

## *Silencing Voices: The Shaping of a Narrative*

There is a master narrative that has been created dealing with the annexation of Hawai'i that has long spoken of a smooth and celebratory union. This dominant narrative might occasionally mention pockets of resistance and a few malcontent Natives but quickly pushes those stories aside to be replaced in our minds with glorious stories of flag waving patriots and present day "melting pots". Research into this vital time in the history of these islands, however, reveals many long silenced voices that eloquently tell a vastly different tale.

The authoritative work of Dr. Noenoe Silva (*Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism*. Duke University Press 2004) and others over the last two decades have brightly illuminated the prolific existence and powerful methods of resistance from Kānaka Maoli through political organizations (Hui Aloha 'Āina, Hui Kalai'āina), anti-annexation petitions, and individual political and social actions. This continuing work will undoubtedly uncover a great many more unheard resistant stories.

In addition to these Kānaka Maoli, there were foreign voices that likewise opposed annexation. While some of the most prominent arguments against the policy were racist or paternalistic, many other Americans saw the taking of a country's sovereignty as immoral and unjust. These people spoke about the "shame" and "dishonor" that such action would bring upon their country (the United States). These voices, for the sake of a harmonious narrative, have also been silenced.

### *'Onipa'a ka 'Oia'i'o.*

#### Letter to the editor:

[Brooklyn Daily Eagle Dec.31, 1897]

*"So far as the present writer can recall the Eagle has not discussed the question or met the powerful reasons against annexation otherwise than by the claim that the islands are a desirable acquisition for the United States, and will conduce to their well being...and you cannot ignore the moral equation in a Christian land and in the nineteenth century."*

*"Ought not the Eagle, then to tell us: **What right we have to annex Hawaii against the protests of its native owners?"***

*"This affair was born in sin and conceived in iniquity. It is understood it cannot pass the Senate, but is to be jammed through Congress by a majority vote on a joint resolution. It will be a new and evil departure for this land of Washington."*

W. Allen Johnson.

Brooklyn. December 27, 1897.

Speech by Senator Pettigrew on the floor of the U.S. Senate July 2, 1898

[N.Y. Times 3 July 1898]

*“Mr. Pettigrew said annexation was not desired by a majority of Hawaiian citizens, and **it would be out of accord with the spirit of a democratic government to annex against the will of the majority.** The Administration, he asserted, had demanded that annexation be accomplished, and Senators were so under its control that they dared not open their mouths for fear they would cause delay and incur the President’s displeasure.*

*Discussing the establishment of the present Hawaiian Republic, Mr. Pettigrew said:*

*“**The American flag went up on Hawaii in dishonor; it came down in honor, and if it goes up again now it will go up in infamy and shame and this Government will join the robber nations of the world.**”*

Letter to the Washington Post:

[Washington Post Feb.26, 1893]

*“To one who has been a student of history and who has watched for some years the drift of political matters here and in other countries it is a matter of profound regret that such a line of action as that involved in the proposed annexation of Hawaii should be seriously entertained. **The annexation of Hawaii would be an act out of harmony with the principles of a republican form of government; it is undemocratic – it is imperial.**”*

Samuel H. Smith  
Baxter Springs, Kansas. Feb.15

A monthly journal titled, *The Californian* wrote in 1894:

[Californian Illustrated Magazine]

*“**The most amusing feature of the recent attempt of the foreign missionary government of Hawaii to present the United States with a piece of property which it did not happen to own was the cool complacency with which it ignored the rights of other foreigners.**”*

Speech by Senator Dinsmore (ranking Democrat upon the Committee on Foreign Affairs) June 12, 1898

[N.Y. Times June 12,1898]

*“**It would be, he insisted the first step upon a policy of colonial aggression.**”*

Speech by Rep. Johnson 22 Feb.1898: N.Y. Times article entitled: Speech Against the Hawaiian Annexation Made in the House by Mr. Johnson of Indiana. IT WINS HEARTY APPLAUSE.  
[N.Y. Times Feb.23, 1898]

*“A colonial policy might be adapted to the nations of antiquity, but it would not do for a free country, which derived its power from the consent of the governed.”*

*“Let us have the moral courage to say ‘No’ to a policy which will lead, God alone knows where”*

Mr. Allen Dare writing for The Californian:

[Californian Illustrated Magazine. June 1893]

*“The securing of cheap labor, together with the reciprocity treaty, made the accumulation of immense fortunes possible for the sugar planters who, with few exceptions, have invested their surplus in Europe or America.*

*This is the keynote of the whole annexation scheme. Were it not for the insatiable greed of this already too favored portion of the little country, who have for years arrogated to themselves every virtue and grasped everything worth having, and who are now trying to rob the Hawaiian of his country and flag, the United States would never have known of the present scheme to annex the Hawaiian Islands.”*

A front-page article of the New York Times carries columns: “PROTEST OF LILIUOKALANI” and “TREATY STRONGLY OPPOSED” which highlights:

[N.Y.Times June 18,1897]

*“Opposition to the Hawaiian annexation project has broken out much more violently than was anticipated by the Administration and the treaty will be roughly handled when it comes up in the senate for ratification” and mentions one of the sources of opposition being from those who are “opposed on principal to the embarkation of this government upon colonization schemes,..”*

New York Times article entitled: HAWAIIAN INDEPENDENCE: AMERICANS IN THE ISLANDS DO NOT WANT ANNEXATION.

[N.Y. Times Nov.25, 1891]

**“I feel quite confident that I express the sentiment of the American colony at Honolulu when I say that a continuance of the independent monarchy is desirable. The natives do not desire to give up their independence, and the great sugar planters do not represent the true interests of the colonist at large.”**

Judge Lawrence McCully of the Hawaiian Supreme Court  
Chicago, Nov.24 1891

\*This relatively brief research turned up dozens of examples of such mana’o. Many more are still yet to be heard.

Kākau ‘ia Ronald Williams Jr