PATHS TOWARD CREATION OF AN INDEPENDENT HAWAIIAN NATION
ETHNOGRAPHIES OF FOUR HAWAIIAN INDEPENDENCE LEADERS

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Acknowledgements begin with recognition of those deities who provided the guidance and the path for the journey that I take every day in my life. They have led me along more twists and turns than I could have ever imagined and provided me with challenges for which I hope I have proved my worthiness. I truly experience abundance in all things in my life, and the completion of this particular part of my journey is an accomplishment that I never dreamed I would enjoy. Mahalo nui e Na Akua, e Na Aumākua, e koʻu mau Mākua for leading me, guiding me to achieve, and protecting me along the way. I know there are still many more adventures to experience, challenges to face, and achievements to attain in my life.

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ABSTRACT

This is a collection of ethnographies of four Hawaiian independence leaders. They are Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, medical physician and founder of Ka Pakaukau, a Hawaiian independence movement; Mililani Trask, founder and first Kia‘aina or Governor of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a Hawaiian nation; Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki Bumpy Kanahele, a self-educated founder of the Nation of Hawai‘i independence movement and founder of the Pu‘uhonua Hawaiian Village in Waimanalo, O‘ahu; and David Keanu Sai, founder of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i independence movement and representative to the World Court in the Hague, Netherlands.

Each has played a significant role in shaping the discussion of sovereignty, self-determination and self-governance for an independent Hawaiian nation. Each has found themselves in a controversial spotlight, sometimes supported and sometimes criticized by the larger Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian community.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze traits of Hawaiian leadership through the lives and actions of these four individuals who have contributed significantly to the Hawaiian self-determination movement. Each path is unique, spanning three generations and varying in educational training and background. They don’t always agree with each other, yet each of the four leaders has influenced the discourse on Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination in different ways.

Each of these leaders has a great vision for the nation. While their individual approaches differ, they essentially yearn for the same results – the ability for Hawaiians to make decisions and determine their own future.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

My name is Michelle Lou Noe Noe Mei Ling Wong-Wilson. In the old days, you would be able to tell from my name that I am of Hawaiian - Chinese ancestry. That may not be the case anymore as Hawaiian names have become popular for children in Hawai'i and elsewhere, despite those children’s lack of Hawaiian ancestral lineage.

I claim my Hawaiian ancestry through my father, Llewellyn Waine’e Wong. He was born in Kahauloa near Nāpo‘opo‘o, South Kona on that island of Hawai‘i and was raised in Hilo as a young child. His family moved to O‘ahu in the late 1930’s and the bulk of them have resided on the Windward side of the island since then. His Hawaiian mother was Miriam Lo‘e Kanakamaika‘i from Wailuku, Maui. His father was Edward Kawelau Wong, a Hawaiian-Chinese man born in Spreckelsville, Maui. Edward’s father was Wong Moon who arrived aboard the S.S. Mee Foo from Canton, China in 1881. He worked in the sugar fields in Pu‘unene, Maui and married a Hawaiian-Chinese woman, Alice Alekuokamoana Asau, of Wailuku, Maui.

My grandmother Miriam passed away in 1942, in my father’s senior year at Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu. My Grandfather, Edward, was a sugar worker turned club bouncer, and general mischief-maker. My brother and I were raised in a Hawaiian ‘ohana, amongst the Wong family in Kailua, O‘ahu, which included most of my father’s eight brothers and sisters and my twenty-one first cousins.

My mother, Betty Jane Kwei Jun Ching Wong, informs me that we are also part haole, white-blooded. She says she believes so because my father’s maternal relatives are fair-skinned. I have not been able to uncover a shred of evidence of her claim of
Anglo ancestry in any of the research I have accomplished on my genealogy. For now, I refuse to accept my mother’s theory of that part of our family history.

My mother is of pure Chinese ancestry. There is no doubt of that, despite the 6-foot tall women born in her family, the aquiline nose of my Tai-Gung (Great-grandfather) Ching Yei in his portrait which hangs on the wall of my childhood home, or the very kinky hair that obsessed my very tall Chinese Grandfather, Hung Chin Ching. Hung Chin was the first-born child, born in Honolulu in 1900 at the turn of the century. He wore a stocking cap to bed for years, made from discarded silk hosiery of my pure Chinese but Hawaiian-raised grandmother, Margaret Tow Wong Ching of He‘eia. It was the only way to keep his hair slick and close to his scalp, or he would have distinctly un-Chinese wavy hair. Great-grandfather Ching Yei’s wife was Fong Shee. She came from China as a young bride. Her feet were bound in the fashion that was made famous in the novel, *The Good Earth*, by Pearl S. Buck. I remember that she was a tiny woman and her hair remained jet-black into her 90’s. Whenever I visited her, she sat with her back straight in her silk Chinese dress, her feet were enclosed in tiny leather shoes, and her neck was adorned in pearls and jade. These were gifts from my grand-uncles - a Chinese version of rags to riches success stories - newspaper boys to airline moguls and land developers of the 1960’s. Tai-po (Great-grandmother) was a Christian, tutored by Mother Damon of the missionary Damon family, and became a U.S. citizen in her elderly life, although she never spoke English.

I was born in 1951, a time when Hawai‘i was still a Territory. I remember my parents driving my brother and me over the treacherous, wind-blown Pali to Kailua, our childhood home. That was before the Pali and Wilson Tunnels were built, and long
before the infamous H-3 Freeway. Life seemed very simple then. There was only one paved road in Kailua.

Television was introduced to Hawai'i in the year I was born. Back then we lived in Hālawa. We had a small black and white TV set in our house with rabbit ears, but the stations only broadcast intermittently during the day. The community depended largely on radio for news.

I was eight years old when we became the 50th State. I remember the huge celebration, we were so happy to become Americans. Governor William Quinn was elected as the first Governor of the State of Hawai'i after serving as the last appointed Governor to the Territory of Hawai'i.

In Hawai'i, when someone asked you, "What are you?" My mother taught us to say, "I'm American! If you want to know my racial ancestry, I'm Hawaiian-Chinese-Haole". Back then I believed what she told me about being Haole.

My Mother is a product of World War II. Although she was born in Hawai'i, her childhood was spent living with relatives in the San Francisco Bay area. She was there in 1942 when World War II broke out in Hawai'i and she was painfully scarred by her experience of anti-Asian sentiment, even though she was considered a "Chinese National". Although her family was not interned like Japanese families during World War II, they were forced to wear badges to identify themselves and were subject to curfews and rations. Her worst memory of her childhood was carrying a gas mask and taking part in drills to run for cover in case of aerial attack by the enemy. Even in the 1950's, well after the war had ended, we practiced those air raid drills in school each month when the Civil Defense alarms would ring throughout the Kailua Community. My
classmates and I would push our desks against the wall with the most windows, remove our glasses, and crouch beneath our desks with our hands over our heads until the "all clear" signal was sounded. We were well prepared against enemy attack throughout my elementary school days. I'm not sure who the enemy was, but we were prepared for it.

Standing erect and barefooted, we placed our right hand over our heart and recited the "Pledge of Allegiance To the Flag (Under God)", and sang such patriotic songs as, the "Star-Spangled Banner", "O, Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean", "America, the Beautiful", and "God Bless America". It seemed throughout my childhood that we were always trying to prove that we were "American".

In Hawai‘i, whenever you meet someone for the first time, it is a very local custom to introduce yourself by stating the name of your family, or the place where you were raised, or what high school you graduated from. Undoubtedly, you will connect with that person through a common acquaintance or common experience. “Do you remember Andy’s Drive-Inn in Kailua?” My affirmative response will tell you that I am an old time resident of that community, that you, too, are familiar with my childhood neighborhood. We will enjoy an immediate bond of shared memories, an unspoken understanding of each other through common experience.

I found this trait to be important, not only in Hawai‘i, but throughout Polynesia during extensive travels with my family. For eighteen months beginning in October, 1995, we were privileged to sail from Hawai‘i through most of the islands of Polynesia, as far south as Aotearoa, New Zealand. All along the way, in the numerous Cook Islands, Leeward and Windward islands of French Polynesia, the Tongas and Islands of Sāmoa, and throughout Aotearoa, we were hosted and cared for by members of the
extended Polynesian double-hulled canoe voyaging families. We felt comfortable in our new surroundings, even though our previous experiences of their language and culture had been minimal. It was, I am certain, because our welcome was preceded by the positive experiences that each of those voyaging sailors enjoyed when they visited Hawai‘i in previous years. Our relationships continue as we freely exchange hospitality and maintain our dialogue about cultural and political issues that affect our communities.

One of most common interests that we shared as Polynesians and Oceanic people was our history and cultural belief systems. That experience of traveling and living within other Polynesian cultures provided me with an insight into similar issues we face in the struggle to maintain our culture, belief systems and right to determine our own destiny as a people.

That experience interacting with people throughout Polynesia was life changing for me and my family. It brought me into sharper focus about Hawaiian consciousness and altered my life's work. Since that time, I have maintained my focus to support Native Hawaiian and indigenous people’s ability to choose their own destiny. I engage myself in learning as much as I can about our culture and history. Indeed, understanding the world through a Hawaiian perspective is like removing your dark glasses at night. The world is still the same, but the relationship of the objects to each other is different. I have returned to school to complete my higher education degrees. I believe in the importance of education in both Native Hawaiian cultural practices and in Western institutions and use my experiences and degrees to teach Hawaiian culture and history to students at Hawai‘i Community College. I have organized and coordinated a number of large conferences, like the 1999 World Indigenous Peoples’ Conference on Education in
Hilo, Hawai‘i, and have worked closely with organizers of subsequent events with First Nations people in Calgary, Alberta, Canada in 2002 and Aotearoa in 2005; and the first Ka ‘Aha Hula ‘O Hālauaola, World Conference on Hula, also held in Hilo in 2001.

These opportunities to learn about each other’s struggles and successes, and share our own insights and knowledge are vital to our continued growth. This message was emphasized to me this past April, 2007 when I was fortunate to be in a select audience with His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, on Maui. He was adamant that a culture in isolation was culture-suicide, and he urged us Native Hawaiians to reach out to other like cultures in the Pacific to gain strength and resolve for our own cultural survival.

I have shared myself with you, the reader, so that you will understand my background and motivation. Each of the Hawaiian leaders interviewed in this thesis has also shared their most personal stories with us. Perhaps you will find commonalities with us in your lives, in the events that have shaped all of us in Hawai‘i over the last several decades, particularly since Hawai‘i became the 50th of the United States. Their stories give us insight into how each of these individuals chose or perhaps were led on their paths toward their life work. Hopefully, you, the reader, will have more understanding of these very public individuals and what motivates them.

Placing Myself in the Context

I have told this very personal story about myself so that you, the reader, can understand my biases toward the subject of this thesis. I am a Hawaiian-Chinese woman, born and raised in Hawai‘i during a period of strong political influence of the United
States. In my adulthood, I have become educated about the events that took place before my birth and during my life that have shaped the political and cultural landscape for my great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, myself and my children. Try as I might to remain objective about the issue of Hawaiian nationality, it is near impossible to avoid some influence of my innermost spirit on my writing. Thus, it is important to place myself within the context of this paper, to form, from the outset, my relationship with my topic and to inform you, the reader of that relationship.

We are informed at the beginning of our Graduate School experience, while chomping anxiously at the bit to begin our journey through the next phase of our academic maturation, that we should choose wisely; that there is a fine line between selecting a topic that we are passionate about but can maintain an arm's length intellectualism toward, and one that will swallow us up whole, emotionally and intellectually. When I first heard that statement made, I felt I was in total control of my choice of the topic that I had in mind.

This topic, however, has indeed swallowed me up whole. I am challenged daily to find an intellectual place for me to comfortably reside in while engaging in this discourse. I struggle to remain open-minded and intellectual while talking to my sources, reading the historical and present information; listening to and contributing toward the dialogue and the discourse on governance and leadership, sovereignty, independence, dependence and nationalism. I struggle to understand the concepts, keep up with the changing political and legal landscape, maintain an open and honest dialogue and communication with leaders of the movement. I struggle to cope with my own mixed feelings and emotions about the future of our nation, people and the effect of these
changes on my family and me. The bottom line is, though, I am Hawaiian, Native Hawaiian, born and raised in these islands, and I carry the blood of my ancestors who have lived here since the time of Papa and Wakea. I am a descendant of Haloanakalaukalilikili, the first Kalo, and Hāloa, the second born, the ancestor of man. (Liliuokalani, 1978)

The Hawaiian expression for responsibility is kuleana. Kuleana is the "right, privilege, concern, responsibility, title, business, property, estate, portion, jurisdiction, affair, province; reason, cause, function, justification...". (Pukui & Elbert, 1986)

Kuleana infers the Hawaiian's relationship to his world and his environment. The concept of kuleana places the kanaka or Hawaiian person within the context of his relationship to his gods, to his spiritual as well as physical world, and to his fellow kanaka. The relationship is symbiotic, each person has kuleana for each other. This relationship transcends the generations. The actions of one generation resound on the next.

As such, I am responsible for continuing the struggle of my elders, my Kupuna Wahine Kuakahi, Great Grandmother, Kamae of Wailuku, whose signature appears on the 1887 Anti-Annexation petitions rediscovered and made public by Nalani Minton and Noenoe Silva. (Minton, Silva, & Hui Aloha Aina, 1998) Every since I found my ancestor's signature on the document that expressed her opposition to the annexation of our islands to the United States, I have felt it was my kuleana to respond to her declaration.

I accept responsibility for my involvement, my work and the effect that my participation and this writing could have on the discourse. I am a part of the outcome, of
decisions made that affect the Hawaiian Nation, the Hawaiian people, my community, and my family. I am responsible for the effect of my actions or inactions.

I know that I further the understanding of ourselves, Native Hawaiian consciousness and understanding, by participating in many conferences, coordinating programs, teaching and working with students, establishing and networking with organizations that support and further our causes, and demonstrating for educational, cultural and political awareness for our larger community.

And, as this kuleana has passed on to me, it most certainly passes on to my children. Of this, I am certain.

Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate traits of Hawaiian leadership through the lives and actions of four individuals who have contributed significantly to the Hawaiian self-determination movement. Each of these leaders has agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of this paper. Their ethnographic interviews provide us with only a slice of their life, in their own words. Their writings, publications and websites have supplemented their ethnographic interviews to provide and background information about them. Each one of these Hawaiian leaders has uniquely contributed to the major social movements that have taken place for over thirty years, since the period called the "Hawaiian Renaissance" began. Each of the selected leaders represents a different vision and process for achieving their goals of self-governance, independence, or sovereign status. These individuals represent three generations of leadership with varying
backgrounds and styles. What they have in common, however, is their passion for change, their hope for the future.

The leaders are Ms. Mililani Trask, former Governor of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, an independent Hawaiian government, peace activist and international legal expert on native governance issues, Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell, a physician and creator of Ka Pakaukau, a separatist independence movement group, and the Kānaka Maoli Tribunal Komikē. David Keanu Sai, historian, researcher, former military officer and advocate of the concept of the United States’ illegal occupation of Hawai‘i; and Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki “Bumpy” Kanahele, a self-styled grass-roots organizer and leader of the Nation of Hawai‘i movement and founder of the Pu‘uhonua Hawaiian Village in Waimanalo.

It was my intention that the leaders represent both male and female genders. Despite the mostly male-dominated chiefly line of descent in Hawaiian history, females played a notably important role in political and cultural affairs. Additionally, these four individuals represent three different generations of experience, beginning with Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell, born in 1925, a teenager when Hawai‘i and the U.S. entered World War II. He is the self-appointed leader of Ka Pakaukau, and the Convener of the 1993 International Tribunal on the Rights of Indigenous Hawaiians. Mililani Trask and “Bumpy” Kanahele were both born in the early 1950’s and experienced the transition of Hawai‘i from the Territorial expansion into Statehood. Mililani was the first Kia ‘aina or Governor of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a Hawaiian Nation, and “Bumpy” Kanahele is the Head of Nation for the Nation of Hawai‘i. Keanu Sai was born in 1964. The Hawaiian Renaissance was about to begin. He was the only one of the four leaders who did not
participate in some form in the 1978 Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention (Con-Con). He holds the title of Acting Regent Pro Tempore of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

Each of these leaders has a distinct and separate alternative for self-governance. They are, in some ways, similar in that they want the same outcome for Native Hawaiians, namely the right to determine our own destiny. The forms of that destiny are what makes each theory or government model different from each other.

Are these four individuals true leaders of the sovereignty, self-determination movement? What qualifies them for their positions? What motivated these individuals from very different walks of life, to engage in the movement toward sovereignty or independence for Hawai‘i? Which individuals have demonstrated a significant influence over their lives and political ideology? How have they influenced the discourse, dialogue and direction of the community discussion on this subject?

Each has, in his or her unique way, contributed towards the discourse. Each one has taken somewhat different paths toward their divergent positions, their solutions for Hawaiian self-determination.

Three of them, Blaisdell, Trask and Kanahele, were involved in some way with the 1978 Hawai‘i State Constitutional Convention as well as other subsequent forums and public discussions in the early days of the sovereignty and self-determination movement. Although Uncle Kekuni Blaisdell is at least one generation older than the other leaders, his involvement in the movement did not begin until he returned to Hawai‘i in the 1970’s. Keanu Sai belongs to a younger generation. Highly trained in military intelligence gathering, Sai positions himself apart from the sovereignty or self-determination movement. His objectives for self-governance
do not include domestic negotiations within the U.S. Rather, his solution lies solely in the international relations arena where he believes the Hawaiian Kingdom is still recognized.

This ethnographic research, while enlightening in the engagement of these specific individuals, will not provide a complete analysis of the Hawaiian Sovereignty and Self-Determination movement. However, ethnographic interviews provide a significant benefit for research in that it allows us to understand the information through the “first-person”, by the telling of their stories in their own words. (Edelman, 2001) This allows the individual the opportunity to provide an explanation of activities and thoughts that might not be amply expressed in other writings. Too often, individuals who are willing to step out in front of a movement are vilified by news articles and sound bites afforded in newspapers, television and radio media. Very little space, if at all, is afforded the reader, viewer or listener to understand the background or motivations for a movement. Movement leaders have to strategize in order to get a message out about a movement or community issue to the mass media by demonstrating, causing a ruckus at a public event, and hoping that there are no larger news events that will pre-empt coverage of their cause. This ethnographic interview process will allow the leaders to set the record straight.

The selection of the individuals who are featured in this paper are the responsibility of the author alone, and do not reflect on the immeasurable and positive impact that countless other individuals have made on public opinion and awareness of the topic. There are many individuals who have dedicated themselves to the betterment of Native Hawaiians; including through education - Aunty Gladys Brandt and Lilikalā Kame‘eleihiwa; promotion of Nuclear-Free Pacific - Soli Niheu; preservation of cultural sites - Aunty Pele and the late Keolalani Hanoa of Ka‘ū; deeper understanding of our culture by the Kanakaʻole family of Hawaiʻi
Island; the building of Hawaiian double-hulled canoes and the practice of long-distance voyaging - Nā Kalai Wa‘a Moku O Keawe, Canoe Builders of Hawai‘i Island and Polynesian Voyaging Society; and through the staunch efforts to revitalize the Hawaiian Language - ‘Aha Pūnana Leo and the University of Hawai‘i Hawaiian Language College. Many others continue to advance their ideas and agenda to promote the educational, health, political and economic status of Native Hawaiians including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawaiian Home Lands Commission, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, and the Royal Societies. The “Ali‘i Trusts” also play a significant role in bettering the status of Native Hawaiians, including the Kamehameha Schools, Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust, Queen Emma Trust, Lunalilo Trust and Kapi‘olani Foundation. There are also two other groups who claim Kingdom status for Hawai‘i. They are the Kingdom of Hawai‘i based in Kane‘ohe and the Kingdom of Hawai‘i from Wailuku, Maui.

Neither is the self-determination revival significant only to Native Hawaiians. Native American tribes, Alaskan Natives, First Nations People of Canada, Maori of Aotearoa, New Zealand, Maohi of the islands of Tahiti, Kanaks of New Caledonia, and native and indigenous communities throughout the world have struggled for the right to exist as a people since Europeans began their quest for world domination more than 500 years ago. (Wolf, 1982) It is hoped that this discussion will contribute to further dialogue amongst these groups as each strives to achieve a better status for Native Hawaiians and for their own people around the world.

Providing a Historical Context

The discussion about sovereignty or self-determination for Native Hawaiians is as prevalent today as it has ever been. The movement began in the early 1970’s with a
number of independent events that collectively became known as the "Hawaiian Renaissance." (Kanahele & Project WAIAHA, 1982)

In 1971, a movement began as a battle for land rights, and erupted into a larger discussion on Native Hawaiian autonomy. A small group of displaced Hawaiian and local families as well as a handful of pig farmers, were threatened with eviction from Kalama Valley, owned by Bishop Estate (Kamehameha Schools), to make way for development of a new upper income housing project. This struggle for recognition of tenant rights also became a rallying cry for Native Hawaiian autonomy as the movement amassed and gained wider support and attention. (Trask, 1999)

The Polynesian Voyaging Society began its scientific experiment in 1974, making its first attempt at demonstrating that ancient Polynesian ancestors had the skill and canoe-building technology for long distance voyaging. This movement began to establish a sense of pride that began in Hawai‘i and migrated throughout Polynesia. 7

In 1976 – "Protect Kaho‘olawe" became the battle cry of a burgeoning group of young Hawaiians who attempted to stop the bombing of Kaho‘olawe Island by the U.S. Navy. George Helm, Walter Ritte, Richard Sawyer, Kimo Mitchell and Emmett Aluli forced the U.S. Navy to stop live bombing exercises by occupying the island, and hiding from authorities. In 1993, the U.S. Federal government returned Kaho‘olawe Island to the State of Hawai‘i and millions of dollars were spent on partial cleanup of unspent ordinance. Well-known Hawaiian Falsetto singer, George Helm and Kimo Mitchell lost their lives during the initial days of this struggle.

Then, in 1980, another high profile eviction of Hawaiian and local families took place in an area called Sand Island, on O‘ahu. The State of Hawai‘i planned on
developing Sand Island for cargo and container ships and in a highly televised event, families were forcibly removed from their Fisherman shacks along the Sand Island waterfront. (Keith, Rochford, & Winward Video., 1982)

Finally, in 1983, to the encouragement of many Hawaiian families who did not have the opportunity to learn their mother tongue, a group of Hawaiian language teachers and Native Hawaiian speakers formed the 'Aha Pūnana Leo organization to begin the revitalization of the Hawaiian Language and to develop Hawaiian language immersion pre-schools.

**Sovereignty Groups Formed**

In 1972, the first of the sovereignty organizations was formed, founded by Louisa Rice, a taxi driver from Honolulu. She was inspired after reading a book, Hawai'i's Story by Queen Lili'uokalani. The book had been left in her taxi by a previous passenger, and was the only thing to survive a fire that destroyed her vehicle. ALOHA: Aboriginal Lands of Hawaiian Ancestry began seeking reparations from U.S. Congress. Their efforts resulted in a 1983 Native Hawaiians Study Commission that detailed the plight of Native Hawaiians to Congress. (Dudley, 1990)

The first grass-roots organization to declare itself the Restored Constitutional Hawaiian Kingdom was founded by Peggy Ha'ō Ross in 1974. OOH: Ohana O Hawai'i sought negotiations with the United States and filed a lawsuit against the U.S. at the International Court of Justice at the Hague, Netherlands. (Ibid. 113)

Hō'ala Kanawai was founded by Mitsuo Uyehara and Black Ho'ohuli in 1977. This organization proposed to form a Native Hawaiian Trust Corporation to manage "ceded" lands and Hawaiian Home Lands.
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) was established by the State of Hawai‘i in 1979 as a quasi-governmental agency to address the protection of entitlements and enhancement of the lifestyle for Native Hawaiians. Currently, OHA advocates the passage of the Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Bill in the U.S. Congress which will allow for a process for Native Hawaiians to form their own government under the nation-within-a-nation model of the U.S. 10

Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a new Hawaiian government, was founded in 1987 with the drafting of their constitution by Attorney Mililani Trask, Mitsuo Uyehara and 250 delegates at Keaukaha, Hawai‘i. 11

Ka Pakaukau was formed in 1989. Led by Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell, this organization is a coalition committed to Kanaka Maoli decolonization and total independence from the United States. 12

The Nation of Hawai‘i was restored by Proclamation on the steps of ‘Iolani Palace on January 16, 1994. This organization’s Head of State is Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki Bumpy Kanahele. He was appointed by a Kupuna Council made up of elders from all the islands. 13

In December, 1995, the Hawaiian Kingdom Trust Company was formed to represent the government under the laws of the Hawai‘i Constitution of 1864. This group, led by Regent Keanu Sai, believes that the 1864 document is the last legal Constitution of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and that the 1887 Constitution was, in effect, a 'coup d’etat'. 14

The Reinstated Kingdom of Hawai‘i, under Prime Minister Henry Noa, was established in 1999. This organization advocates that the Hawai‘i Kingdom Constitution
of 1887 that was in place at the time of the deposing of Queen Liliʻuokalani, is still in effect.  

 Movements Toward Self-Determination And Restoration Of Native Hawaiian Rights

In 1978, the State of Hawaiʻi Constitutional Convention (Con-Con) made several recommendations to protect Hawaiian rights. On their recommendation, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs was established by the State Legislature in 1979, "for the betterment of Native Hawaiians and to receive reparations." Initially, only Native Hawaiians could vote for trustees who represented each major island, as well as a number of trustees-at-large or were eligible to run for office. In April 1996, a lawsuit was filed by Hawaiʻi Island Rancher, Harold "Freddie" Rice which successfully challenged the "Hawaiians only" vote, thereby allowing all Hawaiʻi citizens to participate in the OHA elections process.

In 1983, the U.S. Native Hawaiian Study Commission report was issued which stated that the U.S. did not authorize the invasion of Hawaiʻi in 1893 and therefore no entitlements for compensation for loss of sovereignty were due. A Minority Report filed by the three Native Hawaiian members of the commission, Chairperson Kinaʻu Boyd Kamaliʻi, Educator Winona Beamer, and Attorney H. Rodger Betts disagreed. The Majority of commissioners were members of the Reagan Administration. The Minority Report was later used as a basis for the 1993 Apology Law signed by President Clinton. (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 1994; United States. Congress. House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, 1985)

Also in 1983, the Federal-State Task Force Report on Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) recommended 134 specific reforms including return of lands
transferred by Executive Order of the Governor to non-native Hawaiian awardees. (Parker, 1989)

OHA released a Blueprint for Native Hawaiian Entitlements for the establishment of a Hawaiian Nation in 1989, naming only themselves as the entity that should control all Native assets. This effort resulted in a settlement between OHA and the State of Hawai‘i in which OHA received a payment in 1991 of $100 million and an agreement for an additional $8.5 million each year thereafter. In return, OHA released claim to 1.5 million acres of “ceded lands”. This decision was extremely unpopular amongst sovereignty groups who decried the trade of cash for land. (Trask, 1999)

In 1991, Hui Na‘auao, with support from Senator Inouye, received a three year grant award for $300,000 for sovereignty education, to hold a constitutional convention and petition the Congress of the U.S. for recognition. Hui Na‘auao is a coalition of over 50 Hawaiian groups whose goal is to facilitate and support awareness of Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination. (Sovereignty Advisory Council, 1993)

The State Legislature created the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission in 1991 to develop a plan to discuss and study the sovereignty issue. A Final Report was submitted in 1993. Chaired by Rowena Akana, this commission brought together representatives from 13 sovereignty organizations, including OHA, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Ka Pakaukau, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. (Ibid.)

In 1993, the State Legislature convened another group called the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission, chaired by Sol Kaho‘ohanalahalā. This commission was charged with the planning and conducting of a plebiscite for Native Hawaiian
Sovereignty. Four seats on the board were reserved for OHA, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, The State Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. The balance of the 20 seats would be chosen by the Governor from a pool of candidates nominated by Hawaiian organizations. Ka Lāhui refused to fill their designated seat. They believed that allowing the Governor to appoint commissioners gave the State too much control over the process. This commission filed their report to the Legislature in 1994 which recommended that a process for a plebiscite and that an Independent Hawaiian Sovereignty elections Board be established in 1995. (State Sovereignty Commission, 1994)

Also in 1991, the Hawai‘i Advisory Committee to U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report: A Broken Trust: 70 Years of Failure of Federal and State Governments to Protect the Civil Rights of Native Hawaiians From Hawaiian Home Lands Abuses, was issued. (United States Commission on Civil Rights. Hawaii Advisory Committee, 1991)

Thousands of Hawaiians and supporters gathered at ‘Iolani Palace in 1993 to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. This was the largest gathering of Native Hawaiians and Hawai‘i residents to voice a mass protest against the 1893 illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 1994)

The Apology Law (PL-102-150) was signed in 1993. This law recognizes that Native Hawaiians "never relinquished their claims to their inherent sovereignty as a people over their national lands to the U.S., either through their monarchy or through a plebiscite or referendum..."; apologizes to Native Hawaiians for the role the United
States played in the overthrow and urges the President to acknowledge the ramifications and support reconciliation efforts between the US and the Native Hawaiian people.  

A report, “From Mauka to Makai: The River of Justice Must Flow Freely”, was released by the Department of the Interior and Department of Justice in 2000. It is a Report on the Reconciliation Process Between the Federal Government and Native Hawaiians. This report recommends that (1) Native Hawaiians receive Federal Recognition, (2) that a new office within the Department of Interior be established to address Native Hawaiian issues, (3) that the Office of Tribal Justice be assigned to maintain a dialogue with Native Hawaiians on an ongoing basis, (4) that a Native Hawaiian Advisory Commission be established to consult with all bureaus within the Department of Interior regarding land and natural resource issues; and, (5) that efforts be made toward reconciliation to ameliorate past wrongs suffered against Native Hawaiians. (United States. Dept. of the Interior & United States. Dept. of Justice., 2000)

In 2000, the first of the Bills nicknamed the "Akaka Bill" was introduced in Congress for the purpose of establishing recognition for Native Hawaiians and protecting Federally-funded Native Hawaiian Programs from legal threat. The original bill was supported by some of the sovereignty groups, including Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. Hearings on this bill were held in Hawai‘i in August, 2000.

Since then, several versions of the bill have been introduced which have failed to garner support from either the broad range of sovereignty groups in Hawai‘i or from the majority of members of the Senate. Although versions of the bill have passed successfully from the U.S. House of Representatives, they have failed to reach support in the U.S. Senate. In January 2007, the latest version of the Akaka Bill, S.B. 310, “The
Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Act of 2007", was introduced. This bill: (1) establishes the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations in the Department of the Interior to serve as a liaison between Native Hawaiians and the United States, (2) establishes the Native Hawaiian Interagency Coordinating Group to be composed of federal officials from agencies which administer Native Hawaiian programs. Both of these provisions are intended to increase coordination between the Native Hawaiians and the federal government, and (3) provides a process of reorganization of the Native Hawaiian governing entity for the purpose of a federally recognized government-to-government relationship with the United States. While language from negotiations with the U.S. Department of Justice has been inserted into this bill, it still does not have full support of the Bush Administration. Governor Linda Lingle, OHA, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the Kamehameha Schools and other groups continue to support its passage.

Independence-minded sovereignty groups like Ka Lāhui, Ka Pakaukau and the “Kingdom” groups do not support it.

An effort supported by OHA, “Kau Inoa” began in January 2004, to register members of the new Hawaiian nation has been only mildly successful.

In 2001; the Hawaiian Kingdom took their case, Larsen v. Hawaiian Kingdom, to the International Court of Arbitration at the Hague. Hawaiian subject, Lance Larsen, had sued the Hawaiian Kingdom for failing to protect his rights against the United States. Larsen was found guilty and imprisoned for failing to possess a valid Hawai’i Driver’s license and a license plate for his vehicle. In his international trial, it was verified by the court that the Hawaiian Kingdom still existed as an independent nation-state and was
subject to all the same rights and protection as other recognized nation-states in the United Nations. The U.S. failed to appear on their own behalf. In addition, Acting Regent Keānu Sai filed a complaint at the United Nations against the U.S. against its prolonged occupation of Kingdom of Hawai‘i since 1898.  

Defining a Hawaiian Leader

*Na Lolina – Hawaiian Values*

George Kanahale, noted Hawaiian scholar, writes of traditional Native Hawaiian leadership in his book, *Kū Kanaka, Stand Tall: A Search for Hawaiian Values*. He lists all the desirable Hawaiian values which he deems necessary for an individual to possess in order to be considered a leader. They include pono, which he defines as rectitude; mana or spiritual power – partly achieved and partly innate or ascribed; aloha – a reciprocal caring for one another, kūpa‘a or loyalty; mālama or caring; ha‘aha‘a or humility; kūpono or integrity; na‘auao or intelligence and wisdom; koa or courage; and ho‘okōkō or competitiveness. Additionally, he states that other qualities for Hawaiian leadership include loko‘omaika‘i or generosity; ho‘okipa or hospitality; aloha which he defines here as “spirituality in the sense of developing one’s mana” and courtesy or ‘olu‘olu. (Kanahele, 1986).

Most certainly, a perfect leader might possess most if not all of those qualities which are prized in Hawaiian culture. Hawaiians, as evidenced in the many mo‘olelo or stories about our great ancestors, have shown repeatedly, that an individual who places the welfare of the people above his own is considered a great leader. Such was the case of Kamehameha I who was revered by the people of Hawai‘i Island, particularly in his
old age, when his reputation as a peace-loving Statesman, accomplished farmer and
fisherman was well-known. In his younger years, however, Kamehameha I was also
known for his skill in battle, and his ruthless victories over Maui and O‘ahu chiefs. His
victories in battle became the victories of his chiefs and followers. Throughout
Kamehameha I’s life, the social and governance structure of the ali‘i nui or high chief
remained intact. Through a symbiotic relationship with the akua or gods, ali‘i or chiefs,
maka‘ānana or people, and the ‘āina or land, every person understood his place in
society, relied on this relationship to provide service and sustenance, and the leadership
structure remained intact.

With the changes in the social structure of society brought about by the new
Christianity, and the re-structuring of the native’s relationship to land caused by the
Māhele, traditional leadership roles were uprooted, and Hawaiian values which were
intact for hundreds of years were transformed. The Māhele refers to the laws instituted in
1850 which introduced fee simple or freehold ownership of land to Hawai‘i. These
changes uprooted the entire socio-economic structure of Hawaiian rule which had been
based on a symbiotic relationship with the akua, ali‘i, maka‘ānana, and the ‘āina. The
process of claiming land left less than 1% of the land in the hands of the maka‘ānana and
opened up the opportunity for anyone to purchase land in Hawai‘i.

Times have certainly changed, and the call for unity among Native Hawaiian
governance groups rings loudly over the P.A. system whenever Hawaiians gather to talk
about our future. Unity is expressed as if all Hawaiians should share one single opinion
on our collective future prospects. Lack of unity is looked upon by our greater
community in Hawai‘i as well as the Washington D.C. politicians as indicating that
Hawaiians will never agree on a preferred form of governance and as long as we can't agree, we will never achieve our dream of self-determination, in any form. Never mind that more than one-half of all voting Americans in the last U.S. Presidential election didn't agree on their choice for leader. Or, that a significant percentage of Hawai‘i residents did not support the current governor. It seems that political decision makers in Washington D.C., in Hawai‘i, as well as the general public believe that Hawaiians must declare unanimity in our choice of a leader and the preferred form of governance in order to gain political support. This is a double-standard, to say the least. Our current generations of Hawaiians have never grown up under the ancient Chiefly regime. And while it seems we have a desire to be led by a person who possesses all these Hawaiian values, we have only known American Democratic principles as a form of governance.

We understand the individual's right of self-expression, and we possess no fear of retaliation for voicing our opinions, and forming our own groups to support our agenda.

*Kūlana or the Right of the First-born*

According to Kanahele, primogeniture was an important element of leadership selection in traditional Hawai‘i, among both ali‘i and maka‘ainana. Leadership fell naturally to the first born, and in most but not all cases, to the first-born male child. 20 While this may still be the preference for inheritance in some families, kūlana or birth rank is no longer the formula for determining political leadership in Hawai‘i, among any ethnic population.

Perhaps because of the political and historic circumstances which face contemporary Hawaiians today, and because we no longer rely on primogeniture to determine the inherited rights of leadership, I believe there must be additional skills that
modern Hawaiian leaders must possess. All those altruistic traits expressed as Hawaiian values are not enough to determine what constitutes a great Hawaiian leader.

*Ike Ho'omaupopo or Hawaiian Consciousness*

Most certainly, because of the threat of losing our collective interest in our land as well as all the inherent rights that go along with it, our Hawaiian leader must possess a deep understanding of the relationship of the Hawaiian to the land and be willing to defend our rights to maintain that relationship. This commitment to care for our collective lands is of utmost importance in order to declare any type of self-determination and form of nationhood. Caring for the land would include caring for the kupuna whose bones and possessions rest in safe-keeping in the land. Caring for the land would include protecting the environment from further harm so that our mo'opuna or grand-children will enjoy the same benefits that we enjoy. Caring for the land includes nurturing our relationship with the ocean and the forests as well. And, caring for the land would mean protecting the rights of the people to gather food, plants, animals, provide access for these uses, and have the ability to practice our spirituality without interference, or having to state our intent to conduct spiritual worship, and not simply to visit the park, as is currently the case in the "National" parks like at Kīlauea Volcano or Pu'ukoholā Heiau on Hawai'i Island.

Pua Kanaka'ole Kanahele, a noted Hawaiian scholar, mentor and cultural leader, tells us that without these islands of Hawai'i, we would not be Hawaiian. We have no other place from which we come, which our ancestors call home. The diminishment of our 'āina, including loss of control and access to our sacred places, beaches and forests have a profound impact on our psyche, our well-being, collectively and individually.
A true and effective leader, therefore, must possess an utmost commitment to maintaining that connection to the land for our people.

This Hawaiian consciousness is a fairly modern movement, according to noted Hawaiian scholar, John Dominis Holt. In his essay, On Being Hawaiian, he describes the new Hawaiian groups that have formed to combat the assault on Hawaiian land, and on Hawaiian intelligence. (Holt, 1995) He witnessed the beginnings of the movement by Hawaiian groups to stop encroaching urban development, and applauded the resurgence of cultural values and preservation of Hawaiian heritage. Holt discusses the generations of Hawaiians who have been burdened by the events of history which degraded our culture and relegated Hawaiians to become "welfare agency cases, pa'ahau's (prisoners), and public health problems." (Ibid, p18) He lauds the new Hawaiian leaders who can be found among the educators, artists, architects, clergymen, lawyers, physicians, businessmen and political leaders of the State. Although Hawaiians are not predominant among those ranks, they are leaders, nonetheless.

Ho'ona'auao or Becoming Educated

Education was definitely encouraged for young Hawaiian leaders. From the earliest times, the young boys were provided special training in developing skills for leadership. In Stephen L. Desha's book, Kamehameha and his Warrior Kekūhaupi'o, he writes about the selection of a young son of a warrior chief, Kekūhaupi'o, who was identified as a young child as being worthy of becoming a kahuna and trained in the art of war. Kekūhaupi'o was observed by the guardian priest of the Hikiau heiau as possessing the physique and character of a promising young warrior. He was trained to become a kahuna lua (a master in the art of warfare) by a master named La'amea. In turn, upon the
birth of Kamehameha I, another young child prophesied to become a great warrior chief, Kekūhaupiʻo is selected to become his mentor and teach him all the arts and skills of battle. (Desha, Frazier, & Hawaii Historic Preservation Division., 2000)

By the next generation, after the arrival of the missionary families and the introduction of writing to the Hawaiian language, the manner of training young leaders transformed. In her book, The Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's School, Juliette Montague Cooke records in her diary, the daily activities of the lives of the royal children of Hawaiian chiefs who have been given to her care and training. Established in Honolulu in 1839, at the request of Kamehameha III, Governor of O'ahu Kekuanaʻoa, and other high ranking chiefs, the school opened with Juliette and Alistair Cooke as their teachers. Students of the “Royal School” included Alexander Liholiho, who would become Kamehameha IV; Lot, who would become Kamehameha V; Bernice Pauahi who would later marry financier, Charles Reed Bishop; David Laʻamea, who would be named Kalākaua, a future king; and Lydia Kamakaʻeha, who would be the last reigning monarch, Liliʻuokalani. (Cooke, Cooke, & Richards, 1970) The need for formal education in Western knowledge and diplomacy was acknowledged. The skills of warfare were no longer the route to ensuring the survival of the Hawaiian people and their culture. Indeed, mass education in Hawaiʻi began in 1820 with the arrival of the missionaries and was supported by the translation of the bible into the Hawaiian language, a feat completed in 1839. In 1841, education for all children over the age of four was compulsory on all the islands. At that time, instruction was delivered in the Hawaiian language. (Ibid. Xiv)
Moʻokūahau or Genealogy

In ancient Hawai‘i, chiefly status is acquired primarily by birthright. Genealogy or moʻokūahau played a significant role in determining one’s social standing and customary rights. This is evident in the story of ʻUmi, a young son of Chief Līloa whose birthright was claimed when he appeared before his father with personal items that identified his relationship with the chief. ʻUmi had been born of a common woman, and raised by his mother without knowledge of his chiefly rank. When it was confirmed that he was, indeed, the son of Chief Līloa, ʻUmi was afforded all the rights that his status deserved.

In this same moʻolelo or story, is an example of the desirable leadership skills that ʻUmi possessed. Although Hākau, the first born son of Chief Līloa, succeeded his father to the throne, his distasteful personality and stingy ways encouraged the high priests to seek the support of ʻUmi in battling his brother for the throne. Throughout his reign, Chief ‘Umialiloa (ʻUmi, son of Līloa) was revered as an intelligent and caring chief. (Fornander, 1959)

In Martha Beckwith’s Hawaiian Mythology, she writes about the traditional tangible signs of chiefdom. They are: (1) a family genealogy or moʻokūahau which traces back to the gods through one of the two sons of Kiʻi, Ulu and Nana-ulu. It was also desirable that the family tree branched as widely as possible in determining important relationships; (2) that a name chant or mele inoa be composed at birth which glorified the family history of persons concerned, places made sacred by particular events or by association (Often times, the genitals of the child would be given a name to honor their ancestors); (3) by hōʻailona or prophetic signs in the heavens by which
'aumakua of the day recognized their offspring on earth. (These could take shape in cloud formations, rainbows, and other natural phenomenon); (4) the child’s birthplace would be considered sacred; (5) the aha or sacred cord (representing an umbilical cord) which was strung across the entrance to a chief’s dwelling would fall on its own accord when approached by a person of equal or higher rank, (6) the possession of wealth or waiwai, this could be in the form of land, labor, special personal belongings and markings of high rank, (7) kapu or taboo which were passed down from the parents, such as the kapu moe or prostrating kapu, (8) a chief possessed the right to officiate over ceremonies at the heiau or temple, and (9) upon their death, there was a special arrangement for preparing the body and secreting away their bones for safekeeping. According to Beckwith, “Rank therefore depended primarily upon blood; but of equal importance was the conduct of life by which one could, by carelessness in preserving the tapus and in making proper marriages, lose caste and prerogatives under the severe discipline of the Aha-ali’i or so-called “college of chiefs,” or could, through a royal marriage, raise the rank of one’s descendants upon the family line. (Beckwith, 1976)

In *Ka Po'e Kahiko, The People of Old*, by Samuel Manaikalani Kamakau, he discusses the various degrees of chiefs, including the Ni'aupi'o, the very highest rank, the Pi'o, reserved for children of Ni'aupi'o chiefs, Naha chiefs, who held lesser kapu than the Pi'o chiefs, Lo chiefs who lived away from the other communities and maintained their chiefly kapu, Papa. Wahi, or Lokea chiefs where one parent held a higher kapu than the other, La'au Ali'i or La'auli who were descendants of the second or later wife of a high ranking chief, Kaukau Ali'i who were descendants of the La'au Ali'i. There was also a
class of Ali‘i Noanoa, a child born of a union between a high chief and a commoner, such as 'Umi whose father was High Chief Li‘iloa and his mother was a beautiful woman without rank named 'Akahiakuleana. Finally, Kamakau names the Ali‘i Maka‘ainana, or chiefs born of high parentage but lived in the countryside amongst the maka‘ainana or commoners and who kept their kapu secret. (Kamakau, Barrere, & Pukui, 1992)

New Leadership Under the Constitutional Monarchy

In his book, Dismembering Lāhui, Dr. Jonathan Osorio discusses the structural change of governance in the establishment of the Constitution of 1840. For the first time, maka‘ainana are thrust into a new role, that of decision makers of the laws of the land. Although commoners were now elected into the House of Representatives, Osorio writes that “a Hawaiian understanding of representative as lawmaker was several years away.” In the capacity as Konohiki, a low ranking ali‘i responsible for the management of a specific piece of land, this person would be responsible of ensuring the abundant productivity of the land and the maka‘ainana farmers. Most the elected representatives, however, were not Konohiki, but teachers. According to Osorio, “These kanaka were the symbols of the new Western and Christian knowledge that had been the cornerstone of their education.” Over time, this new governance structure served to elevate the status of maka‘ainana as decision-makers and equalize the status of the members of the House of Nobles, whose mo‘okūahau or genealogical ties to early high chiefs, no longer served that status. (Osorio, 2002)
Modern Hawaiian Leadership Defined

Neither genealogy nor gender are the markers of leadership, according to Hawaiian scholar and sovereignty activist, Haunani Kay Trask. While Aliʻi rank plays a part in “reinforcing leadership”, mana is the defining characteristic of leadership. Mana, she describes, is “the ability to speak for the people and the land, to command respect by virtue of this ability, and to set the issues of public debate as those that benefit the lāhui (nation).” Trask goes on further to say that women have been at the forefront of the early sovereignty movement. “Caring for the nation is, in Hawaiian belief, an extension of caring for the family, the large family that includes both our lands and our people.” Mana and Pono are linked values that are understood by Hawaiian sovereignty leaders and the people, according to Trask. She defines Pono as the traditional Hawaiian value of balance between people, land and the cosmos. “Only a leader who understands this familial, genealogical link between Hawaiians and their land can hope to reestablish pono...” (Trask, 1999)

I agree with Haunani-Kay Trask in that a modern Hawaiian leader must be viewed by the community as possessing mana, and that the leader be pono or be balanced in their thinking, word and action in addition to all those values expressed by George Kanahele. Those values of kūpaʻa or loyalty; mālama or caring; haʻahaʻa or humility; kūpono or integrity; naʻauao or intelligence and wisdom; koa or courage; and hoʻokākā or competitiveness, lokomaikaʻi or generosity; hoʻokipa or hospitality; ‘oluʻolu or courtesy and aloha are all a part of leadership qualities considered desirable by Hawaiians. In total, they add to that leader’s mana or spiritual power. In addition, an
ideal modern Hawaiian leader will exhibit a strong Hawaiian consciousness and understand the relationship and importance of the Hawaiian to the ‘āina or land, be educated in both Hawaiian cultural and Western knowledge in order to balance Hawaiian cultural understanding with Western beliefs, and know their moʻokūauhau which gives them a strong sense of who they are and how they are related to communities and the ‘āina.

While ideally, I believe the Hawaiian community would welcome the emergence of a Hawaiian leader from a traditional Hawaiian aliʻi family who possesses all of these positive traits, that has not been the case. Potential Modern Hawaiian leaders have fallen short of community expectations for various personal, political and medical reasons. They include the Kawananakoa family who claim aliʻi status by virtue of their ancestry as a descendent of a sister of King Kalakaua. Their substantial family endowment was amassed through their Scottish grandfather from whom the wealthy Campbell estate derived its benefit. Unfortunately, they have failed to use their status and substantial income to step forward as leaders in the Native Hawaiian self-determination movement. Another disappointment was the first Hawaiian Governor of the State of Hawaiʻi, John Waiheʻe, a descendant of the Kamehameha line, who made significant headway towards addressing inequities for Native Hawaiians between the State and Federal government, and then segued into private law practice for a top-notch Washington D.C. firm. Former Senator Milton Holt, a high school football star and Harvard University graduate was hoped to be the next Hawaiian Governor but fell from grace due to personal problems.

This is the ripe opportunity for new Hawaiian leaders to come forward. Modern Hawaiians no longer look toward the aliʻi class for leadership. Instead, other Hawaiian
values emerge as important qualities of a desirable Hawaiian leader. It is still important for that leader to know his or her genealogy, but no longer important that they are able to trace their genealogy back to a high chief, as in the old days.

These four leaders who are subjects in this thesis possess these qualities in varying degrees. Not a single one of them, or any other modern leader, no matter what their ethnicity or worldview might be, have overwhelming support of the majority of Hawaiians or citizens in Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, each has significantly impacted the discussion on Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination in different ways. They have challenged the status quo relationship with the U.S. and State of Hawai‘i government and stretched the dialogue to its furthest limits, thereby allowing for any possible form of self-determination to emerge. They have each added new vernacular to our language and discussion about these issues as well as various models of self-governance. Further, each one of these leaders has dedicated their lifework to these causes, for the betterment of the Hawaiian people. This in itself is an admirable quality.
CHAPTER TWO
AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. RICHARD KEKUNI BLAISDELL

Date of Birth: March 11, 1925
Place of Birth: Honolulu, Hawai’i

This interview with Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell took place on October 9, 2004 in the Radisson Prince Kuhio Hotel Lobby. We were attending the First Ka ‘Aha Pono, a conference on Hawaiian intellectual and cultural property rights. We were surrounded with Hawaiian intellectuals, debating the merits of the arguments heard earlier in the day at the conference. The mood was upbeat – it was thrilling being in the company of so many Native Hawaiians who could speak with one mind about a topic as important as this one. This discussion on protecting our cultural and intellectual property is an important step, just one more step in the whole movement toward self-determination. The outcome of this conference was a statement called the Paoakalani Doctrine, named for the site on which it was written. This Doctrine declares to the world that Native Hawaiians have asserted our collective and individual rights to our cultural and intellectual property. No longer will we stand by as world conglomerates such as the Disney Company and others usurp our ancient Hawaiian mele or songs and claim it as their own, nor will we, as a body, allow photographers to claim the image and pose of hula dancers as their personal property, when our ancients have been dancing hula for millennia and the dance forms are a product of the collective property that we claim as
Native Hawaiians. Uncle Kekuni, as he is often called, was present at this ‘Aha or conference as he is always present when Native Hawaiians gather to discuss important issues such as this. I also call him Uncle out of respect, not only for his age, a spry 80-something, but because he is a classmate of my Father’s, Class of 1942 at the Kamehameha School for Boys. The Class of ‘42 was made famous by the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A plaque sits atop a hill at the high end of the campus, near the Girl’s School Dorms, which commemorates this class of young men who, in their Senior year, found themselves guarding the school against possible attack by the enemy. This was the incident that signaled the United States’ entry into World War II.

This small class of twenty-four young men boasts such Hawaiian leaders as Uncle Kekuni Blaisdell; Daniel K. Akaka, Senior Senator from Hawai’i to the United States Congress; noted Hawaiian kupuna and activist Louis “Buzzy” Agard; and, my father, Llewellyn Waine’e Wong, community leader and life-long service volunteer.

Uncle Kekuni began with an explanation of his genealogy.

NN: Can you please tell me your full name.

KB: My full name is Richard Kekuni Blaisdell. When I was born, my family name was Akana, then in 1940 I was hanai’ed by my mother’s second husband, William Blaisdell, because my father died. My birth certificate was changed to Blaisdell. I am also a Pu’uohau.

NN: Your niece, Nālani Minton shared with me a picture of your ancestor Pu’uohau. How are you related?
KB: My mama is Maria Kahopekaha Pu’uohau. She was born in Honolulu but her father came from Kōhala and her mother came from Waiālua. They were married in Waiālua. I think they came from a home that was owned by Princess’Miriam Likelike. Thomas Pu’uohau was the coachman. And they both were in her singing group, Nā Lani ‘Ehā, created for the royal composers.

NN: Now did you say your father was Akana?

KB: That was my biological father, Keali‘ikauahia Akana. His mother was a Wong Ham. Her mother was Marion Keli‘ikipi from Maui.

NN: Where were you born?

KB: I was born in old Kapi‘olani Maternity Hall where Foodland Store on Beretania Street and Kalākaua Avenue meet, next to the Mormon Tabernacle. That used to be Kapi‘olani Maternity Hall before it moved to the corner of Bingham and Punahou Street.

NN: When were you born?

KB: I was born on March 11, 1925.

NN: Were you raised on O‘ahu in your early years?

KB: Yes, I was raised in Kaimākā on Pāhoa Avenue and the house is still there, two blocks away from my Tutu Maria Pu’uohau’s house. It was she who married Captain George Pitlz, Captain of the Dickenson, the cable ship that was used to lay the transpacific telephone cable.

NN: Do you mean the telephone cable between the islands?

KB: Yes, and from the U.S. mainland and Japan.

NN: Do you have brothers and sisters?
KB: My hiapo (first-born child) was my sister, Louise Iwalani Akana Blaisdell and she married Frank Minton, Nālani’s mom and Dad. I was number two at that time. Later we acquired some siblings.

NN: Where were you educated?

KB: I went to Punahou for the first and second grades, from 1930 until 1932, until my father. Then my mother put us in public school. From 1937 until 1942, I attended Kamehameha School for Boys.

NN: Did you go to school on the campus at Bishop museum?

KB: I did, I went to school from the 7th Grade at Kaiwi’ula. That’s what it was called, the red bones, that’s the name of the site.

NN: I remember my father’s stories about how exciting it was when the class moved up to the Boy’s school up on Kāpālai‘a.

KB: That was in 1940 when we moved up the hill.

NN: I remember his stories about when he was in school at Kamehameha, he worked part of his school life. Did you work, too?

KB: Yes, we worked in Low Eleventh Grade and High Eleventh Grade. All the boys were assigned to an occupation. I was an electrician at Hawaiian Pine Company, with Buzzy Agard and Bobby Gomard. After high school, I was working in 1941 when we went to war. It was morning, December 7, 1941. After breakfast, we were polishing our brass and our shoes because Sunday Parade was scheduled for that afternoon. I was getting ready for the Dress Parade when some of the youngsters went outside and saw the smoke coming from Downtown Honolulu somewhere, as well as from Pearl Harbor. Somewhat later it was announced on the P.A. system that planes and ships from the
Empire of Japan attacked us. The school was suspended for a long time, and we were assigned as guards around the campus amidst all the rumors about Japanese parachuting into the hills behind the school.

NN: There is a plaque up at school about that. Have you seen it?

KB: Yes, I have.

NN: After high school, did you go into the service right away?

KB: No, I was supposed to be an electrician. There was one particular faculty member at Kamehameha School for Boys who took an interest in me. His name was Donald Kilolani Mitchell, and he was a science teacher. He asked me if I was interested in becoming a doctor. I said no one in my family had ever become a doctor, no one had gone to college. And, I was supposed to be an electrician.

NN: Why do you suppose he singled you out for that? Did you excel in Science?

KB: No, Buzzy Agard was number one in science. Sometimes my test scores in science were good but not always. I did well in most of my classes. He told me that he had come out to the islands in 1928 when he finished college. He had taken a medicine course and planned to go back to America and go to medical school but he fell in love with our people, our land, and our culture.

NN: He never left, did he? Dr. Mitchell was still there when I was in school in the late 60’s. Did you go to medical school right away after high school?

KB: The war was on. He asked me again, he told me that it was one way to get out of the war. Maybe I could be deferred if I went to medical school. So, I went to Chapman University. There was another member of the faculty who taught there. He was a graduate of the University of Redlands which was in Southern California. And he liked
me so he helped me get into Redlands. The night before he came into our room and I
had a phone call from Jimmy Blaisdell who was left behind to take care of his Mama and
who lived in Coronado, California. He was an outstanding athlete at University of
Redlands so everyone asked me if I was related to Jimmy Blaisdell because he was an
All-American athlete. Anyway, he had gone there before, and I was on the track team so
I got a scholarship. And, I applied for a scholarship from Kamehameha Schools and they
had just started an award for Seniors. I got one of them, I forgot what it was called, I
think it was the Frank C. Atherton Award, so I got on a troop ship between here and San
Francisco. It took over 12 days, and I went to the University of Redlands. After three
years, I was admitted to University of Chicago School of Medicine. I went to medical
school during the war. Most of my fellow classmates had already been to war in the
Army or the Navy and then went to medical school. I was one of the few civilians in my
class. I graduated from medical school in 1948, the war was over at that time. Also, by
that time my Mother had died, she died in January 1946. But in 1940, my mother
married William Blaisdell. He became the Fire Chief. His oldest brother was Neil.

NN: I remember Neil, wasn’t he our Mayor of Honolulu?

KB: Yes, he was. He worked for Hawaiian Pine as Director of Personnel and I
remember when he found out I was going to leave Hawaiian Pine he said, “What do you
want to do that for? You have a good job.” You see it wasn’t supposed to be. I wasn’t
supposed to go to medical school.

NN: So when you finished medical school, what kind of practice did you go into?

KB: I finished medical school in 1948 and I went to Johns Hopkins Hospital in
Baltimore. I trained for one year during the Korean War. My pay as an intern at Johns
Hopkins Hospital was room and board, one-week vacation and that was it. We worked night and day. I didn't have any income, so I joined the Army and they commissioned me. I got First Lieutenant pay so I was able to buy a car. Then that meant I had to pay back for my post medical school loans. After one year, I went to Tulane Charity Hospital in New Orleans where I was a Resident Physician.

NN: What was it like for you in Louisiana?

KB: It was awful in the South. I witnessed and experienced segregation. The Charity hospital was split right down the middle.

NN: Was it half white and half black?

KB: They even had separate blood banks and separate emergency rooms.

NN: Which side did you work on?

KB: I worked on both sides.

NN: Was there a difference in the delivery of service?

KB: Oh, yes, except I was on the Tulane Staff. There was also Louisiana University and Louisiana State University - South.

NN: How were you treated when you were there?

KB: It was interesting, because they didn't know how to treat me. You see, when I was in California they thought I was Mexican. When I went to Chicago they thought I was American Indian or something like that, and then went I went to Baltimore and New Orleans, they didn't know what I was. They had segregated washrooms so I used both, sometimes I used the Colored one and sometimes I used the White one. I used any one of them.

NN: Whichever was closer?
KB: Yes. So I got to know people.

NN: Were you married during this time?

KB: No, no woman would have me. I tried.

NN: And did you finally come home?

KB: No, I had to pay back to the Army, so the Army sent me to Korea because the war was on.

NN: Did you go to Korea?

NN: Yeah, I was in the hills when the shells were coming in at night. They wouldn't let me out after one year so I stayed in Japan for one year and they still wouldn't let me out, so they sent me to Taiwan, and I stayed one more year. During that first year I was in the Army they sent me to a laboratory, a research lab. That was an interesting experience.

It was right outside of Boston, in Lawrence, Massachusetts. That's where I conducted interesting research. I really enjoyed that work. It was near Harvard University and that was good experience. When I finally got out of the Army, Tulane wanted me to go back and stay on the faculty but I didn't think I was ready because I had been in the Army for so many years.

So I went to college at Duke University instead. I had met a professor in Taiwan and he had come out as a consultant. He agreed to take me into his Department of Pathology at Duke so I went there for one year, it was really good experience. Pathology is the study of human tissue. I wanted to be a Hematologist, a blood doctor.

So after a year at Duke, University of Chicago accepted me to go back as a resident and asked me to stay on in Hematology. That's what I did, I stayed on, started to do some research and got a faculty appointment.
Then the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission in Hiroshima, Japan needed a Hematologist. I was appointed to that position for two years. I lived in Nagasaki and did hematology for patients from both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and that was awesome. I really fell in love with the people. They are peace advocates.

NN: Really? But they suffered the most heinous crimes?

KB: That's right.

NN: So were you working with the survivors?

KB: Yes, I worked with the Atomic Bomb survivors. And I lived in Nagasaki, which is a very interesting city. During the WWII, Japan was closed to the outside world.

Nagasak was the only city that was open only to Dutch foreigners, because they needed their expertise to steer ships in Nagasaki Harbor. I was one of the few foreign workers in the city at that time.

NN: You were away for a long time, weren't you?

KB: Yes, I went away in 1942 and I came back in 1966, that's twenty-four years, isn't it? In Japan, something else happened.

NN: What was that?

KB: I hanai'ed my son in 1959, when he was a year old. His name is Mitsunori Kamakani. Aloha Blaisdell.

NN: What do you call him?

KB: Kamakani. But in school they called him Mits.

NN: How old is he now?

KB: He was born in 1958.

NN: So he is 45 years old now?
KB: Yes, and he is bigger than I am.

NN: Is that right? So you raised him from a baby?

KB: Oh, yes. He is married now and has two children.

NN: I recall when the issue of hānai came up in the discussion about the Admissions Policy at Kamehameha Schools that you made a statement about hānai. Can you tell me about that?

KB: Yes, I am hānai and I hānai'ed a boy.

NN: So you have never been married?

KB: Oh yes, I am. When I brought my hānai son back to University of Chicago and I was on the faculty I found a pretty nurse there and I married her. She is a Waimanalo plantation girl.

NN: You found a Waimanalo plantation girl there in Chicago?

KB: Yes, her name is Irene Furuto, a plantation girl. So I married her and we lived in Chicago until 1966. My daughter was born in Chicago. Her namē is Nānani Blaisdell. She became a Channel 2 news reporter and she married Bill Brennan who is also on Channel 2. They used to anchor the weekend news. Then she started medical school and she finished her residency so she is now a full time physician here at Kaiser Medical Center and she has two children, so I have four mo'opuna (grand-children).

NN: Congratulations, that’s a blessing. So, what kind of medicine did you practice?

KB: I practiced Hematology.

NN: And you’ve been in Hawai‘i practicing since 1966?

KB: I came back, not to practice medicine, I came back to start the medical school.

NN: Do you mean the John Burns School of Medicine?
KB: It wasn't John Burns when we started, it was the University of Hawai'i School of Medicine. We started as a two-year school and then we had to transfer our students to the U.S. continent to get their M.D. degrees. Then 1975 was the first year that our medical school awarded medical degrees and among those in that notable class was Emmett Aluli; Nathan Wong who was on the Hokule'a, he's at Kaiser now; Bill Ahuna who is also at Kaiser and became an internist; and Sol Naluai.

NN: So you came home to start that whole program and you stayed on to become faculty?

KB: We began that School of Medicine. I retired officially in 2003, but I still teach.

NN: I know you have an organization, Ka Pakaukau, and I know you have been an advocate for our Hawaiian nation's sovereignty or independence for some time. Can you tell me first of all how that came to be, where in your life did you decide to become active in events such as this and what were the events in your life that might have taken place that turned you in that direction?

KB: Well I knew since I was a little kid that I was Kanaka. I had a Haole grandfather and I had a Paké (Chinese) grandfather. I knew I had Haole and Paké blood in me and yet I knew I was wasn't (culturally) Haole and I wasn't treated by others that way.

NN: You were treated like a Kanaka?

KB: I was treated as a Kanaka. We were the only Kanaka family on our block. My Tutu lived two blocks away and there was one other Kanaka family there. This was in Kaimuki. That was on Pāhoa Avenue between 6th and 7th avenues. My Tutu's older sister, she was a Pu’uohau married to a Kaeo, lived behind her on the land she had acquired.
because they were wards of Queen Liliʻuokalani. My grandmother, Mariah Puʻuohau and her sister became wards of the Queen when their parents died.

NN: They were orphans?

KB: They were orphans when Puʻuohau died and they were raised in the household with Princess Miriam Likelike. When Princess Likelike died and then her parents died, the Queen took them into her house and sent them to school to Kawaihāʻo Seminary. That’s when she met this Haole sea captain and the Queen gave her a piece of land at Waikīkī. Their second child was my mother. She had polio as an infant and the doctor said you better live where it is dry and sunny so they sold the property at Waikīkī and bought this land in Kaimāki and that’s why we lived there. That’s why I’m telling you I realized that I was Kanaka and not Haole. When I was a youngster, the term Kanaka was usually used derogatorily, an unfavorable adjective for a Hawaiian; lazy, stupid, dirty, drunk, so I knew all of that.

Going to school at Kamehameha was interesting because we were all Kanaka. When I found out that the school had been founded for us Kanaka, I began to understand my identity, and when I learned that the income for the school came from these lands, I began to feel some pride. I used to think that all these Haoles, fresh off the boat from America and all of them, except one, Kilohana Mitchell, understood that if you wanted to get anywhere, you needed to know how to be a white man, although you will never really be a white man. You can learn how, you can learn to survive in a white man's world but you will never be one. I got through the system, somehow.

NN: Right, You were able to take advantage of the system. Now, when did you become involved with the Self-Determination movement?
KB: I got involved with Hui Hānai, which is the publishing arm for Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center. They ended up publishing a few wonderful books. Nāna I ke kumu was one of them.

NN: So you began with them?

KB: I began to learn about the Queen and learned what happened to Lili‘uokalani, then the Kaho‘olawe movement began. But it was still early, in the late 60’s early 70’s. So when Native Hawaiians started to listen, the education hearings were going on.

Do you know how the whole movement started? Her name was Louisa Rice and one day her taxi caught fire, and the only thing that survived was a book that had been left behind by a passenger. It was Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawai‘i’s Queen. (Liliuokalani & Grant, 1990)

There were hearings going on about Native Hawaiians, so I went to see what was going on, and I was asked to help draft the health statement for the US Native Hawaiian Study Commission. (United States. Congress. House. Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs., 1985) And they determined that no reparations were due. So Kina‘u Boyd Kamali‘i drafted a minority report in 1983 and said the health care for Hawaiians were poor. (Ibid.) Then in 1984, three Kānaka asked me to join the independence movement; Soli Nīheu, Puhipau and Imaikalani Kalahele, the artist. They asked me to join their movement and we started the first native Hawaiian sovereignty conference.

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In 1989, Ka Pakaukau was formed with Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell as the Coordinator. This was a group of twelve Hawaiian organizations seeking independence from the United States. He also co-founded the Pro-Hawaiian Sovereignty Working Group and
the Kanakā Maoli Tribunal Kōmike who, from August 12 - 21, 1993, convened hearings throughout Ka Pae ‘Āina, in which the United States was put on trial for crimes, including genocide and ethnocide, against the Hawaiian people. (Blaisdell, 1994) The idea for this tribunal was attributed to the late Hawaiian Activist Gail Kawaipuna Prejean. More than 60 organizations and 500 individuals became sponsors of the Tribunal. The United States, however, did not send a representative. (Churchill & Venne, 2004)

On August 21, 1993, the Kanaka Maoli Tribunal Komike, under the leadership of Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell, convened the Peoples’ International Tribunal Hawai‘i 1993, Ka Ho’okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli. A panel of nine international human rights activists, including international rights lawyers, an expert in U.S. Constitution law, a minority rights lawyer, a member of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal, a theologian and an American Studies professor, heard testimonies from citizens throughout Hawai‘i regarding nine charges brought against the United States on behalf of Kanaka Maoli. The charges included:

I. Impermissible interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign people and nation;
II. Aiding and abetting a foreign coup d’état against the government of a sovereign people and nation;
III. Annexation of a sovereign people, their nation and territory without their free and informed consent;
IV. Imposition of statehood on a people, their nation and territory without their free and informed consent;
V. Illegal appropriation of the lands, waters and natural resources of the Kanaka Maoli;
VI. Economic colonization and dispossession of the Kanāka Maoli;
VII. Acts of genocide and ethnocide against the Kanaka Maoli;
VIII. Destruction of the environment of Ka Pae‘āina; and
IX. Violation of international and domestic trust responsibility.
In general, the tribunal found that the United States had indeed transgressed upon the sovereign rights of Kanaka Maoli as described above, and offered recommendations. Their recommendations included:

I. A directive that the “U.S. and the world should immediately recognize the sovereignty and right to self-determination of Lāhui Kanaka Maoli” under U.S. and international covenants and declarations of rights;
II. It calls upon the U.S. and the world to recognize the right of Lāhui Kanaka Maoli to decolonization under United Nations provisions;
III. It calls for the restoration of all Kanaka Maoli lands, including Ceded Lands;
IV. It states that jurisdiction of restored lands should belong to Lāhui Kanaka Maoli, including the right to determine the disposition of land occupied by non-natives;
V. It calls for the suspension of the use of “blood quantum” for identifying Native Hawaiians;
VI. It calls for the U.S. to “observe the provisions of the U. N. Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples as a minimum standard” when interacting with Lāhui Kanaka Maoli;
VII. It calls for the United States to ratify and adhere to the 1948 Convention on Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide; and
VIII. It finally states that all other wrongs that the U.S. has committed against Kanaka Maoli should be “rectified in a manner deemed satisfactory to the people themselves. (Ibid)

Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell continues to be a strong advocate for Hawaiian independence. He co-founded E Ola Mau, an organization of Hawaiian health professionals, and continues his research on Polynesian medicine and Hawaiian health.

Conclusion

Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell is one of the living senior members of the Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination movement. His organization’s name, Ka Pakaukau, literally means “the table”. Although Ka Pakaukau remains a loose coalition of Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination organizations, his discourse has indeed pushed the dialogue to its extreme limits. He advocates complete secession from the United States.
and the establishment of a new independent Hawaiian Nation. His statement is, "Ka Pakaukau, a coalition committed to Kanaka Maoli decolonization and total independence from the colonizer, the United States, strongly protests the colonial establishment’s scheme, again and again, to impose its own "Native Hawaiian Nation," in spite of repeated rebuffs from our Kanaka Maoli people." (Blaisdell, 1996)

Blaisdell and his organization are very clear advocates of complete independence from the U.S. and are vocal critics of the proposed "Akaka Bill" re-introduced in January, 2007 in the U.S. Congress. He does not, however, offer an alternative structure of government but seems to leave that to the will of the Hawaiian people.

Over the years, Uncle Kekuni has been called forth to participate in a number of committees and in writing reports on the Native Hawaiians. He was drafted by Chairperson Kina' u Boyd Kamali'i to draft the statement on Native Hawaiian health for the first report of the Native Hawaiian Sovereignty Council in 1993 and continues as an advocate of bettering health conditions for Native Hawaiian. He has authored numerous articles on Native Hawaiian health, and incorporates traditional Kanaka Maoli healing practices alongside Western understanding. He also established E Ola Mau, an organization of Hawaiian Health professionals which also serves on the board of Papa Ola Lokahi, a federally funded Native Hawaiian Health initiative created from the 1988 Native Hawaiian Health Care Act.

I believe that Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell is definitely a Hawaiian Leader. Since his return to Hawai‘i in 1966, he has been involved in supporting Native Hawaiian causes, and in educating young Hawaiian medical doctors. He is, obviously, an educated Hawaiian, both as a Western-trained medical physician and as a student of the Hawaiian
culture. Although he grew up during a time when the Hawaiian language was not taught in the public schools, and Hawaiian Culture was not the main frame of education at Kamehameha Schools, he has learned to speak Hawaiian, and frames his thoughts with Hawaiian values.

His sense of justice was influenced greatly by his own experiences of prejudice, while growing up as a child, and during his training as a medical doctor in the deep South. In addition, his empathy for A-bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is evident and solidified his interest in fighting U.S. political insensibilities. This framework was already formed when he returned home in 1966 to find Native Hawaiians in a state of political despair. He was there, right at the beginnings of the self-determination movement, and witnessed first hand the discriminatory acts against homeless families, Hawaiian and local.

He is actually a very soft-spoken man, with a slight and aging physical frame. He is not afraid to speak his mind, even when it goes against public and Native Hawaiian opinion, like his stand on hānai during Kamehameha School's legal battle over their admissions standards. In that case, he believed that a hānai child should have all the benefits of his adopted parents, including ethnic heritage, as if he were their natural born. He himself was hānai, and raised by a step-father from whom he takes his surname. He was nurtured by a teacher in high school, Dr. Donald Kilohana Mitchell, who urged him towards medical school at a time when he was otherwise destined to be an electrician.

His energy abounds, however, and he conducts weekly meetings with self-determination advocates in his home in Honolulu every Thursday evening. The younger generation continues to seek his wisdom and he often appears at public forums to support
their causes. I see that as a nurturing motive, to enthuse others as he was supported in his life's journey. I feel that about him whenever we have an opportunity to talk to each other.

Despite his political agenda which is not popular among the mainstream, Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell is well thought of as a physician and medical researcher. His efforts toward increasing the number of Native Hawaiian health professionals is remarkable, and his niece, Nalani Minton carries on his work at the John A. Burns School of Medicine.
CHAPTER THREE
AN INTERVIEW WITH MILILANI TRASK

Date of Birth: April 22, 1951
Place of Birth: Honolulu, Hawai'i

Mililani Trask was born into the world of politics and the struggle for Native Hawaiian and human rights. Her grandfather, David Trask, was an early member of the Hawaii Democratic Party, the first Hawaiian sheriff in Honolulu and a member of the Territorial Legislature for twenty-six years. Her maternal grandmother, Maui-born Iwalani Haia, was one of the first women to organize the Benevolent Societies on Maui, and played a key role in the movement to inform Hawaiians of the events surrounding the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893. She is the niece of Arthur Trask, well-known orator, lawyer and politician, and David Trask, Jr., a politician and a key player in labor organizing and collective bargaining for higher wages and better working conditions for public workers. Mililani is descended from the Pi‘ilani line of Maui and the Kahakumakaliua line of Kaua‘i.

Born and raised on O‘ahu, the fourth of five children of Bernard and Haunani Trask, Mililani was educated at the Kamehameha Schools. Following her graduation in 1969, she attended the University of Redlands and San Jose State University. In 1977, Mililani returned home with a Law degree from Santa Clara University in California.
In 1990, Mililani became the first elected Kia‘aina or Governor of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a Hawaiian nation formed in response to the United States’ colonial dominance. She was a prominent figure in the Hawaiian political spotlight for over eight years during her leadership of Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. In 1993, she served on the prestigious Indigenous Initiative for Peace (IIP) under the direction of Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu-Tum, the United Nations’ Goodwill Ambassador to the UN Decade on Indigenous Peoples.

And, in 1995, Mililani became the Second Vice-Chair of the General Assembly of Nations of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organizations (UNPO), founded in 1991 by His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama, as an alternative forum to the United Nations. Then in 1998, Mililani won a coveted seat on the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), the quasi-governmental organization formed in the 1978 Hawai‘i Constitutional Convention. She was elected by the largest number of Hawaiian votes cast in any election since OHA’s inception. OHA is an organization that has been the object of attack by independence-minded Hawaiian Nationalists since its creation.

In 2000, after the Rice decision forced the mass resignation of the OHA Board members and opened the election process to non-Hawaiians, Mililani lost her bid for re-election. She is an advocate of peace and has studied and worked with Mother Theresa of Calcutta for seven years. She founded the Native Hawaiian non-governmental organization (NGO), Na Koa Ikaika o Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, which worked in the international arena on the Draft Declaration for Indigenous Peoples and the World Conference on Racism for the last fifteen years. Today, she has a reputation as an expert on international and human rights law and is a much sought after speaker on native issues. She is currently serving as the Pacific representative on the United Nations
Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, based in New York. Mililani and her sister, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Professor, Haunani-Kay Trask, are outspoken critics of the current movement for the establishment of U.S. Federal recognition for Native Hawaiians, symbolized by the “Akaka Bill”.

The original interview took place on July 9, 2003, with follow-up discussions between then and April 2004. Our first meeting took place in Mililani’s Hilo office at the Gibson Foundation, a non-profit organization founded in 1987 to support housing for Native Hawaiians. She focuses on assisting kūpuna or elders in the community by providing advice and project support for home construction and repair. This, she feels, is her life’s purpose, working selflessly, without pay for her community.

Our initial interview lasted for three hours and covered a wide range of topics affecting Native Hawaiians. She possessed a nervous yet vibrant energy, constantly in motion, her pacing accented by her graceful hand gestures. The conversation was intense, as if we could affect the future of generations of Hawaiians by the agreements that were made in our private conversation. At times, the sky opened up and our voices were drowned out by the Kanilehua rains – short bursts of liquid sky that maintain the lush vegetation. Other times, the noise from the low-flying inter-island jets overwhelmed us, and the conversation stopped entirely. Once, her voice dropped to a whisper as a pedestrian passed by on the sidewalk. I felt like a conspirator, an insider participating in events that would turn the future for our nation. This is her story.

NN: Tell me how you became involved with the sovereignty movement in Hawai’i.

MT: I came home from law school. It was in the late 70’s. Alu Like had asked me to work at the 1978 Constitutional Convention (“Con-Con”). (In 1978, the Hawai’i State
Legislature convened a Constitutional Convention. It was most noted for creating a series of Legislative Bills that established Native Hawaiian programs and rights, including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The “Con-Con” has not been convened since that date.) I was in my last year at law school, and during that time, attended hearings about Sand Island. There, I heard testimony presented by a group of Wai’anae Hawaiians called Ho’ala Kanawai which means “to awaken the law”. They were alleging that the Hawaiian people had particular rights that other Native Americans did not, and that Hawaiian rights to land resources were part of the ceded land trust. I became interested in what they were doing and from that time, I began to work with them. I wrote a research paper on the Hanapepe, Kaua‘i water case that raised the issue of Hawaiian entitlements to water. I was working with a Japanese attorney, Mitsuo Uyehara. Together we filed an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief on behalf of the Hawaiian peoples.

NN: When did you become involved with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement?

MT: First, I became involved with the Ho’ala Kanawai group. They were looking at the concept of sovereignty as it could apply to Hawaiians in this modern period, but building upon the status of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and even going further back into the time of the monarchy and pre-western contact. They were trying to look at sovereignty, not only in the U.S. political context, but also the cultural aspects of sovereignty that existed before contact; what happened during colonization and how our political status had changed. Ho’ala Kanawai became a Statewide, non-profit corporation. They proposed legislation for the creation of a Hawaiian corporation, fashioned after the Alaska Native situation. This was taken into the State Constitutional Convention in 1978.
NN: Is this when you became involved with the “Con-Con”?  
MT: I was approached by Alu Like to be a researcher for the Hawaiian Affairs Committee of the “Con-Con”. By that time, the Hoʻāla Kanāwai Bill had been in the State of Hawaiʻi Legislature for two years. They were ready to move on their legislation. The idea was that Native Hawaiians could form a corporation then go to the State for a share of the Native Hawaiian assets. We wanted lands from the Ceded Land Trust, and some money so that the community could address their own needs.

NN: Was this effort successful?  
MT: Unfortunately, the entire effort was co-opted by a group of Hawaiians who were tightly associated with the Democratic Party. Frenchy DeSoto was in charge of the Hawaiian effort at the “Con-Con”. Her committee looked at the research and came to the conclusion that (1) Hawaiians were not ready for self-governance, (2) the community initiative was a substantial threat, a challenge to the State, and (3) that Hawaiians needed a two-step approach. The committee considered the U.S. Government’s Bureau of Indian Affairs, which has oversight of the Native American Indians. They decided the first step was the creation of a State of Hawai‘i type of Bureau of Indian Affairs. They created the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, which emerged after the ’78 “Con-Con”. All of the people affiliated with the “Con-Con” plan got Democratic Party support. Henry Peters, and John Waihee, (a young lawyer who would become the first Native Hawaiian Governor), supported the Bill. They said, “Let’s create the ‘Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ and make it a quasi-sovereign entity so it could be part State, part nation. That way we don’t have to create a separate nation.”

NN: What was your reaction?
MT: I opposed the Committee's decision, left the "Con-Con", and I continued to work with Ho'ala Kanawai. It was then we decided that we really needed to work with a larger group, it couldn't be just Ho'ala Kanawai, a few Hawaiian Homesteaders, but we had to broaden the effort. There were many other organizations looking at this concept of sovereignty - grass-roots groups and Hawaiian Civic Clubs were looking at self-governance, Hawaiian Homesteaders were discussing sovereignty, Native Americans were coming to Hawai'i to talk about sovereignty. Other Hawaiians were going to the United Nations. We decided that we would have a hälawai, a gathering, and it was decided that a new group should form so that Ho'ala Kanawai could remain intact.

NN: Who else was involved with this movement?

MT: The president of the Ho'ala Kanawai was Bluckie Hoohuli. Aunty Apolonia Day from Maui, Aunty Marie (Last name unknown) from Wai'anae, Aunty Pele Hanoa and others were involved in the Ho'ala Kanawai movement. A new group was formed called the Native Hawaiian Land Trust Task Force. It was headed by kupuna from each island. One of its central goals was accountability because we realized that the Ceded Land Trust assets were being encumbered, sold, and developed before Hawaiians could get the sovereignty question addressed.

NN: What action did the Native Hawaiian Land Trust Task Force take?

MT: The Task Force took its legislative initiative to the U.S. Congress who then called for an investigation of the Hawaiian Homelands Program. A Federal/State Task Force on Hawaiian Homelands was set up in 1982. The Federal/State Task Force continued to bring together all kinds of Hawaiian groups, not really sovereignty groups, but grass-roots groups looking at sovereignty. Many kupuna from the grass-roots communities
were involved. After a number of years, the report on the Hawaiian Home Lands situation was published. It was worse than we thought. Much of the land was being used for public purposes. We realized that the Hawaiian Home Lands were comprised of nearly 200,000 acres of rocks, unsuitable for agriculture, and, to make matters worse, while we were trying to focus on the homestead issue, we had not been paying attention to the larger land issue – the Ceded Lands Trust. So, we decided we would call for a big state-wide hālāwai. We decided that the time had come to call for a constitutional convention.

NN: Did Hawaiians respond?

MT: The response was overwhelming. Hawaiians came from all over. The gathering occurred at Mālia Puka’O Kalani church in Keaukaha in 1987. The rules were simple – come, regardless of age, or what group you were with or if you were by yourself, just come. We really did it as a grass-roots effort. At the end of the constitutional convention, we had to name the nation and the nation’s name was Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, that is how it was born. It was an effort of the Native Land Trust Task Force.

NN: Tell me more about Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i.

MT: Hawaiians drafted the first constitution; every few years there would be a convention to consider constitutional amendments. The constitution structured the government. We dealt with very basic concepts. What type of a structure would be culturally appropriate for Hawaiians and still allow us to interface with the United States and other native nations? The idea of a bicameral legislature didn’t make sense. When Hawaiians meet, everyone sits in one circle. That concept emerged as a uni-cameral government. For Hawaiians, the American notion of one-man, one-vote didn’t work. It
was culturally inappropriate. In Hawai‘i, governance was never one-man, one-vote. It was the Ali‘i or chiefs of the islands who had certain powers. But, in this modern day and age, you cannot govern by bloodline alone because you have Hawaiians with bloodlines from Kaua‘i, now living on O‘ahu. Should these people decide what’s going to happen on Kaua‘i when they don’t even live there? But bloodlines were important and needed to be included in some appropriate way. The reason why Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i has such a good constitution is because the process was created and implemented by Hawaiians to address their own concerns and rights. In order for a constitution to reflect what the people’s desires and political will is, it must be written by the broader and most representative group of Hawai‘i’s peoples. Representation based on “population” favor urban centers and westernized values. When representation is based on “community” the real value of Hawaiian cultural enclaves such as the fishing villages of Miloli‘i and Kalapana or the taro growers of Waipi‘o will be included in the outcome. Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s processes were created by Hawaiians to enhance their right of self-determination. It’s constitution addresses marine resources, cultural spiritual and traditional practices because Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s processes ensured that Hawai‘i fisherman, planters, kahu and cultural practitioners were delegates to the constitutional process. Self-determination is not only a human right, it is also a process for empowerment, nation building and conflict resolution.

NN: Is Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i a democratic nation?

MT: Yes, we thought that democracy was also an important concept. So, Hawaiians put the purest example of Hawaiian self-determination and self-governance into Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s constitution. This is why, for instance, in Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, you
have a uni-cameral, collective decision-making process and not a one-man – one-vote system. "In Ka Lähui Hawai‘i, power is equalized. Each island, O‘ahu, Kaua‘i, Ni‘ihau, Maui, Moloka‘i, Lāna‘i and Hawai‘i Island, have eight votes. Regardless of the population, each island would have a fair say. We also looked at conflict resolution. In traditional times we practiced ho‘oponopono, a traditional method of conflict resolution. Some Hawaiians said, “We want to have a judge”. So when we drafted the constitution, we had elected judges who can vote, or, if you prefer, go to the Kūpuna Council for Ho’oponopono. You cannot choose both, but you have a choice, either traditional or the modern. We also looked at issues such as burial rights, fishing, land rights, how we are going to protect our culture, that’s why you have the Ali‘i branch of government, they don’t vote in the mokuna or legislature. The Ali‘i council is Ali‘i blood, and they look after culture and protocol. It’s not for the elected government to try implement cultural protocol. These kinds of things were worked out in the constitution so that the government structures would be reflections of culture, and would protect and address tradition.

NN: How many citizens belong to Ka Lähui Hawai‘i?

MT: We eventually went from a handful, about 250, to over 20,000, with adults and children here and also on the continent. But we struggled with issues like blood quantum, incorporation of Hawaiian cultural as well as Western ideas. Many different sovereignty groups were emerging at the same time. The Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s first step was to form a nation within this political environment (nation within nation U.S. structure), while developing an international strategy. We knew there were limitations under the U.S. system that could never be addressed under U.S. domestic law. Because of
our previous history with the United Nations, we decided we had to go to the international arena.

NN: What is the relationship between Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and the United Nations?

MT: A lot of people looked at Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and said we were selling out, we wanted to be under the U.S. system. This was not quite accurate because what we were saying was that the first priority was not a political relationship with the U.S. The first priority was to protect the land and protect the people, education, health and cultural preservation. The first priority was to create a Hawaiian nation to facilitate self-determination at home. The political strategy for dealing with the U.S. was the second priority. Under the United States, indigenous people can achieve only limited rights, but we could obtain land for our people’s needs. And, we could at least get a share of our revenues to develop health, education and culture. Those were Ka Lāhui’s priorities for the eight years I served as Kia‘aina of the nation.

NN: Was there widespread support for those priorities?

MT: There was consensus but not complete unity. The criticism that we don’t march to the beat of a single drum; that we don’t stand in unity, is out of political necessity. That criticism comes with a western bias and is imposed on native people. We Hawaiians were never unified. We always had different kuleana or responsibilities until the time of Kamehameha. Kamehameha unified the islands, but how? It wasn’t through native practice – ho‘oponopono - but with the gun of the white man and through war. What eventually became established was just simply not Hawaiian but rather, a monarchial structure. I don’t blame Kamehameha, and as far as I’m concerned, even though I have problems with the cultural thing, I will always honor the Kamehameha monarchs. Our
people went from a traditional lifestyle to occupation by outsiders and háoles taking over, in one generation. Kamehameha looked around, he was concerned about the survival of our peoples, and they saw a monarchial structure in Europe. Hawaiians had treaties with Europe. Hawaiians knew that change was coming and they did the best they could. It's pointless to blame Hawaiians who lived during the monarchy. If we had lived in their time what would we have done? I don’t know if we would have done any better.

Nevertheless, we were trying to address sovereignty but the system created the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. OHA was moving ahead with their state initiative, and we had the political realities of the State Democratic Party, which controlled our assets. The party is heavily dominated by Japanese Americans and they want to remain in power and in control of the state's land trusts. That's where we are today. We are dealing with the same old structure. Hawai’i is the only State in the Union that has never really had a two-party system. So, the checks and balances of the US two-party system – Democrat and Republican - are meaningless to us, meaningless! Republicans are in power now because Democrat voters are sick of what the Democratic Party has become, not because the people are all Republicans. This is how my involvement with Ka Lāhui Hawai’i developed. When I stepped out of office in 1998 it was because I had served two terms as kia’aina and according to the Nation’s constitution, I couldn’t run for that position again.

NN: One of the most important issues facing Hawaiians today is whether or not to support the move for Federal Recognition. Can you share your thoughts on the “Akaka Bill”? 
MT: We need to go back to the first draft of the “Akaka Bill” and determine its purpose. The purpose was to begin to address reconciliation on the Apology Resolution, restore to the native people the right of self-determination. What is the purpose of the current “Akaka Bill”? The purpose of the current “Akaka Bill” is to create a process for Federal Recognition.

As a by-product, you have to create a nation because you can’t recognize nothing. The purpose of this bill is not to create a Hawaiian nation, but to create a process for Federal recognition, self-determination. We had this before the overthrow. The Apology Resolution says, as a result of the overthrow, international law was violated, Hawaiians lost their right to sovereignty, Hawaiians lost self-determination. However, Hawaiians never relinquished their claim to lands.

What is the Apology Resolution talking about? It is talking about our right as an independent native people to self-determination under international law. Under International Law, self-determination is the right of all peoples to determine political status, and by virtue of that right, to determine cultural, social and economic development. The right of economic development comes from self-determination. The right for cultural development, preservation, and social development comes from the right of self-determination, which begins, with our right to determine our political status. If this bill is written properly, we can get out of a wardship relationship with the U.S. and begin our road back to nationhood. This is based on the definitions of International Law.

NN: So, why is the “Akaka Bill” so controversial among Hawaiians?

MT: In the “Akaka Bill”, strangely, there begins to be manipulation of conflict of self-determination. Native Hawaiians expressed their right to self-determination, self
sufficiency, self-governance, by getting government services, for example, for health - Papa Ola Lōkahi; education - Center for Hawaiian Studies; language immersion – ‘Aha Pūnana Leo; employment training – Alu Like, Inc.; economic development – Alu Like, Inc. and the Center for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA); children's services – Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust; you can go all the way back. You don’t express your right of self-determination by securing a place on the pork barrel line.

Later in the bill, it says that Hawaiians have the right to self-determination, we have the right of autonomy. The Federal government limits your right to have internal control over certain matters. Indian Nations, at best, are autonomous. There are overlapping jurisdictions. There are some things they don’t have a say about, like military bases. Indians can’t say a thing about it. That would be very convenient here in Hawai‘i, because so much of the ceded lands are militarized. For Hawaiian Home Lands, you have to go to the U.S. Congress to make any changes. So, in this bill, you can see U.S. policy strongly emerging, and this puts it solidly under the U.S. control. In addition to that, there is further diminishing of the concept of self-determination. It is a legal right to get government services and you can see it, how they drafted it. Now, who drafted this? Not Hawaiians.

Further, Hawaiians are co-opted because they don’t understand the process. And, some Hawaiians are co-opted who understand full well, but they want the kālā, the money. They want to advance their careers and they are getting older. I have great disdain for that. So these are the kinds of things to look at when you look at this bill. Did Hawaiians write it? No. Did Hawaiians testify? No. And they made damn sure there was no opportunity for anybody to make the record. In this presentation, who supports
the Hawaiian bill, who opposes it? It's not just white racists, there are a lot of people who can't support it because they don't understand it. There are a lot of people like me who can't really support the bill because it offends the very principle of transparency and inclusiveness. For god's sake, if you don't want to have an official Congressional hearing here, than launch an educational effort and have the people write testimony and send it to the Congress.

In the international arena, everybody is having elections. In the 50's, people like Mr. Saddam Hussein and Moammar Qadafi were dictators. There were no elections. Nowadays, all over the world, we have elections. So, that's why we have to have U.N. observers because you would be a damn fool to manipulate the process.

Congress says they have had hearings in Hawai'i, and that Hawaiians supported it, but it's not the same bill it was years ago when the first draft came out. The truth is that the reason the support for the original bill was so high is because when you have a Congressional hearing, you are invited to testify. Senator Dan Inouye made a list and not more than four groups in opposition were allowed to testify. I found this out quite a bit later from Aunty Gladys Brandt. I didn't know that this happened.

NN: Did you testify on the bill?

MT: Yes, but the way I got to testify was not from an invitation from Inouye. The way I got to testify was I wrote to a guy who came down here with Inouye, he ran for Vice President, a Republican, from Arizona, John McCain. I wrote to Senator John McCain. I met him on Moloka'i. He and his wife came, we had a hearing over there and she was just shocked to find a small group of us from Ka Lāhui Hawai'i holding up signs. The hearing on Moloka'i excluded Hawaiian people. McCain's wife was offended by that.
After that, I always went to see McCain and then he told me that "if I ever get the Chair, we'll move something for Hawaiians".

But, when the hearing happened on the first bill, I couldn't get in and I wrote to McCain and McCain's clerk called me and said, "Senator McCain is taking a position that you will testify and a memo has gone from Senator McCain to Senator Inouye saying I am requesting that this woman be allowed to testify." And, that's how I got on. I didn't know that there were other Hawaiians who wanted to get in there, but Aunty Gladys told me that when they had the notice to prepare the testimony and who would be on the list, she was called in. So, all the other hearings that they had over here in Hawai'i didn't count. Those hearings were all negative, but Inouye said the only "official" one was over there in Washington D.C. and the excuse was that Senator Dan Akaka was having a back operation; so it cannot be official.

Then the next version of the "Akaka Bill" came out. No hearings were held for the Congressional record in Hawaii on the other versions of the bill. This second "Akaka Bill", was different from the first bill. They are all called the "Akaka Bill". So, they are very craftily manipulating the records. The only people who went up to testify were the OHA trustees. Nobody who opposed had a chance to get up there. Nobody could get a dime to get up there.

NN: Can you discuss the current version of the bill, S.B. 344 (2004 version)?

MT: We have to ask ourselves the question, "Can we salvage anything?" What we see right here in the bill is that the adult Hawaiians will have an election for the interim government, the adult Hawaiians will certify the list of names or Roll that the Secretary of Interior makes. The Federal census is telling us we have about 400,000 Hawaiians in
the U.S. We know we have about 175,000 over here (in Hawai‘i). We know that maybe half of those people will be 18 or over. Say we have 100,000 adult Hawaiians registered today. And, we have another 100,000 Hawaiians scattered across the archipelago and all over the U.S. How the hell are we going to get organized and put together an election? We need to raise the funds, coordinate the election, how are they going to certify the Roll? Well, those with the money and those with the organizational mechanism will carry the ball by default. Who will that be? OHA and CNHA.

When you look at what’s happening now, the bill looks screwed. Who’s making the decisions here? Who’s going to certify the Roll? The bill says the adult Hawaiians will. Who’s going to do the elections? The Bill says the adult Hawaiians will, not the Federal government, not the State of Hawai‘i.

The nation is not going to end up being 200,000 adult Hawaiians. How can they establish an enrollment process? I think the efforts to enroll Hawaiians will be limited to Hawaiian Home Lands. And you know, there are so many definitions, you don’t know who the hell is native, aboriginal, indigenous people. How many definitions do we need? They claim they want to start out with an inclusive definition. And by the time we get to the Roll, we have a definition of Native Hawaiian, which is those who qualify for Hawaiian Home Lands.

Native Hawaiian is defined in three parts. The general definition was – Native Hawaiian is indigenous, native people; direct lineal descendants of those who resided here in 1893, and who exercised sovereignty, and whose ancestors were eligible for Hawaiian Home Lands in 1921. So in order to meet this definition, the only people automatically included were those who were on Hawaiian Homes. The date referred to
in the bill, 1893, was a census year. There were already non-Hawaiians living here. So here, it says “must occupy and exercise sovereignty”. So you would have to show by the census that they were here — that would prove occupation. They can only show that they exercised sovereignty in three ways — you need to prove that they voted in the Kingdom election, or that they were on the petition, or they signed the Oath of Loyalty to the provisional government. The ones who signed the Oath of Loyalty were the non-Hawaiians who lived here. They actually have records in the archives.

Do you know the story of our Royal Hawaiian Band? There was a Royal Hawaiian Band. And then, in 1893, suddenly; the Royal Hawaiian Band was no more. Why? It was because the members of the Royal Hawaiian Band would not sign the Oath of Loyalty. And because they never signed, the Royal Hawaiian Band was disbanded; they wouldn’t swear an Oath of Loyalty against the Queen, in support of the provisional government. So here, the Oath of Loyalty is going to be signed by Haoles and traitors to the Queen.

This bill uses the term “resided”. But when it comes to exercising sovereignty, you have to show that you voted in the Kingdom election or you signed the petition. The only people who are automatically included (in the first draft) were Hawaiian Homesteaders. However, this (subsequent) draft of the bill made it tougher for these guys, they are no longer automatically included, inclusion is now deleted, and if you are a homesteader, you still have to go back and show that your ancestors were residing here in 1823. How many Hawaiians do you think will do research to come up with their proof. How many Hawaiians do you think can do this?

NN: What can we do as individual Hawaiians to change this process?
MT: What strategy do we take as Hawaiians? Do we boycott it? Do we participate and try to counter-organize? We could make our own roll. We could run independent candidates. We could run Kingdom candidates. We could get 100 guys to sign up. Then we could write a constitution, I know because I wrote a constitution for Ka Lāhui. We went through several constitutional conventions. We have a damn good constitution, but is anybody going to be there to talk about it? A boycott is just what they want. They want the leaders who are on the take to be the leaders of this nation. Do we go along with it? Are we getting co-opted by participating in the process that we know ourselves has already excluded our people? How the hell can we participate in the damn thing? How can we not participate in it knowing where it is going, looking at the poverty of our people. What are we supposed to do? Just in the last two months, several groups have been involved in this discussion. We haven’t made the record in the Congress about where our people are on this issue. We haven’t had the chance to testify on these bills. Just in the last few months, several groups have been involved in this discussion. Right now, the People’s Tribunal Komike - Kekuni Blaisdell; American Friends Service Committee - Kyle Kajihiro; possibly the Interfaith Ecumenical Council - Father Alapaki; the Human Rights group - Joshua Cooper on Maui; the Royal Order of Kamehameha in Hilo and myself on the U.N. Permanent Forum, have been talking about calling for a hearing on the “Akaka Bill”. We will form a Komike (committee), we can have a meeting on O’ahu, we will send out notices to all those that have been left out. If you wish to come, bring your thoughts, your mana’o, in writing on this bill, whether you support it or not, whether you favor independence or not, we don’t care. We will give you the opportunity to bring it in and we will, as a Komike, be responsible for compiling it all,
sending it to Congress, sending it to the U.N. and somehow getting it in the 

Congressional Record. We'll file it with the Library of Congress, because in two 
hundred years, our great-great-grandchildren will come looking for it just like we looked 

for the Anti-Anneixation petitions signed by our great grandparents in the 1890's. We 
can do that.

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Conclusion

Ka Lahui Hawai'i, under the guidance of their first governor, or Kia'aina, Mililani 

Trask, became the first model for a Hawaiian nation. This was a robust movement for the 
duration that Mililani guided and moved the nation, eventually boasting over 20,000 
members, both Native Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian. This was a grass-roots movement 
that created a democratic constitution from the bottom up and bridged the governance 
structures between the older traditional chiefly forms of governance, and the newer, 
modern concepts of equal representation. Within the constitution, two models of conflict 
resolution are offered, the traditional Hawaiian method of Ho'oponopono, or a more 
Western-style mediation process.

Mililani comes from a long line of political leaders. Her own legal training and 
participation in the 1978 Con-Con as a legal researcher incited her to become a part of an 
early self-determination organization, Hō'ala Kanāwai.

Ka Lahui Hawai'i was an advocate of the first draft of the "Akaka Bill" that 
called for a nation-within-a-nation form of relationship with the United States. They 
have not supported the subsequent forms and re-drafts of the bill, and in fact, although
she no longer serves as their leader, Mililani has vigorously opposed this legislation. Nevertheless, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s platform for a nation-within-a-nation model while continuing to pursue international remedies remains a viable model for creating a democratic and inclusive Hawaiian nation that can address the nation’s immediate needs as well as future aspirations. At the moment, Mililani and her closest followers have stepped away from this movement and concentrated on the international arena.

In my opinion, Mililani Trask has proven herself to be a great Hawaiian leader. She is educated in both Western jurisprudence and in Native Hawaiian culture and values. Mililani does descend from a line of Maui and Kaua‘i chiefs and is modest in her claim of ali‘i blood, however, she knows and is proud of her genealogy and her family legacy as attorneys, public speakers and political leaders. Perhaps if Mililani had remained as Kia‘aina, beyond the term limit of eight years, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i would have become an even larger player in negotiating for Native Hawaiian self-determination.

Her mentors include the Attorney Mitsuo Uyehara, with whom she began her legal work for the ‘78 Con-con. She credits him with exposing her to the important issues surrounding Hawaiian water and land rights, including the ceded lands issue. Mililani is also largely influenced by her sister, Haunani-Kay Trask, a Professor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, whose opinions on Hawaiian Sovereignty and nationalism became lightning rods for the movement in the ’1970’s. Haunani joined her sister in forming Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i and was a staunch supporter in the early years. She is well-connected, even with U.S. political figures like Senator John McCain, and is not afraid to use these connections to accomplish her work.
Through her international work, Mililani took heed of Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu-Tum and religious icon, Mother Theresa of Calcutta under whom she developed her advocacy for peace.

Mililani cares deeply for the welfare of Native Hawaiians and has chosen to address the plight of much needed housing. Her organization, the Gibson Foundation, is a non-profit that promotes self-help housing initiatives on Hawai‘i Island. She takes no salary from this effort although she employs two others. She depends on her meager stipends and occasional honorariums from lectures and special appearances to support her simple lifestyle.

Her reputation in the international indigenous peoples’ human rights arena surpasses her popularity at home in Hawai‘i. She works tirelessly for the cause of human rights for indigenous people and is considered an expert on this subject. I had the good fortune to spend three weeks in New York at the United Nations’ Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in 2003. Mililani was in her last year at Representative of the Pacific at that forum. I observed her work in the international arena. She is eloquent and well-respected and works to exhaustion. I believe only a few people who live in Hawai‘i really understand the work she does on behalf of Hawaiians and other Pacific peoples’ at the United Nations. This work is frustrating and often far from fruitful. Even at an Indigenous Peoples’ Forum, the politics is overlaid by the large countries or “States” who give no heed to their minority populations, choosing instead to support new development and profits to the detriment of the land and the people.

Here at home, Mililani also spends tireless effort on causes such as Ka ‘Aha Pono, promoting Native Hawaiian Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights. She was
instrumental in the formation of the Paoakalani Doctrine, the Statement of Native Hawaiian Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights. I expect Mililani to continue to be a strong voice for Native Hawaiian rights, both in Hawai‘i and throughout the world.
CHAPTER FOUR
AN INTERVIEW WITH PUʻUHONUA DENNIS KEIKI “BUMPY” KANAHELE

Date of Birth: July 1954
Place of Birth: Honolulu, Hawaiʻi

This interview with Puʻuhonua Dennis Keiki “Bumpy” Kanahele took place in Panaʻewa, Hawaiʻi on October 21, 2006. Bumpy, as he prefers to be called, was administering his I-Health® program to a Native Hawaiian kupuna during this interview. This is a new focus in his life, supporting good health and increased longevity for Native Hawaiians through lifestyle change and the use of a computerized program that enhances physical well-being.

NN: Aloha Bumpy, Please tell me about yourself.

BK: Aunty Pilahi Paki is Puʻuhonua. My parents are Kalima - Dorothy Koleka Kalima, the Kalima family. Also Kahoʻopii, my grandfather’s name - my mother’s father. My dad is Benjamin Keiki Kanahele from Niʻihau whose father was known as Hākākā Kanahele. That’s the extent of the Niʻihau family I know, that was confirmed by Elama Kanahele, one of our cousins from Niʻihau.

The reason I brought up Kahoʻopii is because Kalima is Kahoʻopii, Kahoʻopii is Kalima, My grandfather was Solomon Kalima, his brother was also Joseph Kalima of the Hilo Kalima family. On my mother’s side, my Aunty Sweetheart Kalima, Aunty Mona Kahele, those are two sisters who just passed on. She married my Uncle George. My
Great-Great-Grandfather was Frank S. Keiki. He appears in a picture with Queen Lili'uokalani as one of the guys that went to Washington D.C. with her to protest the annexation of the Kingdom. That's my whole genealogy that I know, at least two generations back, my parents and my grandparents.

NN: Where were you born?

BK: I was born in Kapi'olani Maternity Hospital in Honolulu, but right after I came out of the hospital, I was taken to Waimānalo by my mother's oldest sister, her maiden name was Kalima and her married name was Maukele from Waimānalo. I was raised by her in Waimānalo until I was 5 or 6 years old. Then I went to be raised by my mother and grandfather in Waikīkī on Wainañi Way.

I went to Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, all the way 6th grade. While going to school there, I went back to Waimānalo every weekend. Waimānalo was the place I needed to be. Then when I went to 7th grade, intermediate, I went back to Waimānalo Intermediate and Kailua High School.

I never graduated from there, I went to the 12th grade and thought I was smarter than the teachers so I left.

Eventually I got by GED in 1988 from Farrington High School. So I did complete my degree, I was in OCCC at that time, and the Governor just passed a law that you had to have some form of a diploma to get out, and I got one really fast, in about a month and a half. Sometimes it takes long to learn but I got it in jail.

NN: What did you do when you left high school?

BK: After high school, I actually got into an apprenticeship program, with the painter's union. My dad was a painter. I had about 2 years of that. The money was good, and
eventually I started doing other things and started getting into trouble. In 1972, I ended up in Olomana Golf Course. Eventually, I became a working foreman working on the cart paths. I had an interest in golfing. I became an amateur golfer. I had a 3 handicap at that time. That's pretty good. So, I stayed with the golf course, working on the cart paths and doing the cement work, laying thousands of yards of cement. Eventually, I was offered a position to work on the driving range, so I became a driving range person and eventually a cart boy. Then management saw me as a big asset and they wanted to keep me so they pushed me up to Assistant pro shop manager, I eventually became the Pro Shop Manager and the Starter. I basically ran Olomana Golf Links from about 1976 until 1979. I had plenty of exposure and plenty of experience.

NN: When did you get involved with the Hawaiian movement?

BK: In 1978, I first got involved in the Hawai'i State Constitutional Convention, that's where I got more involved in Hawaiian issues. Some of my friends were people who put together the paperwork for Office of Hawaiian Affairs. In 1978, they were working with Peter Apo and all these braddahs that were doing this kind of stuff, real akamai (smart). If I'm not mistaken, these are the ones that discovered what ceded lands were at that time. What is interesting is that at that time they were talking about receiving 30% revenues from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. Most people don't realize how the pie is broken down. The State of Hawai'i has two pots, the State has sovereign income and proprietary income. And, both pots deal with how revenues are divided in Hawai'i. Basically for proprietary income, 20% goes to agricultural development, 20% goes to capital improvement, 20% goes to public schools, 20% goes to public parks, and they managed to, in 1978, have 20% go to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for Native Hawaiian
benefits. That's proprietary income. Proprietary income is from leased lands and lands that are sold from ceded lands. That's how that income comes in.

Now the Sovereign income has about the same thing, it goes to capital improvements, agriculture, public parks, public schools, and the fifth one that it helps is to benefit the conditions of Native Hawaiians. Eventually, I found out that is how the 5f clause comes in on the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and that's how we get our revenues from over there. Although it's not spelled out in exact percentages like the proprietary income, but it's hidden over there in the 5f clause in the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. So we have two pools of money and that's how our income comes into OHA. They get their revenues from these proprietary incomes. Anyway, that's kinda like my involvement back then from all these things when these guys were trying to get 30% and then we were trying to get 20% from each pot, which would make it 40% and the legislature was going bonkers because there's no way, it was too much money already.

NN: Can you tell me about your campaign for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs?

BK: In 1980, I ran for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs the first time. It was more like a popularity contest. That was the beginning of more of my involvement in Hawaiian issues.

I want to share something about me – when I was a small kid – I always used to be in the “A” class, you know when we were small kids they had “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”. My friends were always in the “C” and “D” class, you know hard head kind, they were the ones making trouble. I was always in the “A” class, I never wanted to be there but I was stuck there. So, I became good friends with the Haoles and Japanese kids in my
class. They were mostly the "nerds. My mother used to always get on my case because I
would defend them. They were getting their lunch money taken away, all that kind stuff.
And I had to defend these guys because they were my friends, they were in my class.

In the 1980's when I went to L.A., I started to learn more about Hawaiian issues,
genealogy and Hawaiian rights and all that. And we started to really push against the
government. What reminds me of my Mom, is that I realize I was always defending
against injustice. When I look back at my life, it seems I was always doing that, trying to
defend or help people. But she used to get mad at me because every time I tried to defend
people, I ended up fighting and ended up in the Principal's office or I end up going to jail
because of that. Then in the 1980's, the troublemaker became bigger, now it was the
government. Before it was the bully, but now it was the government. And as I started to
get more involved in the movement, I finally realized that we have been had as Hawaiian
people. I started to learn more about our Queen, the overthrow. And, I realized my
spirit was unsettled, and I started to understand that all this time I though I was mad at
authority. I was pissed off at the law, my father was in prison, I had to go to prison to
visit him, so I had this thing about authority. At the time I thought it was because of
those things going on in my life. Then in the 1990's, it finally dawned on me that the
injustice happened to our people on a broad level, and that made me realize, at that
point, that this unsettled feeling inside of me wasn't about authority, wasn't about what
they did to my dad and my mom, the separation. It was about what happened to us as a
people. Once I understood that, then everything started to click. Now I know how it all
started when I was a small kid, and now I come to realize that it wasn't those crimes and
hard-head things we did as small kids, getting in trouble, so much as society at the time—

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the cultural trauma that our people went through – generations after generations after generations. Then I really started to feel my kupuna. I started to feel them behind this thing. Even though I was raised Christian, I had this other kind of thing coming to me which was hewa. My Christianity world was telling me that was the devil, that’s no good. But I ignored that Christian attitude toward what I was feeling. That made me realize I had the power to choose what I wanted to keep and what I never like keep and I kept the things my parents taught me – Christianity like that. Then I came to realize that religion came over here and destroyed that. Already I know I don’t believe in what society is doing. I wanted to know more about our culture, what was the religion of our culture, the spirituality of our culture. And, that started it all. In the beginning I had a hard time, you know, you are brought up believing in Mr. Kepalo and all that kind stuff and you hear from your parents and parent’s parents all kind stuff about akua lele and those kinds of things. My mom used to tell me stories about my Aunty them, my grandfather’s sister them, when they get into Hawaiian stuff, they would put the bible in her mouth and she would bite it off. I would never disrespect them by bringing it up, because that was all they knew and they had to get away from it for whatever reason. Today I know why. And so there was that part of my life, and I started to get more heavily into the movement, understanding what I had to face. I was never afraid of the government, I was never afraid of being humiliated because I believed that they were wrong. They stole this from us, and now they expect me to sit back and do nothing. It reminded me of when I was a small kid protecting this “nerd”. You know, you’re not my friend anymore, I would say, but you cannot do this to that guy...you know, that kind. That’s the same thing. And you know I am running for OHA now, it makes sense for me.
because I always did try to look out for the best interest of people in general but for me it was our people first. Some people have a hard time with that, they think I should look out for the whole world, yea, right, it's us first. A good example for me is last week – the big earthquake, that's definitely picking on us. To me, anyway, it seems like that.

Before that, I was mostly in the Boy’s Home, and Job Corps. There were plenty of underworld crime activities in the community, and they were trying to recruit people like me to get involved for whatever purpose. Because I never liked bullies to begin with, I never liked gangsters either. So, I was caught between two different worlds. Although they were family members, friends of the family, I just couldn't get involved. It was wrong because you had to hurt somebody, really hurt somebody. I never had that in me, not for that purpose. If it was to defend ourselves, now that's a different story. So anyway, although I was connected with those things, guns and that kine stuff, I really wasn't ever afraid of or interested in those things, but I found what I wanted to do when I understood our history and the sovereignty movement.

In 1986 is when we started the ‘Ohana Council, and we started to bring all the organizations together. That’s when we started to organize all the families. We had inside people that were working in title companies. Very close to us, so we had the lay of the land as far as land planning and deeds. We started to understand the different claims, on one side was Makapu‘u from Queen Kalama land and the part toward Hawai‘i Kai was from Princess Victoria Kamamalu. And so our families have ties with Kalama.

NN: Is this when you started to claim the land at the Makapu‘u lighthouse?
BK: We started to learn that the government had a couple of things happening. The Coast Guard was giving back the land at the lighthouse in Makapu'u. If no State or County agency claimed it, the land should go back to the heirs. That was the standard at that time. Knowing that, when we checked the records, the Coast Guard was given the land back because nobody claimed it, so it was like floating. What we did, we filed a claim based on our genealogy to Kalama as heirs. Then we went to claim the land.

We didn't cut the lock to the gates. There was an electrician up there that was disconnecting the lines for the Coast Guard that was moving out of the three houses up at Makapu'u Lighthouse. We were talking to him telling him what was what and he gave us a key. With that key, we opened up the locks on the main gate on Kalanianaole Highway and we replaced the locks with our own locks. And we took the keys that we had, made spares and gave them to the Coast Guard because they had to maintain the lighthouse. We did stuff real — you would think us guys was a professional outfit, they way we was doing these things. That's how we got up to the lighthouse. Then we started flying documentation to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), to the Governor, the Federal Government, and that started to really make things rock.

We stayed there only two months before they came and kicked us out with the SWAT team. In the first month, we had plenty people come in and give us support. After about eight of weeks of being up there we were gaining ground support from plenty people, bringing food, people coming, putting up places on different locations on the mountain. Then, we had a call from the Governor's office, from someone up there who was close to us, told us that they were going to come in and get us guys that night. And, hā, right there I knew already it was the weapons. It was kind of like a set up kind of
thing, and it got carried away. The only thing I remember is walking down to the SWAT
team guy, swearing at them guys, telling them to get off our property and get off our land.

I was trying to talk to this one guy when these other guys came behind me and
took me down, I had guns in my face, against my head. When I was down, my head was
facing sideways, ground level, I saw my son was running toward me to help me, he was
eight years old. The SWAT Team officer just clothes-hangered him, right to the ground.
And my niece was trying to help him, running toward him, she got clothes-hangered to
the ground, too. And I was helpless, one of the few times I was so helpless. It was
unnecessary. So unnecessary, when everything was said and done and they had us in the
paddy wagon going to jail, that some of the SWAT officers were on the side of the road
just crying because it wasn’t right. We got 50 people arrested, my Father was there, too.
He neva know what was happening. They really manhandled him. Even my wife, all the
women were so super. One of my cousins got beat up, bruised up. When I went to court
for my case, one officer came up to the witness stand and testified that I had a shot-gun, it
was unreal, it just blew my mind because I knew I didn’t.

Our testimony was based on our claim for ownership and we were defending our
property, and I told the judge. I don’t know what these guys are talking about because we
were defending our property. The judge told me, “You know, Mr. Kanahele, you gotta
fight the civil matter in a civil court, not in a criminal court.”

In 1988 I started serving my sentence. In 1989 I came out. So my ordeal in
prison, although I was sentenced to 11 years, only lasted one year. The Parole Board
gave me one year mandatory, but I had to admit to the crime, and I never did because I
never committed any crime. Of all the things I did in my life, this wasn’t the one.
NN: When did you get the land in Waimanalo?

BK: In 1992, we were looking for lands because now I had organized all the people who were living on the beach, homeless, houseless - houseless meaning Hawaiians with four or five families, with four or five kids in one homestead who would go down the beach. We knew all these families. So, I went down there and started organizing them. This is how the next land occupation, near Sea Life Park began. Then I get a call from the Governor, he asked me to sit on the Hawaiian Sovereignty Commission. And I was actually on it but I thought to myself, this buggah wants to take me away from the front line so I don't give him trouble.

I had organized all these people who were living down the beach and I went to the State to ask them for land in Waimanalo so I could go build the village we got now. So we had this Agreement in Principle, the governor had already asked me to sit on this Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission. I was holding off answering him. Then we started to cut a trail to assess the land, how we could put things together. When we did that, the neighbors got all pissed off and reported it to DLNR who came down on us. That's when we went to Makapu'u, that's how it all started. That area is called Kaupo, from Makapu'u Beach, the surfing area all the way to Waimanalo Bay, that's nine acres of land. We went there with my kupuna, some of my cousins, nieces and nephews. We went down there, put our flag in the sand, and prayed to our kupuna. That was in September when we started the land occupation. In October, after we occupied the Makapu'u Beach area is when the governor called me back to sit on the commission, And then in November, the Apology Law was signed by the President (of the United States), it passed the House and on November 28, 1993, was signed into law. So now, that made it
even more so that the government and State in Hawaiʻi was illegal. The way we see it is if you admit the crime, you gotta do something. Like any other crime, when you steal, you gotta give it back. That was the reason I went on the commission because I figured that we could get experts to come in and give us their opinion. This is where Francis Boyle came in, on December 28, 1993, and gave his testimony and opinion about the legality of the overthrow. So when that happened, I called the Governor to tell him that I was going to resign. It was big news at the time that I was going to resign from the Hawaiian Sovereignty Advisory Commission. He said, “Why are you going to do that?” and I said, “Now you are really illegal.” It was really simple. So, in 1994, we stayed on the beach. Eventually over 300 people came in. And, the Nation of Hawaiʻi was formed. In 1995, the kapuna ratified the constitution that we were working on and made me the Head of State of the Nation of Hawaiʻi.

I went to Bellow’s Beach in Waimānalo. Nobody was around, I was sitting on the beach looking up in the sky and said, “God, please give me a sign, I don’t know what to do right now, and I know we are going to get into a confrontation.” I waited for just a couple of minutes and three people came walking down the beach, two little girls and a woman. I was looking at this wahine, as she came in closer, it was the wahine who was the Deputy Chair of DLNR, the same lady who we were dealing with in the occupation. Keith Ahue was the Chairperson and this lady was Donna Hanaike, the Deputy Director of DLNR. She was walking down the beach on Bellow’s with her two kids and I am on the sand six miles away from our site and I said, “Mahalo e Ke Akua” cause I got my answer. To me it was to leave Makapuʻu and avoid the confrontation. Because I experienced the incident at Makapuʻu Lighthouse and I knew what could be in jeopardy,
what would be lost. The reason for that, too, was DLNR was telling us that they had to come and take us out but they were offering us land. I said, “Which land?” They said, “You know, that other land”. The one that we had 15 months prior, that we had an Agreement in Principle with them was the one they were offering to give us back. And when I was sitting on the beach, she came by and asked me what I was doing. I told her, “You won’t believe this, but you came along and gave me my answer.” She said, “What?” I said, “Are you still going to give us the land? Do you still want us to go?” She said, “Yeah, when can you leave?” I said, “We going to leave tomorrow.” So, that’s how we ended up getting our land. We signed a 55-year lease for the land. We had a non-profit created, Aloha First. They are the ones that signed that agreement. They are the ones that run the place, the wahines.

I feel good that the wahines took over, because no matter what happened, they will take care. The village is taken care by the women, they have strict rules and regulations, they don’t let the kids get out of hand at all. About 80 people live in the village right now, about 22 homes. What we did was, whatever people wasn’t working outside was working on the village. Whatever trades these guys had, from carpenters to painters and electricians, we ended helping to build our houses up slowly. We built the floor and put tents on top, eventually, when they had money, or we could get lumber donated to us, we started with one house, and eventually twenty-two houses were built. All good kind, I don’t see how we cannot solve the problem, we are just too “in the box”. But the State basically gave us one electrical cord and one outlet and that’s all we had for electricity. And they put one 2-inch pipe in the village with a spigot at the end of 100 yards and that was our water. Once we got those, we started wiring up everything.
Believe it or not, we never had a lease for eight years. Their thing to me was, Bumpy, just build, and we will follow with the permits. This administration is now trying to say that the condition of the work is not good. There’s nothing wrong with them. Our people have so much pride over there, especially the carpenters, workers, my nephews, they are challenging the outside workers to build it to code for safety, not because the government said so, but because they want to make sure the houses don’t catch fire, you know all the safety factors. Today, the women have a meeting every Tuesday and bring the babies together to touch bases, ‘make sure nobody is getting out of hand, real village style. You know, the kind where you can go next door and borrow sugar. Eventually, people who never had nothing, houses and cars, now they all got. They all work. Before, 90% were on some kind of subsidy, today, I think the only things they get are health and food stamps. My sister gets help with her dialysis machine. That’s the only subsidy she gets. I cannot think of anybody else, but maybe one family with lots of kids. Other than that, this is a real example of success. Throughout the last 14 years, the State always comes up there to ask us how we do it.

You know this last episode with the homeless, they came down to the beach to ask us to help them. I said you need two things, dedicated people, and you have to stay out of their affairs. That’s the problem. They said, “What do you mean?” I said, “The village no can grow up Hawaiian with government interference. You have to let them grow and go through their lumps.” They said, “Who do you think the leadership should be?” I said, “Who you guys got?” They said, “The churches.” I said, “Braddah, the leadership going come from the beach, from the people themselves. The leader going emerge. That’s what happened to us. These churches and these non-profits, how much
money you giving them? I know you getting millions of dollars in grants, who’s making the food for them?” He said, “You know these non-profit groups, we give them so much so they can prepare food.” I said, “Why these people cannot do it for themselves? Transition is the worst thing. You gotta place the land in their hands. That’s what happened over here. If you don’t do that, not going happen. They scared, they scared follow the example because going get strong if they ever do that on every island. You let the Hawaiian go, and now, ever more so, because more of our people are turning to their culture. In our time, never had this kind of culture. The last fourteen years was big time that people were learning more, so we were shooting from the hips to know how to get everything up and running. So, when I was at the OHA debate and people were talking about their experience, I was like, “my experience is we get a village.” Mine is like how a woman feels when she gives birth, and a man no can even come close to how it feels. But for me it was like experiencing these things. It was pretty amazing they way I was coming across. Yea, I could say I went to San Francisco’s Federal Reserve Bank, I got underwriter training, I learned from different experts in the field of socially responsible investments and all that stuff. The only reason I went that route at that time was because I was under house arrest, so if I was going to do anything I was going to tell the government, when they asked me where I was going, I would tell them I was going to the Federal Reserve Bank, so now they were letting me go to these different things.

NN: Tell me about Nation of Hawai‘i.

The Nation of Hawai‘i is pretty much dormant. My directive came from over 300 kāpuna. They are the ones that ratified the constitution, representing their families and their extended families. That was really strong, and plenty of them passed away. But at
that point, when the Federal Government took me away back in 1995, right after I got the village up and running, the Federal Government came to me again.

When they first came inside, they asked me straight out, can any Hawaiian be an owner in this place. I said, “Of course, you just gotta work it out”. But what I also understood was that it had nothing to do with Constitutional Law, but only commerce. Remember the Burgess guy tried to tell me that it was discrimination. But I said, no. You cannot pick on me when it comes to our business like you could when it comes to the U.S. Constitution because it has nothing to do with the constitution of homes. You might do that with the Department of Interior with the Akaka Bill but you cannot do that now. This guy was pissed because he knew that what I was saying was true.

NN: So what’s your vision for the “nation”? Cause the Nation of Hawai‘i is not really active right now.

BK: I was given the directive personally as the Head of State so I can go with or without any big amount of people. I guess on the political side, what I’m pushing for is a platform for a free, fair and impartial process, that we debate amongst each other, get educated first before we decide on any form of government. Let the people decide. I have no doubt in my mind that people are going to look at the injustices done to us and look at the history and the economic opportunity So, that’s my main thing.

NN: Would you say, at the time, during the constitutional convention in the 70’s, and you named some people who were involved in understanding the issues of Ceded lands, because before that I don’t think too many people really understood that. A lot of consciousness came out during that time and different people who are now involved in different ways kind of grew out of that same period of time. As you understood and
learned that along with everybody else, was that where you thought you were moving?

Was there a revelation one night, like having a dream that this is what it was all about for you? Is this natural for you to move in that direction?

BK: Yeah, it was natural.

NN: You seem to always have been the defender of justice, weren't you?

BK: Yeah, and I think about that now, and I realize, yeah, it was. I didn't fight and get in trouble in school because I was a bully.

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BK: You know that's what happened.
BK: I don't think it would have that impact. They could have gone after Nathan, but that wouldn't have been the impact on the community that people saw, but when they arrested you, it was a different kind of impact. It was a power struggle.

NN: They weren't going after the guy seeking refuge, they were going after the temple. They were going after the priest, the people they think hold the power. Otherwise, they could have just gone in. Were you standing on a law that said they couldn't come into the village and arrest Nathan?

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whatever their forms. It’s confusing to Hawaiians, even educated Hawaiians, don’t you think it’s confusing?

BK: A lot of them get the drive for their viewpoint of what they believe and what should be done. But, they have plenty good information - they bring plenty of good stuff to the table, all of us. I’m not bragging, but I never seen them they way that I have been. None of them have proof in the pudding. None of them have a village. None of them make sure their kids all ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (speak Hawaiian). Even though we don’t ‘ōlelo fluently, they, the kids all do. We don’t waste time with some things we cannot learn overnight, but our kids are fluent right now. Employment, housing, health, we might be a microcosm of a bigger picture of a nation but it’s only temporary. Fourteen years later, we still co-exist. We still hold those same values that we started with.

NN: So what do you think it takes to be a good leader, to be a Hawaiian leader?

BK: Heart. It takes heart.

NN: Some people claim their leadership through their bloodline.

BK: That too. But, we all come from the same strong bloodline. It’s the heart that makes the difference, caring for one another, that truly is Aloha. I’ve been doing this all my life, without realizing it. Just recently, I realized that that’s what I have been doing. I have a heart for the poor, the needy and not that I’m always there with those guys, but I see their problems because some of them take advantage of that kind of situation. But nonetheless, I can overlook that and say that is part of the cultural trauma we have been through. With me, it’s different. I’ve seen it, been there, done it. You better know what you’re saying because I’ve been there. I’m not picking on anybody else’s hard work but my experience might not be degrees and all that, my degree is all in life experiences.
How many people can say they got a letter from President Clinton? Have you seen that letter? How many people can say that they work with the Department of Treasury? Or with the government bank or ever met with ambassadors...this is all to do with finance. I have.  

I've been to the bottom of the barrel already, they couldn't put me under the ground, but I've been to the bottom of the barrel. And through it all, I loved them all. Just like our Queen who loved all our people. That's what came into me. All the kāpunas knew I was sincere, that I wasn't phony. There isn't one phony part about it. Mine was love of country. Still till today, I realized that I gotta co-exist in the system until such time that our people are ready, and we are ready. We will make that choice, and we will make the right choice. So we all will profit. We are learning from different leaders, this and that. No need take everything, take some of the good things that they got, they all got good stuff, but they all got big egos, too. I know, I got the biggest one. So, it all works out. We need to identify these things, and they knew what they are, too. For me that's way I exist.  

NN: Thank you. Mahalo.  

BK: Wow, you took me on some trips, man. Unreal, asking me some questions is like reminiscing. Out of all the bad that happened, I only end up with good thoughts.  

Conclusion  

Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki Bumpy Kanahele is a true grass-roots organizer. His rough exterior shields the caring heart that he carries for those he feels are being taken advantage of by the bullies in life. This need to protect the smaller and weaker person extends from his childhood experiences of protecting young friends in school through his
current drive to keep elderly Hawaiians healthy using his IHealth program, a holistic
computer system technology. This is how I got to know him well, as his client during his
monthly visits to Hilo for consultations with his computerized program.

He is an enigma as he tells the stories of his brushes with the law, and his heartfelt
concern for the underdog, even to the point of doing his time in jail rather than have his
cousin face the same consequences for their involvement in the Makapu‘u Lighthouse
occupation in 1987. In 1998, Bumpy was arrested again, this time for harboring tax
fugitive Nathan Brown in his village of Pu‘uhonua O Waimanalo. Held without bail or
being charged for nearly all of four months, he was finally sentenced and released after
serving the remaining seven days of his sentence.

During his additional four-month period of restrictive probation, he was not
allowed to go near the small village in Waimanalo that he fought so hard to obtain from
the State. Bumpy used his time wisely, attending courses with the Federal Reserve Bank
and delving into socially responsible investment strategies. His dream of creating a
Native Hawaiian Bank has many people interested, but not to fruition so far.

Instead, his village of Pu‘uhonua O Waimanalo has surpassed his wildest
imagination, providing homes, a secure Hawaiian lifestyle and stability to the village of
more than 80 men, women and children. The secret to success, according to Bumpy, is to
let the women have the control. Head of the nearly defunct Nation of Hawai‘i, Bumpy
finds success in doing what some native political activists have already claimed –
sovereignty is yours, just take it and do something with it.

His vision for creating inexpensive housing for the homeless families from
Waimanalo is based on self-help enthusiasm. In our interview, he talked about the
homeless crisis currently facing the State government. There are communities in Wai’anae with scores of families living in tents on the beach. Governor Linda Lingle’s quick response is to provide warehouse-type accommodations, and to pay the churches and volunteer social ministry groups to feed and care for the homeless. That won’t work, according to Bumpy. You have to allow the people to take care of themselves. Give them the land, and let them govern themselves. He believes they can do it, just like his community in Waimanalo did.

Bumpy is still active in politics and made an unsuccessful run for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs during the 2006 elections. While he didn’t win a coveted at-large seat on the OHA Board, he enjoyed a strong showing, placing fifth in a crowded field of well-known candidates. He developed a coherent four-point plan that included Political, Economic, Social and Cultural programs. He believes that he still holds the mandate to work for Native Hawaiian sovereignty given to him by a gathering of kupuna or elders, established in 1995, along with the Constitution of the Nation of Hawai‘i.

I believe that Bumpy is a unique leader among the four selected for this thesis. He did receive his General Education Diploma after dropping out of high school in his senior year. Although he never attended college or university, Bumpy did participate in a number of workshops on banking and securities which gave him the impetus for starting a Native Hawaiian bank. It remains a dream for him that doesn’t seem attainable until some form of self-governance is achieved.

He is truly a grass-roots organizer. His largest accomplishment is the establishment of his Pu‘uhonua Village in Waimanalo. He achieved, through dissident action, a dream that most others can only talk about, that is acquiring land for his people.
and his ‘ohana. At the lowest level, this was a huge grass-roots accomplishment.

Through the village, he continues to support the work and health of kupuna from the communities throughout the islands. My Aunty Momi, my father’s last surviving sibling, from Maui, was often a guest at Pu‘uhonua Village for Kupuna Council activities.

Despite the continual efforts by State powers to squash his movement and his actions, Bumpy persevered. In fact, those actions seem to have provided him with notoriety, made him into a Robin Hood type hero among grass-roots Hawaiians.

Bumpy understands Hawaiian culture through his family upbringing, mainly in Waimanalo. He understands the importance of land, and the importance of allowing a person to achieve for themselves. His cultural values are evident in the way he set up the ownership and management of the village, through the women with whom he places great faith that they best know how to keep the children and the families intact. He, on the other hand, will remain the lightning rod.

His political movement, the Hawaiian Nātion, remains stagnant. It is uncertain, how he will manifest his political agenda in the future. His establishment of the Pu‘uhonua O Waimanalo Village, however, is to date, the greatest achievement, and one that he will be credited with for generations.
CHAPTER FIVE
AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID KEANÜ SAI

Date of Birth: July 13, 1964
Place of Birth: Honolulu, Hawai‘i

This interview with David Keanu Sai took place on October 21, 2003 at Hālau Ho‘ona‘auao, Hawai‘i Community College in Hilo, Hawai‘i. I have known Keanu’s parents, Dennis and Nānea Sai, from my association with the Prince Kūhio Hawaiian Civic Club of which they are also members. Our fathers worked together at the Hawaiian Telephone Company many years before. I also remembered his involvement with the Perfect Title Company case in the mid 1990’s and knew that his parents had lost their home because of it. Since then, Keanu has been speaking extensively on his theory of illegal claims to ownership of title of land in Hawai‘i.

David Keanu Sai is a graduate of Kamehameha Schools, Class of 1982, and attended New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell, New Mexico, where he received a commission as a Second Lt. in the Army Reserves in 1984 and completed an Associate Degree in Pre-business. He received his B.A. in Sociology from University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in 1987 and his M.A. in Political Science specializing in International Relations in May, 2004. He is currently a Ph.D Candidate in Political Science at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.

In 1987, while he was a student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, Keanu joined the Army National Guard. He completed Officer’s Basic and Advanced Course in
Oklahoma where he achieved the rank of Captain. He credits these skills of intelligence and data gathering and his Officer's training skills toward his ability to gather and critique information. These are skills that he applied toward his investigation and analysis of the events that took place in Hawai‘i's history. He resigned his commission in 1994.

In his interview, Keanu discussed his political theory on the legality of the laws that have governed land transactions in Hawai‘i since 1893, when Queen Lili‘uokalani was deposed by the Provisional Government. His theory that Kingdom of Hawai‘i law was never extinguished was the backbone of his formation of the Perfect Title Company in 1995, a company he formed with Donald Anthony Lewis, a Realtor and Partner in Locations, Inc., a major real estate brokerage in Honolulu during that time. Perfect Title Company counseled clients on the legality of the titles to the land, and advised them to question the companies that held their mortgage. A number of people stopped paying their monthly payments, basing their claims against their title insurance. Subsequently, a number of families, including his family, lost possession of their homes. In addition, Perfect Title Company filed lawsuits against the Bureau of Conveyances regarding the legality of land titles for these clients. These actions caused an uproar with the real estate and business community in Hawai‘i.

As a result, on September 5, 1997, State of Hawai‘i Sheriffs raided their Perfect Title offices and confiscated their files. The principals, Donald Lewis and Keanu Sai, were indicted for Attempted Theft. They were also forbidden to file any lawsuits against the Bureau of Conveyances by the judge.
Donald Anthony Lewis was eventually acquitted of this charge of Attempted Theft, however, he pled no-contest to a second charge of Failure to File a 1996 general Excise Tax report. His sentence was deferred and Don Lewis performed 50 hours of community service. Keanu Sai was found guilty of Attempted Theft. He was given a sentence of five years unsupervised probation. Perfect Title Company was closed in 1999.

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NN: Aloha Keanu. Can you please tell me about yourself. Where did you grow up?

KS: I grew up in Kuli'ou'ou Valley which is a suburb of Honolulu, just before Hawai'i Kai. My family has been there on Homestead land since 1907. It was before the Hawaiian Homelands Act was established, under the Organic Act. It was the special Homestead agreement, where it can be converted into fee. My family lives on almost nine acres of Homestead land that belonged to my great-grandmother, Rose Miguel who married Charles Armistead Reeves and from them there were nine children.

Almost nine acres were divided into nine separate pieces and given to each of the children and each of those acres were then subdivided, so my grandfather, Henry Keanu Reeves was one of the nine children who received one acre and out of that one acre it was subdivided into smaller plots. My Mom got a quarter-acre and my uncle and aunties got the adjacent, and that's pretty much how the breakdown occurred in Kuli'ou'ou. If you know the roads, you know the families.

The land came to our family under the 1900 Territorial Government Organic Act. These lands were part of what is known as the so-called "ceded lands."
In 1992-93, while I was enrolled as a student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, my family was drawn into Quiet Title actions by McCandless Ranch in Kona, so my cousins and aunts got me to research this type of information. It was Reeves land through Charles Armistead Reeves, coming through George Hueu Davis. Charles Reeves was married to Kalanikapu‘anui, before he was married to Rose Miguel who was my great-grandmother.

My Mom’s mom was Rose Kekaikuihala Simerson Reeves. I was her oldest mo‘opuna. My Tūtū used to talk to me all the time. I used to go all over town with her. She was my best friend as well as my Tūtū.

While I was away at New Mexico Military Academy, she was ill with cancer. She told my Mom, that she didn’t want to die until my Uncle Johnnie-Joe and I came home to see her. So I finished at New Mexico Military, got my commission, my degree and I came home and enrolled at the University of Hawai'i. My Tūtū used to have me come over everyday just to talk story with her before I would go to class. And, she would tell me all these stories about things that my parents and I didn’t know. I really couldn’t make sense of it until I did some research on Hawaiian history. The one thing that she did make me promise was that when she passed away that I fulfill one obligation, that I know my genealogy. She says that once I knew my genealogy I would know who I am and what I need to do. That was a kauoha, an order given to me by my Tūtū.

So I began taking classes in Hawaiian history and culture and I got pretty emotional, I was pissed off. I realized that I was merely parroting what I was taught, and not necessarily understanding it.
Then I had a wake-up call from my dad. I launched into him at a party, and blamed him for the Hawaiian situation that I perceived it to be. I accused him of being a part of selling the lands, getting ripped off by the missionaries, the whole thing. My Dad was caught off guard because he didn't understand what I was saying and he said something that was pretty pivotal for me. He simply said, “I thought you went to school to become educated and not come home and argue with us.” That for me was a wake-up call. I started to realize what I was saying! So I abandoned this whole Hawaiian activism or movement, or whatever you want to call it.

In the meantime, the idea of looking up my genealogy was still gnawing at me. I began doing research. My Tūtū’s genealogy was pretty well documented in Hawaiian newspapers. She was called upon by the family from Nāpo‘opo‘o to give testimony on who was related to whom. Her grandmother and her aunts are all buried at Kahikolu Church in Nāpo‘opo‘o.

My Tūtū was put into a Catholic convent against her will to be raised by nuns when she was about eleven years old even though the family was Protestant. Her father, William Kuakini Simerson, left, never to be seen again. He was one of the fourteen pallbearers of Prince Jonah Kūhiō’s casket. I began to do my own research in the Kingdom era because I could access information, like Census reports, and find out where they lived, what were their occupations, my grandparents, great-grandparents and even further. As I started to realize that, I gained a better appreciation of who I was as a person.
Then I started to work on the genealogy of my Dad's side. My Dad's great-grandmother was Lucy Kapohaiali'iokamamalu Koi'i who attended Queen Lili'uokalani to public court when she prorogued the legislature in 1892.

I felt I was taught by my Kupuna who had already passed on. I wanted to see it through their eyes. I wanted to walk in their shoes, hear what they heard, feel what they felt, understand what they understood, and see what they saw. So I used that as my methodology to experience what history could tell me about what happened in their time.

NN: How did you develop your theories about the illegal occupation of Hawai'i?

KS: After I understood my genealogy and who my ancestors were, issues came up such as "nationality" because they talk about it in the Census report as a citizenry and not as a race. And, I understood about the events of the overthrow of the Kingdom in 1893. But what I wanted to do was first was understand what it was like to live in the Kingdom days.

So I started to gather information, first-hand documentation. I needed to understand what the land was about. I needed to use concepts that were associated with that system, and that's why I got into how the land transferred from one person to another. I needed to understand the laws that affected its transfer, the Bureau of Conveyances, notaries, courts, and probates, in the Kingdom era. I understood the law that regulated it and I understood the country and it's place as a bonafide country in the international arena.

NN: Is that when you conceived the idea of the Perfect Title Company?

KS: Yes, I started to see things like the "overthrow of the Kingdom" in a completely different light than what I was taught. I found that there was a civil unrest, but I found
no evidence of an “overthrow” of the “Hawaiian kingdom” as a country. I only saw an overthrow of a government. That in itself would not negate the country.

It’s sort of like Iraq today. You can overthrow a government but Iraq is still an independent state dealing with that situation. It’s not an American colony. I started to appreciate terminology, ideas, and concepts. I realized how land titles could not be transferred after a certain point because of an illegal situation. An example would be titles to land in my family. This chain of titles could not be transferred after 1893. You would need to look at who the notaries were that acknowledged the transfer of a title and where did that notary get commissioned from. Beginning in 1893, their commission would be from the provisional government, then the Republic of Hawai‘i, which would all be illegal. That’s like a sovereignty group today making up their own notary. You can look at the court system post-1893, it’s not the same court system that existed pre-1893. So how do you expect to be probated in this court system? I can’t find any legality connected to it. That’s the point, domestic law starts in 1887, which was the coup d’état 46 and that led up to 1893 because they are trying to remedy that situation.

NN: So was there a succession of the kingdom to the provisional government?

KS: Actually, that’s what I couldn’t find — any succession. I couldn’t find any transfer from Queen Lili‘uokalani to the Provisional Government. The break in the title in 1887 affected government lands administered by the Minister of the Interior. It didn’t affect all lands in Hawai‘i from private ownership to leasehold.

NN: The Māhele had already occurred, and weren’t the Mō‘i lands 57, Government lands (administered by the Minister of the Interior) and private individual ownership lands established?
KS: Right, this was regulated by the Hawaiian government along with taxes and condemnation. The government could exercise eminent domain on private ownership if they needed to condemn the property to build a road, so what it does is take the understanding of land titles to another level because you have ownership of land, but that ownership of land fits within the system of law. So really, nobody owns land when someone has fee simple title. Because the term that it used, even in Anglo-Saxon versions of law is that you own the control of the land, you don't own the land cause nobody can own land. That's even in the western concept. It doesn't move, it's real property - it's immovable. But you own the control of that land, meaning you can convey it to somebody without conditions on it, that is a fee simple title; or lease it from somebody which is a limited control of that land, under a freeholder. It could be like a 30-year lease.

NN: Aren't freehold and fee simple two types of ownership?

KS: With freehold - you can have two types - fee simple or life estate. Leasehold is not freehold because you're holding it from somebody with a life estate or fee simple. So the concept of owning land doesn't even exist in America or Anglo-Saxon law.

NN: Was this the concept for Perfect Title?

KS: Before we moved into Perfect Title, we had to fully understand this concept because Perfect Title would be the test. It was with the realization that land titles stopped, and we had a true understanding of how the Māhele operated within this type of system of freehold and less than freehold. We started to see terms such as "ma lalo iho o ke ano allodial" (life-estate) versus "ma ke ano allodial" (fee simple), and understood its limitations, how it worked, what the Māhele was, classes, and vested rights. The full
The term used is “kuleana nui malālo iho o ke ano allodial”. That’s a free hold life estate. That’s all documented even preceding the Māhele in 1848.

NN: Weren’t there just a handful of people given that right though, who weren’t subject to the kālai‘aina prior to the Māhele?

KS: When Kamehameha I held the islands, he held it as the sole owner of the fee, everyone else held it under him in trust. The Chiefs held it in trust and the people held it under the Chiefs. It was like a pyramid.

NN: Did they use that language then?

KS: They didn’t, during the Kingdom era of Kamehameha III, they were putting terminology on concepts, the one who was responsible for that was John Papa I‘i.

NN: When was the first time they used these terms? In which document did it first appear?

KS: The first time they began to use it, statutorily wise, was when the Board of Commissioners of Quiet Land Title was established in 1845 on December 10. That was in the organic laws of the Kingdom.

NN: Isn’t allodial an English word?

KS: They Hawaiianized an English word because the one thing they were doing in 1845 when they were quieting the title was running into problems with foreigners and land, like with Lord Paulet and Captain La Place from France and Charlton, the British Consul who briefly claimed Hawai‘i under British rule. (Kuykendall, 1938) These people were using laws that were recognized internationally between the members of the family of nations – the British, the French, the German.
NN: And weren't they coming here to Hawai'i and demanding that we recognize those rights for their citizens?

KS: Actually, what they were doing was using that to their advantage in claiming rights against the Hawaiian Kingdom. That's how we were getting ripped off, through international diplomacy. That's what forced Kamehameha III to begin the establishment of a constitutional government and then began to revamp the land system so it's on record, and it's in line, not just with Hawaiian law, concepts and principles but international law so when the French came back after 1843, or the British, they can say, here is the contract and you are deviating from the established procedures.

NN: Wouldn't it also protect the ali'i to now have land in their name so that foreigners couldn't come and take it from them?

KS: There are certain provisions that would be used in the wording of the document where foreigners were prevented from acquiring property in fee. It was called the Alien Disability Act and in 1845 when the land commission was created, it stated that foreigners could not acquire fee simple title in Hawai'i. That set the stage to begin the establishment of a codified form of land system that not only met the requirement of international language, but also was in line with constitutional rights within the Hawaiian Kingdom itself. But in order to codify the land system - they first had to establish a government because the government had what is called corporate rights to regulate, assess taxes, condemnation, and all these kind of things. These are not private rights. The problem was the government had private rights to the land because they came from Kamehameha I, so you had a blending of private rights of land into the corporate rights of government. That's quite scary because if you do that, when you take

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over the government, you take over the land. So what they needed to do was separate
that so the rights to land were protected by the law. Once the constitution was created, it
decentralized control into agencies governed by constitutional law and not the whims of
the head of state. So these were all part of the evolution of Hawai‘i in dealing with
foreigners and the game they were playing. By creating the system, they actually put in a
check and balance.

NN: So you say that it was purposeful?
KS: Definitely. It was to ensure the compliance of law and the rights of individuals.

NN: So can you tell me about Perfect Title? What was its purpose?
KS: Perfect Title demonstrated that the Hawaiian Kingdom is a legal system.

NN: Who is Perfect Title, how did you come up with that name and concept?
KS: It was myself and two of my cousins that were involved with it. We merged with a
friend of ours that we just met, his name was Donald Lewis. And, he actually was one of
the principals of Locations, Inc., a real estate company in Honolulu. He was very well
known and respected. And he’s Hawaiian, in his late 60’s. We understood the land
system of the past and he could see it now, how it linked to today’s system, to the real
estate industry. So he brought today’s reality to yesterday’s legality. We began to work
together and realized that the Hawaiian kingdom legally still exists. The laws are still in
force but nobody is enforcing them. And it’s a very unique situation.

Why is it that we believe the Māhele was a good thing but everybody else believes
it’s bad? That forced us to double-check. We had to prove that the Māhele was part of a
bigger system, you cannot speak of it out of context, and the effect of it is that the native
tenants were still protected. We can cite where the native rights were protected as late as

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1890. We can show that native Hawaiian tenants were getting lots of land through the Māhele process.

NN: Were they getting land in that actual first division or did they come in and get land in the Homestead Act that followed when they opened up the land to the general public?

KS: They were getting it in the Kāleana Act in 1850. Native Hawaiians who did not submit their claims to the land commission before 1848 and did not receive a Royal Patent Grant were now getting 25 to 50 acres. So it was a different way of channeling the title.

NN: But it wasn’t through the very same process, was it? Wasn’t there a deadline in that first process?

KS: Right, because the Land Commission was established to look at title that existed before 1845 from Kamehameha I, to confirm or reject lands claims, and to quiet the title before they could begin the formal re-issuance of title. So, the problem of dividing native tenant rights and chiefs rights during the Māhele didn’t occur until 1848. In 1846, they were already starting to investigate.

NN: Did they set up the court system, the board and the structure first to adjudicate these claims? And then did they starting laying out the claims?

KS: Ali‘i and native tenants were not a part of the land commission initially. The land commission was initially set up to investigate claims to land by foreigners, the majority of them were foreigners prior to 1845 because they had to confirm or reject how you got it and who did you get it from. They were rejecting a lot of them and also confirming some. They needed evidence to prove it.
So the Mähele is the dividing of undivided rights. And that’s important because you can’t give a fee for undivided interests, that is the reason for the quiet title claim. It was much more detailed in compliance with the law where chiefs rights were being separated as life estates, but native tenants rights were in those chiefs lands of life estates. The native tenants rights were totally protected under the system. So, in the process the chiefs could change the life estate into a fee title but still have native tenant rights that they had to respect and issue title on.

Don Lewis was able to bridge it to today, link it up to how the escrow process works. Same concept, same terminology. It is a perfect link. What we realized is that there were breaks in the chain of title, legally, because of incompetence, whether it was notary incompetence, whether it was judges or probate incompetence, so we decided to create a company to prove this. And we were going to create this company under Hawaiian Kingdom law, cause the law still exists but nobody enforces it. It’s like nobody is enforcing Iraqi law right now, but it still exists. So we were going to follow the law and prove to people who claimed to own land that they don’t own it. And, we are going to show you how to fix it. So Perfect Title had a twist on it – to “per-fect title”.

In 1995, Don and I made presentations at the Outrigger Hotel with all the title company abstractors. Don had the connections cause he was a realtor. They all came. And when they saw what we had up there with the original documents, their jaws were on the ground. Big time. They realized they made major mistakes. For one thing, they didn’t know what “malalo o ke ano alodial” was. They were treating it as if it was a fee inheritable title on their title search. They didn’t understand the Hawaiian term with the English term. You would only know that if you understood the Hawaiian in the land
commission and the records because they say, less than allodial, or in other words, a life estate. The land commission was clear on that. After awhile they didn’t use life estate, they just said less than allodial. Nobody caught it.

Until it is proven how the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was extinguished through the legal system, it’s remains like a corporate entity, nothing can transfer from that system. Also, in 1893, there is no transfer, there’s usually an index that confirms the illegality. We actually found out the title companies’ title searches only went back about two conveyances, although they say they go back all the way to 1845 in their brochure to close escrow. The ones who incur the liability are the title companies who issue the title insurance policy. So the title insurance has an owner’s policy and a lender’s policy. Title insurance does not insure title. The warrantor does, the one you bought it from. Title companies insure the accuracy of the title search. That’s what title insurance is for.

When they started to see this, they saw the liability on the title insurance policy because of these inaccuracies.

Now when we threw the other bombshell in: that nobody owns land because there is still a break in the chain of sovereignty, there was no transfer - they were flabbergasted. Talk about being perplexed. Don and I were so naive, we said we wanted to help; we wanted everybody to fix the problem. Finally we got disgusted, and we said we would form our own title company and we would fix this problem. So we created Perfect Title Company in 1995, under Hawaiian Kingdom law. We documented Hawaiian Kingdom law; we were not just self-professing. There’s a process of how to file it in the Bureau of Conveyances because the Bureau was there since 1845. We were following the laws. If someone were to create a title company in 1886, they would have
done exactly what we did to create Perfect Title. We followed that process and the
Bureau of Conveyances was a repository for articles of agreement for general
partnerships, so we were fully under the system to protect ourselves.

Then, we said we were going to do title searches. The authority to say we are
going to search your title is coming from the native tenants, from the bottom. Native
tenants as a class have rights to the land. But, there is a provision in Hawaiian law that
says you can't get a fee title or divide your kāleana until you can prove that there is no
other interest in it. So we had to do our own quiet title in 1995 before native tenants can
begin to exercise their rights.

So we authorized Perfect Title Company to serve as that organ to investigate and
find out who owns land so native tenants know what they can claim. That was the angle.
People started to bring in their titles to be investigated. They were people with fee title.
These were not native tenants claiming land. These were other people who were coming
in, Filipinos, Haoles, and Hawaiians, coming in to investigate.

We would do title searches by people putting in their claim. We announced a two
year period to file your claims and we would investigate from February 14, 1996 to
February 14, 1998. The cost was $1,500.00, $10.00 per year going back 150 years. We
had abstractors, we had overhead, we had an office, phones, salaries. A lot of people
weren't paying the entire cost, but they paid the initial $500.00. It wasn't a good
business decision, but we didn't do it for that reason, it wasn't to make money. How are
you going to make money by telling people that they don't own their land? We followed
the land commission process and we showed in an abstract how the title was broken.
And they would take their abstract to their title company, like Title Guarantee, because
they paid, according to their escrow papers, $1,500.00 for a title insurance policy and a title search. They went and asked if they could see their title search because Perfect Title just did a title search for them (which shows that they do not have clear title to their land) and they wanted their title company to refute this. If it can’t be refuted, then call in the title insurance policy to pay off the note. Title insurance is used to pay off a promissory note. That’s why it’s called a lender’s policy. It’s paid to protect the lender with the amount of money you borrowed.

NN: So in case the real owner comes back to claim the land, can they file a claim with the insurance company?

KS: Insurance is used to defend it or to pay it off because they can’t defend it. This wasn’t Hawaiian sovereignty. This wasn’t about native Hawaiian cultural rights. It was contracts. These cases went to the company attorney and they started to panic. They saw the same thing that their abstractors saw. This was liability - big time. Clients started presenting it to Hawai’i Escrow, Long and Melone, Old Republic. It went back to the real issue who was the underwriter in the title company. And the underwriters were from Tycor Title Insurance Company, Chicago Title Insurance Company and Stewart Title Insurance, all from America. They were panicking and we were getting telephone calls from the insurance companies in America asking us what was going on. When we explained to them what was happening they said they could come back at the title companies for misrepresenting them and their underwriters.

NN: I remember it causing quite a stir.

KS: They couldn’t refute it. So things were hitting the fan. And we expected it because this was a test: The final straw was when we were asked to sit on a panel with the
Hawai‘i Developers Council, one at the ‘Ilikai and one at the Prince Hotel. At the ‘Ilikai, Don went up and sat with the legal council for Title Guarantee, an attorney from Ashford and Wriston, a representative from Chicago Title Insurance Company and some moderator who was an attorney. I jumped into the panel at Hawai‘i Prince Hotel. There were 500 people in the Hawaii Prince hotel in this ballroom. We got the list of who was there because we knew the head of the Hawai‘i Development Council. So the title for the presentation was, “Perfect Title, Scam or Restoration”, and on this panel I was going to sit with the guy from Chicago Title Insurance Company, the attorney from Ashford and Wriston, the head of Hawai‘i Escrow and Title, another attorney, and somebody from Bank of Hawai‘i. You could hear a pin drop. People were just blown away cause that’s not what you were reading in the newspaper. The newspaper was fabricating this stuff about us and one of the attorneys was making it sound like we were telling people not to pay their mortgages. We were saying, listen, this is an unsecured promissory note, you don’t have a mortgage. People didn’t understand what mortgages were and I explained it in the panel. There were two documents that people sign in escrow, one is a promissory note and the other is a security instrument to ensure the payment of that note. The security instrument is a mortgage. That is not a loan, the promissory note is the loan. Now in order to pay it back, you need something of collateral to secure it, which is the lien on the property. If you got no title, this mortgage is no good. You have an unsecured promissory note. Now you are directed to title insurance to protect the lender of that promissory note. That’s the way escrow works, but people thought a mortgage was a loan. You don’t pay a mortgage. You pay a promissory note that is secured by a mortgage. I even had the documents up there, and everybody in the audience was
looking at it. They could see it. I was the abstractor, and I was the one who trained all
the abstractors. I know these laws like the back of my hand. We were talking about
contracts, and you ain’t got it, and this is affecting your pocketbook.

We gotta fix it, we all gotta fix it. That’s what we were saying. We were not the
culprit. But we gotta fix the problem because it was our money. It was business and
contracts. Well, the people walked out of there stunned.

After the presentation, one of the opposing attorneys on the panel, came up to me
and says, “You know your Tutu is my godmother.” I said, “What! My Tutu started me on
all of this.” I looked at him and said, “Are you serious?” He says, “Yes, your Tutu is
my godmother!” I said, “Wow!” and he goes on to say, “What you are doing, Keanu, is
not right. You are creating havoc and you are leading people down the wrong path.”
And I said, “I can’t stand on the emotional side with you, an attorney. I notice that you
have one of our title abstracts in your hand,” because it was sticking out of his folder. I
said, “I sent that to you two weeks ago because I knew you were going to be on this
panel, and I thought that as a good attorney, you would scrutinize this title abstract
because it’s about ceded lands, especially since it’s my parent’s land in Kuli’ou’ou. The
title is broken.” I explained that there is no such thing as “ceded lands”. I said, “I need
you to go line by line, and all you have to do is refute that title report. That’s the issue.”
He said, “I did go line by line and it is historically and factually correct, even the
Māhele, native tenants, everything.” I said, “Well, what’s the problem then?” He said,
“Well, America’s here and that’s just the way it is.” And I said, “Gee, I didn’t expect
that from an attorney because I didn’t think that America was involved with title
insurance policies.” And he just got angry. I said, “You know what, you just answered
my questions, we are solid. So that's something you gotta deal with but hey, we'll work together.” Then, I walked out. Three days later we got raided by the Police Department, the White Collar Crime Unit, out of the blue, raided our office. It was on the front page of the newspapers, “Keanu and Don investigated for racketeering, money laundering, tax evasion and theft.” It was a smear campaign. This was three days after the Hawai‘i Prince Hotel meeting. That’s the walk we took. They wouldn’t be making a stink about this if it weren’t real.

NN: So you were accused? Were you indicted for this?

KS: We were arrested for investigation of racketeering, money laundering, tax evasion and theft in 1997. Don and my secretary and I were there at 8:00am in the morning. We were waiting for the abstractors to come in to give them their instructions. They came in and raided us with guns, pistols drawn. We were like, “Whoa! Now this is where the real game begins,” because they couldn’t refute what we were doing. They separated us in the rooms. I was sitting there calmly because this was my style. This was for real. This one Hawaiian guy is standing next to me, all nervous. I look at him and say, “Bruddah, what’s up?” He says, “We just came down from the top, this ain’t right.”

NN: Tell me about people being encouraged not to pay their mortgages. Were there people who lost their homes?

KS: Title wise – you can’t lose what you never had. Strictly title. But physically, you are living in a shack and you are squatting.

NN: Didn’t those people have signed documents? Didn’t they pay money for this?
KS: Definitely, that's the title insurance problem, escrow and the bank. That's where the problem was. Everybody ran on the assumption that the title was good. Now we are showing that the title was no good.

NN: Did Perfect Title encourage people to do this?

KS: I would explain what the title search means, Don would explain what title insurance is all about and that they have an issue with the title company right now. And, what they do is totally up to them, and he would explain how the process works. So we asked them to bring their escrow papers in. We would do a title search and we'd say, "You see this? That's a promissory note, and this is a mortgage agreement, that's called a security instrument. You see this? You have title insurance, and a title report. You paid for that.

I would suggest, "But it's up to you to talk to your title company because you bought your title insurance. So you have a problem here that you need to get resolved. The title companies would refuse to give them the title searches that they supposedly did. So they would come back to us and say, "They won't give it to us. We can understand why because if you are right in this title, then nobody owns land in Hawai‘i." So they are left with a problem, they don't have good title to their land. We'd say, "Right now you don't have a mortgage, you have a promissory note. And you owe that money because you signed the note. But, you don't have a mortgage because there's no good title. But you signed a promissory note that you would repay. That's an obligation that you signed."

And we explained to them that they owed that money that was borrowed. But what they have and what they were required to purchase is title insurance in case something is wrong. And we show them the brochures of all the title companies. And they said they didn't know that was what it was for. So I said, "And now you know."
NN: So people actually took that stand and tried to go down that path?

KS: I'll give you the example of my parents because it was our house that got hit with this. There's no such thing as homestead in Kuli'ou'ou. That came out of the Territorial Government, it's all illegal. Nothing was transferred to the United States. So, in the case of my parents, my Dad and my Mom realized that there was a definite problem with the title, so they went to speak with the people at Title Guarantee. All my Dad said was, “Here are my escrow papers, I want to see my title insurance that I paid for and I want to see the title report.” They wouldn't give it to him. So he filed a claim against Chicago Title Company. He said, “We have a problem. I'm initiating a claim to investigate what I paid for. If it is found that this title is no good, then I want you to pay off my credit union because that's what I paid for, here's the contract.” Chicago accepted the claim and assigned it to a local attorney to investigate the claim. He knew full well what we were doing and he never followed through. My Dad was saying, come on, you want to play that way, we are going to play that way, we aren't going to pay this note until you tell me that this insurance is not usable. What happened was the title company and the attorney got together with the credit union and they initiated foreclosure proceedings. They came after me and my parents because we were living in an 'Ohana Zone. There was an impasse and no matter what my parents said in front of the Judge Sandra Sims, that this was about a contract, not about sovereignty, she didn't agree. All the cameras were there. They knew this was Keanu Sai's family. So, my parents, me and my family, we decided to leave on our own. We now rent a house in 'Āhuimanu in Kāne'ohe. We had to walk the talk, this is how the game is played. And this is how hard they were coming
down on us. After that, they arrested me. Then I got charged and indicted, and eventually given probation.

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Keanu Sai received 5 years probation for his crime. The records from Perfect Title Company were confiscated by the State Police and never returned to him. He has continued to research this topic and participate in public forums to inform the general public about the legality and continued existence of Hawaiian Kingdom law. He is presently a Ph.D. Candidate at University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in Political Science. His Dissertation is entitled, “Constitutional Law of the Hawaiian Kingdom”.

Conclusion

David Keanu Sai has provided even more substance to the framework for the return of self-governance for Native Hawaiians. His focus is redress through international relations and recognition through the international arena, such as the World Court in the Hague, Netherlands. One goal which he achieved was recognition by the World Court of the continued existence of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. This is a remarkable accomplishment for Sai and his Hawaiian Kingdom followers despite the fact that the United States continues to ignore invitations to participate in these proceedings. Ultimately, the World Court has no enforcement jurisdiction over the countries even though they subscribe to their proceedings in situations more amenable to their intentions.

The campaign by the Hawaiian Kingdom for recognition in World Court runs parallel to his attempt to establish the illegality of land transfers under U.S. law through the Perfect Title Company that he co-established in 1995. His first challenge was to
establish the company under Kingdom law rather than under the jurisdiction of the United States. His alleges that land titles cannot be transferred in Hawai‘i because the takeover of land by the Provisional Government of Hawai‘i, and the eventual transfers of those lands to the Republic, the Territory and eventually the State of Hawai‘i are illegal. He claims that signature of the notary who was commissioned by these other forms of government is illegal, therefore the transfers of land which have taken place since the overthrow of the Queen in 1893 is also illegal. Keanu’s attempt to expose the break in the chain of title was met with a heavy hand from the State of Hawai‘i whose Sheriffs confiscated all of his records. If allowed to continue, Perfect Title could have meant a complete unraveling of land transfers and ownership in Hawai‘i and a dismantling of a system that provides a significant foundation for the economy of Hawai‘i. As it is, the effect of the arrest and conviction of Keanu Sai, albeit his sentence was a 5-year probation and release on his own recognizance, was to squash this movement and send a strong message to others who might consider undermining the powerful status quo. The question of the validity of land transfers and the legality of the United States’ position in Hawai‘i remains unaddressed.

David Keanu Sai is a controversial figure, even among Hawaiians. He holds the title of Chairman of the Board of Regency and serves as the Acting Head of State for the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. Keanu promotes the idea that the Kingdom of Hawai‘i was not extinguished with the action that removed Queen Lili‘uokalani from her throne. He demonstrated this legal position in the enactment of the Perfect Title Company. Keanu’s story is compelling. His Grandmother’s kauoha or command that he know his genealogy
was a turning point in his life. His skills as a researcher and his penchant for strategic thinking were honed in the Military during his training as an officer.

Keanu provides a very different take on the issue of self-determination. He doesn’t consider himself a Hawaiian Sovereignty Activist. In fact, he eschews the need to seek sovereignty but rather believes that the Kingdom of Hawai’i still exists. He disagrees with the claims by other sovereignty groups for “ceded lands” since his theory is that the lands are in fact illegally taken by the occupier, the U.S. and were never “ceded” to that country.

Keanu seeks remedy for his claims against the United States for their illegal takeover of the Kingdom of Hawai’i through international means. He continues to pursue these claims through the case of one of the citizens of the Kingdom, Lance Larsen. (Ibid) Larsen was convicted of several traffic and motor vehicle citations under the laws of the State of Hawai’i and the United States. He then filed a claim in the World Court in the Hague stating that the Kingdom of Hawai’i did not protect his rights as citizen of the Kingdom against the U.S. under whose false jurisdiction, Mr. Larsen has been forced to live. Larsen’s claim against the Kingdom established in International Court that the Hawaiian Islands have indeed been illegally occupied by the U.S.

Keanu Sai’s leadership style is distinctly different from other sovereignty and self-determination leaders. He holds his regency seat merely as a placeholder until such time that the real leaders of the country can retake their positions as head of government.

He is an intense but amiable individual with a strong sense of justice and belief that he is on the right track. Keanu did not grow up with a Hawaiian spiritual
background, per se, but he understands and possesses Hawaiian leadership values, especially an attachment for the importance of land for the Hawaiian Kingdom.

I had the opportunity to travel with Keanu in 2002 to a small First Nation’s community about two hours drive away from Calgary, Alberta, Canada. We were there to attend the World Indigenous Conference on Education and to present educational workshops. During that week, I not only sat in on his workshop about the illegal occupation of Hawai‘i by the U.S., but we had numerous conversations about his theories. While we were there residing in a very spiritual place in the Stony Mountains, a young Hawaiian lady approached him. She said she had a message to him from his deceased grandmother. His grandmother’s message was that he would continue telling his story. It would become his life work.

At first, Keanu seemed shaken by this message. Then, slowly, he began to accept it. It has, indeed become his life work. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in Political Science and writing and researching even more on this subject.

Keanu’s theory of illegal occupation of Hawai‘i by the U.S., as well as his language and concepts have become mainstream dialogue among Native Hawaiians. For many citizens, Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian, it seems unreasonable to believe that the largest world power, heavily invested in military facilities and manpower, would just pick up and leave the islands. Some of this theory must be credited to Kekuni Blaisdell and others like him, who were touting this same concept of the illegal occupation of the islands since the early days of the movement. However, no one else has taken those theories forward to question the legality of transfers of title and ownership of land in Hawai‘i.
I consider him a leader because of the boldness of his theory and his perseverance and fortitude to seek resolution for the Hawaiian Kingdom and Hawaiian people. His stance has not always been popular, and he and his family have suffered financially and emotionally for it. He has conviction. When I asked him about this, he said they had to walk the talk. It's as simple as that.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

The Need for Strong Hawaiian Leadership

According to the 2,000 U.S. Census, there are nearly 240,000 Native Hawaiians residing within the State of Hawai'i, and an additional 160,000 residing across the U.S. and abroad for a total of 401,000. If all of the Native Hawaiians, living in Hawai'i and abroad were eligible to be members of the proposed “Akaka Bill” Hawaiian nation, this would constitute the single largest “tribal” entity within the United States. The largest Native American Indian nation, the Navajo Nation is comprised of just more than 250,000 members. Still, within Hawai'i, Hawaiians make up only 23% of the population. Hawaiians are an economic and political minority in their own land.

A recent study, “Income and Poverty Among Native Hawaiians: Summary of Ka Huaka'i Findings,” by Kamehameha Schools Policy Analysis and System Evaluation (PASE) concludes the following:

“Native Hawaiian families in Hawai'i have the lowest mean family income of all major ethnic groups in the state.

Native Hawaiian families tend to be larger than average, meaning that their comparatively low income must support a higher number of individuals.

Per capita income calculations confirm that Native Hawaiians are socio-economically disadvantaged. The cost of living in the state of Hawai'i is among the highest in the United States.

When we adjust for differences in the cost of living, the median and per capita income of the national Native Hawaiian population is substantially lower than comparable national figures.
Poverty rates consistently show the high socioeconomic need among Native Hawaiians in the state of Hawai‘i.” (Kana`iaupuni & Ishibashi., 2005)

In a 1997 article, “Update on the Status of Kanaka Maoli Health,” Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell concludes the following:

“In the 1990s, most Kanaka Maoli health indicators have not improved significantly. In some instances, such as life expectancy, overall mortality and death rates for heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes, and risk factors, such as obesity, hypertension and alcohol-use, the rates are worse than in the 1980s.

The 1988 federal-mandated Native Hawaiian Health Professional Scholarship Program and the 5 island-wide Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems, operational only since 1991, have not been established long enough to reach significant numbers of Kanaka Maoli and to have a measurable impact on Kanaka Maoli health indicators. One favorable outcome has been the Wai'anae traditional Kanaka Maoli and adapted diet which demonstrated short-term control of body weight, hypertension and diabetes. However, this program has affected less than 300 participants and long-term results have yet to be reported.

Persistent, grim Kanaka Maoli social, educational and economic indices extending into the 1990s support the hypothesis that societal as well as lifestyle factors are major determinants in Kanaka Maoli ill health. These factors appear to include Kanaka Maoli depopulation and minority status from continuing foreign transmigration, colonial exploitation with Kanaka Maoli landlessness and economic dependency, coercive assimilation, cultural conflict and despair, adoption of harmful foreign ways and institutional racism.” (Blaisdell, 1997)

The 2006 Health Section from the Native Hawaiian Data Book compiled by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs also concludes the following:

“Native Hawaiians developed a sophisticated, well functioning system of health care based upon “ke ola pono”, concepts of wellness that are consistent with today’s holistic healing practices combining mental, physical as well as spiritual beliefs systems and practices. By the end of the 18th century and a steady stream of haole foreign visitors from the East and West, native Hawaiians had to deal with an onslaught of
infectious diseases that were deadly to their unsuspecting immune systems. Traditional healing and knowledge could not stem this devastating tide. Native Hawaiians had entered a process sometimes referred to as "cultural trauma" brought on by forced assimilation.

Disease incidence and mortality are strongly associated with lifestyle and risk factors. Of all racial groups living in Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiians are the racial group with the highest proportion of risk factors leading to illness, disability, and premature death. Statistics reveal a high risk profile for Native Hawaiians, with the bulk of them having one of the following risk factors: sedentary life, obesity, hypertension, smoking, and acute drinking. The data depicts Native Hawaiians are experiencing high rates of circulatory diseases and malignant neoplasms, particularly digestive and respiratory types, which appear to be strongly associated to risk factors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, obesity, sedentary life, and so on. The data also indicate that large segments of the Native Hawaiian population were recipients of state and federal sponsored health care services, a clear indication that low income is a barrier to full access to health care systems." (OHA, 1996)

These socio-economic, health and education statistics paint a grim picture for the future of Native Hawaiians. This scenario creates a ripe environment for a cultural change movement. The individuals chosen for this thesis, therefore, become agents of these changes, introducing new concepts, language and political understanding to the community who believe that as a class of people, they have been deprived of their political, economic, and social standing. (Bodley, 1999 and Naylor, 1996)

Each of these leaders offers an option for change to the Native Hawaiian community. As grass-roots organizers, their financial capital for public information campaigning, and dissemination of information is almost non-existent. This is especially noticeable in comparison to the large amount of monies spent by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to conduct its campaign in support of the “Akaka Bill”. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible to determine exactly how many Hawaiians feel threatened enough to take action. It is possible, even probable, that many Hawaiians are willing to remain with the status quo, even though they
know that their Hawaiian rights have been usurped. Uncertainty about the future of the
Hawaiian nation is a large incentive to do nothing. Misinformation and disinformation have led
to confusion and a feeling of helplessness among the communities for generations. Native
Hawaiians have witnessed too many failed attempts at addressing their needs, particularly
during the term of the only Hawaiian Governor of Hawai‘i when several attempts were made at
addressing past wrongdoings. A recent conversation by two morning radio talk show hosts
exemplified this kind of misunderstanding about the economic effects of Hawaiian
independence. “I don’t want to give up my color T.V. and have to work in the taro patches”,
said one misinformed radio talk show host.

This thesis does not attempt to clear up the misunderstandings. Simply the research
investigates the origin of some of the philosophies and concepts that underlie the movement
toward self-determination and self-government. There are numerous forms of sovereignty and
self-determination that emerge in the general discourse. They range from nation within a nation
models offered by the “Akaka Bill”, partial autonomy or self-governance within the state
model, to seeking complete independence from and perhaps a new relationship with the United
States. By default, the status quo remains. Despite concerted efforts to sway public opinion
through television and radio advertising by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, there is a
pronounced lack of agreement for any singular solution to the current dilemma.

This is evident in the interviews that comprise this thesis. Each of these four
individuals is unique in their history, motivation and approach to addressing the issues
facing governance and self-determination. They are born of different generations, and
bring with them different experiences and upbringing, different socio-economic
backgrounds, education and motivation. Most times, they do not agree with each other in
the process that might achieve the best benefit for Hawaiians as a nation. They do all agree on one thing, however, that the current political, health, economic and social status for Native Hawaiians needs to be changed in a positive way and that adoption of a form of sovereignty and self-determination is one solution.

Common Threads

Are these four individuals true leaders of the sovereignty, self-determination movement? Indeed, the response is yes. Each in their own way possesses the desired traits of modern Hawaiian leadership.

‘Ike Ho‘omaupopo – Hawaiian Consciousness

In this trait they are all very similar. This consciousness pertains to the environment, for that is of utmost importance to Hawaiians. Environment includes caring for the land, the ocean, the atmosphere, and all living creatures so that each may thrive and grow.

These leaders all understand the relationship the Kanaka has to the land and the need to ensure the land remains in control of the Hawaiian nation, for the benefit of all the people. When we discuss the issue of land, it is Hawai‘i specific. There is no interest in acquiring land elsewhere for the same purpose. On the contrary, the only land that is of utmost importance to a Hawaiian is the land here in Hawai‘i. This relationship between Kanaka and land is a spiritual relationship that extends back to the days of Papa and Wākea, the creators of man. In Hawaiian thought, we humans will never own the land, but can have lifetime use of it. This is evident in the arguments that Keanu Sai brings to the table when he discusses land titles and the various legal forms associated with it. It also defines Bumpy Kanahele’s greatest accomplishment to date, the acquiring of land to establish a village for his family and followers. Mililani Trask and
Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell also recognize the importance of a land base from which the nation can exist and grow. Land would be a foundation for economic stability and self-sufficiency in every self-governing scenario.

_Ho'ona'auao – Becoming Educated_

Three of the four leaders are highly educated in the Western system. One leader is a self-taught man.

Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell is a noted medical doctor, researcher and Hawaiian health historian. He, in fact, approaches his leadership on two fronts, as a medical professional vitally interested in improving the health of Native Hawaiians, and as a liberal supporter of Native Hawaiian political independence from the U.S.

Ms. Mililani Trask is an attorney, a peace advocate, international Indigenous Peoples' human rights advocate, and founding leader of the largest Hawaiian nation effort to date, Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i. She is a leader, both internationally and at home in Hawai‘i.

David Keanu Sai was a U.S. military officer, highly trained in gathering and analyzing intelligence. He is also achieving his Ph.D. in Political Science. The skills he has learned in both of these disciplines have well prepared him for the research he conducts to provide evidence of his theory of the illegal occupation of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i by the U.S.

The fourth leader, Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki "Bumpy" Kanahele is formally educated through his high school equivalent G.E.D. And, he has engaged himself in learning about U.S banking laws through the Federal Reserve Bank in order to accomplish one of his goals, to start up a Native Hawaiian bank that will drive the economic development of the new Hawaiian nation. He, of all the leaders, has fought his way through the “school of hard-knocks”. Bumpy has learned his lessons along the way. Each time he has been challenged by life, he has grown
from his experience, including his time spent in prison. He is a reformed man. He has learned to channel his anger and frustration to become an advocate of peaceful resistance, and more importantly, he is completely focused on his goals to achieve independence and self-governance for Native Hawaiians.

*What qualifies them for their positions?*

For one, each leader exhibits the cultural knowledge and traits of a Hawaiian leader set forth by noted author George Kanahele. These traits of pono or rectitude; mana or spiritual power – partly achieved and partly innate or ascribed; aloha – a reciprocal caring for one another, kūpaa or loyalty; mālama or caring; ha’aha’a or humility; kūpono or integrity; na’auao or intelligence and wisdom; koa or courage; ho’okūkū or competitiveness; lokomaika‘i or generosity; ho’okipa or hospitality; and ‘olu‘olu or courtesy are all present in their characters and witnessed by their passionate desire to improve life for Native Hawaiians and right the wrongdoings of the past. Bumpy describes these collective traits as “heart”. He says a good leader has to have “heart”. This philosophy guides him now in his everyday life.

Each leader is Native Hawaiian. When they speak, they speak on behalf of their families and their ancestors. While none of these leaders claim their lineage from high chiefs in order to provide them the status to be leaders, they all, nevertheless, possess the mana that is required to be a leader. They each have demonstrated a willingness to step forward in public, to be sometimes supported and mostly criticized by the very people for whom they wish to improve the quality of life. They have not and do not run from the criticism, but rather contemplate ways to improve their individual messages, to work toward mutual and beneficial understanding of the need for changes in the political structure of self-determination.
What motivated these individuals from very different walks of life, to engage in the movement toward sovereignty or independence for Hawai‘i?

Kekuni spent several years in medical training on the U.S. Continent and in Japan following W.W. II. During this time, he experienced first hand prejudice and segregation in the deep South of the U.S.; and the atrocities of man’s inhumanity to man in the Atomic Bomb destruction of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was motivation enough for him to come home in 1966 and engage in the fledgling Hawaiian sovereignty movement which began in the early 1970’s. Kekuni participated in Con-Con activities and support for the Hawaiian package that emerged.

Mililani Trask grew up during the Vietnam years. Although she did not mention it in her interview, she no doubt was exposed to the anti-Vietnam war activism in college on the U.S. mainland during the early 1970’s. When she returned to Hawai‘i with her law degree in the late 1970’s, she was immersed into the Hawaiian movement spawned by the 1978 State Constitutional Convention. What she learned through those experiences and the sovereignty uprising that occurred following the Con-Con helped shape her thinking and defined her actions toward creating Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i, a Hawaiian Nation.

Bumpy Kanahele was also impacted by the activities surrounding the 1978 State Con-Con. He stated in his interview that he was called upon by some of his friends to attend hearings and listen to what was going on. His political agenda was shaped by the events of the time including demonstrations and evictions of Hawaiians from their land.
Keanu Sai was too young to participate in the activities of the 1978 Con-Con. After attending college on the U.S. Mainland, Keanu returned to Hawai‘i and attended classes at the University of Mānoa Hawaiian Studies program in the early 1990’s, in time to experience the anger and frustration of young students, brought to the surface by the Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination movement. His epiphany occurred when, at a party, he blamed his father for giving in to pressures of the political system. That is what motivated him to further research how land title passed through his family hands and led him to the understanding he has about the occupation of Hawai‘i by the U.S.

*Which individuals have demonstrated a significant influence over their lives and political ideology?*

Each of them give tribute to their families and elders who have guided them from their beginnings.

Kekuni's mother and grandmother were a strong presence in his early life. Once he entered into Kamehameha Schools, he lived in the dormitory and was greatly influenced by his teachers. His primary mentor was his teacher, Dr. Donald Kilohana Mitchell who provided him with the impetus to enter into medical school on the U.S. Continent. This was not an expectation of his family.

Mililani also came from a strong political family. She, too, was educated at Kamehameha Schools, and went on to attend university on the U.S. Continent. Her early mentor was a Japanese attorney, Mitsuo Uehara, who introduced her to concepts of law regarding Native Hawaiian rights. Her other mentors in her adulthood were peace advocates, Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu-Tum and Mother Theresa of Calcutta under whom she studied.
Bumpy Kanahele is a self-styled leader. He learned his life lessons through trial and error. He relies on the support and teachings of his kupuna and extends that relationship to hundreds of others in the community. For Bumpy, the kupuna’s understanding and support is his affirmation.

Keanu Sai begins his story with his grandmother’s kauoha or command to him to learn his genealogy. It was her motivation that set him on the path that he walks now. His parents have traveled this tough road with him as well, providing him with emotional support through his legal challenges with the Perfect Title Company.

*How have they influenced the discourse, dialogue and direction of the community discussion on this subject?*

Each of the four leaders has influenced the discourse on Hawaiian sovereignty and self-determination in different ways.

Kekuni Blaisdell has set the boundaries of discussion with his loose-knit group of supporters in Ka Pakaukau. He advocates for complete independence from the U.S. Although this may be the most extreme position at the table, it nevertheless serves the purpose of providing the widest parameters for the discussion to take place. Kekuni is relentless in his pursuit for justice for the wrongdoings of the U.S. against the Hawaiian people and Hawaiian Kingdom.

Mililani Trask has also set a standard that is unmatched with the creation of the Constitution for Ka Lāhui Hawai’i, an independent Hawaiian government. More than 20,000 people eventually signed up for citizenship in her nation, from across Hawai’i and the U.S. Ka Lāhui Hawai’i’s Constitution blends democratic principles with a Hawaiian Cultural Ali‘i framework.
Bumpy Kanahele has achieved what no other sovereignty leader has achieved, that is the ability to build a Hawaiian village on land provided to him in Waimanalo. He and his followers acquired the land through peaceful demonstration of the homeless plight in Waimanalo. What they have achieved through a lot of blood, sweat and tears, is a thriving self-governing community for about eighty families, many of whom had been homeless and living on the beach. His model of self-sufficiency is remarkable as members of their community worked together to build out the homes for each other. He is also head of a Hawaiian Nation organization, albeit a non-active one. Bumpy hopes to develop a Native Hawaiian Bank to serve as an economic catalyst once the new Hawaiian nation is created.

Keanu Sai has accepted perhaps the greatest challenge. His theory is that the U.S. illegally occupies the Hawaiian Kingdom which is in abeyance. He does not subscribe to the idea that Hawai‘i has been colonized by the U.S. He says simply that the U.S. illegally occupies and controls the island nation. The Kingdom of Hawai‘i is currently not operating, because of the political and military pressure exerted by the U.S. But the Kingdom is not dissolved and continues to have legal standing in the International arena. Keanu has single-handedly taken on the U.S. Government with this theory.

How Do They Differ?

Each of these leaders has great vision for the nation. While their individual approaches differ, they essentially yearn for the same results – the ability for Hawaiians to make decisions and determine their own future. Blaisdell, Sai, and Kanahele support different versions of independence. Blaisdell has always advocated complete separation from the United States. Kanahele formed his Nation of Hawai‘i with a mandate for a
government completely separate from the United States. Sai holds a position as Head of State for the Hawaiian Kingdom, as a placeholder, until such time that the kingdom is recognized and the government is rightly restored. Keanu Sai does not deem himself a Hawaiian sovereignty activist and tends to stand apart from the others. He believes that the Hawaiian Kingdom sovereignty still exists. He seeks his redress for the illegal occupation of the U.S. only through international means. Trask was an original advocate of the Akaka Bill which supported a nation-within-a-nation model, however, she and Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i no longer support the current version. Ka Lāhui Hawai‘i’s strategy, however, is to work on all fronts, within the U.S. governance system, and to continue to seek international recognition through the United Nations.

It should be noted that several other leaders in the Hawaiian movement are strong advocates of the Akaka Bill, A bill for the Native Hawaiian Reorganization Act of 2007. This bill, according to Senator Daniel K. Akaka, would accomplish three things: 1) It authorizes an office in the Department of the Interior to serve as a liaison between Native Hawaiians and the United States; 2) It forms an interagency coordinating group composed of officials from federal agencies who currently administer programs and services impacting Native Hawaiians; and 3) it authorizes a process for the reorganization of the Native Hawaiian governing entity for the purposes of a federally recognized government-to-government relationship.

Regardless of their agreement or disagreement over the forms of achieving self-governance with each other and with other leaders in the Hawaiian self-determination movement, each of these leaders has contributed greatly to the public debate and discourse about the issue.
No one who resides in Hawai‘i is untouched by this debate, no matter what their ethnic background, or length of residency in the islands. While it is important, even necessary, that Hawaiians continue to drive the debate, it will eventually become imperative to enter into the discourse with the community at large. Any kind of reorganization of the government within the State of Hawai‘i to make room for an entity of nearly 23% of the population of Hawaiians will surely have a major effect on the entire political, social and economic system.

A nation cannot exist without a land base. The debate of how the land currently under State control might be carved up to provide an economic base for the new Hawaiian nation is nearly enough to guarantee that this dialogue will continue for a long time, even if the Akaka Bill were to successfully maneuver out of the Federal Congress. And, the process for signing up on the rolls, the current Kau Inoa campaign headed by Hawai‘i Maoli, Inc. and supported by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, has been less than successful in garnering the signatures of over 401,000 Hawaiians who reside in Hawai‘i, on the Continental U.S. and throughout the world.

The difficulty in organizing the large number of potential citizens would be the same for any group or nation. Observe the current U.S. national campaign for President which assaults us on a daily basis, on television, newsprint and radio. A tremendous effort is placed on public relations, media exposure, controlled messages and rolling polls. Pundits constantly monitor feedback from their constituency on how the candidate is being perceived. The efforts and the monies spent on shaping public opinion and getting the message of the candidates out into the communities is tremendous.

This kind of problem does not solely belong to the Akaka Bill advocates. All of
our present and future Hawaiian leaders face the same kind of challenge to effectively communicate their messages to Native Hawaiians who reside in Hawai‘i, on the U.S. Continent and throughout the world, as well as to the non-Hawaiian residents of Hawai‘i.

Who among us can garner the support of an entire nation of people? How can we Hawaiians, an economic and political minority group in our own land, become effective agents of change for our own self-determined future? Is there one person among us who possesses all those traits of Native Hawaiian leadership so desired and expected by our, people and our communities? Certainly an outstanding Native Hawaiian leader will emerge to lead our nation forward. This new leader may very well come out of the next generation. Young Hawaiians are becoming better educated in both Western knowledge and Native Hawaiian culture. Young Hawaiians are being raised with a better understanding of their ancestral knowledge, and their mo‘okālehu or genealogy. Those essential Native Hawaiian values and traits, such as mana or spiritual power, pono or rectitude, aloha, a reciprocal caring for each other, kūpa‘a or loyalty, mālama or caring for the land, ocean, and the people, ha‘aha‘a or humility, koa or a warrior’s strength, lokomaika‘i or generosity, nā‘auao or intelligence and wisdom, ho‘okipa or hospitality, ‘olu‘olu or courtesy and ho‘okākā or a sense of competitiveness are recognized once again, and consciously taught to our youth. A new Native Hawaiian Leader must understand all of this, and be able to embrace everyone who becomes a part of the new nation.

Most of all, our emerging Native Hawaiian leader must have a true sense of Hawaiian consciousness or ‘Ike Ho‘omaupopo. This deep understanding of the importance of our ‘āina which includes the surrounding ocean and skies, and our
relationship of the kāhaka to all the physical and spiritual realms of Hawaiian consciousness is paramount.

Perhaps then, we Native Hawaiians will be ready to move forward together, to build our nation with a clear vision for the future generations that will depend on wise and intelligent choices.
ENDNOTES

1 Hawai‘i became the 50th State in 1959.

2 The Federal Department of Defense Highway that connects Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station with the Naval Base at Pearl Harbor was an extremely controversial development project that destroyed numerous sacred sites along the Hālawa Valley route.

3 White person, American, Englishman, Caucasian.

4 A committee founded by Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell to review charges against the United States for their role in the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom.

5 In 1978, the Hawai‘i State Legislature convened a Constitutional Convention. It was most noted for creating a series of Legislative Bills that established Native Hawaiian programs and rights, including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The “Con-Con” has not been reconvened since that date.

6 Kingdom of Hawai‘i, Kāne‘ohe website: http://www.pixi.com/~kingdom; and Kingdom of Hawai‘i, Wailuku, Maui website: http://www.freehawaii.org

7 For more information on the Polynesian Voyaging Society, see website http://pvs.kcc.hawaii.edu/

8 For more information on the Kahoolawe Movement, see website http://kahoolawe.hawaii.gov/

9 For more information on the Hawaiian Language Revitalization movement and ‘Aha Pūnana Leo, see website http://www.punanaloe.org/

10 For more information on the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, see website: http://www.oha.org

11 See Milliani Trask interview

12 See Dr. Richard Kekuni Blaisdell interview

13 See Pu‘uhonua Dennis Keiki “Bumpy” Kanahale interview

14 See David Keanu Sai interview

15 For more information on the Reinstated Kingdom of Hawai‘i, see website: http://hawaii-gov.net

16 For more information on the Rice v Cayetano Decision, see website http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/98-818.ZS.html

17 For the complete text of the Joint Resolution in Congress (PL 103-150) see website: http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c103:4.:/temp/~c103yQwxQu::


19 For more information about the Hawaiian Kingdom’s international legal strategy, see website: http://www.hawaiiankingdom.org/intl-proceedings.shtml

20 Ibid. p 403

21 Lit. to feed, it is a form of adoption in Hawaiian culture.
Kamehameha School for Boys had a mandatory ROTC program at that time. One of the activities of the program was a Dress Parade on Sunday where the cadets wore full dress uniform and marched in formation on the football field. It was considered quite a social event.

The “Rice Case” is a lawsuit that prevailed in the U.S. Supreme Court. It claimed racial discrimination against a “Hawaiians only” voting policy for Office of Hawaiian Affairs trustees. In 2000, the trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs chose to resign en masse. Governor Benjamin Cayetano named interim trustees, including the first non-Hawaiian to the Board. Mililani Trask lost in her subsequent bid to regain her seat on the board.

Ceded Lands are Crown Lands that were claimed by the Provisional Government after the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. These lands were subsequently transferred to the Republic of Hawaii and eventually were incorporated into the State of Hawaii under the Statehood Act in 1959. These lands are supposed to be held in trust for the Native Hawaiian people and are not supposed to be sold, traded or otherwise disposed of by the State of Hawai‘i.

Aunty Frenchy Desoto was instrumental in forming the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and served as trustee for twenty years since its beginnings. She resigned from office in 2000 along with all the trustees in response to the Federal Supreme Court determination that non-Hawaiians should be allowed to vote and run for the office of trustee.

Henry Peters was a Hawaiian Legislator who became the powerful Speaker of the House of Representatives in the early 1980's and then a trustee of the Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate during its most controversial era in the 1990's.

In 1920, the U.S. Government created the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act that set aside approximately 200,000 acres of land that was undesirable for agriculture for the rehabilitation of Native Hawaiians. Homesteaders are required to prove that they have a minimum of 50% Native Hawaiian blood.

Honored attendant, guardian, regent, keeper, administrator, warden, caretaker, pastor, reverend or preacher

Bumpy, along with a number of prisoners, was pardoned for his crimes by Governor Ben Cayetano in the last few days of his office in 2002.

The 5f clause of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920 refers to the purposes for which proceeds from the sale or income from the land may be used.

Wrong.

The Devil

Flying spirits

“Puako” earthquake occurred in October 2006

The ‘Ohana Council is predecessor of Bumpy Kanahele’s Nation of Hawai‘i sovereignty group.

Frances A. Boyle is a Professor of Law at the University of Illinois and is an advocate for Native Hawaiian rights. He has consulted with a number of Hawaiian sovereignty groups on their claims for justice.
H. William Burgess is a vocal opponent of Hawaiian entitlements. He believes that any Hawaiian entitlement, including the Admissions Policy of Kamehameha Schools which gives preference to Native Hawaiians, is unconstitutional.

For more information on Bumpy Kanahele, see his website: http://www.hawaiination.org


Quiet title refers to actions for determining legal ownership of property and can include settling boundary disputes, removing clouds on title, resolving breaks in the chain of title caused by invalid or missing prior deeds or the absence of a probate for a deceased prior owner. As of 1985, a person can also use the quiet title procedure to secure ownership of lands created by accretion. (MacKenzie, Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, & Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 1991)

To discontinue a session of parliament.

In 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani was deposed as Head of State of the Hawaiian Nation. This event is commonly referred to as the “overthrow”. These are the events leading to the establishment of a new Constitution which King Kalākaua was forced to sign. This is often referred to as the “Bayonet Constitution”. This Constitution, in effect, transferred the powers from the Sovereign to the Legislature.

These are also referred to as Crown Lands.

‘Alokio, aloio – Fee simple, fee simple title. There is no listing for “ma ke ano alokio” which is the phrase used by Keanu Sai in his interview. Lucas, Paul F., 1995, A Dictionary of Hawaiian Legal Land-Terms, Native Hawaiian Legal Corp., Honolulu, Pg 9

Kuleana malalo o ke ano alokio – Freehold less than allodial, life-estate. Ibid. p.62

Kālai‘aina is a chiefly title; to manage or direct the affairs or resources of the land. It was customary prior to the death of Kamehameha I, for the Kālai‘aina to redistribute the resources of the land upon the establishment of a new High Chief.

John Papa ‘I‘i was a noted Hawaiian Scholar and a member of the first Board of Commissioners.

Hawai‘i Escrow, Long and Melone and Old Republic are names of some of the title companies that operated in Hawai‘i in the late 1990s.
REFERENCES CITED


