

## Notes & Queries

*The Journal welcomes responses to previously published articles, statements on Hawaiian and Pacific history, and queries for information that will assist research. Opinions expressed here and elsewhere in the pages of the Journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or the Hawaiian Historical Society.*

### THE HALE NAUA SOCIETY

In late 1998, the Hawaiian Historical Society and the Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities undertook sponsorship of the translation of the records of the Hale Naua Society, a cultural organization founded by King Kalākaua.<sup>1</sup> The planned focus of the translation was the material within manuscript collection M-469 at the Hawai'i State Archives, including minutes of meetings and the original constitution and by-laws of the society. Manuscript Group 469 also contains speeches, membership records, reference data, notes, and records in English as well as in Hawaiian. Because the 1886 Hawaiian manuscript of the constitution and by-laws differs from English-language versions (1886 and 1890), a new translation was deemed worthwhile. In the midst of background research, an important and uncatalogued manuscript was located at the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society and added to the documents to be translated. The fifty-eight-page *Buke Oihana*, or ritual book, of the Hale Naua Society provides a fascinating glimpse of a syncretic blend of Hawaiian culture and Western fraternalism.

The project will make the translation available to libraries, research institutions and other interested groups. These manuscripts form a vital body of primary source material relating to the first phases of the Hawaiian cultural renaissance undertaken by Kalākaua and Hawaiian nationalists. They also provide insight into nineteenth-century fraternal movements, of which Hale Naua was a unique example. Finally, the Hale Naua files allow the voices of Hawaiians who lived during

the 1880s to be heard once again, not as passive subjects but as a proud people intent on charting their own cultural and political agenda.

*Kalākaua's Hale Naua, 1886–1891*

King Kalākaua founded the Hale Naua Society in September 1886 in the midst of a decade of incessant political and social turbulence in the Hawaiian kingdom. From the early 1880s Kalākaua sought to increase the number of native Hawaiians in government positions, hoping to reverse the domination by foreigners that began a half-century earlier. Criticized widely among the largely haole planter-business-missionary alliance for this “new departure in Hawaiian politics,” Kalākaua continued this policy while also delving deeper into Hawaiian culture.<sup>2</sup> During the 1880s, the population of Hawaiians continued to decline (from more than 44,000 to 34,000) as new immigrants from China, Japan, and Portugal relocated to the kingdom.<sup>3</sup>

Within this social and political context, the king revived the *hale naua*. The original *hale naua* scrutinized the genealogical qualifications of those who claimed relationship to the chiefs, as Hawaiian historian David Malo described in a short passage of *Moolelo Hawaii*.<sup>4</sup> First a *naua hale* (house) was built, with genealogists and historians investigating claims back to the tenth generation of ancestry. Officers, guards, and watchmen supervised the comings and goings of aspirants to assure the smooth functioning of the group. However, the founding members of Kalākaua's Hale Naua interpreted the name of the organization in two ways: initially as the “House of Wisdom” and later as the “Temple of Science” during the 1886–1891 period. Mary Kawena Pukui and Nathaniel B. Emerson refer to *naua* or *nauwā* as the challenge addressed to those who sought entrance to the ancient *hale naua*.<sup>5</sup>

Kalākaua's Hale Naua had much broader objectives than those of the original *hale naua*. While seeking to revive many elements of Hawaiian culture that were slipping away, the king also promoted the advancement of modern sciences, art, and literature. The members of Kalākaua's Hale Naua undertook relatively uncontroversial activities such as wearing feather capes and cloaks of the *ali'i* (chiefs), sponsoring displays of Hawaiian artifacts at international exhibitions

in Melbourne and Paris, and promoting the production of fine tapa, woodwork, and shellwork. Simultaneously, another section of the society engaged in genealogical research, collecting the chiefly lineages as well as unpublished manuscripts describing the traditional Hawaiian *kapu* system. By carrying on the work of the kingdom's Board of Genealogy, which was on the verge of being abolished by the anti-Kalākaua Reform Party cabinet and legislature of 1887, the society essentially privatized what had been a publicly funded organization. The appointed president of the Board of Genealogy was Princess Virginia Kapo'oloku Po'omaikelani, the younger sister of Queen Kapi'olani. Members of the Hale Naua elected Princess Po'omaikelani as president in November 1887 and she continued her genealogical work.

Other sections of the Hale Naua focused on astrology, divination, and science. While the astrology-divination section apparently conducted its meetings in secret, several documents in the Hale Naua file<sup>6</sup> attest to its pursuits. In the first annual address to the Hale Naua, Antone Rosa, who briefly served as attorney general, indicated that the society was propagating knowledge held by *kahuna* (priests and experts) of every specialty, from those skilled in the arts of canoe-making, *kahuna kalaiwaa*, to those knowledgeable about the stars, *kahuna kilo hoku*. Tables were drawn listing the traditional Hawaiian names of constellations, planets, and stars along with their counterparts in Western science.

The scientific section of the Hale Naua was the society's public face, linking current scientific observations with traditional Hawaiian concepts. After obtaining a map of deep-sea soundings of the Pacific region through the U.S. surveyor general's office, society members used that information together with Kalākaua cabinet minister William Lowthian Green's published work on volcanism, and archeological evidence, to speculate on the geological forces that formed the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>7</sup> Hale Naua members thereby sought to encourage "enlightened governments" such as the United States to continue these soundings and "furnish appliances for deep sea research," said Antone Rosa.<sup>8</sup>

The progressive sentiments and the society's prescient focus on the preservation of the historic artifacts of Hawaiian material culture were obscured by criticism of the Hale Naua by Kalākaua's political

adversaries. Leaders of the emerging economic oligarchy, through the vehicle of their newspapers and thousands of specially printed pamphlets, from 1886 into the 1890s attempted to discredit Kalākaua in particular and Hawaiian royalty generally through vilification and systematic mockery.<sup>9</sup> Some of the criticism conveyed distinctly racist sentiments.<sup>10</sup> The Hale Naua was a prime target for their attacks—as a secret society, it was proudly nativist and was sailing into unfamiliar territory. Unlike established Western fraternal organizations such as the Masons, the Oddfellows, and the Knights of Pythias, all active in Honolulu in the late nineteenth century, the Hale Naua did not count conservative white businessmen among its members. Instead, the organization's membership was Hawaiian and its proceedings were carried out in the Hawaiian language. The Hale Naua quickly became a symbolic *tabula rasa* on which the sons of missionaries and business leaders could project their most fearsome nightmares of a return to the “unholy terror” of “heathen idolatry.”<sup>11</sup>

The Hale Naua had a host of historical precedents. Because so little was known of the original group, which last functioned during the reign of Kamehameha I at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Kalākaua used several established Western organizations as models. One model he acknowledged was the “Psychical Society of London”:

The London association devotes itself almost exclusively to researches in spiritual phenomena while the Hawaiian seeks to establish amicable relations between the material and the spiritual economies of nature. Therefore the scope of the latter embraces all the phenomena of the visible universe.<sup>12</sup>

The organization referred to was the Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882 to investigate parapsychological phenomena, both cognitive and physical.<sup>13</sup> Increasingly influential over the next two decades, this society counted among its members prominent British literary and political figures, including Prime Minister William Gladstone and philosopher William James.<sup>14</sup> Another important influence on Kalākaua's Hale Naua was Freemasonry, the fraternal organization to which the king belonged. By 1878 Kalākaua had attained the thirty-third degree of the Scottish Rite, awarded only to those who

have been outstanding in their contributions to the order and internationally renowned for devotion to the "craft." Like his early mentor Kamehameha IV, Kalākaua took a leadership role in Lodge Le Progres de l'Océanie, the oldest Masonic lodge in Hawai'i.<sup>15</sup> The king also deeply immersed himself in the Scottish and York Rites (Masonic affiliate organizations that granted dozens of additional "higher" degrees), with their complex ritual dramas, secrecy, and social fellowship.<sup>16</sup>

Because so little was known about the work of the original *hale naua*, Kalākaua and his associates also consulted a number of Hawaiian sources. Through his close friend, John Kapena, whose wife was the daughter of David Malo, Kalākaua obtained a copy of Malo's "Moolelo Hawaii," a wide-ranging compendium of Hawaiian cultural traditions.<sup>17</sup> And the king had long followed the career of Hawaiian scholar and historian Samuel Kamakau, whose more than two hundred newspaper articles on Hawaiian culture and history appeared in *Ka Nupepa Kuokoa* and *Ke Au Okoa* in the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>18</sup> Kalākaua combined these sources with the information compiled by Judge Abraham Fornander during decades of research into Hawaiian culture and his own considerable knowledge as the basis of the Hale Naua Society.<sup>19</sup>

At the initial meeting convened to discuss the formation of the Hale Naua, the king said that the organization would provide "a means of practicing various aspects of the humble and gentle way of life [that] the elders have preserved since genesis." The ancient Hale Naua concentrated on investigating the genealogical affiliations of those who would claim relationship with the chief or king. Kalākaua did not emphasize high lineage as a prerequisite of membership, and the qualifications for joining the society were left vague in the constitution and by-laws. The king also broke another more contemporary custom in establishing the Hale Naua: he included women as full members and officers, deviating from the pervasive male-only membership policies of Western fraternal lodges.

The secret nature of Hale Naua's mixed-gender meetings provided additional fodder for detractors of the monarchy, who declared that the ancient sexual game of *kilu* was being revived. Lorrin Thurston labeled the Hale Naua "The Ball of Twine Society" in his memoirs,

referring to the gossip that in this game the balls of 'olonā fiber were rolled toward members of the opposite sex for purposes of choosing a partner for the night.<sup>20</sup> Hale Naua records indicate, however, that the 'olonā twine was used to construct *pūlo'ulo'u*, tapa-covered balls on a staff that signified high genealogical rank and *kapu*.<sup>21</sup>

Kalākaua's most trusted friends and advisors enrolled in the society, joined by a roster of Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians. By 1888 the Hale Naua was one of the largest fraternal organizations in Honolulu with more than two hundred members. In its five-year existence, Hale Naua had a significant impact on cultural affairs in the kingdom's capital, providing a social arena for Hawaiians to both celebrate and study their culture. It also had a marked effect in the political scene because Hale Naua members formed a solid cadre of support for the Hawaiian monarchy at a time when Kalākaua's rule was endangered by proponents of the "Bayonet Constitution."

As a vehicle for strengthening the monarchy, Hale Naua may not have been the "political machine" that missionary descendant and Kalākaua opponent William D. Alexander said it was, but the organization did serve to imbue the kingdom's leaders with the aura of the sacred symbols of the Hawaiian past.<sup>22</sup> The society also facilitated Hawaiian unity at a time of increased political factionalization, a problem that would plague Kalākaua's sister and successor, Queen Lili'uokalani in the early 1890s. Yet Kalākaua and Hale Naua members had to continually deal with negative perceptions of the society as exemplified by Honolulu's English-language papers such as the *Daily Bulletin*: "it is not a fit thing for respectable people . . . sensible natives laugh at its proceedings, and further . . . its apostles are demented, crazed, pupule, off their base, clean gone, not proper subjects to be at large and should be closely watched by their friends."<sup>23</sup> Such was the attitude of the Westernizing elite who apparently saw little need or purpose for the preservation of Hawaiian culture and had little understanding of its depth and complexity.

### *Membership*

Those present at the initial organizing meeting of the Hale Naua on September 20, 1886, were King Kalākaua and Queen Kapi'olani, John T. Baker, Mrs. Ululani Baker, Mrs. Annie Maikai, Mrs. Hannah

Kinimaka, Mrs. Hannah Lilikalani and Mrs. Grace Kaahalewai, Mrs. K. Makua, Mrs. M. Kaahu, Mrs. M. Kawelo, and Mrs. K. Keaweluaole. In subsequent weeks, as the king's fiftieth birthday jubilee on November 16, 1886, drew near, the group began to steadily add members. Most of the Hale Naua members listed below were of *ali'i* lineage or connected to it by marriage.

ULULANI LEWAI BAKER, governess of the Island of Hawai'i, 1886–1887. Ululani Baker was the daughter of Noah Peleioholani, descended from the high chiefs of Maui.

JOHN TIMOTEO BAKER, husband of Ululani Baker and son of an English mariner and a Tahitian-Hawaiian mother. Elected representative in the Hawaiian legislature during the 1880s and appointed by Kalākaua as high sheriff of Hawai'i in 1886. Member of the Privy Council under Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani. Baker was a close friend of King Kalākaua and was reputed to be the model for the Kamehameha statue that stands in front of Ali'iolani Hale in Honolulu. Queen Lili'uokalani appointed Baker governor of the Island of Hawai'i in 1892–1893. John T. Baker later became a successful cattle rancher and businessman in Hilo.

ROBERT HOAPILI BAKER, brother of John and longtime aide on the staff of King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani. Robert Baker was also close friends with the king. Appointed by Kalākaua as member of the Privy Council in the late 1880s as well as governor of Maui.

JAMES HARBOTTLE BOYD, military and diplomatic aide to Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani.

PAUL PUHIULA KANOA, governor of Kaua'i, minister of finance under Kalākaua. Adopted son of Paul Kanoa, cousin of Governor Mataio Kekūānao'a, father of Kamehameha IV and Kamehameha V.

JOHN ENA, member of the House of Nobles, the Privy Council under King Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani.

JOHN LOTA KAULUKOU, elected representative in the Hawaiian legislature during the 1880s.

ANTONE ROSA, attorney general under Kalākaua, member of the Privy Council during the reign of Kalākaua, Lili'uokalani.

GEORGE MOOHEAU BECKLEY, descendent of Kohala *ali'i* and Captain George Beckley, an English mariner. Appointed to the Privy Council by Lili'uokalani.

CURTIS PIEHU IAUKEA, reared as a retainer or *kahu* to the chiefs. Longtime aide to Kalākaua, serving as private secretary, chamberlain, commissioner of crown lands, and as diplomatic envoy to European powers. Appointed by Lili'uokalani to the Privy Council.

JUNIUS KAAE, member of the House of Nobles from 1882 and the Privy Council from 1883 to 1891. Infamous for his role as the middleman in the opium licensing scandal of 1886, which discredited Kalākaua's regime.

JOHN PAUL KAHALEWAI, captain of the King's Guard.

JOHN W. KALUA, member of the Hawaiian legislature, 1882–1892, circuit judge, 1894.

EDWIN KAMAKAU LILIKALANI, member of the Hawaiian legislature during the 1880s, Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani staff member.

SAMUEL MAIKAI, member of the king's military staff.

FRANK PAHIA, member of the Hawaiian legislature, 1882–1886.

ROBERT PARKER WAIPA, officer of the King's, Queen's Guards, 1884–1891.

Submitted by Frank Karpel

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Hawaiian Historical Society Advisory Committee for the project includes Edith McKinzie, E. Alison Kay, Roger Rose, Chieko Tachihata, and Barbara E. Dunn. Project translator, Carol Silva. Project coordinator, Barbara E. Dunn. Principal humanities scholar, Frank Karpel. Hawaiian Mission Children's Society librarian Marilyn Reppun also provided much appreciated assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom, Volume III, 1874–1893, The Kalākaua Dynasty* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1967) 246.

<sup>3</sup> Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1977) 25.

<sup>4</sup> The ancient tradition has been designated *hale naua* in accordance with the suggestion of the advisory committee convened by the Hawaiian Historical Society in order distinguish it from its late nineteenth-century incarnation. David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities (Moolelo Hawaii)*, trans. Nathaniel B. Emerson (Honolulu: Bishop Museum, 1951) 191–92.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Kawena Pukui and Samuel H. Elbert, *Hawaiian-English Dictionary* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1965) 243; Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities* 199.

<sup>6</sup> Hale Naua Collection, M-469 (hereafter M-469), AH.

- <sup>7</sup> William Lowthian Green, *Vestiges of the Molten Globe* (London: E. Stanford, 1875–87).
- <sup>8</sup> In the first annual address to the Hale Naua Society, 1887. M-469, AH.
- <sup>9</sup> See “Kalakaua’s Hawaii, 1874–1891.” Pamphlet Collection, microfilm 3138, U of Hawai’i, Hamilton Library.
- <sup>10</sup> See particularly Alatau Atkinson and Edwin Purvis, “The Grand Duke of Gynbergdrinkenstein” and the “Gynberg Ballads,” as well as Sereno E. Bishop, “Why Are the Hawaiians Dying Out?,” in “Kalakaua’s Hawaii,” Pamphlet Collection. The condemnation of the Hale Naua by haole elites continued long after the organization had passed from the scene. Interestingly, there is a distinct change in tone and content of these critiques over time. During the late 1880s and 1890s, the king’s opponents mocked his regal pretensions and the society’s claims to historical legitimacy while emotionally denouncing the return of “heathen idolatry.” From the 1930s onward, the Hale Naua was disparaged for its scientific shortcomings, including vastly overestimating the geological age of the planet in its annual reports and the preamble to its constitution. See James Bicknell, “Hoomanamana—Idolatry,” in “Kalakaua’s Hawaii, 1874–1891.” Lorrin Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (Honolulu: Advertiser Publishing, 1936) ix, 28; Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom* 345.
- <sup>11</sup> *F* February 1901.
- <sup>12</sup> *PCA* Feb. 5, 1888.
- <sup>13</sup> Peter Washington, *Madame Blavatsky’s Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums and Misfits who Brought Spiritualism to America* (New York: Shocken Books, 1995) 80.
- <sup>14</sup> Washington, *Madame Blavatsky’s Baboon* 80.
- <sup>15</sup> See Frank Karpriel, “Mystic Ties of Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Hawaiian Royalty and Ritual,” *Pacific Historical Review* (forthcoming).
- <sup>16</sup> Karpriel, “Mystic Ties of Brotherhood.”
- <sup>17</sup> There are three surviving nineteenth century manuscript versions of “Moolelo Hawaii” located at the U of Hawai’i Hamilton Library, Hawaiian Collection.
- <sup>18</sup> Many of Kamakau’s articles were translated by Mary Kawena Pukui and subsequently published in the following collections: Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *Ka Po’e Kahiko, The People of Old*, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1974); Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *The Works of the People of Old, Ka Hana a ka Po’e Kahiko*, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1992); *Tales and Traditions of the People of Old, Nā Mo’olelo a ka Po’e Kahiko*, trans. Mary Kawena Pukui (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1991). Another notable work by Kamakau, translated by a team of scholars including Pukui and first published in 1961, is Samuel Manaiakalani Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*, rev. ed. (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools P, 1992).
- <sup>19</sup> Fornander’s work was originally published between 1878 and 1885 and has been reprinted several times. See Abraham Fornander, *An Account of the Polynesian Race: Its Origins and Migrations* (Rutland, Vt.: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1969).

<sup>20</sup> Thurston, *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* ix, 28.

<sup>21</sup> Hale Naua Collection, M-469, 1H. 'Olonā fiber was used to make fishing lines and nets, tapa, and many other items. It also formed the base of ti-leaf rain-coats and feather capes.

<sup>22</sup> William DeWitt Alexander, *History of the Later Years of the Hawaiian Monarchy* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette, 1896) 16.

<sup>23</sup> *DB* Nov. 13, 1886.