November 9.
- 1960e. "78-Year Old Is Niihau's First Alien to be Granted U.S. Citizenship," December 1.
- 1961a. "Action Looms on Niihau School Sites," March 31.
- 1961b. "Niihau Beaches Ruled Public," May 11.
- 1961c. "Robinson Brothers Greet Quinn on Niihau," September 29.
- 1961d. "20th Century Problems Hit 19th Century Niihau," September 30.
- 1961e. "New Niihau Stories Eclipse the 'Old' Ones," October 1.
- 1961f. "Quinn Favors Negotiating for Niihau School Sites," October 2.
- 1962a. "Resident Prefers Niihau Life Anytime," May 31.
- 1962b. "Destination Niihau," October 28.
- 1964a. "Kanahele's Death Recalls His Heroism," March 9.
- 1964b. "Niihau War Hero Died May 1962," March 16.
- 1964c. "Plantation Manager's Dean, Sinclair Robinson, 78, Dies," June 26.
- 1964d. "Her Aloha Wins Trip to New York," August 5.
- 1964e. "Yarberry Reports Slow Progress on Niihau School," October 25.
- 1965a. "Bombing of Niihau Angers Sen. Inouye," October 8.
- 1965b. "Unique Education Project Is Proposed for Niihau," November 2.
- 1965c. "An End to Isolation," November 3.
- 1966a. "FDR Wanted Niihau," December 15.
- 1966b. "Roosevelt's 'Heavenly Spot' A Mystery," December 20.

- 1966c. "Roosevelt May Have Seen 2 Islets from Ship," December 20.
- 1967a. "Niihau Is on the Alert," February 22.
- 1967b. "Niihau Students Plan Honolulu Visits," March 6.
- 1967c. "Niihau Can't Pull Wires to Power Warning System," March 14.
- 1967d. "Niihau to Get Education TV," March 28.
- 1967e. "Cancer Takes Life of Niihau Patriarch," April 3.
- 1967f. "Niihau Mourns the Old Boss," April 3.
- 1967g. "Board Members Hail Niihau School," October 5.
- 1967h. "Is Happiness Enough for Niihau's Pupils?" October 8.
- 1968a. "Taxers Feel Niihau Worth \$390,000," April 24.
- 1968b. "Little Niihau's Big Swing into Democratic Party," October 1.
- 1968c. "Niihau Voters Get Choice of Ballots," October 4.
- 1969a. "Battery Saves Niihau's Siren Signal Problem," August 25.
- 1969b. "Burial Held for Owner of Niihau," October 26.
- 1969c. "Isolation of Hawaii's 'Mystery Isle' May End," October 26.
- 1969d. "Economic Facts of Life Shadow Niihau's Future," October 27.
- 1969e. "Bruce Robinson Named Uncle's Estate Trustee," December 8.
- 1970a. "A Heavy Financial Burden, but the Robinson Want to Carry It," February 11.
- 1970b. "Bill Wants Niihau as a Preserve," February 11.
- 1970c. "Kamaiiana Challenges Burns' Plan for Niihau," February.
- 1970d. "Kauai Students Voice Concern Over Niihau," February 21.
- 1970e. "Niihauans Plead 'No Change'," February 28.
- 1970f. "Niihauans Plead for Status Quo," March 1.
- 1970g. "Robinson Family Says Niihau Not for Sale to Anyone," March 3.
- 1982a. "On Niihau All the School Needs Is One Bicycle Pump," May 12.
- 1982b. "Thompson Decries Quality of Teaching on Niihau," September 3.

- 1982c. "Members Back Thompson's View of Niihau School," September 4.
- 1982d. "Lessons to Learn from Niihau," September 13.
- 1982e. "Jewels of the Islands," September 16.
- 1982f. "Niihau's Children Learn English in Special Classes," November 26.

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CONFIDENTIAL LIST OF INFORMANTS

(Held by author)

AUTHOR'S ADDENDUM (1987)

Between the dates that this thesis was submitted to the University of Hawai'i for approval and its publication as part of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies Working Paper Series, something dramatic occurred regarding Ni'ihau that necessitated this addendum. The event surely punctuates, in a most unpredictable way, the story of the Forbidden Island.

On June 13, 1987, a helicopter landed at Pu'u Kole Point on Ni'ihau's northern shore. This was not the first time a helicopter touched down on Ni'ihau, but such instances are indeed, rare.

What was significant about the Pu'u Kole Point landing was that the helicopter was owned by the Robinsons, and filled with journalists. The new \$1 million aircraft was purchased to provide better emergency medical care to the residents of Ni'ihau, according to Bruce Robinson, co-owner and manager of the Ni'ihau Ranch. To pay for it, the family decided to initiate tourist flights to the island. The media was taken on the inaugural flight to help publicize the new commercial venture.

The last two sentences are interesting because contained in them are four words which, up to this point, have been anathema to the Robinsons and their management philosophy regarding Ni'ihau: Tourist, flights, media and publicize!

The Robinsons applied to the Kaua'i County Planning Commission in December 1986 for permission to operate the helicopter from a pad near their estate in Makaweli to two sites on Ni'ihau. During the hearings, the States's Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) argued against the Robinson proposal citing the potential destruction of archaeological sites and the danger to the culture of

the Hawaiian residents there. The Ni'ihauans, however, voiced their overwhelming approval of the plan.

After more than five months of debate, the Kaua'i Planning Commission approved the Robinson request on May 27, 1987. The authorization granted landing rights at Pu'u Kolo Point and at Keanahaki Bay, the southernmost tip of Ni'ihau.

For \$235 anyone can now board the Robinsons' Agusta 109 helicopter in Kaua'i and take the short trip over the Kaulakahi Channel to Ni'ihau. Landings are made at both approved sites where visitors remain 20 minutes, but cannot leave the vicinity of the helipad. Picture-taking is permitted. During the flight, which avoids the village of Pu'uwai, the visitors are briefed on the history of the island by the tour guide-pilot hired by the Robinsons.

So, it seems, the Robinsons have finally made Ni'ihau a contributor to the family's overall business enterprise. By selling what the island offers tourists rather than what can be raised or grown on it, they now hope to turn a profit from Ni'ihau. Although they insist that the helicopter was purchased to better service the medical need of the Ni'ihauans, and that profits from the tours will subsidize those operations, one cannot help but feel that other Robinson business needs played a part in the decision to buy the aircraft. Now, the very people the Robinsons so vehemently opposed having access to Ni'ihau (tourists and journalists), for more than 125 years, can visit the island at will, but for a fee.

With this somewhat startling event comes the speculation of the future of Ni'ihau. The Robinsons claim that the lifestyle of the residents will not be affected by the helicopter tours. The Ni'ihauans are seemingly convinced of

this as evidenced by their voting in favor of the plan. Whether this abrupt change in the Robinsons' philosophical outlook on Ni'ihau is a signal of even further loosening of the restrictions regarding access to the island remains to be seen. Sufficed to say, these recent events caught many by surprise, including the author of this thesis, and perhaps, even the Robinsons themselves.