The Controversial Appointment of Lucius Eugene Pinkham, Hawaii’s First Democratic Governor

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The election of Woodrow Wilson on November 5, 1912 as the first Democratic President of the United States in the 20th Century caused great joy among Hawaii’s Democrats who had thirsted for political office and patronage since establishment of the territorial government in 1900. The first governors, Sanford B. Dole, George R. Carter and Walter F. Frear, had been Republicans, and that party had a virtual monopoly on most federal and territorial appointments. President Wilson’s eventual selection of Lucius E. Pinkham to be governor created consternation and bitterness among island Democrats.

Lucius Pinkham’s appointment as governor of the Territory of Hawaii is an excellent demonstration of multiple causation. Not tied to any particular island faction, he seemed to offer to President Wilson the administrative experiences that the other candidates lacked. Hawaii’s Democrats, demonstrating disunity, awarded the national administration a free hand in its selection of the territorial governor.

Woodrow Wilson and his cabinet espoused a “New Freedom,” a progressive reform program for the benefit of middle-class Americans. Believers in a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant value system, they found Lincoln McCandless’ past unacceptable. McCandless’ candidacy appeared to reflect the political bossism that the President abhorred. A second candidate, Gilbert J. Waller, seemed to be disqualified because of his religion. President Wilson and Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane approved of Edward Watson, a third candidate, whose values were similar to their own, but his physical condition finally eliminated him. California Congressman William Kent, as a friend and powerful conservationist, easily gained Franklin Lane’s ear and capitalized upon...
the discord in the islands. Given a choice between the self-proclaimed candidates and Lucius Pinkham, Lane and President Wilson found the latter more in concert with their ideas about America’s future.

Territorial Delegate Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaole, during an on-going controversy over territorial land policy, protested against reappointing Governor Frear when the latter’s first term expired on December 18, 1911. In September 1912 Secretary of the Interior Walter L. Fisher personally investigated Prince Kuhio’s charges but then recommended Frear’s renomination. President William Howard Taft did so on October 17, only three weeks before the presidential election. With Wilson’s win over Taft and Theodore Roosevelt, Frear became a lame duck appointment, and when Congress met from December to March, the Democrats determined not to confirm Taft’s appointee.1

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR: THE FIRST GROUP

On March 4, 1913 Governor Frear informed President Wilson that he had intended to resign about September 1, 1913, but he now forwarded his resignation to give Wilson the opportunity to appoint his replacement sooner.2 Following Wilson’s November victory, three prominent Honolulu Democrats, Lincoln L. McCandless, Gilbert J. Waller and Edward M. Watson, had gathered both territorial and national support for their candidacies. Soon Wilson and his Secretary of the Interior, Californian Franklin K. Lane, had substantial files on each man.

The McCandless Faction

Lincoln Loy McCandless, born on September 18, 1859 at Indiana, Pennsylvania, joined his brothers, James and John, in a Hawaiian partnership in 1882 to drill wells. Hawaiians nicknamed him “Eliwai” or “Well-Digger.” By 1913, McCandless had become the largest private individual landowner in Hawaii, with extensive holdings on Oahu. He won election as a Republican in 1898 to Hawaii’s House of Representatives and in 1902 to the Senate. Defeated in 1906, McCandless changed parties in 1908 and sought election as Territorial Delegate, opposing Kuhio in 1910 and 1912. He soon dominated the Democratic Party, using his fiscal resources to control a significant faction.3 Factionalism contributed to the territorial Democratic Party’s failure to agree on a list of names for the various offices and eventually forced it to accept Wilson’s gubernatorial nominee.

Lucius E. Pinkham. Reproduced from MEN OF HAWAII 1917.
In 1912, McCandless controlled the party's central committee whose leading members were John H. Wilson, Palmer P. Woods, and John Effinger. All had worked for McCandless' election as delegate and nomination as governor. Wilson, who had a long and varied political career, was born in 1871. The son of Charles B. Wilson, Queen Liliuokalani's marshal, he was in his early career associated with McCandless in road and sewer building. First elected as Democratic National Committeeman in 1912, he was reelected continuously until 1942. He served several terms as Honolulu mayor between 1920 and 1954. He died in 1956. Palmer P. Woods, Democratic National Committeeman in 1904, part-Hawaiian and Hawaiian rancher Samuel Parker's nephew, had gained endorsements in 1913 to be Secretary of the Territory, the second most important appointive territorial position.

Democrats opposing the McCandless machine were Honolulu Mayor Joseph Fern, Honolulu Treasurer Charles J. McCarthy, Territorial Senators James L. Coke and Curtis P. Iaukea, and Territorial High Sheriff William Jarrett. A rising Democratic senator and supporter of Edward M. Watson, Delbert M. Metzger, denigrated McCandless as a "really very active, capitalist of considerable wealth, whose holdings are largely in sugar stocks, public utilities and numerous small tracts of land, and whose pastime is politics."

Waller and Watson

The second leading gubernatorial contender, Gilbert J. Waller, was Hawaii's Democratic National Committeeman in 1908 and a delegate to the 1912 national convention in Baltimore. Born in England, he arrived in Hawaii in the early 1880s and by 1913 owned the successful Metropolitan Meat Company of Honolulu. Metzger described him as "a wealthy beef and meat merchant, with a religious turn of mind. . . ." Waller, a member of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, found his candidacy suffered as a result of prejudicial attitudes in the Territory and in Washington concerning his Mormon affiliation. He did, however, receive strong endorsements from many Democrats such as Fern and McCarthy and from Republicans J. P. Cooke of Alexander & Baldwin Co. and Benjamin F. Dillingham, although both stated a judgment that Waller would not be as competent as Frear. On November 12, 1912, a week after the presidential election, Waller wrote Woodrow Wilson that, at the request of leading Democrats and businessmen, he offered himself as a candidate for territorial governor.

The third major contender, Edward M. Watson, was born at Holly Spring, Mississippi on December 20, 1874, earned a law degree from the
University of Mississippi in 1897, and in 1901 opened a Honolulu law office. A staunch Democrat, he was a delegate to the 1908 and 1912 Democratic national conventions. Shortly after the Baltimore convention, he suffered a paralytic stroke, making doubtful his ability to be governor, but he was championed nevertheless by powerful United States Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi. Williams, who knew Watson's father, a county judge, assured Woodrow Wilson that the Watsons were excellent people. He observed that Watson had received recommendations from several judges and leading Democrats.8

Territorial Senator Delbert Metzger of Hilo was an early major supporter of Watson. Metzger, born at Ozsawkie, Kansas on March 4, 1875 arrived in Hawaii as an Army engineer volunteer in 1899. Following his tour of duty, he worked for three years with Lucius Pinkham drilling wells. While on Kauai in 1900, he joined with three others in organizing the Democratic Party there. In 1908 Metzger won the contract to build the first phase of Hilo Harbor's breakwater and then became superintendent for The Breakwater Company of Philadelphia during a later phase of construction. In 1912 he won election to the territorial senate while continuing with the jetty company.9 Metzger believed Watson to be eminently qualified for he had executive ability, was a tried and true Democrat and "a clean and broad minded man, capable of initiating such policies . . . as would put the affairs of the Territory on a sound and progressive basis . . . ." But Watson's physical disability remained in the forefront of all discussions about his candidacy.

John Waterhouse of the firm of Alexander & Baldwin and a Princeton graduate, class of 1896, wrote to that more famous Princetonian, Woodrow Wilson, that Watson was the most qualified Democrat but, with his health a question, only he and his family could decide if he were capable of managing the office. But when everything was considered, said Waterhouse, Governor Frear remained "the best qualified of all."10 The planter-business oligarchy sent Wilson a clear signal that Walter Frear should complete his four-year term, which had almost three years remaining. Thus the idea was planted that if there were no well-suited Democrats, the President should stay with the territory's proven success.

In February 1913 William A. Kinney, a territorial Democrat and attorney representing Delegate Prince Kuhio in his fight with Frear, warned the President-elect that appointing a governor representative of plantation interests would keep the Democratic Party enfeebled. It was essential, Kinney affirmed, to have a strong man, "closely affiliated with and supported by the Federal Government . . . representative of the common people and not be a spokesman for the power elite." His
lengthy rehearsal of the Kuhio-Frear conflict and cautions about a new governor's qualifications only served to retard Wilson's selection of a Democratic replacement for Frear.11

On March 4, 1913, Wilson's inaugural day, Waller, Watson and McCandless each had great hopes that the President would award him the gubernatorial prize. To assist McCandless, Territorial Democratic National Committeeman John Wilson attended Wilson's inauguration and aimed at smoothing the waters for his candidate who applied for the governorship on March 5, claiming the endorsements of all Democratic organizations.12

Shortly thereafter John Wilson informed McCandless of an unsatisfactory interview with Interior Secretary Franklin Lane who spoke of rumors that McCandless' private life had been less than exemplary; "charges were made and [Lane] wanted to know whether they were true or not." Wilson had reassured Lane that several Honolulu churchmen backed McCandless. He then directed McCandless to locate a major church figure to provide the ex post facto endorsement. A second problem was Lane's understanding that Wilson was financially indebted to McCandless. He explained that in their business arrangement McCandless advanced money for construction contracts in return for a percentage of net profits. In urging Lane to remove Frear and appoint McCandless, Wilson downgraded the other two Democratic contenders saying that Watson would, like Frear, "depend upon his talent and wit to mislead the people" and that Waller was too slow, not aggressive enough, and too weak to be governor.13

John Wilson's directive to McCandless to find a supportive church leader was delegated to John Effinger, who asked the committeeman to "keep secret the fact that I secured from Bishop Restarick the most kind endorsement that I did and how I obtained it." Effinger evidently felt embarrassed and degraded by the experience but he did get the requisite endorsements from Bishops Restarick and Liebert.14

By late March, John Wilson, having sorted out the currents and cross-currents swirling about the gubernatorial appointment, alerted Effinger that he might have to remain longer than April 7 or until the appointment was made. He did not return to Honolulu until late August. Bertram G. Rivenbaugh of Hawaii, Waller's Washington representative, had revealed McCandless' character flaws to Lane, but Wilson believed the two bishops' endorsements blunted that attack. Wilson also learned that W. A. Kinney and Prince Kuhio had visited Lane to urge Frear's removal. When the secretary pressed the two for their recommendation for governor, both demurred until he questioned them about the three
applicants. Kinney thought that Watson, being invalided, would not do. When Lane turned the discussion to McCandless’ private life, Kinney felt that McCandless’ behavior had been satisfactory in recent years. Lane, nevertheless, expressed concern about McCandless because of a pending paternity suit filed against him, but the grand jury in April found the charges groundless. As for Waller, Kinney thought that he should be disqualified because his life was taken up too much with his religion.  

Lane decided that it had become necessary for the three candidates to come to Washington for interviews. McCandless prepared to leave on March 31 with his wife and daughter. Waller claimed to have no funds to make the trip, but he nevertheless managed to arrive in Washington. As Watson departed from Honolulu on April 16, it had become apparent that the appointment was stalemated. At that moment, Delbert Metzger, while continuing to endorse Watson, wrote to Lane that if Watson’s health was too serious a bar, then he too wanted to be a candidate for the position. Metzger also informed Secretary of State Bryan of his availability.

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR: THE SECOND GROUP

On April 24, former Hawaii Supreme Court Justice Clinton A. Galbraith suggested Samuel M. Damon as the nominee, but only Galbraith seemed to support that choice. The Interior Department received some letters of endorsement for Judge Arthur A. Wilder, but his few supporters came “mostly from men in private life in the United States.”

PINKHAM’S CANDIDACY

On April 1, California Congressman William Kent of Marin County suggested Lucius E. Pinkham for the post. Kent, a Progressive Republican and then an Independent, capitalized upon his friendship with Lane, who was from San Francisco. Gifford Pinchot, former United States Chief Forester, and Kent were leaders of the National Conservation Congress, a powerful environmentalist organization with which Lane had to contend. Kent, who had met Pinkham during visits to Hawaii, believed that Pinkham ought to be considered because he was honest to a fault and consequently had been deemed “too radical and therefore hostile to the sugar interests.” Having checked with Territorial Delegate Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaole, Kent learned that the Hawaiians “are very fond of Pinkham and . . . believe he is their best friend.” Kent had called President Roosevelt’s attention to Pinkham’s qualifications in 1907 and
noted that Roosevelt had received several indications from Hawaii that Pinkham would be a good replacement for Governor George Carter when the latter's term expired that year. As for Pinkham's nomination in 1913, Kent advised Lane that he was securing up-to-date documentation from Wallace Farrington of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin and from Alfred Carter, "considered by [former Secretary of the Interior] Walter Fisher, the squarest, ablest liberal in the Islands."

Kent recommended Pinkham with the apparently pure motive of suggesting the best man he knew. At the time of his first contact with Lane, Kent was evidently unaware of the developing dilemma facing the Wilson administration over the three self-proclaimed candidates.

Lucius E. Pinkham, born at Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts on September 19, 1850, attended public schools in Boston and Hartford, Connecticut, and then completed a business course in preparation for entering Yale. He fell while taking a horse over jumps, and from the age of nineteen until twenty-two he was unable to walk. While his handicap was not incapacitating, he did not attend Yale. He remained crippled with a shortened right leg, and his hip caused him pain for the rest of his life.

He arrived in Hawaii in 1892 to erect a coal handling plant for the Oahu Railway & Land Company and then returned to California in 1894. In 1898 he went back to Hawaii to become Treasurer and Manager of B. F. Dillingham's Pacific Hardware Company. He remained with this company until January 1903. Having been seriously ill with pneumonia in October 1902, Pinkham spent most of 1903 in retirement. On April 13, 1904 Governor Carter appointed him President of the Territorial Board of Health, a salaried position, and he served until April 12, 1908 when Governor Frear replaced him.

Pinkham's blunt speech caused recurring problems. In the fall of 1907, the Japanese community became offended by his remarks about its behavior during a recent bubonic plague outbreak at Aiea, and this Japanese reaction was a major reason for Frear not reappointing Pinkham to the health board's presidency. Pinkham then moved to California and worked briefly for the California and Hawaiian Sugar Company's refinery at Crockett. In April 1909, in the employ of the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (hereafter HSPA), he went first to Manila and then to Hong Kong to assist in transporting Filipino labor recruits to the islands. The HSPA terminated his contract in 1913 because of differences of opinion about the methods and purposes of recruiting Filipino workers.

This was the man Kent instinctively thought ought to be governor,
based upon impressions gained during trips to the islands. He labored with increasing fervor for the next four months to gain the nomination for Pinkham, plying Lane with communiques from Wallace Farrington. Kent relayed the journalist’s April 1 cablegram which noted that the three announced candidates had corralled all endorsements and that Alfred Carter was supporting Waller because of mutual ranch interests. Despite the existence of strongly entrenched opposition, Kent asked Lane to query Kuhio and Judge Sidney Ballou, the HSPA lobbyist, about Pinkham.  

As Kent prepared to broach Pinkham’s name for the first time to Lane, he cabled his idea to Farrington in Honolulu. Farrington immediately replied (though the letter did not reach Kent until mid-April), warning that while “your suggestion is dandy,” the planters resented Pinkham’s lecturing them as “to what they should do in caring for the Filipinos and discussions of sociological problems.” Farrington warned that Pinkham had powerful enemies in Honolulu:

I know in advance that the charge immediately brought against Pinkham will be that he is a crank and too positive in his opinions. Yet everyone knows that when he was at the head of the health department he accomplished more in cleaning up the city against greater odds than had ever been done before. . . . He is a man of high ideals as you know. Of course the Rapid Transit would fight him tooth and nail. Yet if Pinkham were appointed he would go to the bottom of things and would be . . . more completely free from entangling alliances with local “Interests” than any man I can think of. That should be the strong point in his favor. He has always fought Interests in whatever form they appeared. He has been a scrapper at time [sic] and therefore has vigorous enemies. For not a few of these enemies, he is to be most highly complimented. I am mighty glad you are taking a hand in the Governorship business. Hawaii needs an American governor, never needed one more than at the present day. We need some one who will break through and lead to bigger and broader American ideals without smashing things. You are right in assuming that Pinkham would do things. But he will be vigorously criticized when his name is brought to the front by many men who do not realize yet that the old order is changing.

Farrington believed that, although the three announced candidates were “lamentably weak,” Pinkham would be opposed by the Frear-Dillingham interests. The planters, who had just dismissed him, would lead in opposing his nomination while the Hawaiian people had forgotten Pinkham, another case of “out of sight, out of mind.” He observed that “So far as I am concerned in this connection, I certainly would not be afraid, but in a fight confessedly uphill, it would be necessary to know how the work would be carried on at the Washington end.” He added: “As a Pinkham contest here in Honolulu would be a lone-hand game, it is necessary for me to know just what your ideas are before I start out on the war path.” As Farrington reflected about Kent’s proposition, he
received a cautiously worded cablegram from the congressman noting that Pinkham was but a suggestion until there was more evidence that the struggle would be worth the effort. On April 5, Farrington reported to Kent that it was generally agreed that the present three candidates were “something to make one laugh or cry.” Island Democrats, in casting about for possible substitutes, saw Dr. W. D. Hobdy of the Marine Hospital Service and R. H. Trent of the Trent Trust Company as possibilities. Farrington opted for Trent as being the best of the crowd.

Two days later, McCandless had met Secretary Lane and on the 10th went to the White House. By April 22, Waller had talked with Lane and the President. When Farrington cabled Kent on April 15, “Pinkham arrived [in Honolulu] any suggestions urge delay,” Kent and Lane had been communicating about the territorial position. In “strict confidence” Kent forwarded to Lane a cable from Farrington, warning that “Farrington, like everyone else in the Islands, is subject to the whims of the sugar crowd for his livelihood,” and asking Lane to keep this correspondence out of his office files; he added: “I judge that Mr. Farrington’s mind is working along the same lines as your own. I have wired him that there is no danger of haste.” Lane forwarded this information and intelligence to the White House where it was filed. By mid-April, Pinkham’s name had reached Woodrow Wilson.

Farrington reiterated to Kent in mid-April that there was no Honolulu support for Pinkham, and said that if Pinkham’s chances did not improve and “if the row is so hot among the three” then-announced candidates, he recommended Samuel Damon. He held out hope for Pinkham’s cause, however, upon receipt of Kent’s “no danger of haste” cable which was welcome advice because it would allow the President and people in Honolulu to consider other options.

Pinkham on April 21 acknowledged Kent’s backing. Holding that both Hawaii and the Philippines needed common sense leadership, he averred that he had “had nothing to do with partisan politics, believing the best politics were sound economic administration. . . .” Pinkham did not express interest in being a candidate but, perhaps more importantly, he did not reject the thought. Kent rushed this note to Lane, adding that whatever happened in the appointment derby, Pinkham was a man whom Lane needed to consult and to invite to Washington. Kent volunteered: “I should be glad to stake him for his trip to come over here if the Department has no special funds for such purposes.” Kent knew, by May 5, that the three major candidates were not highly
regarded by the Wilson administration and that island Democrats in their internecine struggles had checkmated each other.

**Metzger’s Candidacy**

As the days slipped by, Delbert Metzger openly pushed his own candidacy. He received endorsements from several people as he sailed for the West Coast on his way to Washington. One interesting endorsement came from Pinkham who found Metzger a fine person for whom he had “high personal regard,” but his absence from Hawaii kept him from commenting on Metzger’s recent political activities. Farrington alerted Kent that Metzger, in seeking Pinkham’s endorsement, had disclosed progressive views that were very much in keeping with the ideals of the Wilson administration. The newspaperman was unimpressed with Metzger’s legislative record, but said that if the choice were between him or one of the three avowed candidates, he preferred Metzger. He informed Kent that Metzger, however, could not serve because the Organic Act of 1900 prohibited appointment of elected officials to territorial office.

**THE FEDERAL WINNOWING PROCESS**

On May 20, the Interior Department staff prepared memoranda on Damon, McCandless, Metzger, Pinkham, Waller, Watson and Wilder. The staff concurred with Farrington’s views in Metzger’s case and found Waller’s Mormon religion to be a liability. Watson was the best candidate when judged from the “quality of the endorsements and the character of the endorsers,” but his health remained in doubt. Watson countered this cloud on his candidacy by forwarding medical opinions indicating that he was currently in good health and that he would continue to recover from his paralytic stroke. McCandless, seen as a self-made man who had secured almost all of the Democratic Party endorsements, was reportedly a good politician and “popular with the masses of the people . . . ,” but he could not overcome the many charges that prior to his marriage he had fathered several illegitimate children in the islands. The staff assessment of Pinkham suggested that he was “somewhat radical in his ideas, particularly on questions of sanitation, etc.; is a man of high ideals and of positive opinions; is not popular with the railroad interests in the Islands and seems to be free from any connection with any of the leading industries. Seems to have some vigorous enemies and many friends in the Islands; is a dark horse, so far as the Governorship is concerned.”
On reaching Washington, Metzger visited President Wilson and pressed for Watson, saying he was "the best man in the Territory for the place and I believe I am the second best man." Metzger provided Kent with copies of recommendations sent to Secretary Lane, but he stated strongly that these were not to be pressed unless the Wilson administration decided not to appoint Watson. Metzger reported to Kent that he had been unable to discern from either the President or Lane their feelings about Watson.

As Pinkham sailed on May 20 for a San Francisco visit, Kent cabled Farrington to rush names of mainland and island references for Pinkham and to draft a biographical statement, for "Pinkham's chances [are] good if responsible people believe him satisfactory." Farrington forwarded a short list of possible nominators. Meanwhile, Effinger informed John Wilson of the considerable talk in Honolulu about Pinkham and "you can imagine what a red flag in the face of a bull this would mean to the Dillingham Interests, as they are all very much opposed to Pinkham, as all of the Interests here are for his independence of action. He is supposed to be Congressman Kent's dark horse." Farrington, following up on the references, unknowingly concurred with Effinger's assessment of the planters' strong opposition to Pinkham, and related that most supporters of the other candidates had no idea of the situation in Washington and that rumors were rife.

John Wilson again wrote President Wilson in late May that Hawaii's Democratic Party, after carefully considering the qualifications of McCandless, Waller, and Watson, opposed the latter two because of their affiliation with Hawaiian corporate interests. The party's requirements for the governor of the territory were: "He must be a man who is firm and immune from all corporation influences and still remain fair and honest to the people as a whole; that he should be physically capable of withstanding the hardships of the mountain trails and the rough sea voyages between islands, which one must traverse, and that he should also be familiar with the customs and requirements of the people." John Wilson maintained that only Lincoln McCandless met these specifications. Thomas J. Ryan, an active organization member, confirmed that the party faithful still supported McCandless as the only man not "coached by the Sugar Interests."

McCandless and his family returned to Honolulu on June 18, confident that he had gained the inside track. He added that if he were not nominated, at least he had assurances that no mainlander would gain the office. He reported that the Wilson administration, overwhelmed
with the task of launching the new government, had moved slowly on territorial appointments. 

While McCandless wended his way home, John Wilson called on Joseph Tumulty, President Wilson’s private secretary, at the White House on June 6. Tumulty revealed the names still under consideration. None of the three long-touted candidates was on that list; the finalists were Samuel Damon, A. A. Wilder, Lucius Pinkham, and Delbert Metzger. McCandless, Waller, and Watson were all casualties. John Wilson informed McCandless of their defeat and then vented his feelings about the remaining men: Damon at the age of 68 seemed too old; the presumed Republican, Pinkham, a tool of the sugar interests who had been a recruiter of “surfs [sic] for the plantations,” was no longer an island resident; Wilder, an inactive Democrat, was a “lawyer employed by the Sugar Interests;” and Metzger had too many voting irregularities to be pleasing to the Democrats. After reflecting on Tumulty’s information, John Wilson wrote a lengthy letter to the President reiterating why McCandless was the best candidate and deprecating the others. After criticizing Pinkham, he indicated: “He is probably the best equipped man of all those mentioned for Governor, except Mr. McCandless, but I do not think he is eligible according to the Organic Act, he has not been a resident of the islands for a number of years. He is also getting along in years and I doubt whether he can stand the strain. He has not voted in Hawaii for a number of years and when he did, he was always an ARDENT SUPPORTER of the REPUBLICAN PARTY....” While John Wilson informed Effinger on July 4 that Pinkham’s chances were nil, he perhaps unwittingly had tipped the balance toward Pinkham in his letter to the President. 

When it became clear that McCandless would not be appointed, College of Hawaii Professor of Agriculture William A. Bryan wrote to President Wilson and to Lane on June 2, offering himself as a possible solution to the national administration’s appointment dilemma. The Interior Department did not see him as a serious contender. Although active in civic affairs, he had never held public office, and the Interior staff found no evidence of his ability as an executive.

Farrington informed Kent on June 24 that Honolulu’s rumor mill indicated that Watson was the President’s first choice while Metzger appeared to be second. In fact, the Star-Bulletin carried that report as a lead story. Farrington knew that some movement was occurring in Washington when Kent cabled on June 21 to ascertain Pinkham’s political affiliation. He had to report that Pinkham had never been a Democrat, but there was no evidence that he had ever been a Republican,
although he felt that Carter would never have appointed him to the Board of Health unless he had been on that party’s rolls. The journalist suggested that the Democrats, controlled by McCandless’ political machine, would never endorse Pinkham while plantation interests remained divided between Waller and Watson. Farrington relayed that: “The principal fact is that Pinkham never ‘played politics’ in the partisan sense. He went out for results and appealed to the good sense of the public to support him. Furthermore, when he was in office there was no Democratic party worthy the name. It was a case of different factions of the Republican party. I can say that Pinkham is beyond question non-partizan, with a firm belief in efficiency in administration.” He admitted that his summary “sounds rather pessimistic insofar as it relates to your hope that Pinkham is a Democrat, but I would be foolish to send you a cable on Pinkham as a Democrat and have the final searching show what I really think his political character to be.”

Far from being dismayed, Kent seized the initiative and wrote to President Wilson that Pinkham really proved to be the strong individualist that he had been claiming. After reviewing this latest Farrington-Kent correspondence, Lane alerted the President that Pinkham had no political ties but should be invited to Washington for an interview. In a postscript, he added: “Pinkham according to the latest wire is a near Democrat—I must say I like his attitude.” The President concurred that Pinkham should “come and see us.”

Pinkham stayed at Congressman Kent’s Washington residence. Kent, apparently distressed by his candidate’s appearance and mental reflexes, warned Secretary Lane:

I hope you will have a chance to see the enclosed letter before you see Mr. Pinkham. I am more than ever impressed with the sanity and breadth of vision of Mr. Pinkham, who, in appearance, is what is known as a “singed cat”. In order to get a fair estimate of the man, it is absolutely necessary that you should give him some time. He is not a slow thinker, and certainly is a man of large vision, but being gifted with mental self-respect is very careful about his expressions. He made his own record as an administrative officer in fighting cholera, plague, native ignorance and superstition, the greed of the planters, and the impudence of the Japanese, and in spite of all this fighting, I don’t believe you will find an honest man in the Islands who would assail his character or distrust his motives.

After conferring with Pinkham, Lane informed Woodrow Wilson that “Mr. Pinkham is in town, and I have asked him to call upon you. He is a slow-spoken man, but evidently has administrative sense. He does not claim to be a Democrat, although he voted for Cleveland and Russell the last time he voted in this country. Can he be confirmed? That is a question worth considering.”
The Department of the Interior spent most of July checking out Lane’s concerns. John Wilson, who was still struggling to turn the tide in favor of McCandless and away from Watson, the presumed front runner, did not consider Pinkham a threat, nor did Watson who had arrived in Honolulu on July 1, the same day Pinkham left San Francisco for Washington, D.C. In mid-July, John Wilson saw the President again:

I thought it would be better for me to make one more talk in behalf of Link [McCandless] and also put him wise as to who Pinkham is, and to find out if I can how soon a Governor would be appointed. I will also ask him if he cannot consider Link to say so and give the organization an opportunity to name another person, if he feels that it would be impossible for him to appoint Link. In fact, I intend crowding the old fellow a little this time, and I will cable the result of this visit.42

Metzger returned to Honolulu on July 15 and advised the Star-Bulletin that Watson would be appointed governor. At the same time, while Pinkham was meeting with President Wilson and then with Secretary Lane, the Los Angeles Times thought that Professor Bryan would gain the appointment.43

Joseph Tumulty, after Pinkham met the President, turned to Ernest G. Walker of the Boston Herald’s Washington Bureau and “one of the most responsible and honorable newspapermen in the city” for additional information about Pinkham. Walker tempered his findings by saying that his information came from sources not altogether friendly to the candidate. Walker found that a major problem was Pinkham’s insult of the Japanese community in 1907, while the planters, formerly favorable to him, no longer endorsed him, for “they say he has shown eccentricities, which were embarrassing.” On the other hand, Walker’s sources found Pinkham “a very generous, big hearted man, with numerous qualifications that attract men to him.” Secretary Lane queried Pinkham about these issues and then reported to the President that Pinkham “has explained them satisfactorily, such, for instance, as the trouble with the Japanese Consul and his employment with the Hawaiian sugar planters. I have seen no evidence that he has delusions of persecution.”44

On July 19, the Star-Bulletin’s Washington correspondent wired that, while Kent had pushed Pinkham’s candidacy, Secretary of the Interior Lane had made no recommendation to President Wilson and the President would make the final decision. As the President pondered his alternatives, Senator John S. Williams of Mississippi forewarned of difficulties ahead for a Pinkham nomination. Hearing that Lane had recommended Pinkham, Williams regretted that his friend, Ed Watson, had not secured the position and told Wilson that “although I am not a radical spoilsman, it does seem to me that we might find intellect and

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character enough amongst Democrats in Hawaii out of which to make a Governor.”

Kent, on July 22, forwarded Farrington’s latest cable to Franklin Lane indicating that Manuel C. Pacheco, Democratic Territorial Chairman, had stated that “if McCandless has no chance I prefer Pinkham to either Watson or Wilder whose supporters have tried to wreck the Democratic Party to serve their own ends. Pinkham is no factionalist.” As President Wilson read the communiques sent to him by the Interior Department, he was apparently satisfied with the attitudes of territorial Democrats, but he asked Lane to check with HSPA lobbyist Royal Mead to see if any difficulties lay in that quarter. Mead’s reply came one day too late to affect the President’s decision. The Honolulu HSPA cabled Mead: “Severed connection with Association at our request after four years’ service on general grounds that we considered for the best interests of all concerned and in hope affecting harmonious cooperation our work in the Philippine Islands.”

On July 24, Woodrow Wilson sent his nomination of Pinkham as Governor of the Territory of Hawaii to the United States Senate and word was immediately cabled to Honolulu. Reported the Star-Bulletin: “Surprise and some incredulity greeted the news when it was first received. . . .” M. C. Pacheco, when interviewed, believed that with the major Democrats deadlocked, the President’s only solution was to appoint Pinkham who would be “an independent and a truly American governor.”

Two days earlier, the Pacific Commercial Advertiser had editorialized that “L. E. Pinkham’s candidacy for the governorship of Hawaii under a Democratic administration is still the wonder of the community. That he had the nerve to present himself at Washington is only slightly less surprising than the fact that he has apparently been able to secure a hearing and secure some sort of recommendation from the secretary of interior.” The newspaper’s opposition resulted from Pinkham’s open hostility to the development plans of the Honolulu streetcar company in which L. A. Thurston, the newspaper’s owner, had a substantial interest.

Riley H. Allen, editor of the Star-Bulletin, seeing Pinkham’s nomination as a personal triumph for Congressman Kent and “a logical result of the Democratic situation in Hawaii,” claimed that “some of the very objections raised against Mr. Pinkham were the deciding reasons for his nomination, for they would mean to Mr. Wilson that Pinkham would be a man identified with no local faction.” John Wilson, writing from Washington on July 27, concurred with Allen’s analysis: “This disappointment to Link should be a lesson to Watson, Waller and others,
the necessity of 'UNITY.' It is the constant scrapping and wrangling that caused the President to appoint Pinkham. . . ." While the national committeeman hoped that senators friendly to territorial Democrats might fight the confirmation, he thought that the national administration had committed itself to Pinkham and advised Hawaiian Democrats "to remain mum for the present."49

On July 31, John Wilson informed Thomas Ryan of Honolulu that when he learned of Pinkham's nomination, "it liked to have floored me." Pinkham met John Wilson on July 25 and promised to "turn all patronage over to the organization if we supported him." But Wilson, certainly the confirmed optimist, was still plotting to reverse the nomination and secure the position for McCandless. Meanwhile Farrington alerted Kent that Honolulu's "sentiment swings toward peace and support with end of bickering. Only Watson [and] McCandless talking opposition based on alleged cables from Washington."50

Controversy immediately swirled about the Pinkham appointment in Honolulu and Washington. Former Governor George Carter, who had known Kent at Yale, chastised "dear Billy" in an open letter for manipulating the appointment because Pinkham was not a qualified resident of the Territory and for labeling a well known Republican as a Democrat or non-partisan: "Billy, you congratulated the Territory on Pinkham's nomination. Permit me to congratulate you, only on this, that you have succeeded all alone in picking out and naming a Governor of Hawaii for which others are to be responsible. Poor Pinkham! I like him, and please express to him my condolences." Kent told President Wilson that Carter, an old friend, "has seemingly gone insane on this subject."51

On July 28, the Interior Department staff reported that Pinkham identified the growing island opposition as coming from the "big interests" which were led by L. A. Thurston, while in the United States Senate, Senator John S. Williams was building a coalition against him. The staff concluded that "it looks now as if there will be a big fight on."52

OPPOSITION IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE

With the focus of the power struggle shifted from the Interior Department and the White House to the Senate, Hawaiian Democrats, ignoring John Wilson's advice, determined to have the nomination rejected. Wilson informed them that if they wanted Pinkham out, they had to prove that he had been a Republican and never a Democrat. Wilson, who remained in Washington until mid-August, issued two
additional injunctions to Thomas J. Ryan, a member of the McCandless faction. He first warned Ryan and McCandless not to talk with Farrington who was relaying his findings to Kent. More importantly, he asked Ryan to keep his directives about the party a secret—"I do not want it to leak out that you are conducting the movements of the organization on my advise [sic]. I want it to appear that I am carrying out the wishes of the organization. The President is greatly opposed to a boss in politics. I do not want him to get the impression that Link and I are bosses. I have led them to believe here that I requested the organization to accept Pinkham and that the Natives Rebelled and got excited, hence I was obliged to change my action and request his redrawal [sic]."

One person who remained silent during the Democrats' ordeal was Territorial Delegate Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaole. In fact, John Wilson reported on July 31 that "Kuhio has kept out of the fight lately, [and] we cannot locate him." However, some two weeks after Pinkham's appointment, Kuhio wrote the nominee that Kent, a strong believer in "homesteading the public lands in Hawaii to promote a non-Asiatic population in that Territory and a friend of self-government in Hawaii" had "strongly advocated" the nomination of Pinkham or Alfred Carter because both held parallel views. Because of Kent's representation that Pinkham's views were identical with Kuhio's, the delegate promised not to oppose his candidacy. He foresaw that, with the growing opposition to the nomination, he would have to take a public stand and he wanted reassurance from Pinkham that Kent's premises had been correct. Pinkham sent Kuhio a telegram from Worcester, Massachusetts, affirming his beliefs in homesteading and in sound territorial government.

Kuhio responded: "To be frank with you, it was distinctly disappointing. My vital objection is that you seemed to 'hedge,' if you will pardon the expression, on the question of Commission Government," an issue that Kuhio had been worrying about most of the year. But the delegate appeared to be searching for a reason not to support Pinkham and thus made much of the fact that the governor-designate had not discussed this particular issue.

During August, some "McCandless Democrats," following John Wilson's lead, bombarded the White House and United States Senators with letters and cables about Pinkham's political affiliation, while Senator Williams, Judge Watson's sponsor, asked the same questions. Other Hawaiian Democrats informed the President of their support of Pinkham. One of these, Delbert Metzger, found the opposition to Pinkham to be technical and reflective of the self-interests of other candidates, adding "We need his brains, courage, honesty and intimate knowledge my first
choice since nominated." Metzger, having lost the gubernatorial bid, prepared to seek the position of Secretary, which also proved a futile quest.

The Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico allowed Pinkham to examine the protests it had received from Hawaii residents and to submit a response. Old charges had been made again: 1) that he favored planters over common people, 2) that he was not an island resident, 3) that he was not an active Democrat, and 4) that he was anti-Japanese. In his refutation of the charges in a detailed letter, Pinkham attested: "I believe in the plans and policies of President Wilson and the Democratic Administration and shall, if opportunity be granted, support with loyalty and enthusiasm the men and measures that represent Democracy." But Pinkham did not win the confidence of the Democrats on the committee, and Senator John Shaforth of Colorado, chairman of the Committee, forwarded both the charges and Pinkham's reply to Wilson in hopes that the President would withdraw the nomination. Wilson, however, stood firm.

On September 16, Senator Williams asked Wilson to appoint Metzger who "is not only an able man but a good Democrat," something Pinkham was not. The President agreed that Pinkham had many "ifs and buts" and some drawbacks, but he was better than Metzger and was the least risky of those considered. As for Williams' original candidate, Watson, his health had eliminated him from the governor's chair, but the President hoped to appoint him to a territorial judicial post.

Mississippi's other senator, James K. Vardaman, also challenged Pinkham's nomination. Wilson, responding that he had thought much about his dilemma and "each time I find that I am in a blind alley unless I can have Pinkham," said his choice was restricted by the 1912 Democratic Party Platform and by the Organic Act, both of which required that only territorial residents be appointed to office. He asked Vardaman for a favorable committee report, a bitter pill for the Mississippi Senator, but the Southerner avowed that he would vote for Pinkham and assured the President that he would "endeavor to get a favorable report. . . ." Meanwhile, Williams thanked the President for his concern about Watson, assured him that he would not stand in Pinkham's way, and would not filibuster against the appointment, but would insist upon a roll call vote "so that I may give my reason why I can not support him. I think you need have no fear for his confirmation because I doubt if a majority of the Democrats, even, will be guided by the rules I have laid down for myself, and, of course, every Republican will vote for Mr. Pinkham's confirmation."
The Democratic senators fought Wilson's persistence by not appearing at scheduled committee meetings. Even though Shaforth tried five times during September and October to get a quorum of the Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, he was unable to do so. But he remained hopeful of Pinkham's confirmation and succeeded on his sixth try for a meeting on October 22. Over the "violent protest" of Williams, the committee reported favorably on Pinkham's confirmation to the Senate. Since so many agreed with Williams, Senator Shaforth proposed to hold back the report for one week in order to give the President and Secretary Lane time to lobby senate members. Several senators told Lane that while they were willing to support the President, they disliked voting for Pinkham "whom they considered as a Republican." President Wilson interpreted Lane's summation of the dismal situation as a signal that it was "unwise to press any further the appointment of Mr. Pinkham, but if not Pinkham, who?" Lane responded that termination of the nomination had not been his intent.

I am for staying with Pinkham until the Senate acts. There is a possibility that he may be rejected, and I wanted you to know this, but the fact that the Senators are adverse does not lead me to the conclusion that his name should be withdrawn, for it does not seem to me to be a matter of reproach to nominate a man that the Senate rejects.

Mr. Pinkham is the best man I have yet seen for that job, but I do not feel like pleading with Senators to confirm a man when all I say is construed as a request for a personal favor on my part in the way of patronage.

The President agreed: "We ought to take the position that we have exercised our best judgment and that he is the best man we are able to suggest."

But the Senate still proved recalcitrant as Senator James H. Lewis, Democratic Party Whip, proved when he demanded that Tumulty explain why the President persisted. If the President had "any personal desire, apart from the ordinary official form for the confirmation," Lewis promised to round up enough votes to secure the appointment.

PINKHAM WINS CONFIRMATION

When the Senate began considering Pinkham's confirmation on November 24, Senator Williams attacked the nominee for his Republican affiliations. Two days later, Senator Shaforth visited the White House to learn that the President stood firm in his resolve to have Pinkham as territorial governor and planned to renominate Pinkham at the next regular session of Congress if confirmation failed this time. On November 29, the day before that session of Congress adjourned, the Senate
confirmed Pinkham by a vote of forty-six to twenty-four. While the Honolulu Star-Bulletin exalted over the success of its candidate, it had been a close call: Pinkham had garnered by just one vote the two-thirds votes necessary for confirmation. Four years later, as the question of Pinkham’s reappointment or the naming of a successor was being considered, Senator Key Pittman informed his brother, William, a Honolulu lawyer and a candidate for a territorial judgeship, that “I could have defeated Pinkham at the time of his appointment, and I would have done but for my friendship for Bill Kent. As it was, I did not vote for his confirmation—I absented myself from the chamber. My vote would have defeated him.”

Governor Pinkham travelled slowly to Hawaii during December, arriving, after a San Francisco stop-over, in Honolulu on December 30. On January 2, 1914 the Hawaii National Democratic League honored him at a reception and dinner. Three days later, the governor invited forty-one prominent Democrats, including all the hopefuls for the nomination, to a conference at the Executive Chamber. Thirty-three of them attended.

During this controversy over the appointment of a territorial governor, Woodrow Wilson demonstrated both the strengths and weaknesses that marked his administration. He proved able to dominate Congress and work his way upon the Senate. He used intuition as much as reason in his decision that Pinkham was the best man. The Wilson presidency was marked by his stubbornness that was demonstrated once again when he was confronted by a senatorial revolt over this appointment.

Governor Pinkham, the beneficiary of the several national and territorial political crosscurrents, had ample opportunity over his next four years in office to wonder if President Wilson, Congressman Kent, and Wallace Farrington had really done him a favor. In 1918, as his term expired, President Wilson did not reappoint him. Throughout his adult life, Pinkham suffered from the injury he incurred as a young man, walking with a noticeable limp. In late January 1914 Delbert Metzger had told Secretary Lane that Pinkham was “not physically strong and at times suffers much pain,” while William Kent, in reporting to Lane in 1915 about Pinkham’s gubernatorial success, stated: “Our poor old cripple is certainly making good.” While governor, he suffered three minor accidents, each of which required time for recovery. In March 1919 as he resumed his correspondence with Kent, Pinkham reported that he had been on crutches since July 1918 and even so was only able to walk a few steps.
Shortly after Warren Harding's election as President in 1920, island Democrat Judge C. W. Ashford recommended Pinkham's reappointment as territorial governor. For his part, Pinkham, as soon as he learned of Wallace Farrington's interest in that position, contacted President Harding via the President's and his own physician, Dr. Charles E. Sawyer, about his endorsement of the journalist. On June 4, 1921 Pinkham, having just learned from Farrington of the latter's appointment, congratulated Kent for having selected for a second time the governor of the territory.69

After leaving office, Pinkham travelled in the United States. He was in Kansas City when his health failed in the fall, 1922. He was taken to San Francisco in October where he had relatives. He remained bedridden, suffering from a bad heart and general abdominal problems, dying on November 2, 1922 at Letterman General Hospital at the age of seventy-two.70

NOTES


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7 Memorandum with regard to Gilbert J. Waller, 20 May 1913; letters, Waller to Wilson, 12 November 1912; J. Fern to Waller, 2 February; C. J. McCarthy to Waller, 3 February; J. P. Cooke to Waller, 5 February; and B. F. Dillingham to Waller, 4 February 1913, RG48, File 24–10–3, Waller; letter, Metzger to W. Wilson, 6 January 1913, RG48, File 24–10–3, Watson.

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10 Letter, J. Waterhouse to W. Wilson, 11 March 1913, ibid.


12 Letter, McCandless to W. Wilson, 5 March 1913, RG48, File 24-10-3, McCandless (3); and John Wilson to W. Wilson, 12 March 1913, ibid., McCandless (1).


14 Letter, John Effinger to J. Wilson, 18 March 1913, ibid.

15 Letter, Wilson to Effinger, 23 March 1913; letters, M. C. Pacheco to J. Wilson, F. K. Lane and J. E. Raker, 5 April 1915, ibid., Politics, Mar. 20–31, 1913 and Apr., 1913; HSB, 2 April 1913, p. 2 and 5 April 1913, p. 1.

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19 HSB, 2 November 1922, p. 1; letter, Lucius E. Pinkham to Sec. of Interior, 20 September 1917 and memoranda, L. E. Pinkham in re certain Hawaiian Matters [1913], RG48, File 22-11, Pinkham (1) and (2); letter, W. Frear to Sec. of Interior, 15 April 1908, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Office of Territorial Affairs, Record Group 126, File 9–4–7, Leper Settlement, NA. (Hereafter cited as RG126.)

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21 Letter, Kent to Lane, 2 April 1913, RG48, File 24-10-3, Waller.

22 Letters, Farrington to Kent, 1 April, and Kent to Sec. of Interior, 18 April 1913, RG48, File 22-11, Pinkham (1).


24 Letter, Farrington to Kent, 5 April 1913, ibid.

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26 Letters, Lane to J. P. Tumulty, Sec. to President, 17 April, and Kent to Lane, 16 April 1913, W. Wilson, File 400M.

27 Letter, Farrington to Kent, 16 April 1913, RG48, File 22-11, Pinkham (1).

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