

CONCERNING THIS ISSUE



O'ahu Charity School
Albumin print by Hugo Stangenwald
Ca. 1856
From *Hawaiian Mission Children's
Society Library*

It is not surprising that among the variety of activities making up the College of Education's 50th Anniversary celebration are those drawing attention to the educational legacy of Hawai'i.

How we understand and interpret the past profoundly shapes the educational decisions we make today as we face the always uncertain future, beckoning or foreboding. In whatever manner educational ideals have been expressed historically, and through whatever means such individual and collective aspirations have been pursued, our inquiry into those actual human experiences in search of their meaning shapes our humanity which we come to realize as at once both universal and highly particular in nature, enduring, and yet sculpted by time.

The initial essay, exploratory and tentative in nature, involves the reader in one of the most persistent themes in historical writing: the employment of a view of the past as an element not only in understanding the present and in venturing imaginatively into both the past and the future, but also as an effort in gaining some control over the natural and human forces constituting natural and human history.

Our only extant published volume devoted solely to the educational history of Hawai'i is Benjamin O. Wist's *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii, 1840-1940*. In the reformist tradition, the book traces the events surrounding the transplantation of the American ideal of free, universal and compulsory public education into Hawaiian soil. The book is in large measure a celebration of the realization of that American ideal in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's "one best system" as the further stage of the development of this American ideal, as now realized, cannot be done uncritically.

The second essay reflects the influence of educational histories that challenge the essentially liberal reformist orientation of works like Wist's. These so-called revisionist histories and this student essay reflect the radical ferment of the 1960s and 1970s and great uncertainties about a future drawn from liberal interpretations of the past. That times of uncertainty produce advocates of both continuities and discontinuities with our educational past comes as no surprise.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN HAWAII

The third essay addresses, from an anthropological and sociological perspective on education, another theme of central importance in the Islands' history—that of the "educator as prophet." The late Robert W. Clopton, emeritus senior professor of education at the University of Hawai'i, wrote, as a graduate student in 1939, a most intriguing and insightful historical term paper which provided the impetus to the third essay.

The fourth essay was prepared for publication in the never-completed *Encyclopedia of Hawai'i*; with the permission of the University of Hawai'i Press it is published here. As a major component of the Islands' private school sector, and as a significant and valued part of the educational tradition of Hawai'i, it is fortunate to have this essay on the Catholic schools of Hawai'i made available for publication now.

Another system of private schools, the so-called "foreign language schools," provided an important educational service historically and, to an extent, today. The fifth essay details the climate of official hostility and ignorance often surrounding this class of schools—especially the Japanese language schools.

The final two essays add quite a different historical dimension to this issue. Each essay presents an account—during periods separated by a century—of motives and impressions of women drawn to Hawai'i in the service of their own ideals and of Hawai'i's children. These essays provide a sampling of the thousands of personalities that have entered into and contributed to the Islands' educational legacy.

The Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset, expressed the view that "Man has no nature. What he has is . . . history." Our humanity is threatened on every side but the bells that toll our destiny are not the bells of a predetermined nature or history as much as they are the bells we humans place around our own necks. The school bell has been one such bell and history affords us the opportunity to examine its peal.

Ralph K. Stueber
Associate Editor



Punahou School Campus, 1863
Photograph, Anonymous
From Cooke Library Archives,
Punahou School



Mormon School, La'ie, 1890
Photograph, Anonymous
From BYU-Hawaii Archives