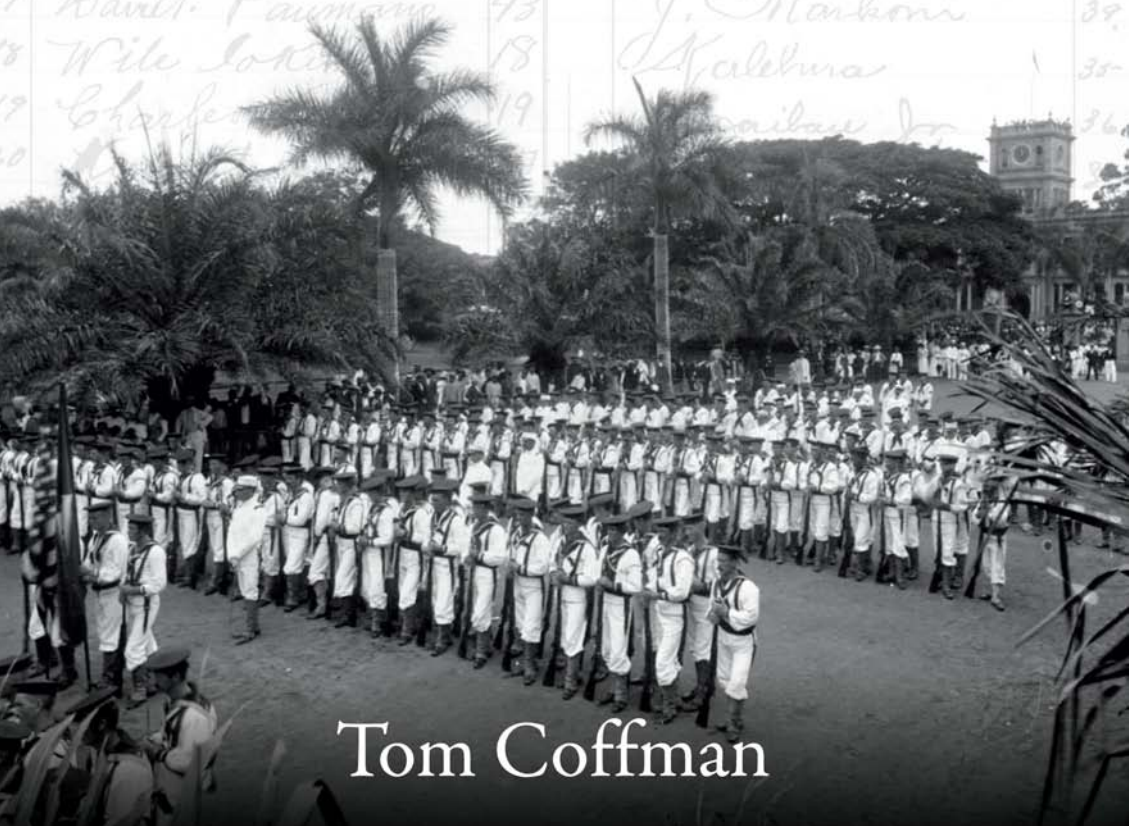


“The best single book on annexation.”—*The Nation*

NATION WITHIN

THE HISTORY OF THE
AMERICAN OCCUPATION
OF HAWAI‘I



Tom Coffman

Praise for *Nation Within*

“The best single book on annexation.”

—*The Nation*

“This book raises important and still unresolved issues about the annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States, explaining that the U.S. Senate would not approve the proposed treaty of annexation, that virtually all Native Hawaiians opposed annexation, and that the ultimate procedure used—a joint resolution passed by a simple majority of both chambers of Congress—was controversial at the time and was questioned by constitutional scholars in the decades that followed. *Nation Within* is much livelier than the usual history book, but also much more detailed, carefully researched, and thoughtful than most journalism.”

—Jon M. Van Dyke, Professor of Constitutional Law, University of Hawai‘i, author of *Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i?*

“No one has taken the time to explicitly search out the relationships between and among Americans who stole our independence with as much tenaciousness and perspicacity as *Nation Within*. Even better is [Tom Coffman’s] exemplary analysis of how the Japanese threat to the Islands was essentially created by confused and greed-inspired policies in the republic and outright deception at the U.S. State Department level. . . . But what I found most valuable about this work was his portrayal of the republic as an opportunistic masquerade of democratic ideals that swindled an entire nation of its inheritance. In no other history that I’ve seen is the cynical and manipulative nature of annexation so clearly displayed. His ironic recounting of how voting under the republic was to be constructed in such a way as to adopt all of the finest traditions of the Jim Crow South tells us all we need to know about the nature of the government that surrendered that nation of Hawai‘i to the United States. . . . [Coffman’s] analysis of Lili‘uokalani’s leadership is sensitive and perceptive. . . .

To this date I have not seen a more believable analysis of the queen's leadership, nor a more compelling analysis of the failure of President Cleveland's leadership in the end."

—Jon Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, author of *Dismembering Lahui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887*, Professor of Hawaiian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, from *The Hawaiian Journal of History*

"Written with power and clarity, *Nation Within* narrates a history of dispossession but also of complicity and resistance. It correctly situates Hawai'i's annexation within the global context of U.S. imperialism; it insightfully points out that the nation was never completely extinguished because Hawai'i continues to stir within the hearts of the Hawaiian people."

—Gary Y. Okihiro, author of *Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States*

"As a historian, Tom [Coffman] has done a tremendous job in revealing the events and circumstances that led to the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom government in 1893. More important, however, he unveils how the queen and Hawaiian subjects were politically and legally astute and were able to organize themselves, in the aftermath of the overthrow, into a formidable political force that prevented the annexation of the country by treaty. While they succeeded in preventing the U.S. Senate from ratifying two attempts to annex the country by treaty, they were unable to prevent the U.S. Congress from unilaterally enacting a joint resolution of annexation (in the heat of the Spanish-American War) that served as the basis to illegally seize and occupy the nation of Hawai'i for military purposes—an occupation that is now over a century long."

—Keanu Sai, political scientist

"A far-reaching treasure hunt for long-buried facts, revealing for the first time the full array of events and shifting international forces that led to the overthrow and annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii. . . . [N]ot to be missed."

—Herb Kawainui Kane, artist/historian, author of *Ancient Hawaii*

"A page-turner — and an eye-opener."

—*Honolulu Weekly*

"*Nation Within* is the most original and best researched account I know on the U.S. annexation of Hawaii — and the Hawaiians' opposition, then and now, to that annexation. The story is compelling for many reasons, not least the Hawaiians' trust that the American democratic process would protect their independence and their lands."

—Walter LaFeber, Cornell University, author of *The New Empire:*

An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860–1898

"All Americans who wish to understand how and why the United States annexed Hawai'i in 1898 should read this book. Tom Coffman has forever dispelled the commonly held belief that annexation was a benign and inevitable process of self-determination. Readers of *Nation Within* also will come to understand why Native Hawaiians today seek justice and reconciliation from an American government that usurped and destroyed their national sovereignty a century ago."

—Edward P. Crapol, Professor of History, College of William and Mary

"*Nation Within* explores those 'strange five years' from 1893–1898 during which a cabal of 'missionary boys' hijacked a sovereign nation, deposed its monarch, prostituted the words 'republic' and 'democracy' as badly as any Third World Communist dictator ever has, and handed over an unwilling native people to the care and keeping of the breast-beating, muscle-flexing expansionist United States. (And if you think I overwrite, then I challenge you to read the book.) . . . weep, grow angry . . ."

—Dan Boylan, Professor of History, University of Hawaii,

MidWeek

NATION WITHIN

*The History of the
American Occupation
of Hawai'i*

REVISED EDITION

Tom Coffman

Foreword by Manulani Aluli Meyer

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Foreword

MANULANI ALULI MEYER

*Truth is the highest goal,
and aloha is the greatest truth of all.*

—HALEMAKUA

Nation Within is a truth telling embedded within a Hawaiian cultural context, yet relevant to the world. History told from a different interpretation changes *everything*. Author Tom Coffman speaks of Hawaiian people as a “separate society that calls out across time to be understood in its own terms.” (page 10) What a relief to read such ideas! As if the drought ended and water returned to fields, crops and our own disposition. Finally, there is a reckoning in our collective consciousness that *Hawaii is an independent country illegally occupied by the United States of America*.

I remember receiving a phone call from my sister Maile in 1996, while I was studying abroad, about Noenoe Silva finding the 1898 Anti-Annexation Petition in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. It was a document signed by 38,000+ Hawaiians and other loyalists declaring their unwavering *aloha* for their Hawaiian Nation and beloved Queen Lili‘uokalani. They were asking for the return of their Hawaiian government, illegally overthrown by missionary-descended, business elite five years earlier. My grandfather, Noa Webster Aluli, was seventeen years old when he signed this piece of living history. The petition holds the names of all my aunties, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and great-grandparents. I recall sobbing when

I finally got to see my *kupuna* signatures shaped in beautiful flowing cursive strokes. It changed us all because *we didn't know*. By 1900, the petition was hidden in the propaganda of post-overthrown Hawaii and never mentioned in history texts or tourist summaries.

We were taught that Hawaiians wanted and asked for annexation, but, as Tom Coffman explains, "Their petitions said the native people had not been consulted on the proposed dissolution of their nation. Nor was the Republic of Hawaii a republic, but rather a tyranny of the many by the few, bolstered by the nearly continuous presence of U.S. warships." (page 2) Almost every Hawaiian alive during that time put their signature to paper to tell the American people and government they *did not* want annexation. My great-grandmother's sister, Aima Nawahi, was the wife of Joseph Nawahi. Both worked in their respective chapters of *Hui Aloha Aina* to facilitate the Anti-Annexation Petition throughout the islands—by canoe, by mule, by horse, by foot, by word of mouth. Reading about their involvement, their passion, their commitment to the love of land and people has strengthened our family.

This *new* knowledge in *Nation Within* that you are about to read is unknown to most of America and still not taught at mainstream schools in Hawaii. A good historian tells a story in a cultural *context*, and, when this occurs, our *seeing* of the *content* has the opportunity to mature. Here is a rare chance for growth!

The truth then becomes evident: Hawaiians have survived, and the essence of our knowing has taught me many things, including that there is a Hawaiian nation-within and we thrive beyond a tourist and military economy. We have reestablished the role of *aloha* in the development of *intelligence* and thus our sustainability with people and land. *Change is here*. The new edition of this book is proof. *Nation Within* is a piece of the larger puzzle situated within an even larger movement that encourages self-reflection and understanding so we can get along better. It is summarized best by *kumu hula* Olana Kaipo Ai: *Aloha is the intelligence with which we meet life*.

I could not turn back the time for the political change, but there is still time to save our heritage. You must remember never cease to act because you fear you may fail. The way to lose any earthly kingdom is to be too inflexible, intolerant, and prejudicial. Another way is to be too flexible, tolerant of too many wrongs, and without judgment at all. It is a razor's edge. It is the width of a blade of pili grass. To gain the kingdom of heaven is to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen, and to know the unknowable—that is Aloha. (QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI)

If *aloha* is our intelligence, what does an intelligence of compassion look like? And what of truth? As a Native Hawaiian, I have come to understand there is relative truth and absolute truth. The contents of this book are indeed relative, but the energy that brought them forth is absolute. The ideas contained within this mosaic of stories and events are of high impact. They bring wisdom and animating purpose that helps me write from a place of forgiveness and compassion. Authors such as Tom Coffman affirm the *kuleana* of my family. The story of Hawaii's annexation is now being offered to a wider audience, who may be ready to learn about a place and people shaped by *aloha*. It is no coincidence that the current president, Barack Obama, came from this place. The role of *aloha* is clear and instructive when he said to the world: *Our differences define us, they do not divide us.*

Liberating truth telling will always help humanity evolve.

Mau ke aloha no Hawaii.

Love always for Hawaii.

Dr. Manulani Aluli Meyer

Alaelama, Hilo One

Moku O Keawe

February 20, 2009

Introduction

When an understanding of history is trampled in the street, its best chance for survival may be in the shelter of odd doorways. Places like the Tusitala Book Store in Kailua, O'ahu, become important, because Tusitala tries to keep the dust level down, and it deals in old and out-of-print books. *The Transformation of Hawaii* survived on the shelf of the Tusitala Store, not to quickly set the record straight—which would be too simple—but to give clues about the distortion of the history of Hawai'i.

The first paragraph gets directly to the book's work. The Hawaiian Islands were annexed to the United States "not by purchase, nor by conquest...(but) *by the vote of the Hawaiian people, who offered them to us as a gift.*" The writer's name is Belle M. Brain, who, according to the book's spine, wrote *Stories of Missions*. The copyright date is startling, because the U.S. Congress voted to annex Hawai'i in July 1898 and *Transformation* came out in September, at a time when typesetting was slow and distance mattered.

And now Belle's book comes back around after a century, and its pages open to suggest why so little is known about the past. For example (I will be brief), the period during which 90 percent of the Hawaiian people died is a period of remarkable progress, while in their pre-Western condition it would be "hard to conceive of a more depraved race of beings." Problems of "corruption and misrule" by the Hawaiian monarchs led to the overthrow of the native government. Bumps lay in the road, but when annexation occurred, the enthusiasm of the Hawaiians "knew no bounds."

There is a certain isolation that results from going back to the Tusitala Book Store for a second time, the second day warmer than the first, in the dust, struggling to decide whether Belle's small volume is now worth forty-five dollars. But for the Hawaiians there was a certain isolation in having their country taken, and then being told it was a lovely gift.

WHEN I ARRIVED IN HAWAI'I in 1965, the effective definition of history had been reduced to a few years. December 7, 1941, was practically the beginning of time, and anything that might have happened before that was prehistory. Hawai'i had finally been accepted as a state in 1959, and justice had been done. From the stylebook of the morning newspaper, disconcertingly named *The Honolulu Advertiser*, where I had my first reporting job, I learned that the word statehood was always to be capitalized. The year 1965 was the sixth year of Statehood. I am acutely aware only now that I began writing a book in 1970 by saying (paragraph one) that the year 1970 was the eleventh year of Statehood, and Hawai'i "was still young."

Many years passed before I realized that for Native Hawaiians to survive as a people, they needed a definition of time that spanned something more than eleven years. The demand for a changed understanding of time was always implicit in what became known as the Hawaiian Movement or the Hawaiian Renaissance, because Hawaiians so systematically turned to the past whenever the subject of Hawaiian life was glimpsed. Indeed they were often critiqued for looking back, which in the self-confident vocabulary of America in the 1960s was akin to being backward-looking.

While this past to which a certain minority of Hawaiians looked may have lacked definition, it inescapably had something to do with the events that Belle M. Brain had helped cover up. Slowly, through many experiences in dusty places, we have been compelled as a society to deal with the essential question of Hawai'i's past, which is the question of what happened to the Hawaiian people. What really happened? Like good journalism, good history is supposed to be balanced and tell both sides of the story. But what if history is mute, and the essence of the story is hidden? What if there is a past, but there is no satisfactory definition of history?

THROUGH THE WIDELY SCATTERED activities of a relatively small number of individuals, I witnessed fragments of the resurgence of Hawaiian life. One of these individuals particularly excelled—both in his writing and in his brilliant conversation—at making the issue of time and history explicit. His name was John Dominis Holt. John Holt was both charming and brainy, and the doors of American society were open to him at many levels, but he chose to embrace his fellow Hawaiians and the Hawaiian past. He dared to grieve aloud. He paid tribute to the queen, raged, and laughed darkly. He went back and back. He studied the archives of Belle Brain's primary informants, the descendants of the missionaries, and he despised them for their sanctimony, and for their assault on the dignity of the Hawaiians.

Dreading the tragedy he would find, he turned to the even more distant past—to the Hawaiians' first contact with the West. He then began to look through the window of contact at the people and events of pre-Western Hawai'i. He memorized the names and genealogies of chiefs and priests, and their ties to migrations, districts of islands, and wars of conquest. He conjured visions of their beings, of their faces, and even of their deaths. Through a process of torment, he became unashamed to be Hawaiian.

"He Hawai'i Au"—I first heard those words from John, which I now see on the T-shirts of Hawaiian nationalists. "I am Hawaiian."

John Holt's quest continued over many years, when he could have more easily come to rest, when people from around the country and around the Pacific Ocean approached him in his house on the hillside as a savant. Yet he was never content to be comfortable. He insisted that we free ourselves from the hodgepodge of seeing events in isolation. He posed as an alternative the development of chronologies and the development of cultural context. He believed that when Hawaiians came to be understood within the progression of time, they would be treated as a real people again.

AS WITH THE HAWAIIANS, so it is with Hawai'i's story. Where the American definition of Hawai'i is of a pleasant and quaint place, an exploration of Hawai'i as a suppressed nation is disturbing but epic. Where people in the twentieth century persistently have written little tales of the Islands, the story of Hawai'i as a nation is a turbulent *mo'olelo*.

Those people, John in particular, who went against convention and generated an alternative viewpoint, also generated a new set of possibilities. These new possibilities begin with taking the Hawaiian nation seriously, and they lead to a serious reexamination of America's history in the Pacific.

Tom Coffman

Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i, 1998

A NOTE ON THE SECOND EDITION

I am as pleased as any writer with a second edition and grateful to my new publisher, Arnold Kotler, for his commitment and interest.

I am compelled to add that the continued relevance of this book reflects a far-reaching political, moral and intellectual failure of the United States to recognize and deal with its takeover of Hawai'i.

In the book's subtitle, the word *Annexation* has been replaced by the word *Occupation*, referring to America's occupation of Hawai'i. Where annexation connotes legality by mutual agreement, the act was not mutual and therefore not legal. Since by definition of international law there was no annexation, we are left then with the word *occupation*.

In making this change, I have embraced the logical conclusion of my research into the events of 1893 to 1898 in Honolulu and Washington, D.C. I am prompted to take this step by a growing body of historical work by a new generation of Native Hawaiian scholars. Dr. Keanu Sai writes, "The challenge for ... the fields of political science, history, and law is to distinguish between the rule of law and the politics of power." In the history of Hawai'i, the might of the United States does not make it right.

In the years between the 1993 Apology Resolution (by the U.S. Congress to the Hawaiian people) and 2000, the Democratic Party fumbled away its opportunity to set in motion a process of negotiation between the United States government and the submerged nation of Hawai'i. Thereafter, the more nakedly imperial Republicans

succeeded in quashing the debate. The administration of a President who led the United States to occupy Iraq also, by some of the same impulses, led the United States away from examining its past as it pertains to the status of Hawai'i.

Dear President Obama of Hawai'i, let us go back and start over. With truth might come some form of reconciliation. And with it, the once bright promise of Hawai'i would be renewed.

Tom Coffman

Hawai'i, 2009

This book is dedicated to the person who sat up late and took the risks, Lois Lee, a sensational mate and a font of provocative ideas and informed opinions. All of that and laughter too.

Nation Within

A False Spring

Having survived the brutal cold of Washington's winter, the Hawaiian delegation welcomed spring. Having survived yet another campaign to annex their homeland to America, they took a brief moment to remark cheerfully on the survival of Hawai'i as an independent nation. Perhaps the moment for America to take over Hawai'i had come and gone, and perhaps the Hawaiians could now get their country back.

The queen of Hawai'i had been living in a hotel in Washington during most of 1897, and the delegates of the native political societies had arrived toward the end of the year, in the dead of winter, to support her with the most ambitious of their many petitions. The delegation had come from mass rallies in Hawai'i against annexation that had been attended by thousands of Hawaiians, who now were nearly one quarter of the earth's surface away. At one of the rallies against annexation, a speaker had likened the Kingdom of Hawai'i to a house, which had been built by the great king, Kamehameha. A handful of foreigners had taken over the house, and they had given the Hawaiians a *lei* stand in return, where the Hawaiians were expected to reside and sell flowers.

Would the Hawaiians live in the *lei* stand? 'A'ole, the crowd had shouted back. No, never.¹

When the delegates to Washington closed their eyes they could remember the faces, the families, and the petitions passing from hand to hand for people to sign their names. As a result of the petition drive, the Hawaiian delegation had arrived in Washington with thirty-eight thousand signatures protesting America's proposed annexation of their country, and they were eager to call the petitions

to the attention of influential Americans. Considering that only forty thousand or so Hawaiians survived, it was surely true, as their opponents said, that some of the signatures were duplicates, and some were the names of children, and perhaps some were names of the dead. But the petitions nonetheless were a virtual census of the Hawaiian nation, as Hawaiians still called themselves, and the petitions said eloquently that in spite of everything that had happened, they wanted to be what they had been, a nation in the world system of nations.²

Culturally it was very Hawaiian to recite stories of the past, and their desire to survive led them to recite the story of the preceding five years over and over. Americans seemed to have short memories, and so the Hawaiian delegates had to constantly remind people that their government had been taken over by a handful of *haole* men, many of them descended from American missionaries. The disloyal acts of this Committee of Annexation had been prompted by the United States minister to Hawai'i, and the committee had thereafter been shielded by the might of the United States navy. At many points along the twisting five-year path, the Hawaiians had challenged the committee's resulting Provisional Government—and challenged America—to open the question of annexation to a democratic vote, but their appeal had always been refused.

As their petitions said, the native people had not been consulted on the proposed dissolution of their nation. Nor was the Republic of Hawaii a republic, but rather a tyranny of the many by the few, bolstered by the nearly continuous presence of U.S. warships. Now, through the draft treaty of annexation, this small group of *haole* was trying to turn the land, sovereignty, and prospective naval bases of the nation of Hawai'i over to the United States. There was a name for such a transaction, former President Grover Cleveland had said, but he never wrote down what it was.

To describe the situation in words that Americans might understand, the queen of Hawai'i was to write that America surely would not want to become "a colonizer and a land-grabber." If the American government was to follow the British, French, and Germans into colonialism, was this agreeable to the American people? While no doubt Americans could rival the Europeans in the sad business of

conquest, was this how an idealistic nation wanted to be known in the world? Would a nation that originated from an anticolonial revolution now want to be known for its colonization of others?

Although the queen was one of many Hawaiians who steadfastly resisted annexation, naturally it was she whose name would be remembered, Lili'uokalani. In the years following the overthrow, Lili'uokalani had gone from exalted sovereign to prisoner to parolee. When she left Hawai'i, she told the president of the white government that she was going to visit a sick relative, but after circulating among acquaintances in Boston long enough to dignify her story, she had taken a night train to Washington, D.C., and there she had tried to regain the sovereignty of her nation. In a short time she had reached a remarkable number of people, many of them highly placed in the world, just as she was. Given the racial stereotypes that sometimes confronted her in the press, and given that much of the globe had descended into the organized violence of colonial takeovers, there was a kind of mad civility to the events that engaged her.

Masons were among the many groups of people who came to see her. One day a hundred Masons from Philadelphia came calling. They sang her song, *Aloha 'Oe*, which spoke of one fond embrace before departing. Lili'uokalani played the piano superbly, and when Masons wanted to sing their national anthem, she obliged them by playing the accompaniment, *O Say Can You See?* She wrote in her diary that all were filled with good tidings for her. Grover Cleveland, the twenty-fourth president of the United States, had welcomed her warmly, and Mrs. Cleveland had honored her with a reception at the White House. Now, she wondered, with America in a more nationalistic mood, would the twenty-fifth president of the United States likewise entertain her, and entertain her thoughts as well?

Among the Hawaiian delegation who joined her, the two most prominent figures were James K. Kaulia and David Kalauokalani. James Kaulia was the leader of Hui Aloha 'Āina, which translates loosely as the Hawaiian Patriotic League and more literally as the gathering of people who love the land. Hui Aloha 'Āina was a mass protest organization that had sprung up to support traditional rule against "a handful of foreign adventurers," as one of their earlier

petitions had phrased it. David Kalauokalani was president of Hui Kālaiʻāina, which had started as something closer to a conventional political party, organized to reassert native influence in the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi.

They had arrived in Washington fearing the U.S. Senate's imminent approval of the annexation treaty. They had been confronted by wild claims that the Japanese were incrementally invading Hawaiʻi, so they had to work particularly hard to remind people that the problem was not the Japanese, but the small handful of white annexationists who had taken over their government. By spring, they sensed they had been effective. If the battle was far from over, it was encouraging that the treaty of annexation as drafted had been stalled again—perhaps indefinitely. News traveled back and forth to Hawaiʻi by letter, and the letters of the delegates made their way into the native language press. They made the point that even though foreigners sat in their house of government, Hawaiʻi was still an independent country. It seemed as if Hawaiians might gain time, and what they had most needed from the moment of the first Western contact was time to adapt to the sweeping changes imposed by the outside world. With time, they might cope with the onslaught and regain control of their house.

A FEW BLOCKS AWAY, the annexation commissioners of the Republic were variously ignoring, sidestepping, or dashing off to counter the protests of the Hawaiians, in the interest of focusing their own influential American friends on a larger picture. The best-known of the small group, Lorrin Thurston, was still thought of by some Americans in connection with the phrase “stolen kingdom,” which had become widely used in the debate over annexation during 1893. Thurston was inclined to be argumentative when such accusations arose, but his colleagues told him not to dwell on what had happened five years ago, and to talk instead about what could happen now, in 1898, and the exciting role that Hawaiʻi could play in a world that seemed to be changing at a dazzling pace.

To gain support for annexation, Thurston and his colleagues had initially attempted to elicit America's traditional antagonism for the British, but the British had proven to be insufficiently antagonistic.

They were, in fact, busy cultivating an alliance with the Americans. Thereafter the little white group had turned to the Japanese. In response, the U.S. secretary of state had confessed that problems with Japan were unknown to him, but he had listened intently. With nurturing, the phobia of Japan had gone a long way toward diverting America's attention from the Hawaiians, but even the supposed menace of Japan had not resulted in an "aye" vote on annexation.

Now, in the springtime of what would be a momentous year, the question of Hawai'i was being pushed aside, as Americans turned to the brutality of the Spanish colonialists in Cuba. The phrase, "our Cuban brothers," circulated through the ever-changing American vocabulary. The ambassador of the *haole* government of Hawai'i wrote gloomily to Honolulu that annexation was nowhere in sight.

TO EXPLORE HAWAI'I'S STORY more deeply, it is useful to begin with the fact that there had been a movement of long standing in Honolulu to bind Hawai'i and America together, and a movement of long standing in Washington with a comparable goal. The members of the little group in Honolulu wanted to gain stability and ease their own fears, while those in Washington wanted to capitalize on instability and strike fear in others. The goals of the American annexationists had to do with the United States evolving into a great power, stretching across oceanic frontiers, and by the spring of 1898 they had come to know precisely what they wanted to do. They had described their plans in great detail, but in the heat of the moment they talked most vociferously about their indignation with the behavior of the Spanish in Cuba, and even about their indignation with the growing number of immigrant Japanese field workers in Hawai'i. As this small circle of men moved America ever closer toward the eating of foreign lands, euphemisms were devised that described distant islands not as nations but as fruit. Misleading semantics are an important part of delusion. Hawai'i was no longer a country in their recitations, but variously a pear, a peach, or an apple, ripe for the plucking.

Many historians, including both admirers and detractors, have described this circle of aggressive expansionists as conspirators, or as members of a cabal. Objectively, they were men with a plan, of which Hawai'i was the most preliminary part. How Hawai'i was to

be taken was a detail to be worked out, but the existence of a plan would prove to be pivotal, even if it was not widely held, because the plan would serve as a guide to action in an atmosphere of chaos.

The gist of the plan had evolved from the events of the preceding quarter-century. The specifics of the plan were devised at the Metropolitan Club in downtown Washington, D.C. Among the members of the circle who met at the Metropolitan Club in the early months of 1898, one stood out for his tenacity, daring, and high spirits. And much to the point of the story, no one in Hawai'i was ever to grasp his role, and very few people outside Hawai'i were ever to care about what he was doing at the Metropolitan Club.

Americans know a great deal about Theodore Roosevelt in his subsequent capacity as a progressive president, an enemy of corruption, and a savior of forests. They know about his childhood asthma, and about his setting the bullies of his boyhood straight. But virtually nothing is known about the governmental position Theodore Roosevelt held in 1898, why he had secured it, and what happened to Hawai'i in the process.

While Queen Lili'uokalani was writing her final appeal to the conscience of America's people, Roosevelt was struggling with the tantalizing possibility of a little war. "I should welcome any war," he said, "for I think this country needs one." He was frustrated by the failure of the annexation treaty, complaining that his fellow Americans had a "queer lack of imperial instinct." But while others polarized over little issues, Roosevelt remained focused on big issues and, in his mind's eye, something changed. He announced to the president that if war should come he would be obligated to resign his desk job and go off with the troops. His superior, Secretary of the Navy John D. Long, said Roosevelt was acting like a fool. Then he paused, as if he could hear his words rattling through the corridor. He remarked how absurd he would sound if, by some turn of fortune, his tiresome underling should "strike a very high mark."

CHAPTER TWO

Retrieving History

An excruciating process of retrieving pertinent fragments of its history occurred in Hawai'i during the years leading up to January 1993, which was observed as the hundredth anniversary of the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. The concept of native government was discussed seriously by a broad spectrum of the community, probably for the first time in the twentieth century. In this discussion, the kings and queens of Hawai'i became something more than conversation pieces, and 'Iolani Palace, which is at the center of Honolulu, was something more than an oddity—"the only royal palace in America," as visitors are told.

By wrestling with the cultural definition of time, the thought began to occur to a widening circle of people that the culture imposed by the West had come to be mistaken for timeless reality. In this new (or retrieved) mode of thinking, people began to see that the monarchy (which had been so dutifully "overthrown") had originated from ancient Hawai'i, and that it was the institution through which Native Hawaiians had attempted to maintain control of their homeland. It further dawned on a certain number of people that the colonizing culture had defined most of the written, as opposed to oral, history of Hawai'i, and that this history typically reduced Hawai'i's total human history to a relatively few years, the focus of which was narrow and parochial. A crushing process of Westernization, and a concomitant devaluing of the indigenous experience, had thereby defined the shape and weight of Hawai'i's story, until America's takeover of "the Islands" was transformed into a set of local tales. And confined by this small,

languid paradise, where breezes blow and palm trees sway, where the natives may be heard playing music far into the night, writers have turned again and again to the actions of a handful of willful people, within several square blocks of Honolulu, during the four days culminating on January 17, 1893.

QUEEN LILI'UOKALANI WAS FIFTY-FOUR years old. She had traveled the world. She dressed on occasion in the finest gowns of Europe, spoke three languages, and wrote prolifically. She said it was as natural for her to compose music as to breathe. She was a devout practitioner of Christianity, which had been the state religion of the Kingdom of Hawai'i since 1824. She was in her second year as queen. She was a widow. Her brother was dead. Her young siblings from childhood were long since dead, and all the Kamehameha monarchs with whom she had attended the Chief's Children's School were dead. Her adoptive sister, Bernice Pauahi, was dead.

Nonetheless Lili'uokalani was a person of considerable energy who refused to be overwhelmed by the tragedies she had experienced. She was besieged by petitions from the native people seeking a new constitution to strengthen indigenous rule through her, the queen, as their traditional ruler, and through a reassertion of influence in the Kingdom's Legislature proportionate to their numbers. The queen's desire to proclaim a new constitution in response to the native petitions became known, and the white annexationists in the port town of Honolulu set out to crush her. The cabal of annexationists in Hawai'i had been to Washington to secure the blessing of the American annexationists, and the American ambassador in Hawai'i was implacably hostile toward the continuation of a Hawaiian government. A ship filled with American marines was in the harbor, armed with revolvers, rifles, machine guns, and enough cannon to level the little city. The once-great armies of the Hawaiians, from the time of Lili'uokalani's great-great-grandfather, no longer existed. Although a few Hawaiians were armed and prepared to fight, they were hopelessly outgunned and outnumbered. Largely as a result of introduced disease, the Hawaiian population was one-tenth of what it had been, perhaps even a twentieth.

The American ambassador called the marines from the ship even before the leaders of the revolt were ready to announce their coup, forcing the hand of the missionary descendants. The marines streamed off the ship under the pretext of restoring order and protecting American lives. Above the harbor they found people strolling in the streets. Parties were starting. The troops were mistaken by passersby for another foreign contingent taking exercise, but the queen knew the ominous meaning of their arrival. She looked from the balcony of her palace and tried to decide what to do.

LILI'UOKALANI WAS THE EIGHTH MONARCH of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, all of whom had traced their ancestry to the powerful chiefs of Hawai'i Island. In a recounting of generational time, the historian Samuel Kamakau had written that for the first twenty-eight generations "no man was made chief over another," and that only when people became more numerous was government by chiefs established. In these early steps of forming governments, the chief was known for working alongside the people and sharing their fate.

As the island population grew, a second and more fierce tradition of chiefly power was imported by Tahitian voyagers, who propounded the necessity of fierce chiefs who ruled from above. Within a few generations a chief emerged from Hawai'i Island who personified this idea. His name was Kalaunui'ōhua, and he succeeded in organizing all the district chiefs of Hawai'i Island into a war party. As they were ready to sail he encountered a strange, gray-haired woman. He asked her to prophesy, "What lies ahead?" She gave a simple answer, "*Maika'i ka ho'omaka 'ana 'ino ka pau 'ana*. Good in the beginning, bad in the end."

Kalaunui sailed nonetheless. He invaded the islands of Maui, Moloka'i, and O'ahu, only to flounder on the shores of Kaua'i, where he was held captive for a long while, until the Kauaians deemed it fit to send him home. Although things had gone "bad in the end," Kalaunui had demonstrated the power of the fast-moving invader who strikes from the sea. He had shown that invading armies could move more quickly in their fleets of canoes than defending armies could move on land. The invaders could nearly always make a landing, protect their line of retreat, and, if things did not go well in battle, make a run for their canoes.

As the chiefs became more powerful, they moved from district to district and island to island, and on their journeys they encountered worlds within worlds. Each bay, stream, valley, ridge, and peak was perceived as different and special, and each had a story. Winds of a particular valley, a certain mammoth stone in a wall, rains, tides, and waves, all were the subjects of infinitely varied stories. A goddess had been here and cast a spell and made love with a certain person. A great chief had shown compassion to a certain person. A beautiful girl had died here but was brought back to life by an owl, which watched over her. A man lived on the point of land by the sea, and at sundown he would dive into the water and swim to the reef, until one evening a boy saw in the dimming light that the man was actually half-shark.

THANKS PARTLY TO PHOTOGRAPHY, Lili'uokalani's image is of a monarch seated on a throne, but she was also a chief who followed ancient tradition by traveling from district to district. When she traveled among the Hawaiian people she was greeted with *aloha nui*, but Westerners were always critiquing her. A writer of history, Albertine Loomis, said that while Lili'uokalani had been blessed with the acquaintance of Britain's Queen Victoria, she did not seem to understand that in England the question of governmental authority had been settled in Parliament's favor. Implicit in this writer's thinking was the separation of a native figure from the land that gave her life meaning. Likewise implicit was the reduction of an epic world to a quaint little place on the map of the West.

While Lili'uokalani appeared to begin her memoir in good Western fashion with a chapter entitled *A Sketch of My Childhood*, she actually launched a Polynesian discussion of her genealogy. She dwelled on her great-great-grandfather, Keaweaheulu, who connected her across generations to the origins of the Hawaiian nation. While this sort of recitation may cause the minds of today's readers to shut down, the genealogies of the Hawaiians provide a glimpse of a highly complex, separate society that calls out across time to be understood in its own terms.

Lili'uokalani knew as a Hawaiian what scientific investigation lately has confirmed, that her ancestors played an extraordinary role in the exploration and settlement of the planet. They departed from

Southeast Asia perhaps as early as six thousand years ago,¹ migrating slowly across the southern and far western regions of the Pacific, then pausing in several groups of islands—Fiji, Tonga, and Sāmoa—that formed a triangle. Here they developed a distinctive language and culture. They became Polynesian. Where metal was fundamental to the development of continental people (the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, etc.), the island environment contained no metal. Accordingly, the islanders of Polynesia were severely limited in their potential to devise machines, develop precision instruments, cut, drill, and carve holes. Nonetheless they mastered the design, construction, sailing, and navigating of great double-hulled craft, which they sailed across unimaginably long distances to colonize the widely separated islands of the largest body of water on earth.

From Western Polynesia, they voyaged into the prevailing trade winds until they reached Tahiti, Bora Bora, Raiatea, the Marquesas, and the Tuamotos, which today are known as Eastern Polynesia. From there they voyaged east to Rapa Nui (Easter Island, as it was renamed by the explorer James Cook); southwest all the way back to Aotearoa (New Zealand); and north—across immense spans of open ocean, with no other islands in sight—to a grouping of fabulous islands that lay in an irregular line running from northwest to southeast, like an oceanic net designed to attract the navigator's searching eye.

The vast amount that is known today about the evolution of the Hawaiian settlements is an overlapping combination of archaeology and oral history. The coastal areas were rich in fish and shellfish. The wet valleys readily grew taro. Where the first round of archaeology in Hawai'i suggested a settlement that was about a thousand years old, this finding was contradicted by chants written down in Lili'uokalani's time describing a hundred generations of human experience, suggesting a settlement of Hawai'i that was nearly two thousand years old. As the digging and analysis have continued, the scientific view has gone to ever-earlier dates, so scientists now typically assign the time of settlement to around A.D. 300. Some dates, while disputed, are from the time of Christ.

The initial population grew slowly during the first eight hundred or so years of settlement. Then, around A.D. 1100, the population began to climb steeply upward. People moved from the coastal

lowlands into the uplands. They migrated from the wet windward sides of the islands to the drier leeward sides. The hydrology systems of the taro fields became increasingly complex, extending further and further up the valleys and further away from the streams and rivers. Enormous offshore ponds were built for the culture of fish, to complement the protein supplies from the streams, the reefs, and the open ocean. According to Kamakau, the construction of a large fishpond required the labor of ten thousand men.

Family shrines, and the religious shrines of fishermen and farmers, now functioned within a system of ever-larger temples. Like the fishponds, the building of the temples required the work of large numbers of people, the stockpiling of food to feed them, and powerful chiefs to rule over them. People today can readily study this ancient society, and imagine what life might have been like, because all of these structures—the walls of the agricultural system, the fishponds, the platforms of the temples, and the places of refuge—were made of stone. The connections of the past were secure, and everywhere Lili'uokalani was reminded of the stream of humanity that had gone before her in the days of old.

By the time Lili'uokalani reached adulthood, the landscape was changing rapidly as a result of the spread of sugar plantations. Many of the agricultural and aquacultural systems had fallen into disuse, and the indigenous population had shrunk to what it had been roughly eight centuries previously, before its period of phenomenal growth. Lili'uokalani herself knew all too well about the cataclysmic spread of disease. When she was ten, three of the children from the royal families had died of measles in quick succession. The last was her little sister, Kaiminaauao. "This sad event made a great impression upon my younger days," she wrote, "for these relatives and companions of my youth died and were buried on the same day, the coffin of the last-named resting on that of the others."

Lili'uokalani was sensitive to the accusation that the chiefs were well off at the expense of their retainers. She said anyone who had seen Hawai'i even fifty years earlier would know she spoke the truth, citing her biological father Kapa'akea as a shining example. "... my father was surrounded by hundreds of his own people," she was to write, "all of whom looked to him, and never in vain, for sustenance."

Although the population was greatly reduced, enough people were left for her to describe her reception in the countryside as hearty and enthusiastic. Since the time of James Cook, Hawai'i had survived and adapted. It was the object of enormous fascination, particularly in Europe and also in East Asia and North America. It had been accepted by the most powerful nations on Earth as a modern nation, and that alone was reason for optimism about its future.

Lili'uokalani was one among intricate circles of learned Hawaiians who were determined that their history and culture would survive. Accordingly, they committed enormous quantities of information from the collective memory of their oral culture to paper. Lili'uokalani herself was to translate the creation chant known as the *Kumulipo*, perhaps the most seminal of all Hawaiian stories. Her brother, Kalākaua, directed the writing of a long volume of "myths and legends." While the name contributes to the sense that the past is only vaguely defined, the stories themselves were told with great specificity. Around the same time, a Swedish immigrant, Abraham Fornander, wrote a voluminous summary titled *An Account of the Polynesian Race*. Fornander was married to a Hawaiian woman and learned how to speak, write, and read Hawaiian. His principal informants were a circle of young Hawaiian scholars trained at Lahainaluna School on Maui. Among them, Samuel Kamakau was the most brilliant and wrote the most prolifically and incisively about the traditions of the Polynesian chieftdom as it developed in the competing kingdoms that formed the net that originally snagged the navigators—Kaua'i far to the west, O'ahu and Maui in the inner cluster, and giant Hawai'i to the southeast.

To the uninitiated, this Hawaiian epic may have sounded unreal, particularly when it was separated from the artistry and conviction of the storyteller, but in fact it reflected a brilliant culture that differed fundamentally from the Western culture that came to envelope it. As archaeology has progressed, and as Polynesian voyaging has been replicated in the present day, scholars of all types the world over have come to accept that there was, indeed, a period of intense voyaging across the north-south barriers of wind and equatorial calm, at a time when Western man hovered near his shore. People from not only the Marquesas and Tahiti, but a wide variety of islands

participated. The heroes of the voyages founded the lines of the Hawaiian chiefs. Kalākaua wrote of “the old Ulu and Nanaulu line” of Windward O’ahu, from whom infinitely storied generations of chiefs descended. Fornander wrote down the genealogical trees of the original settlers, stretching from generation to generation across millennia, to the times in which he lived. As a result of such genealogies, there are people in Hawai’i today who can trace their family trees back as far as two thousand years.

TO IMAGINE A HAWAIIAN CHIEF who traveled the districts is one thing, but to think about Theodore Roosevelt in connection with the Hawaiian Islands is another. It requires thinking about the histories of America and Hawai’i as interrelated. It further requires understanding Theodore Roosevelt not as a caricatured figure riding up a distant hill, but as a political leader of enormous importance whose most far-reaching achievements were not about forests or parks, but about projecting American power into distant seas. His achievements, which define America to this day, had to do with making the United States a first-rate naval power, an aggressively expansionist power, and finally a global power. In extraordinary ways, he summarized his age. On the surface, he was the boisterous American politician, but underneath he was no less cunning or autocratic than a Hawaiian chief in the days of epic warfare.

He was the seventh generation of Roosevelts born within the same few square blocks of Manhattan Island, which made him an islander of a sort. By the time he wrote his autobiography, he would recite his genealogy—describing a stream of Dutch immigrants who intermarried with English, Irish, Scotch, and German immigrants. His Roosevelt grandfather, who continued to speak Dutch at the family table, achieved considerable success as a merchant, and the Roosevelts were well on their way to becoming prominent New Yorkers, if not yet prominent Americans.

Theodore’s father was an expansive variation on the Roosevelts of Manhattan. In 1850, he heard a story about a plantation in Georgia called Bulloch Hall. He went south, where he met a girl named Mittie, then fifteen years old. When the historian David McCullough dug into Mittie’s story, he began to think she was Margaret

Mitchell's inspiration for the character Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*. Mittie was full of talk and full of life, a seemingly stereotypical belle of the Old South. At eighteen she married Theodore Sr. and moved to Manhattan, then moved her mother with her. With a Southerner wife, Theodore Sr. was aghast at the prospect of war between the North and South. He spoke at street rallies in hope of forestalling the war. When it came, he resorted to a common practice of the wealthy, employing a man to fight in his place, determined that his hands not personally be touched with the blood of Mittie's kinsmen.

Theodore Jr. was born in 1858, three years before the war began. As a child of seven, he looked out from the second floor of the family's New York brownstone house at a horse-drawn coffin passing in the crowded street. Lincoln was dead. A photograph of the funeral procession survives that was taken from street level. It shows the tiny figure of Theodore at the window with his brother Elliott, who would grow up to have a daughter named Eleanor Roosevelt.

Theodore was fixated on the powerful personalities of his parents. Even though his father had not fought in the war, he was, in young Theodore's eyes, a combination of strength and gentleness, courage and tenderness. The senior Roosevelt carried Teddy through the terror of nights when he struggled to survive his asthma attacks. "I could breathe," he would write, "I could sleep, when he held me in his arms." The senior Roosevelt was more interested in charity than business. He helped found an orthopedic hospital and a charitable society for needy children. He was active in the Young Men's Christian Association. He was alarmed by the poverty resulting from the Civil War. He developed a plan through which soldiers could voluntarily allot part of their pay to their families back home. He went to Washington, talked with Lincoln, lobbied the legislation through Congress, then rode from camp to camp urging men to make the allotments.

He was a kindly face in an austere family. Teddy's sister remarked how difficult her Southern mother's life must have been. "... I should hate to have married into them at that time unless I had been one with them in thought. They think they are just, but they are hard in a way." Writers consistently reach for theories of psychology to

