

# THE RACE ISSUE IN HAWAII

A Review of the Past and Present  
by Lorrin A. Thurston

The raising of the race issue in Hawaii, meaning thereby the attempt to excite the prejudices of the native Hawaiians against the "haoles" (white men) for political purposes, is a comparatively new thing.

My memory and intimate connection with things political in Hawaii goes back for approximately thirty years. I do not remember that the policy of voting on race lines was advocated, except in a few isolated cases, until about the time of and just after annexation, when it was promoted with extreme effectiveness, for a brief period, by those who had opposed annexation, and who formed what was called the "Home Rule Party."

The two most prominent advocates of the policy of "haua ka ihi" (literally, "look at the skin") were R. W. Wilcox and James Kauia, the first a half-caste, and the latter a pure Hawaiian.

At the first election after Hawaii became a Territory, in 1900, the most spectacular among the Hawaiian politicians was R. W. Wilcox, a schoolmate of mine, by the way, with whom I maintained pleasant personal relations up to the time of his death.

"Down the Swine" and "Kill the Snakes."

Mr. Wilcox's style of oratory was fervid and passionate. He loved upon the emotions of his native hearers, bending them to his will in a remarkable way. He adopted as a "keynote text" of the campaign the parable of the swine that were driven over a steep place into the sea and drowned. The "haoles" (whites) were the "swine" in his application of the parable, and in his impassioned way, he would demand that they should all be driven over the bluff into the sea, there to be devoured by sharks.

Mr. Kauia varied the program by likening the "haoles" to snakes, and the opening phrase of almost every speech he made was: "kill the snakes!"

### Only Hawaiians On Guard.

Neither Mr. Wilcox nor Mr. Kauia intended to physically "down the swine" or "kill the snakes"; but their oratory was exceedingly effective and the native Hawaiian voters took them at their word, when they asserted that Hawaiian rights were in danger and that only Hawaiians should be put on guard.

The result was a sweeping victory for the Home Rule ticket; Wilcox being elected to congress and but few whites returned to the legislature. That body proved so incompetent that it went into history as the "lady dog legislature," the chief legislative act of the session being one which exempted female dogs from taxation.

The violence of these appeals to race prejudice and the utter incompetence and failure to secure results by those elected thereunder, discredited the policy and the Home Rule party, and from that time to the present, very little of either has been heard.

### Attitude of Historic Hawaii Toward the Whites.

A brief reference to earlier Hawaiian history will verify the statement that the race issue is comparatively new to Hawaii.

It is well known that the success of Kamehameha I in conquering the islands was very largely due to the white advisers whom he made members of his household.

Throughout the reign of the successive Kamehamehas, the Hawaiian people and government continuously relied upon the whites for advice and assistance both in their internal affairs and in their relations with foreign nations; and they did not rely in vain.

It was white men who steered Hawaii through the troubled waters of her relations with France and Great Britain; who formulated her government; her laws and policies which resulted in making her the only independent nation in the Pacific.

During the reign of Kalakaua—Experience of L. A. Thurston.

Coming down to the reign of Kalakaua, and matters within my own knowledge, I may be excused for referring to my personal experience, as I know of no better illustration of the utter lack of race prejudice on the part of the Hawaiians at that time.

I was a candidate as representative in the legislature, from the district which consisted of the islands of Molokai and Lanai, in 1886. There were only about a dozen white voters in the district, and the most influential of them were violently opposed to me; so much so that the people of Lanai were forbidden by the "Lord of the Manor" to furnish me with food, transportation or sleeping accommodations; and the Board of Health prohibited my addressing the voters of the lesser settlements, although my opponents were given full access thereto.

I was personally acquainted with only about half a dozen voters and was running in opposition to two of the most well-to-do and influential native Hawaiians in the district, one being the district judge and the other the district tax assessor. They had been successively elected for several sessions and were specifically endorsed by King Kalakaua and were running on what was known as the "Royal Ticket."

### Sponsors Were Hawaiian.

My sponsors were almost exclusively Hawaiians, the principal one being Judge John W. Kauia, and John Richardson of Maui, and A. P. Kapehonohe, M. Kane, and now Senator David Kalanokalani, Sr., of Molokai.

With the assistance of two speeches by white men, W. A. Kinney and W. R. Castle, who had no special hold on the district; with almost no expenditure of money; running on an anti-government platform; with all the government officers opposed to me; with no patronage to offer or promise; as a result of a house to house canvass and meetings held in every hamlet over a period of some six weeks, I was returned to the legislature by this almost exclusively native Hawaiian constituency, by a heavy majority over my native opponents.

Again in 1890, I was returned to the upper house of the legislature from the island of Maui, running on an anti-government platform. I do not now remember in either campaign to have ever heard the suggestion made that the electors should not vote for me because of the color of my skin.

### Race Issue Campaign Now Being Conducted.

Coming down to the campaign now being conducted in Hawaii: It has been repeatedly and publicly denied by Kuhllo and his supporters that a race issue campaign was being conducted.

I make no charge that Kuhllo is personally appealing to race prejudice, because I have not heard him. There is published herewith what one of his strongest supporters, J. P. Hale, reports him to have said. Whether Kuhllo is personally advocating the race issue or not is important; but of more importance is the fact that such a campaign, of the most pronounced character, is being systematically conducted in his interest by his closest supporters and friends. It is in the air. It is everywhere. There is not a person in Hawaii who understands the native language or talks with Hawaiians, who does not know that this policy is being pursued with the most vicious persistency and great effectiveness.

During the first weeks of the campaign it was kept well under cover, only minor and veiled reference thereto being made in the native press which is favorable to Kuhllo.

### All Restraint Cast Off by Desha's Paper.

"Ka Hoku o Hawaii," (The Star of Hawaii), a semi-religious newspaper, published in Hilo, is supporting Kuhllo. Rev. Stephen L. Desha is President and Editor of the Hoku, and J. P. Hale is one of its directors. They are among Kuhllo's leading supporters, having recently made the circuit of the islands with him, on a campaigning tour. The issues of the "Hoku" of July 30, and August 5th and 13th, became more open in their raising of the race issue; but in the issue of the Hoku of August 29, all restraint is cast to the winds, and the rankest, most violent race prejudice talk since the days of Wilcox and Kauia, is spread over columns of the paper.

### "Drink of the Bitter Waters."

The leading article purports to be contributed, but it has all the earmarks of the editor. It quotes the words of Kamehameha I. to his army just before the battle of Iao, on Maui, it being related that he had destroyed his enemies upon landing from Hawaii. "Forward and drink of the bitter waters for you have no place to retreat."

The article then proceeds, reiterating again and again statements to the following effect:

That the Advertiser has been publishing articles urging the white men to stand together in opposition to the native Hawaiian voters; That they should stand united and vote solidly as native Hawaiians for Kuhllo, for the reason that he is a native Hawaiian;

That unless they so vote, there is no future for them; That the haoles have got to fighting among themselves and have revealed their real purpose which was concealed before, that you native Hawaiians should be killed forever.

Plan to Combine Hawaiian Voters of All Parties to Down Rice.

The paper openly states that the plan of campaign in support of Kuhllo is to get all of the native Hawaiian voters, regardless of party, to vote for Kuhllo at the primaries for the purpose of downing Rice, his rival for the Republican nomination for Delegate.

Bitter attacks are made upon Palmer Woods, because it is feared

that his candidacy will draw away to himself and McCandless some of the Democratic native Hawaiians, who otherwise would, at the primaries have voted for Kuhllo.

### Extracts From Desha's Paper, the "Hoku."

One of the stock arguments that is being made in the Kuhllo campaign, both in speeches and in Desha's paper, is that the voting franchise of the native Hawaiians is in danger unless Kuhllo is re-elected. That if Rice is elected, he will secure a repeal of their right to vote, or at least secure the passage of an act limiting voters to those who have an income of \$900.00 a year, and who can read and write English. There is no one who can bring a lot of proof that either Mr. Rice or any one else has the remotest notion of doing anything of the kind.

### A Malicious and Wicked Statement.

It is a malicious and wicked statement made with intent to deceive.

If the whites had desired to deprive the native Hawaiians of the franchise, that purpose could have been accomplished, when, having full control of the Hawaiian Government, they negotiated the first Annexation Treaty with President Harrison in 1893. Nothing of the kind is contained in the Treaty, however, and it is worthy of notice that the Treaty, the writer being one of the negotiators thereof, provided for paying Liliuokalani \$20,000.00 a year, and a lump sum of \$150,000.00 to the Princess Kaiulani.

The second annexation treaty, negotiated with President McKin-

ley in 1897, still under the same control in Hawaii, also gave opportunity to deprive the Hawaiians of the vote, had the whites so desired. Nothing of the kind was done.

Whites Made Hawaiians American Citizens, With Full Franchise. Again the same opportunity was presented upon the presentation of the joint resolution of annexation by congress in 1898. Again it was not done.

Again in 1900, on the enactment by congress, a body of white men, of the law organizing Hawaii into a Territory, the same opportunity to deprive the native Hawaiian of his vote was present; but nothing of the kind was attempted, the provision of the Organic Act relating to citizenship, being that "all citizens of Hawaii are hereby declared to be citizens of the United States and citizens of the Territory of Hawaii," thereby confirming to the native Hawaiian the full, absolute and complete rights of an American citizen, co-equal with all other American citizens.

### Whites Would Oppose Disfranchisement.

From that day to the present I know of no proposition by any responsible person to take away the franchise from the native Hawaiian or to otherwise discriminate against him.

So far from there being any truth in the allegation that the white citizens of Hawaii are seeking to deprive their native Hawaiian fellow citizens of any of their rights, I state with the most positive personal knowledge of what has gone on in inside politics in Hawaii since annexation took place, that there is absolutely nothing of the kind.

## Some Recent Examples of Race Hatred Appeals

### (FROM THE "HOKU" OF JULY 30.)

(The "Hoku" is a semi-religious newspaper published in the Hawaiian language, in Hilo. Rev. Stephen Desha is the Editor and President, and J. P. Hale is one of the Directors. They have been members of Kuhllo's campaigning party who have recently made a stumping tour of the Islands.)

In the issue of the "Star" of July 30, there appears correspondence from J. P. Hale, one of the Kuhllo campaigning party, writing from Maui. He reports an address by Kuhllo to the Ministers' convention, which contains the following:

"Love is the best path for us to pursue, namely to love our neighbors, and our country, because what is the use of our praying to God if we cannot love our neighbors and our race ('kakou ihi,' literally 'our skin') and our land?"

Continuing, Mr. Hale says: "I have inspected from Waiotua to Kamaole, and the truthful statement of the people of that place is:

### "This Is the Last Gasp."

"This is our last gasp (o ko kakou wahi hauu hoo loa kela), and if we native-born of the land are deceived into voting for Charles Rice, then will the evil results of our wrong-doing descend upon us all."

"What I hear on the street corners and in front of the liquor saloons is only one saying, namely: 'Do not forget Delegate Jonah K. Kalaniainoa; give him our strongest support so that he will win; then Kuhllo's opponents cannot hereafter do mischief.' These are some of the true sayings if they are listened to."

### United to Nominate Kuhllo.

"Again, on this delegate question, the Democrats, Home Rulers and Straight Republicans are united; there is excepted only the Progressives, and their numbers can be counted on the fingers on election day."

"Again, the present political situation is exactly the same as it was when R. W. Wilcox first ran, that is, the more he was opposed the more he was trusted."

The significance of this last paragraph is that Wilcox's whole platform was based on setting the natives against the whites.

### Bitterness from Lahaina.

In the same issue of the "Hoku" is a column article, purporting to be correspondence from Lahaina, but which contains strong infernal evidence of editorial origin, filled with bitterness; attacking the "sugar planters and the wealthy" who are said to be crushing the independence of the people, driving them like animals and regarding those who are subservient with a crust of bread. The rights of the poor are being exploited for the benefit of Rice and Carter.

"Of this character is the candidacy for delegate, of Rice and Carter. We can see what the object of these men is against the interest of us Hawaiian People."

### Rice and Carter's Object to Choke Hawaiians to Death.

"The object is to choke us until we are dead, oh Hawaiians, and when they are elected they will do what they are always wanting to do—deprive us absolutely, oh Hawaiians, of our voting franchise and of that one position of honor which we have got, oh Hawaiians, the position of Delegate to Washington."

"Thus are Rice and Carter trying to kill the Prince."

"And what is the position of these good gentlemen? They are on the side of the rich, they will not look at our rights, the poor people and the Hawaiian race."

"Your actions are known, you Carter, from the time of the overthrow of the monarchy to the time you became Governor."

"What did he ever do for you, oh Hawaiians?"

"Absolutely nothing!"

"He tried in every possible way to injure us, oh Hawaiians."

"Rice is just the same. He is not independent, but is led by the rich, because he is of that same blood and clan."

"Therefore we must be watchful against the guidance of any of our own flesh who hereafter seek to mislead us for their own benefit. It is very wrong for any man to become a bone carrier for the rich, not for the benefit of the people but for his own personal profit, and we will be the ones who will be hurt if we give our independence to these people to play with."

### Hawaiians Will Suffer if They Do Not Vote for Kuhllo.

The editorial of the issue of the "Hoku" of July 30th is devoted to supporting Kuhllo. Among other statements are the following:

"In the Konas we hear that the people are hot over this opposition of the whites (haoles) and the anger is great against Rice and his supporters."

"As for the Hoku, it is but right to let the public know what their future status will be if the Hawaiians do not vote for Kuhllo, and if the Hawaiians put obstacles in the way of Kuhllo, and are deceived by the leadership of the anti-Kuhllo Republicans, then the day will come when Hawaii will suffer."

"Therefore, on behalf of the people from Hawaii to Kauai, the Hoku calls for a solid vote for Kuhllo, the hope of the future generation."

"In voting for Kuhllo, vote also for the fellow workers of the Prince Delegate."

(Desha and Hale are both candidates on Hawaii. This appeal to get them ride into office on the coat tails of the Prince, permeates the columns of the Hoku.)

### Kuhllo on Organized Hawaiian Vote.

In the same issue of the Hoku, July 30th, is a purported report of a meeting at Aala Park. The speech of the Prince is said to contain the following:

"Delegate Kuhllo urged the Hawaiians to organize themselves into an Association for the protection of us Hawaiians of the land, and stand together as guards of the rights of the 'original race of the land,' and he asked to be again sent to guard the voting franchise of the Hawaiians."

### (FROM THE "HOKU" OF AUGUST 6.)

### Kuhllo Guarding the Franchise.

(J. P. Hale, the reporter of these meetings, has been making the circuit of the islands with Kuhllo and Desha, campaigning in Kuhllo's interest.)

The issue of the Hoku of August 6, contains a report signed by J. P. Hale, of a series of meetings held by Kuhllo and party in Kooaha, Oahu. Kuhllo is reported to have said in a speech at Kapehonohe:

"Fellow citizens, for eleven years and over I have been guarding our voting franchise at Washington, so that the enemies (poe pakana) should not get there and cut off some of our Hawaiian voters."

Rev. S. L. Desha is said to have spoken next, and said:

"Fellow citizens, this is our last gasp (o ko kakou wahi hauu hoo loa kela). If this position of delegate goes to someone else, then will we be in trouble, there will be no one to save us. While we have the vote, the only way to save ourselves is to continue sending Kuhllo to congress at Washington to watch our voting franchise."

Hale Believes in Drawing the Color Line.

The same reporter tells of a meeting at Lala, at which one Kona spoke. The reporter says that his statement was correct and true, except as to one point, in which your correspondent (J. P. Hale) does not agree with him; that is where he said:

"Therefore we see the progress that is being made here at Lala, therefore do not let us look at the skin (i. e. do not let us be governed by race prejudice), but let us look for those who can promote the welfare of our land."

The reporter reiterates that he disagrees with this and says that "Kona is an agent of Charles Rice. If so, all right, for that is his business; but at the same time the question is: Did Charles Rice bring prosperity to Lala? Was it not God, acting through Joseph Smith, as represented in Hawaii by Samuel Woolley?"

### (FROM THE "HOKU" OF AUGUST 20.)

IMUA, A INU I KA WAI AWAAWA, OIAI AOLE HOPE E HOI AKU AI.

FORWARD, AND DRINK OF THE BITTER WATER, FOR THERE IS NO PLACE OF RETREAT.

These were the words that Kamehameha spoke at the Battle of Panipua o Iao. Kamehameha knew that it was only by bravery that he could win the victory over the soldiers of Maui. Kamehameha knew his words of encouragement would be of no use unless the men were really brave; and that was what moved him to encourage them to their struggle. Kamehameha also knew that through their victory, they would again reach the land and their home; and also through their victory he would gain the ascendancy and become the ruler of all Hawaii.

By these words of Kamehameha, your writer is urging you to turn and examine our status as a people today. Your writer also believes that there is no retreat in connection with this vote on the question of a Delegate, because "there is no place to retreat."

Since these islands were annexed to the United States to the present time, there has been no time when the People have been put to such straightened circumstances as at the present time.

### Advertiser Urges Whites to Weaken Hawaiians.

In the columns of the Advertiser of these few days past, articles have appeared urging the white men to stand together and weaken the side of the Hawaiian voters.

These thoughts have been veiled, but those who can read understand what they mean.

If the white men (haole) desire to reduce the voting strength of the Hawaiians, then today, we understand why Woods has been put up as a Hawaiian candidate for the purpose of carrying out this proposition of theirs, i. e., to weaken the Hawaiian vote.

Kamehameha obtained his victory by reason of his soldiers being united and fearless, and knowing that there was no possibility of retreat.

### Adopt Kamehameha's Motto.

This attitude of the soldiers of Kamehameha your writer is strongly urging (ko i ka ika) you to adopt. Let us stand united without fear, because there is no possibility of retreat.

Woods started his campaign not believing that he will win, but believing that this is the way to break up the votes of the native Hawaiians; thereby getting the Democrats to return and support McCandless lest Woods should gain the election at the primaries. By his, we see not only the underhanded work of the Rice party, but we also recognize their great skill.

The sugar plantation companies and the wealthy people, if I am not mistaken, are putting up the money for Woods. These plantation companies and these wealthy people also are supporting Rice; therefore, what is Woods? He is supporting Rice evidently, because he stands with the Rice people.

### Urges Hawaiians to Unite.

By reason of the native Hawaiians standing united Rice is put into pillbox; and by this running of Woods, he endeavors to break up the Hawaiian vote, and in that way weaken Delegate Kuhllo, and by reason of that weakening of Kuhllo, Rice gains the advantage.

If this is the reason Woods is put into this race, then what shall we do, we Hawaiians?

This is my thought; that all the more strongly should we stand fast. All the more strongly should we increase our courage.

I strongly urge upon the Hawaiians who have not given this subject consideration before, that Rice's people are looking for a way to give him the victory. They have decided to go after Woods and to furnish money to him to run in order that he may break up your native Hawaiians.

Why is this deal made?

Because they know your purpose is to stand together.

Now, if we see that their purpose is to break up our strength, are we to become cowards and go back?

### Hawaiians Have No Place to Retreat.

We know that we have no place to retreat to, so where will we go, oh Hawaiian people. The people who have given good for evil.

The people who have been made strangers upon their own native soil.

The people who have seen your queen reduced to the position of a common citizen on her own land.

The writer urges you now is the time to stand united. There is no future time for you. This is your last chance. You have no other chance. We are already down to the chin in straightened circumstances. We have no alternative on this political question of the Delegate.

### Haoles Want to Kill Hawaiians Forever.

"These white men (haoles) have got to fighting among themselves in the different political parties, until they have revealed their real purpose which was concealed before, that you Hawaiians should be killed forever. This is their hope; this is their thought; and that we shall become simply onlookers or that we shall be scared in order that their purposes may be carried out."

"The representatives and senators of the Congress of America have said, 'You continue to send Kuhllo Kalaniainoa to Congress because by this means you show your status as Hawaiian people. He has upheld your honor at Washington. You have been the people greatly admired, and so long as you continue to send him to Washington, you will receive what you desire.'"

"By these words, we see it is not a good thing for you to oppose the express wishes of the members of congress."

"Now, if the honor of you Hawaiians is upheld in Washington, what more is here to be done by you Hawaiians? There is nothing more to be done."

"The great thing for you to consider carefully, you Hawaiians who want to stand fast behind the People, you must be careful to go to the polls on the 12th of September."

"Let every man who has any regard for his nationality be vigilant on that day to strengthen his neighbor and be united and stand fast."

### Go Forward and Drink the Bitter Water.

"Remember, oh Hawaiians, there is no place to retreat to."

"Because there is nothing for us to return to, we cannot stand and look on."

"Let us go forward and drink the bitter water, if there is no other road for us to travel."

"But your writer knows there is no bitter water we will have to drink if we stand fast and are united. We shall retain the victory, and by reason of our standing together, we shall preserve our status as a people."

I know of my own knowledge that there is the kindest feeling toward the native Hawaiian citizens among the leading white citizens in Hawaii, and that the native Hawaiians would not resist more positively any attempt at disfranchisement than would their white fellow citizens.

Mischievous and Cruel to Sow Suspicion and Race Animosity. It is a purely mischievous and cruel trick to sow discussion and suspicion; to stir up racial animosity between the different races of this Territory, especially when it is done with the sole aim and object of carrying a temporary election.

I say to you native Hawaiians that you are now American citizens, with all the rights and privileges of American citizenship, which no one will ever attempt to take away from you, or can succeed in taking away from you if the attempt is made, so long as you conduct yourselves as American citizens should.

I say to you further, that it is most unbecoming, in view of the history of the treatment accorded you by your white fellow American citizens above referred to, and also most un-American and unwise, for you to now try to raise the race issue.

### Best Treatment in the History of the World.

I say to you that never before in the history of the world, has a white race voluntarily given to a dark race in their control, equal powers with themselves, such as the Americans have given to you in Hawaii.

Neither England nor any European government gives full rights of citizenship to her dark-skinned subjects. The dark-skinned subjects of England in India are not permitted to even set foot in the English territory of Canada. A shipload of them who tried to land were driven off with guns, only last month.

America has not given such power to the natives of North America. There are several hundred thousand of them in the United States, who have no vote.

America has not given such power to the people of the Philippines; or Guam; or Samoa; or Porto Rico, all annexed about the same time as Hawaii.

Not one of the people of those four countries is now an American citizen.

You Hawaiians, and you alone, were singled out and given this great honor, of American citizenship, with full knowledge that you outnumbered the white citizens in Hawaii by four to one, and could vote down every white candidate if you chose to do so.

Why did the white Americans do this? Why did they put themselves in your power?

"Because they trusted you!" I reply.

Hawaiians had a reputation, extending back for a hundred years, of fair and honorable dealing, which warranted such trust.

Are you Hawaiians going to violate that trust, or are you going to prove worthy of it?

### Folly for Hawaiians to Draw Color Line.

As long as the whites do not draw the color line, I say to you Hawaiians that it is folly (ku i ka naupou) for you to do so!

What benefit is it to you to draw the color line? A few men will temporarily get an office; but what good does that do you voters who do not get an office?

It will do you no good, and can only do you harm!

I say it is un-American for you to attempt to discriminate against an American citizen because his skin is white instead of brown, or because he was not born in Hawaii, for the reason that the settled policy of the United States of America, is to ignore where a man or his parents came from, whether he was born in the country or out of it, so long as he is a citizen either by birth or naturalization.

### American Policy Ignores Place of Birth of Citizens.

Every office in the gift of the United States government, except that of President, is open to every citizen, whether he is born in the country or not.

There are scores of members of congress who were born in Canada, England and Europe.

The present Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Laha, is a Canadian by birth. His predecessor, Secretary Wilson, who held office for a longer term and under more different Presidents than any other cabinet officer, was a Scotchman by birth.

The present Secretary of Commerce and Labor, William B. Wilson, was born in Scotland.

The present senator from Minnesota, Knute Nelson, who was twice a member of the Wisconsin legislature, elected three times to congress, twice elected Governor, and who has been a member of the United States Senate from Minnesota since the year 1895, was born in Norway.

Bourke Lockman, elected many times to the House of Representatives from New York, was born in Ireland.

Charles B. Schurz, who was a United States senator from Missouri and an efficient Secretary of the Interior, was born in Germany and took an active part in the revolution of 1848 in that country.

Like instances can be cited by the hundreds.

The reason why I have mentioned so many malinkins who have occupied the highest elected and appointed offices in the United States, is to bring home to the citizens of Hawaii, more particularly the native Hawaiians, that it is "un-American" to