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Home, Homelessness, and Homeland in the Kalama Valley: Re-Imagining a Hawaiian Nation Through a Property Dispute

“If I recall something, that is because others incite me to recall it.”
Paul Connerton, How Societies Remember.

In its recent “spotlight on success,” the Schuler Company, a large Honolulu homebuilder, celebrated its new Kalamaku‘u, development in O‘ahu’s (Honolulu) Kalama Valley. The company described the new suburban-style town houses and single-family homes as “housing for the local market place...relaxed, warm, friendly ambiance of island living...a home for every lifestyle.”

“Every lifestyle” does not include pig farmers, people who sell used-car parts from their makeshift carports, junk yards, homes with aluminum-foil-patched ceilings, or houses big and cheap enough for hardscrabble blue-collar workers with large families who were evicted from somewhere else. In fact, owning a home or townhouse at Kalamau‘u is possible only if your lifestyle can afford well over a half million dollars for a house, and the diversity available is much like the variety available in any recently built, higher-end American suburb. The people who would fall into the not-included lifestyle category

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were in fact the only ones living in Kalama when the first stages of its development began in the late 1960s. They called themselves locals and Hawaiians, which meant something fundamentally different from what the real estate ad means by “local market place.”

What follows is a story of real estate development and resistance with a twist. In some ways the struggle mirrored typical eviction and dislocation controversies across the U.S., but it differed and became the spark for a movement toward a new vision of Hawaiian citizenship and nationhood. Like many other land disputes in Hawaii, the origins of the Kalama dispute go back to the Great Māhele (1846–1852), which apportioned Hawaii’s land among royalty, chiefs and commoners; vastly enhanced the availability of private property; and created a sense of dispossession that continued to be apparent when Bishop Estate began its plans to develop Kalama. The Kalama controversy re-framed this sense of possession.

Kalamaku‘u is close to the last stage of 35 years of construction that has totally transformed the Kalama Valley near Sandy Beach on the southeast tip of Honolulu. The struggle over its early development was by all accounts one of the most significant political events in contemporary Hawai‘i. According to Steve Davis, a photographer who lived in the valley with the protesters at the height of the protests,

May 11, 1971 was a turning point in the history of Hawai‘i. Thirty-two local people, facing seventy riot-equipped policemen, were arrested in Kalama Valley for refusing to move from their land and homes and farms there to make room for a planned tourist resort and residential development. This confrontation was the consummation of over a year of struggle between local residents of Kalama Valley and Bishop Estate which claims to own the land.2

Pierre Bowman, a well-known reporter for one of the two major Honolulu newspapers, both of which generally wrote sympathetically about the protest, echoed that sentiment. “It was at windy, dusty, weed-filled Kalama Valley behind Sandy Beach, and it involved the most radical, illegal act in America, the seizing of property.”3 Scholars have described it as “the first prolonged resistance in the post-Statehood era.”

Even now, when enough time has passed to gain a broader per-
spective, without exception those who have written about Kalama Valley see it as the incubator of Native Hawaiian (Kanaka Maoli) political and cultural renaissance. The Kalama Valley protests triggered broader and more militant concerns about land, race, ownership, and ultimately autonomy and sovereignty for Kanaka Maoli. From then on, land and dispossession became the cornerstone of politics. The Kalama protests link to subsequent struggles over urban and rural eviction and finally to a nationalist, Kanaka Maoli sovereignty movement.

This essay takes a closer look at how this linkage came about. I trace this movement as a sometimes real and sometimes symbolic movement from home, to homeless, and the homeland. The Kalama Valley was contested space over which a new idea of citizenship emerged. This idea of citizenship emerged as links were made between homelessness and homeland. This vision of citizenship catalyzed a way of envisioning and organizing a Hawaiian nationalist movement. In the course of this struggle, beginning with Kalama Valley, home became a metaphor for homeland, and political organizing developed accordingly.

First I present a profile of the Kalama controversy and its context. Then I develop a perspective that links home, homeland, and citizenship. Finally I use this perspective to analyze the Kalama Valley controversy and its impact on Hawaiian nationalism.

THE KALAMA VALLEY CONTROVERSY

Background: the spatial reconfiguration of Honolulu

The development of Hawaiʻi Kai, a planned community adjacent to the Kalama Valley and the project that triggered that valley’s development, was the brainchild of the noted and unconventional industrialist Henry J. Kaiser. Kaiser fell in love with Hawaiʻi on a vacation in the early 1950s and returned to live there for good soon after. Learning of Kaiser’s death in 1971, a friend of his asked, “Did you ever think about what Hawaii might have been like if Henry J. Kaiser had come as a younger man instead of in 1954 at the age of 72?” That friend asked the question without irony, and the newspaper article in which it appeared also paid no attention to the question’s
assumptions. That lack of critical inquiry about development reflected the temper of the times, at least until the Kalama Valley protests.

The centerpiece of Kaiser’s Hawai‘i Kai development was the conversion of a 500-acre salt-water marsh and lagoon into an open body of water surrounded by homes and recreational boating facilities. Kaiser’s Hawai‘i Kai development plan called this land “raw” and “underdeveloped” and said nothing about lagoon’s prior history. At that time, newspaper descriptions of the area also minimized the land’s previous use and similarly saw it as “little more than a swamp, a breeding ground for smelly algae and mosquitoes,” a former area for fishing that somehow—no one said how—disappeared. The local newspaper article memorializing Kaiser’s death left the clear impression that this land took on meaning only because of his ability to envision the land in ways that no one else was imaginative enough to see. In the 1920s Waikiki had been similarly described as a “swamp” by those who wished to develop it as a tourist destination. Advocates for building the Ala Wai Canal in Waikiki justified the construction by saying that the canal would drain the swamp, create healthier conditions in the area, and generally put the land to better, more progressive use. In the process farmers in the area lost their livelihood and important place names and markers disappeared. There was no significant organized resistance to this vision and its implementation.7

Similar visions of land and history dominated the reconfiguration of Honolulu in the 1960s. By then, the city was well on its way toward looking like a dramatically different place from the one that Lewis Mumford had described a little over 20 years earlier8 or, for that matter, from the way that the city looked at the time of statehood in 1959. Hawai‘i Kai and Kalama reflected one of four major reconfigurations patterns: the conversion of agricultural land to suburban-type housing; the conversion of urban Honolulu from high density low-rise housing to high-rise condominiums; the enormous increase in the number of Waikiki hotels; and the evolution of public housing in the name of slum clearance.9 All of these reconfigurations shared common assumptions about what Douglas Rae calls “spatial hierarchies” that were so much a part of American culture and so dominant in U.S. housing policies.10 Newly constructed single-family unattached houses sat at the top of that hierarchy. Suburban developments like
Kalama Valley and Hawai‘i Kai directly reflected the continued faith in the moral primacy of that kind of home, but so, in less direct ways, did the other reconfigurations.

Housing was exceptionally expensive in Hawai‘i, so single-family unattached homes were out of reach of a large number of residents. To mitigate this, policy makers encouraged the development of high-rise and townhouse condominiums, which, to save further costs, were often constructed on leased land. The state became a national pioneer in condo development, and their numbers quickly exploded, particularly in Honolulu. In little more than a decade, there were 30,000 condo units in Honolulu, many in or near Waikiki. The condo and hotel development boom in Waikiki removed many clusters of small houses and apartments, eliminated landmarks and familiar names, and required many people either to move out or to become high-rise dwellers. Real estate ads in those years emphasized how similar condominiums were to single-family homes, “a sub-division in the sky,” as one of the real estate ads described them.

In the late 1950s the city began what up to that time was the largest slum clearance project in Honolulu history. This, too, indicated how intensely the single family suburban home was linked to progress. Like urban renewal elsewhere in the U.S., high-rises or medium density housing projects became the antidote to run-down, very dense, but low-rise neighborhoods. But despite this reconfiguration from what in his report to the Honolulu Park Board, Lewis Mumford called “low houses” to high-rises, public housing was constructed with the assumption that the single-family home remained the ultimate way to live. In its information pamphlet for property owners in the area that would undergo slum clearance, the “substandard today” picture is of a ramshackle low house while the “substantial tomorrow” picture is a one-family unattached ranch home with a palm tree and a carport. There was no such house anywhere in the neighborhood, nor of course, was any of the public housing actually constructed that way. A 1962 report to the Governor’s Low Cost Housing Committee said that it was a “prevailing myth” in Hawai‘i “that home-owners are of intrinsically greater worth to a community.”

None of these developments triggered significant discussions of the possibility of other lifestyles or other conceptions of home. Henry Kaiser was an exceptional real estate entrepreneur, but his job was...
made easier because he was selling what were already accepted cultural conventions about the modern and proper way to live.

In the 1960s the housing boom gave some new people chance to make money in real estate. They were small small players, but they had an important impact on defining the state’s housing future. Some of these were independent local entrepreneurs, among them Asian Americans who previously had been locked out of the relatively restricted land market controlled by the haole (white) elites. Many were politicians along with their friends and relatives. The small investors joined the larger developers in advocating the same kinds of housing development values and visualizing the same kinds of spatial patterns that were common throughout the United States.

Very few Kanaka Maoli benefited economically from this real estate boom. Their older versions of land use and dwelling remained obliterated. Prior to the Kalama protests there was not yet a politically or culturally resonant alternative vision that could be used to confront the rapidly developing new Honolulu. No significant alternative strategy, organization, or discourse contested these configurations of space. There was no significant political activity challenging cultural common sense that was reinforced by public policy and driven by large amounts of private capital.

There were, however, broader political developments that ultimately helped turn Kalama into a political issue. Nationally, a great debate about zoning emerged in the 1960s. Large real estate interests worked through state and municipal planning agencies to centralize the zoning process. These developers argued that existing zoning laws were too piecemeal and archaic to allow for comprehensive development. Communities and individuals frequently resisted such changes because, these opponents argued, the new zoning process was less transparent and more difficult to challenge. Zoning and land-use also became a civil rights issue in new and important ways as federal scattered-site housing policies ran up against local zoning ordinances. The utility and profitability of space also became a more significant issue for scholars whose “new urban political economy,” influenced primarily by Henri Leibvre and M. Gottdiener, took a less benign view of space and stressed a critical, political economy perspective on zoning. All this was taking place along with the political ferment of the Black Power movement and opposition to the war in
Vietnam. These ideas and developments influenced the protests, but the Kalama resistance was of a form that was particular to Hawai‘i.

**The Kalama Valley Struggle**

In 1968 Kalama Valley was rezoned from agriculture to urban. None of the 67 families living in the valley at the time participated in the rezoning hearing. Each of those families leased their land from the Bishop Estate (now called Kamehameha Schools), an unusual charitable trust that is by far the largest private landholder in the state. All of the estate’s proceeds are used for the education of Kanaka Maoli children, primarily at the Kamehameha Schools. Bishop Estate planned to maintain ownership of the land while granting the development rights to Kaiser. The estate notified its tenants in the valley that they would have to leave by the end of June 1970 and gave the families only month-to-month leases during this transitional period. The plight of the families attracted the attention of anti-war and environmental activists, Students for a Democratic Society, Black Panther party sympathizers, and, as time went on, particularly individuals concerned with the housing crisis and with environmental degradation. These organizations and individuals coalesced around a new group called Kōkua Kalama (Help Kalama), which organized the bulk of the protests within and outside the valley.

In early July 1970, Bishop Estate sent in bulldozers to begin demolishing the houses in Kalama Valley. Some of the remaining families refused to leave. Three protestors who did not live in the valley climbed onto a house to keep it from being destroyed. They were arrested. Over the next few months the conflict became more visible, and protest activities broadened. Kōkua Kalama, which changed its name to Kōkua Hawai‘i as the struggle broadened, organized two large rallies at the state capitol. Despite some promises from the governor and the legislature, the push toward eviction continued. In late April 1971, a group of protestors moved into the valley. They pitched tents, dug latrines, planted gardens, and helped the remaining families, especially the farmers, with their work. On May 11, 1971, after an uneasy but non-violent standoff, the police evicted all the tenants in the valley. They arrested 32 protestors from the groups supporting the tenants.
The conflict captured the state’s imagination, and the daily newspapers’ best reporters covered the story. Bishop Estate found itself constantly in the public eye. Church groups formed to aid in the tenants’ relocation. George Santos, a Kalama pig farmer who held out the longest, received invitations to meet with key political officials. Young attorneys got their first real taste of high visibility political work.

**Perspective: How Contests Over Home Become Contests About Citizenship and Nation**

Kalama Valley was the site of contesting ideologies over private property, progress, and the proper way to live. Both sides tried to establish a moral relationship with the land. Places are not inert containers with fixed borders. Rather, places develop meaning through language and activity. The multiple meanings of a particular space are constructed through both language and activity. Pieces of property, like other spaces, are containers of experiences. People envision the meaning of property and use narratives to get others to accept their vision. “I own this property” is one common and often compelling form of persuasion. Another comes from memories of experiences with a place, what Dolores Hayden calls “shared time in the form of shared territory.” But all forms are part of a set of narratives that attempt to give meaning to property and to convince others of that meaning. Carole Rose calls this process “property as persuasion,” narratives people create to define and defend their vision of a property’s boundaries and use.

Such narratives commonly feature memories of one’s relationship with the land—how a person used it or marked its boundaries. Home is a particularly evocative and contentious subject in this process. The home is, to paraphrase Orvar Lofgren, sacred and sweet. A loss of home may produce a strong sense of dislocation and even grief. The kinds of home people live in help determine their moral status. For example, in the United States single-family homeowners are considered to be settled people whose commitment to owning a home is an indicator that they can be reliable and deserving participants in civic life.
Without a home a person loses more than shelter and a sense of attachment; in effect, he or she also loses citizenship. What Douglas Rae calls "civic erosion" often takes place where homes are torn down and neighborhoods are reconfigured into new spaces. The homeless, in the sense that the term is commonly used, have the most diminished citizenship. In his study of the homeless, Leonard Feldman describes Giorgio Agamben’s concept of the bare life. The bare life is one of purely physical existence permanently outside the political community. Someone with a bare life is either an outlaw or a bereft person who cannot make decisions about what is best for him/herself. The views of people with bare lives do not matter. They are either outlaws or helpless. Without a home, those with bare lives become superfluous to civic life. “Citizenship as full membership,” Feldman argues, “is constituted as the exclusion of bare life, and homeless persons figure in legal and political discourse as the embodiment of bare life.” They become “strangers to law” in the sense that the law limits their opportunities even to make a case for themselves.

In her discussion of refugees, Hannah Arendt links the loss of homes to the loss of “rights to action.” “The first loss which [these] rightless suffer is the loss of their homes,” she argues, “and because of this loss, they lost the entire social texture of their lives.” A home is more than just a haven in a heartless world. It is an indicator and incubator of citizenship. People without homes are not simply dispossessed from shelter. They are also dispossessed from participation in social and political life.

Diminished citizens use various sites to counter the vision of the bare life and to reassert their citizenship. Feldman describes encampments of homeless people in such terms:

Camps provide a base for which homeless persons may contest their political exclusions, asserting their rights to dwell in a particular space and thereby challenging the logic of exclusion.

There are many other sites where citizenship can be challenged and re-imagined. This process in effect becomes a way of re-imagining the boundaries and inclusiveness of a nation.

Kalama is a site that initiated struggle from the bare life, to citi-
zenship, to a new sense of nationhood. The struggle had two strands. The first was a contest over how bare the lives of the people living in Kalama Valley actually were. Ideas and claims about home dominated this struggle. The second was more explicitly about re-imagining a different kind of political community with a different concept of citizenship, one that created symbolic and discursive space for Kanaka Maoli sovereignty. The next sections examine each of these strands.

CONTESTING THE VISION OF THE BARE LIFE

How barren is the land, how bare are the lives of the people living on it?

Two months after the Bishop Estate first sent in the bulldozers, the Estate’s chairman, Richard Lyman, accused the protestors of “distortion” and misguided resistance. To Lyman, Kalama Valley was simply a “rural slum” full of “substandard housing.” Lyman called the valley “barren land” on which “there is no history of Hawaiian culture or long-term residency of Hawaiians.” In his view, the valley’s history began when a rancher leased it from the Estate. Other than saying that they had lived there for only a short time, he did not describe the families at all. He and other Bishop Estate officials typically considered them simply short-timers in the valley and violators of property rights. The protesters were trespassers aiding other trespassers. The tenants’ legal identity as trespassers made the rest of their identities unimportant. As the judge in the subsequent trial of the protestors put it, their cases were about trespass, “nothing more, nothing less.”

Early on, the protestors sensed the need to highlight the link between the land and the people who lived there. This was not a simple task because at the time Kalama was not a well-known historical site. Whatever settlements had been there before had not been previously well described, and the remaining families had not lived there very long. George Santos, who became the most prominent resisting tenant and the last to leave the valley, had lived in Kalama for only three years. The protestors understood how important memories, particularly family memories, were to making moral claims about identity and to making claims on a place. These claims did not
depend so much on the amount of time in the valley but rather on the link between life in Kalama and broader, enduring values.

Two months after the first houses were demolished and the first protestors arrested, Kōkua Kalama, which was by then leading the resistance, declared parts of the Valley where the houses had already been demolished a “disaster area.” In front of each of these homes they placed a sign saying who had lived there, whether they were Kanaka Maoli, and where they had gone. Kōkua Kalama also began guided tours of the valley. From both within and outside the valley, narratives emerged that put a more human face on the remaining tenants and gave more texture to the valley itself. Some described the number of children that were being or had been raised by the families. Others told of the little touches that made the homes interesting and appealing—a house with “gaping holes but an intricate, lovely display of dolls,” a home with ceilings covered with aluminum foil but brand new wall-to-wall carpeting. Often these stories were about the strong link between the person and the land. A supporter who lived in the valley during the three weeks before the final eviction told of one seventy-year-old tenant who walked five miles across a ridge to and from work as a gardener each day. “His green thumb is legendary in Kalama, where his ramshackle dwelling next to an auto parts yard is surrounded by the most beautiful potted plants, vines and flowers in the valley.” A resident who had lived there for 23 years became widely known as the “mayor of Kalama Valley.” George Santos, the pig farmer who became the most visible and militant resister, became known island-wide. (Santos’s importance is discussed below.)

In response, Bishop Estate officials continued to emphasize the barrenness of the valley and the bereft lives of the people who still lived there. “You talk about keeping Kalama Valley beautiful,” Bishop Estate’s project manager said to a group of University of Hawai‘i students who gave their support to the tenants, but “go out and look at those piles of junk cars.”

Bishop Estate officials spoke about the tenants in ways that denigrated their capacity to participate in political life. Estate officials frequently identified the tenants as rightless, and consequently having no legitimate status to make their claims. “It’s the outsiders who want to create an issue. They’re looking for confrontation,” and they portrayed the resisting tenants as excitable people, “who have no
legal right to be on the premises but remain there because other protesters, created some degree of uneasiness in the minds of valley residents.” “You know,” Richard Lyman said on the eve of the evictions after tenants had already been resisting for close to two years, “I am more Hawaiian than most, and I don’t think too many Hawaiians are raising the issue. It’s other types—some of them University [of Hawai’i] professors.” The descriptions stressed the tenants’ emotional state rather than their political objectives. They were uneasy and naive victims of others’ political agendas. Their actions at times showed, “exuberance and celebratory spirits,” rather than independently arrived at political objectives and strategies. Those who were about to lose their homes did not need politics. They needed help finding housing. The tenants had needs, not demands. The coalition of churches that initially supported the protest ultimately changed its mind and instead focused on finding housing. The head of the coalition defended the choice of needs over demands. “We [the coalition of churches] are guilty of piecemeal and perhaps ’handout’ service, but it’s necessary.”

Pigs and place: full life, body memory, and physical labor

Kalama did not get defined solely by narratives. The protestors also gave meaning to the place through what Dolores Hayden calls “body memory,” physical labor that is put into a place. When they came to occupy the valley in anticipation of the evictions, the protestors helped the farmers with their work. It is unclear how much these sympathizers knew about hogs, but their presence accentuated the vision that the land entailed memories of honest, hard physical work.

Pig farming dominated the newspaper reports of conflict. It is unlikely that most people had any idea of what others in the valley did for a living, yet, with the help of the press, which never used his name without also including “pig farmer” in the identification, George Santos became known to everyone. Part of this was because of his own increased politicization during the course of the protest. As evictions neared, he made it clear that he would be the last holdout. Santos also had masterful skills in dealing with the press. He had just the right combination of good timing, clever insights, and a laid-back, informal style that was very much a part of the culture. The day
before the deadline to move, Santos told a reporter that he was thinking of dropping off his 200 pigs at the governor’s mansion. He was good copy.

But the power of pig farming went deeper than Santos’s formidable political skills. Pig farming evoked powerful memories in Hawai‘i. These farms had been scattered all over the island, some not very far from downtown Honolulu. Many were still around. Slopping the hogs appears in many local stories and memoirs. For many people, working on a pig farm was part of growing up with memories of a hard-scrabble but honest and satisfying existence. Pig farming was also associated with vulnerability and dislocation. In land-use circles, raising pigs is known as “noxious farming,” which means that among land uses it is least conducive to intermingling with new housing developments. Many pig farmers on O‘ahu, including some in living in Kalama, had been evicted in the face of housing developments. The press made this link to Kalama clear. Less than a week before the final evictions, a Honolulu Star-Bulletin story reported, “Santos and at least three of the other residents have a history of moving from valley to

Fig. 1. George Santos speaking at a demonstration sponsored by Save Our Surf and Kokua Hawai‘i at the State Capitol, 1971. Photograph by Ed Greevy.
valley in the face of new urban development.” All parties paid exquisite attention to pig farming. In 1969 the state legislature passed a resolution asking the City and County of Honolulu and Bishop Estate to find suitable relocations for the “hog owners” in Kalama. A month before the final eviction, the Star-Bulletin ran a picture of Santos preparing pig slop along with his quote saying “this boy isn’t moving.” Because of this and other public pressure, Bishop Estate spent a great deal of time trying to find a place to relocate Santos’s farm, despite his on again/off again willingness to move and despite Bishop Estate’s reluctance to get directly involved with relocation. At a crucial stage of these negotiations, the chairman of Bishop Estate indicated just how visible and sensitive the pig issue had become. The Estate cannot be asked to mitigate its Kalama Valley plans because that is the highest and best use of the land, he claimed. The Estate’s only responsibility was to generate as much income as possible for Kamehameha Schools. “There is no secondary responsibility. One piggery, or two, or ten cannot generate as much income as possible.”

Actually relocating Santos’s pigs became the last public eviction gesture the Bishop Estate had to perform. Bishop Estate officials had trouble finding truckers who would move the animals. Some truck drivers did not want to do it; at least one reportedly had gotten a death threat. So the pigs stayed in Kalama for a short time after Santos and the others had been evicted. Bishop Estate allowed him what it called “controlled access” to take care of the animals. A few days later, in what the Honolulu Advertiser described as a surprise “military maneuver,” a team of truckers, state health and agriculture officials, the state veterinarian, Bishop Estate employees, and law enforcement officials swooped into the valley to remove the pigs. To the Bishop Estate officials, this was a necessary action that was carried out carefully, but for the protesters and the public it was another vision of the small farmer crumbling before the bulldozer.

Home and citizenship

The struggle reflected opposing visions of how the valley looked and how integral the valley was to the lives of the people there. Bishop
Estate’s vision emphasized the tenants’ detachment and the absence of social networks. The remaining tenants were no longer defined by their history with the land. They were instead defined by a vision anchored in property law and the conventional values of housing development. That vision looked forward from the marginal rural to the flourishing urban—the “substandard today” versus “the substantial tomorrow.”

Bishop Estate defended its respective positions on the basis of broad claims that promised to resonate long after the last tenants and protestors left the valley. For Bishop Estate, these claims involved the sanctity of private property, emphasis on development of housing at market prices, and the necessity of changing lifestyles when progress so requires. Such progress comes from careful planning. As one of Bishop Estate’s project coordinators awkwardly put a common pro-development attitude, “The issue is the growing city. You don’t control it by cutting houses off. You do it by things like vasectomies.”

When George Santos was asked what he thought of the Bishop Estate’s description of Kalama as a rural slum, he answered, “the kind of chicken coops they’re trying to make out of Hawaii Kai, my pig pen is better than those houses.” That was a clever way to describe what Kalama was about, but it was not a totally accurate description. The protests were not simply about keeping the valley as it was. They were also about the need to build new, low-cost housing. Consequently, the protesters looked to the past but understood its limits. Emerging was an inchoate stance toward time and history that resembled Jonathon Osorio’s description of the orientation of Hawaiians toward time. Noting the Hawaiian word for “past” means the time before in front, or forward, while the word for “future” means the time after or behind, Osorio says, “We [Hawaiians] face the past, confidently interpreting the present, cautiously backing into the future, guided by what our ancestors once knew and did.” No one involved in the Kalama protests explicitly discussed this orientation toward time, but it was apparent in the ways the protesters tried to link the past to the present and the future.

The opponents offered a critique of every one of these assumptions about development and the housing market. The private market was not, in their view, the answer to the housing problem. The protests celebrated an easygoing lifestyle that had more concern for
people than for money. Their words and actions also stressed that the preservation of a variety of lifestyles had to be a part of the state’s future political agenda.

The bulldozed houses took on new meanings. They became homes. Through the protests, what Bishop Estate saw as dilapidated houses, whose inhabitants had no relevant history, became suffused with the kinds of memories that make a house a home. Kōkua Kalama and its allies challenged Bishop Estate’s restrictive vision of housing. By contesting the vision of the suburban home, the protestors made visible the link between social class and the definition of what a home should look like, that is, the link between architecture and politics. The protests effectively challenged the idea that people who were dispossessed of their homes could be defined simply as needy trespassers. The new view saw the dispossessed as political actors who were being denied their right to participate in the life of their community.

FROM HOME TO HOMELAND: THE EMERGENCE OF HAWAIIAN NATIONHOOD

Citizenship and identity: creating sympathy for distinctiveness

Looking back at the Kalama Valley 20 years after the struggle, John Witeck, a Caucasian and one of the first protesters to be arrested there, described how what he called “the Kalama movement” decided to keep Caucasians (haoles, as they are known in Hawai‘i) out of the final and most dramatic phases of the protest:

Indigenous people... wanted to make it a local people kind of stand. Haoles had a role elsewhere. The media would always jump on the fact that someone like me, a haole, was in a demonstration. If I was the only haole on a labor strike line or peace picket, the cop would come up and ask me what we were doing. And I would always be one of the first people to be arrested. The Kalama Valley activists wanted to have a tactical separation to show that this is not outside agitators, or hippie culture, or drugs, or anything else. This was a stand of local people for their local culture and for their identity.

Witeck’s reminiscence hints at several important characteristics of the politics of Kalama and the politics of Hawai‘i. Most obvious is the distinction between haoles and others and the perception of haoles
as outsiders. He distinguishes between haoles and “local people and “local culture.”

In some ways, “local” is a vaguely defined category. It tends to include natives, other Pacific Islanders, and people of Asian descent, especially if these are Asian Americans, but what it most certainly does not include are haoles. In his masterful history of the Massie case, David Stannard argues that in the aftermath of that 1931 legal debacle, “Haoles could be many things, both good and bad, but in the new parlance of the Islands they could never be local. A line was being drawn that signaled an emerging interracial and interethnic unity of consciousness among Hawai‘i’s people of color…”

Witeck hinted at another dimension of Kalama, the recognition that there were differences between “indigenous people”, as he described Kanaka Maoli, and other local people. The easy discursive move he makes from haole to local to indigenous people is a way of speaking that is now commonly understood in Hawai‘i. The Kalama Valley protests forged a new identity that reflected that move.

At various times, protesters described Kalama in terms of social class, sentiment against haoles and outsiders, local identity, lifestyle, “the people,” and “the Hawaiian people.” Over time, however, the resisters mainly talked about the issue as being local or Hawaiian. When Kōkua Kalama removed the haole protesters from the scene, the group’s spokesperson said that Kalama was a story of “Hawaiian” resistance that had never been told. A few days before the final eviction, he called Kalama a struggle against “creating mainland haole ghettos and said that the struggle was a local people’s struggle. Let the local people build their own homes. If they kick us off, it will strengthen the movement. This is a gut issue with the local people. They won’t take it.” After their arrests, Kōkua members continued to see the protests in that way:

We are in jail because in today’s Hawaii local people have no rights. We don’t have enough land or homes. We have to live packed like sardines in housing projects, while the haole bosses live in expensive estates and pocket the money we make by our own sweat.

From its earliest days the movement contained elements of Hawaiian nationalism. These moments were often scattered, fragmentary, and informal. Protesters marked the abandoned houses that had
been occupied by Kanaka Maoli. People talked about how tragic and unfair it was to pit the tenants against fellow Hawaiian truckers and law enforcement officials. For example, a protester on the roof of a Kalama Valley said to a police officer, “Hey, you guys are Hawaiian. You should be up here with us.” After the protesters had occupied the valley in anticipation of their eviction and arrest, Kōkua Kalama planned a lū’au (feast) to celebrate what it described as a few more days without eviction. They invited 150 guests from outside the valley. The problem was that the security guards hired by Bishop Estate had instructions to allow no more outsiders into the valley. The owner of the security guard service was part Hawaiian, as were some of the guards. The lū’au organizers sent the guest list to the guards with the understanding that the guards would allow anyone on the list to pass through and keep out anyone else. The guards complied. The owner of the security company described the relationship between the men and the protesters as friendly.\(^54\)

The Hawaiian issue appeared at the protesters’ trials even as the judges tried to keep the focus on the narrow issue of whether or not the protesters trespassed. “You’re another Hawaiian who sold us out, judge,” a person in the courtroom shouted after that judge had found them guilty.\(^55\) During that trial one of the defense attorneys argued that the property laws were “white man’s laws, not our laws and forced upon us by the white man after the Great Mahele.”\(^56\) Anyone who was at that trial or who read newspaper accounts of Kalama knew who “us” was.

The Bishop Estate itself played a larger role than anyone in defining Kalama as a Hawaiian issue. As previously discussed, its chair had described himself as more Hawaiian than most. Estate officials stressed how much revenue the development would generate from educating Native Hawaiian children. When challenged by his lack of concern about displacing people, the Estate’s chairman said that relocation was not Bishop Estate’s responsibility. The only responsibility that the Bishop Estate had, he argued, was a fiduciary one to the Hawaiian people through Kamehameha Schools. By emphasizing the benefits to Hawaiians, the Estate officials tried to defuse the issue, but instead they managed to make more the link between Kalama Valley and Hawaiians more visible. As the police led them away, the protesters sang the Kamehameha Schools alma mater:
“... Be strong, and ally ye, / Oh sons of Hawaii, / And bravely stand together, hand in hand.”

By the time the final evictions took place and the protesters had been arrested, it was clear that the public had become aware of these roots of Hawaiian nationalism. On the day of the arrests, the Advertiser mirrored both the wide variety of ways that participants in the controversy had framed the issue and how significantly the issue had become Hawaiian. The lead editorial warned that there was a “housing crisis” that “will not be solved for needy people or even for those with moderately low incomes by more sprawling suburbs for the middle class. Moreover, there has to be more consideration of the question of different ways of life in Hawaii.” The editorial added a moderate voice of support to the view of local and Hawaiian identity that had developed in the valley:

There is a small but rising local consciousness. At worst it can generate into a negative kind of racism that can only lead to strife. At best, however, racial identity and organization can give needed emphasis to the special problems of Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian people, a group that has not fared as well as others on this island.

The link between home and homeland

The Kalama Valley protests coincided with what has become known as the renaissance of Hawaiian music. Hawaiian music became increasingly oppositional, and much of it emerged out of the valley. Musicians clearly developed the link between home and homeland:

Songs... have been written and sung in support of political demonstrations since early 1970, when protestors sought to prevent the Bishop Estate from evicting a pig farmer from their lands in Oahu’s Kalama Valley. These crusades against the action of large landowners and real estate developers gained momentum through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

Young musicians like the group Hui Ohana performed at Kalama fundraisers. Others were inspired to write songs reflecting the pain and dislocation that Kalama symbolized to them. Hawaiian music has often been about places— islands, beaches, valleys, and mountains.
The music continued to do this after Kalama Valley but with a more militant, resistant message. Five years after the evictions, George Helm, one of these musicians, who died in another protest over land not long after he wrote this, described the subject of many of these new songs as songs about nature whose words reflect "pain, revolution; it's expressing the emotional reaction the Hawaiians are feeling to the subversion of their lifestyle."61

These extremely popular songs were often about the destruction of home and family and about dislocation. Earlier musicians like Andy Cummings wrote about the feelings about the dislocation and longing they felt when they were away from Hawai‘i,62 but the new music took on a more political and militant dimensions of renewal and reclamation. Liko Martin and Thor Wold’s "Nanakuli Blues," for example, which the group Country Comfort recorded as "Waimanalo Blues," (Waimanalo is close to Kalama Valley) tells how development was destroying the land "my father and I once knew."

Olomana, a group including Jerry Santos and Robert Beaumont, recorded two very popular songs that, in the quiet but politically resonant style that Helm said characterizes Hawaiian renaissance music, broadened and radicalized the idea of home. Beaumont was a well-known activist who some years later after his death is still honored by Hawaiian groups as "a fallen warrior" for his political activities, including grass roots involvement in the Hawai‘i sovereignty movement.63 These songs reflect a strong sense of dislocation and the need to take a stand about keeping your home:

"Ku‘u Home O Kahalu‘u"

I remember days when we were younger
We used to catch ʻo‘opu in the mountain stream
Round the Ko‘olau hills we’d ride on horseback
So long ago it seems it was a dream
Last night I dreamt I was returning
And my heart called out to you
But I fear you won’t be like I left you
Me kealoha ku‘u home o Kahaluʻu

And the group’s even more explicit song, "Home," that Beaumont co-wrote:
I'm staying, I'm not leaving
But I'm just hanging on, not knowing why.
I found the reason for staying,
Found the beauty in saying
This is my home.

Songs like “Honolulu City Lights” and “Home in the Islands” express similar feelings of dislocation and longing for home in Hawai‘i. Kapono Beamer who graduated from Kamehameha School in 1969 just as the Kalama controversy was beginning, wrote and recorded with his brother “This Our Island Home”: “We are young men of this country, young men of this land . . . This is our Island Home.”

Over the years, this music has become popular throughout the state. “This Is Our Island Home” is the theme song for the well-known Honolulu Boy Choir and has been used in TV commercials. That commercialization might suggest that in one sense those songs have lost their connotations of resistance and pain. The Boy Choir and TV renditions ignore the link between home and nation that the use of “country” by the Beamers suggests. At the same time, the mainstreaming of this music is also an indication of how acceptable the idea of Hawaiian distinctiveness has become.

Taken together, these songs attempted to restore forms of nationhood that had long been marginalized and suppressed. For his recent CD memorializing the Los Angeles Chávez Ravine neighborhood that was destroyed in order to build Dodger Stadium, Ry Cooter chose Gabby Pahinui’s son Bla to do vocals on “Third Base Dodger Stadium,” which is a particularly evocative song about place memory. Bla himself began his musical career during the time of Kalama. Cooter says, “Homey of homies, Bla lives in Honolulu, a place where memory is erased every day . . . The overhead construction crane is the state bird of Hawaii, no doubt about that.” Pahinui sings, “Ask if you want to know/ Where a local boy is coming from. / 3rd base, Dodger Stadium.”

A little more than two years after the final evictions in Kalama, protests began over evictions in Chinatown. Though the Chinatown struggle centered on densely packed apartments and single room occupancy hotels, the key issues were the same as the earlier ones in
the valley. To prepare for the destruction of the dwellings, the landowners put their tenants on month-to-month leases. The tenants were poor local people.

Many of the people who had been involved with Kalama also participated in these protests. Eviction took on a broader scope. In February 1976, activists organized a “stop all evictions now” rally. People came from a rural valley on the other side of the island, where eviction issues were already smoldering, to lend their support. These and other eviction controversies helped build a more assertive movement regarding land claims and a growing cultural and political emphasis on the idea of Hawaiians as the people of the land. As dispossession became more visible as a general political issue, it also developed a distinctively Hawaiian nationalist tone and frame.66

A Hawaiian nationalist vision became more explicit at the Sand Island protests in the late 1970s. During the previous years, a number of people had begun to live on a part of Sand Island that the state planned to develop as a park. The shelters the squatters built were makeshift but solid enough to handle the elements of Hawai'i's temperate climate. By 1979 there were 135 families living there, twice the number that had been in Kalama Valley when the Bishop Estate first began its eviction plans.

The state's eviction order was met with placards and actions that made very clear that this was about removing Kanaka Maoli from their land, and the idea of “home” was part of this response. The Sand Island residents put up Hawaiian flags and banners saying “State=squatters, people=homesteaders.”

Photos taken at the scene show a spare but far from bare life for the families. The pictures typically show them posing proudly for the camera in front of their shelters and signs. The people appear to be connected to one another and to the community they had developed.67

CONCLUSION: THE KANAKA MAOLI CITIZEN

The Kalama Valley protest generated a process that moved toward a reconstituted citizenship. The protest countered the idea that the dispossessed had bare lives. It linked the idea of home to political
Fig. 2. Young boy, Kippy, at Sand Island, December 1979. Photograph by Ed Grevey.
resistance. The protests also fostered an identity that was broad enough to include more than native people but at the same time recognized the special status of Kanaka Maoli. In the later land disputes such as Sand Island and Kaho'olawe, this Kanaka Maoli nationalism became more militant, more overt, and yet also more acceptable to the mainstream.

This acceptance of a Kanaka Maoli citizenship was very clear in the reaction to the U.S. Supreme Court’s Rice v. Cayetano decision. In Rice the court decided that the state constitutional provision allowing only Native Hawaiians to vote for Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) trustees violated the U.S. Constitution. Justice Kennedy addressed an important part of his majority opinion to “the citizens of Hawai’i.” He argued that no matter how serious the natives’ problems were, the solution to these problems,

must, as always, seek with a political consensus that begins with a sense of shared purpose. One of the necessary beginning points is this principle: the Constitution of the United States, too, has become the heritage of all citizens of Hawai’i.69

According to the Court, Freddy Rice, the haole who sued because he was not allowed to in the election was, like everyone else who lived there, a citizen of Hawai’i.70

A Honolulu Advertiser editorial severely criticized Justice Kennedy’s view of citizenship. It said that the justice’s description of Freddy Rice “as a citizen of Hawai’i and thus himself a Hawaiian in a well accepted sense of the term” is certainly not “well accepted” in Hawai’i. The editorial went on to say that maybe everyone in California and Iowa are Californians and Iowans, but Rice is “not Hawaiian. Not in Hawai’i.”71

Thus, the same newspaper that immediately after the final Kalama evictions had given qualified support to the idea that “racial identity and organization can give needed emphasis to the special problems of Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian people” now supported that idea more strongly, and in the name of citizenship.

Hawaiian sovereignty remains an unfinished and often controversial issue, but the idea of Kanaka Maoli citizenship that is both unique as well as capacious enough to include others has become part of the state’s basic political imaginary.
NOTES


3 HSB, May 12, 1971, C1.


6 Quoted in HSB, September 19, 1971, C2.


8 Lewis Mumford, Whither Honolulu, a memorandum report on park and city planning for the City and County of Honolulu Park Board, 1939.

9 Milner.


11 Mumford, 6. For an evocative description of one of these neighborhoods, see David E. Stannard, Honor Killing: How the Infamous “Massie Affair” Transformed Hawai‘i (NY: Viking, 2005), 65–81.


13 Cooper and Daws, 300–325.


15 There is no detailed account of the Kalama controversy. For this profile I have drawn from Trask, Mast and Mast, particularly 110–11, 182, 345–46, and Davies.

16 For a useful compendium, see the essays in Setha M. Low and Denise Lawrence-Zuñiga (eds.), The Anthropology of Space and Place (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003).

17 Low and Lawrence-Zuñiga, 17.


21 Rae, 215-53.


23 Feldman, 18.


25 Quoted in Feldman, 120.

26 Feldman, 106. Compare Seyla Benhabib's idea of "just membership" in Seyla Benhabib The Rights of Others (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 3. See also the discussion of the "Aboriginal Tent Embassy" which Aboriginals established on the lawn of the Australian parliament. Mark Harris, "Mapping Australian Postcolonial Landscape: From Resistance to Reconciliation?" Law/Text/Culture, 7(2003), 98. As the latter two studies demonstrate, terra nullius, the claim by colonialists that land was in fact empty and thus open to taking, was of course an important colonial doctrine and continues to have political ramifications.

27 On the nation as a site for re-defining citizenship, see Stychin.


30 For other recent struggles over the "emptiness" of land, see Harris, and see also Renisa Mawani, "Imperial Legacies (Post)Colonial Identities: Law, Space, and the Making of Stanley Park," Law/Text/Culture 7(2003) 98. As the latter two studies demonstrate, terra nullius, the claim by colonialists that land was in fact empty and thus open to taking, was of course an important colonial doctrine and continues to have political ramifications.

31 On the importance of family memories in the process of claiming space, see Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1997).

32 These descriptions are in HSB, June 27, 1970 B1; Davies, p. 31.

Yamamoto, 102, also links the Massie case to the emergence of this local identity.

The articles described the owner as part-Hawaiian. News accounts of Kalama often identified a person as Hawaiian but never used a similar designation for members of other racial or ethnic groups.


In the 1930s Cummings was inspired to write the enormously popular song
“Waikiki” on a freezing night in Michigan where he was performing at the
time.

63 http://www.hawaii-nation.org/fallen-warriors.html
64 Michael J. Shapiro, Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous
Subject (New York: Routledge, 2004) 104
67 See the photos in Grant and Hymer, Hawai‘i: Looking Back: an Illustrated History
of the Island, (Honolulu: Mutual, 2000), 378; As an illustration of how much
the Sand Island protests have become a part of the history of Hawai‘i, the
Grant and Hymer is a coffee-table-style book that is meant to highlight the
important moments in the history of Hawai‘i. Ed Greevy’s photos of homeless
people facing eviction from public lands are very self-conscious efforts to
counter the vision of the bare life. For additional examples see his photos of
the homeless on Mākua Beach in Trask and Greevy, 148–49, 152–55.
69 528 U.S. 495, 524.
70 See Jon Goldberg Hiller and Neal Milner, “Rights as Excess,” Law and Social