



Bernice Pauahi Pākī and Charles Reed Bishop: A Marriage of Imperialism and Intimacy in Nineteenth-Century Hawai‘i

Quinn Akina*, History

ABSTRACT

In 1850 at the age of eighteen, Princess Bernice Pauahi Pākī challenged dynastic resistance when she terminated an arranged marriage to her royal cousin in favor of a marriage to New England merchant Charles Reed Bishop. The marriage of a Native Hawaiian princess and an American foreigner at a time when interracial sexuality was heavily policed offers a rare opportunity to examine nineteenth-century attitudes toward interracial marriage in colonial environments. When understood within the context of imperialism, the Bishop marriage emerges as an intimate and ambiguous zone of empire. In considering the role of personal interests in private relationships and investigating how these ambitions manifested within Pauahi and Bishop’s marital relationship, this study ultimately argues that personal interests, both political and romantic, informed the couple’s marriage.

Hawai‘i was a vulnerable kingdom during the nineteenth century’s era of Manifest Destiny. As a commercial acquisition and ideal location for American settlement, the Hawaiian Islands were an object of expansionist lust. According to historian Amy Greenberg, aggressive expansionism that unfolded in the Pacific came as the result of a vision of Manifest Destiny that celebrated white supremacy.¹ Scholars of American history have already established links between white supremacy and the policing of interracial sexuality, which reached its zenith during the nineteenth century.² It was not atypical for proponents of racial purity, for example, to forbid intermarriage on the basis of natural law. Such a racialized convergence of ideas about religion, culture, and biology simultaneously justified and challenged American imperialism in the Pacific. As a result of its paradoxical applications, this logic at once strengthened and undermined interethnic marriages between white men who settled in Hawai‘i and local women of color.

Americans were not the only people to monitor sexual and marital relationships on the basis of race. On the contrary, the desire to maintain social and genealogical purity also resulted in ethnic and intra-status endogamy among Native Hawaiians.³ This impulse was particularly strong within the *ali‘i* (royal) class, whose members continued to marry first- and second-degree

* Quinn Akina will graduate from the University of Oregon in June 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in History. She will return to the University of Oregon in the fall to pursue a master’s degree in history. Please send correspondence to quinnakina@gmail.com.

relatives despite the abolition of incestuous marriage following the introduction of Christianity by American missionaries in 1820. In 1834, for example, King Kamehameha III married his full sister. Four years later, two closely-related branches of the ruling family arranged a marriage between their infant son, Lot Kapuāiwa, and Lot Kapuāiwa's newborn cousin, Bernice Pauahi Pākī, demonstrating that the practical logic of endogamous marriage prevailed (albeit to a lesser degree) even after the abolition of incest.

The Kapuāiwa betrothal of 1839 symbolized familial expectations for a joint accession to the throne and hope for the kingdom's future security. These wishes were disappointed in 1850 when Pauahi married Charles Reed Bishop. Theirs was a union that defied popular anti-amalgamation sentiment as the first marriage between a daughter of the Kamehameha dynasty and an American foreigner. As such, the Bishop marriage offers a unique window into nineteenth-century attitudes toward interethnic marriage in cross-cultural contact zones. Moreover, such an alliance between two so unequally ranked individuals in this historic situation raises important questions about structures of dominance and individual agency: At what moments and to what degree did each partner exercise interpersonal dominance in the relationship? In this example of what critical race theorist Ann Stoler calls a "tender tie," we must also consider whether power struggles and mutual love were compatible.⁴

This study seeks to answer these critical questions by placing the Bishop marriage within a comprehensive framework that considers both imperialism and intimacy. To that end, this investigation takes a chronological approach to detailing the circumstances leading up to the Bishop marriage, including the birth of Pauahi in 1831 and the formative decade (1840-1850) during which she and Kapuāiwa attended The Chief's Children's School. Finally, the Bishop marriage is considered under historian Deborah Moreno's model of intercultural marriage to ultimately conclude that the Bishops' mutual love was constituted by and of colonial power brokering.

Given the numerous persons and complicated relationships this investigation takes under examination, it may be best to briefly identify each at the outset. At the center of this historical narrative is the Native Hawaiian princess, Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop. Her biological parents were High Chief Abner Pākī and Princess Laura Kōnia. Pauahi's *hānai* (adoptive) parents were Royal Governor Mataio Kekūanā'oa and Queen Regent Elizabeth Kīna'u. Pauahi counted five siblings between both families, including Kekūanā'oa and Kīna'u's biological son, Lot Kapuāiwa, and Pākī and Kōnia's *hānai* daughter, Kamaka'eha. Aside from Bishop, two other Americans by the names of Amos and Juliette Cooke also play a central role in this narrative. Sent to the islands by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the husband-and-wife pair taught at The Chief's Children's School and was the only set of Pauahi's guardians to encourage her relationship with Bishop.

Pauahi was born in Pākī and Kōnia's home, 'Aikupika, on the morning of December 19, 1831. Less than a week later, she was delivered into the custody of Kekūanā'oa and Kīna'u in the prevailing tradition of *hānai* (a practice comparable to informal open adoption among family and close friends). Unification of families was the most significant outcome of informal

adoption, though a complex web of kinship was already in place even before the princess' birth. For example, Kōnia was the sister of Kekūanā'oa's second wife, Kalanipauahi, and also the niece of his third wife, Kīna'u. As one strand in this intricate web of interrelatedness and alliance, Pauahi's adoption was therefore a symbolic reaffirmation of affinity between the two royal branches of Hawai'i's ruling family.

In addition to the physical exchange of a child, the erasure of distinctions between biological and adoptive ties was crucial to this fusion of families. While this practice may have been "perfectly natural" to the Native Hawaiian community, American settlers regarded it as "a most unnatural system and a grievous outrage upon maternal instincts."⁵ Nevertheless, because state policy forbade any legal modifications of this tradition, foreigners were forced to accept the legitimacy of *hānai* kinship—and by extension, a looser family structure that was at odds with the contemporary American concept of the nuclear family. Americans' acquiescence is exemplified by the fact that no one distinguished between biological and adoptive ties.⁶

Just as the *ali'i* strengthened family connections by blurring the division between biological and adoptive relationships, they further cemented these bonds by arranging marriages between their offspring. Although the exact date is unknown, Pauahi and Kapuāiwa were engaged sometime before Kīna'u's death in 1839.⁷ There were at least two incentives to orchestrate such unions. First, marriage among the chiefs was an important matter of state policy. The prince and princess both ranked high in the succession of potential heirs eligible for the throne. A joint claim via marriage could strengthen both families' claim to monarchical power. Secondly, an attempt to revive traditional marriage practices may be another rationale, since *hānai* sibling marriage echoed earlier days when "brothers and sisters in the reigning families sometimes married each other in order to have children of the highest possible rank."⁸ Provided that Pauahi and Kapuāiwa ascended the throne together and produced an heir, an undisturbed transfer of power was guaranteed. In light of these possibilities, their betrothal was cause for celebration in the Native Hawaiian community.

Native Hawaiians anticipated the engagement in part because of its traditional *hānai* roots. Ironically, it was for the same reason that ABCFM missionaries denounced the proposed marriage as an abomination to God. Recalling that neither natives nor foreigners differentiated between biological and adoptive ties helps to explain why evangelicals viewed marriage between *hānai* siblings as incestuous. Beyond those considerations, the arrangement was perceived as a personal affront to ABCFM, who had claimed earlier that their missionary activity had resulted in a "universality of change... unexampled in the history of Christianity."⁹ Having been orchestrated by royals who were already confirmed members of the church, the arranged marriage suggested that conversion did not automatically eliminate long-established traditions of Native Hawaiian marriage or necessarily engender Christian values in new converts. Thus, the betrothal raised troubling questions about the past, present, and future successes of ABCFM's mission in the Hawaiian Islands: If the *ali'i* were only half-heartedly committed to the new religion, how could Christianity hope to spread into the masses? Would Native Hawaiian "minds ever be freed from utter darkness, their hearts... from the influence of depraved passion, and their lives... [from] gross vices"?¹⁰ While it is clear that both natives and foreigners accepted the

legitimacy of the *hānai* relationship, it is equally apparent that these cultural groups' differing principles gave way to a polarized understanding of the tradition's functions and implications. Such contradictory perceptions of native customs explain these conflicting reactions to both the Kapuāiwa engagement and ultimately, the Bishop marriage.

Thus far, *hānai* has been discussed in broad strokes as a cultural practice. Yet it would be a grave oversight for any comprehensive historical study to ignore how this social system affected relationships on the individual level. For example, Pauahi spent the first eight years of her life as the only daughter in Kekūanā'oa and Kīna'u's household in what was surely a formative experience. While the princess' private thoughts on her adoption are unknown, the memoir of Kamaka'eha, the daughter adopted by Pauahi's biological parents, makes it possible to imagine how young royals experienced *hānai*:

I knew no other father or mother than my foster-parents, no other sister than Bernice. I used to climb up on the knees of Pākī... and he caressed me as a father would his child; while on the contrary, when I met my own parents, it was with perhaps more of interest, yet always with the demeanor I would have shown to any strangers who noticed me. My own father and mother had other children... the most of them being adopted into other chiefs' families; and although I knew that these were my own brothers and sisters, yet we met throughout my younger life as though we had not known our common parentage.¹¹

Not all chieftains' children were as content as Kamaka'eha. Rather, Kapuāiwa believed that *hānai* "deprived [him] of the love of a mother, and ... [made him into] a stranger in the house of [his] adoption."¹² While Kamaka'eha's and Kapuāiwa's accounts demonstrate personal variations in adoption experiences, what is clearly apparent from both recollections is that *hānai* children recognized their alienation from their biological families. Physical and emotional estrangement was a natural consequence of the *hānai* social system that affected all involved. Indeed, Pauahi's detachment from her biological family may account for her willingness to marry against their wishes.

As Pauahi's biological parents, Pākī and Kōnia never recovered from their separation from their natural daughter. Throughout their lives, they remained "very desirous of" and dedicated to her reunion¹³ such that when the Queen Regent suddenly died from a paralytic affection in April of 1839, Pākī quickly moved to regain custody of Pauahi. As eager as Pākī and his wife were to reclaim their natural daughter, her foster father Kekūanā'oa was equally adamant about keeping the "promising child of whom he and the other chiefs had become very proud."¹⁴ Pākī proved the more determined of the two and Pauahi returned to live in 'Aikupika sometime between April and June of the same year.¹⁵ The family's reunion, while successful, was also short-lived. By the most generous scholarly estimates, the princess spent only two months at 'Aikupika before she left to attend The Chief's Children's School. From the time students enrolled in this boarding school until they either reached their majority or entered into marriage, students remained on campus and were "allowed to return to their homes [only] during vacation time, as well as for an occasional Sunday during the term."¹⁶ School records

indicate that Pauahi rarely visited either her biological or her *hānai* parents. In fact, her only absence between 1840 and 1850 occurred during the week of March 1, 1842, when she left the island to recover from pleurisy, a lung condition. Except for these sporadic and brief trips home, Pauahi therefore spent little time in the company of her Native Hawaiian families. Losing their daughter a second time—and for such a long duration—appears to have devastated Pākī and Kōnia, both of whom ultimately came to regard the institution and its directors, including the Cookes, as competitors for Pauahi’s affection and obedience. The royal pair was so jealous of the Cookes’ possession of their natural daughter that they initially refused to send their *hānai* daughter, Kamaka’eha, to school. Thus, Pākī and Kōnia’s thwarted desire to claim Pauahi’s childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood may explain their hostility toward those they perceived as rivals for her heart.

American Protestant missionaries, particularly Amos and Juliette Cooke, were some of the first rivals for the princess’ heart. A careful study of the couple’s role in acculturating Pauahi to American ideologies is critical to understanding her later preference for an interethnic marriage. The Cookes and their twelve ABCFM companions arrived in Honolulu Harbor on April 9, 1837.¹⁷ Theirs was not only the largest company of missionaries commissioned up to that point, but also the first to include teachers. Educators, the ABCFM Prudential Committee believed, would best fill the “vacuum in the nation’s civil and religious affairs” occasioned by the abandonment of polytheism in the early 1820s.¹⁸ Teachers’ overt purpose as tools “employed in the propagation of the gospel”¹⁹ was clear: the Cookes would teach their Native Hawaiian pupils “industry by the aid of art, science, and piety,”²⁰ as well as help their new Christian brethren “establish institutions, civil and literary, for the improvement and happiness of a people now barbarous and wretched.”²¹ The arrival of ABCFM missionaries in the islands promised to become a harbinger of change for the kingdom.

So it was that Native Hawaiian education underwent significant changes in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1809, King Kamehameha II ordered missionaries to instruct his chiefs and certain favored commoners in English literacy so that Native Hawaiians would have the “mystical abilities of foreigners to transact by means of paper and script.”²² Missionaries happily complied, since conversion efforts required communication in a shared language. As a result, from the 1810s to mid-1830s, Native Hawaiian adults made up “the great part of pupils.”²³ King Kamehameha II’s successor, Kamehameha III, expanded the monopoly his brother had placed on learning and literacy by making education compulsory in 1835 for all children over four years of age, including Pauahi.

The Crown was particularly concerned with educational opportunities for royal offspring. In 1839, King Kamehameha III ordered the construction of The Chief’s Children’s School for “persons whose claims to the throne were acknowledged” by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Hawai’i.²⁴ The *ali’i* petitioned Amos Cooke to offer his services as a teacher, since they believed it was he who could best “teach wisdom and righteousness” to their children.²⁵ Cooke accepted the nomination, stipulating that the chiefs “build a school house, sustain him in his authority over the scholars, and support the Sabbath.”²⁶ This collaborative effort to establish The Chief’s Children’s School was one of the many measures advancing the formal education of natives.

Amos and Juliette Cooke officially opened their boarding school on May 5, 1840, enrolling pupils Alexander Liholiho, Bernice Pauahi, James Kaliokalani, Lot Kapuāiwa, Moses Kekūāiwa, and William Kīna‘u. Over the course of twenty-one years, ten more students gained admittance. As befitting the royal background of its students, the institution’s motto was “*Aupuni Na‘auao*” (“Wise Government”).²⁷ According to ABCFM, wise government required that the Cookes frame their Native Hawaiian school after American-Protestant educational models. Consequently, “the government of the school [was] paternal in its influence.”²⁸ School days for Pauahi and her peers thus consisted of a series of highly structured and ritualized exercises in prayer, English composition, mathematics, geography, and drawing.

The Cookes attempted to exert—and sometimes gained—a Westernizing influence over their pupils. Amos and Juliette perceived their project of acculturation to be most successful with Pauahi, whose behavior and intellectual endowments were above reproach. Juliette’s letter to her sister describes the fifteen-year-old princess as follows:

Bernice is a most lovely girl—lovely in feature, form, and disposition... She reads to me every day [for] an hour. She is very fond of reading, likes history, and is very well versed in it for a girl of her age—she plays and sings well, paints prettily, works well, makes her own dresses... I wish you could know her, you would love her.²⁹

By the age of sixteen, Pauahi’s role in the school had evolved from student to appointed librarian and even assistant teacher. In this last position, she was “devoted to domestic economy and teaching younger girls pianoforte and singing.”³⁰ The nature of the princess’s educational accomplishments hint at her strong Western leaning. Gorham Gilman, a visiting Bostonian merchant, saw in Pauahi the successful Americanization of a Native Hawaiian. “Miss Bernice Pauahi,” Gilman complimented, “has always been more under foreign influence than most other pupils. She is now a young lady [who] combines a well cultivated mind with much grace of person... She would win golden opinions in any circle.”³¹ He attributed her formation of character to Juliette Cooke, whom “the female pupils seem to be strongly attached... [and] who possessing a well-balanced, well regulated mind, with much tact and discretion... has succeeded in a rich degree in imparting a portion of these happy traits to some of her pupils.”³² The parallel that Gilman draws between Juliette’s instruction and the princess’s development is significant not only because it testifies to the crucial role the female missionary played as an agent of Manifest Destiny and domesticity,³³ but also because it provides a framework for understanding Pauahi’s marital choice as a consequence of the Cookes’ successful conversion. Pauahi’s assertion of personal agency in selecting a love match appears to have been subsumed (at least partially) under the cultural influence of her exposure to missionaries, who viewed interethnic marriage as a means to “transplant and engraft the liberal policy of [American] institutions upon old heathen despotisms.”³⁴

Under the supervision of the Cookes at The Chief’s Children’s School, the princess socialized with both Native Hawaiian and American suitors. As boarders, Pauahi and Kapuāiwa had plenty of time and opportunity to gain an intimate knowledge of one another’s character and so

evaluate the suitability of their arrangement. Which of the prince's character traits might the princess have admired or criticized, and how might her judgment of Kapuāiwa compare to her estimation of Bishop?

The Cooke journals record the personal development of the young man who would later become King Kamehameha V. Kapuāiwa was a gifted flutist at the court of the king. His civic involvement ranged from translating articles for a local Hawaiian newspaper to participating in parliamentary sessions. In terms of musical and community interests, Kapuāiwa shared much in common with Pauahi, who was a noted pianist and translator for the same Hawaiian newspaper, *'Ele'ele Hawai'i*. There, however, the couple's similarities appear to end.

More often than not, Kapuāiwa seems to have conducted himself in ways unbecoming of his rank, upbringing, and future bride. Intemperance was one of his more serious offences. By the 1840s, missionaries and natives began to associate intemperance with beastliness. Royal Governor Kuakini captured this new idea in a speech he gave, saying: "To *horses, cattle, and hogs*, you may sell rum; but to *real men* you must not on these shores."³⁵ Kuakini's speech articulates a connection between temperance and a form of manhood marked by abstinence that was then gaining hegemonic strength both in the United States and Hawai'i during the nineteenth century. Whereas Bishop, who was elected as the Vice President of the Oahu Temperance Society in 1848, well epitomized this emerging type of straight-laced Protestant-influenced masculinity, Kapuāiwa exercised an older form of manhood that recalled earlier days when chiefs were "habitually addicted to the grossest intemperance [and when Hawai'i was a] nation of drunkards."³⁶ In August of 1845, neighboring missionaries witnessed Kapuāiwa and his two brothers purchasing and consuming wine—activities which were in clear violation of both school and government prohibitions against the sale and consumption of alcohol. When confronted by Amos, the brothers "appear[ed] much disposed to conceal each other's guilt."³⁷ Indeed, Amos was never able to break the brothers' alliance or curb their defiances, and in fact, struggled to establish authority over his male charges from the school's very beginning. In 1839, he wrote: "Today punished Alexander & Moses replied *he keiki a ke ali'i 'oia nei* [he was a child of the Chief]. I replied *I was King of the school*."³⁸ Thus, there was clearly a jockeying for supremacy in The Chief's Children's School that pitted foreign teachers against native children. As evidenced by his continued intemperance, Kapuāiwa had the upper-hand over Amos by the time he reached adolescence, and as such, it seems he may not have been as receptive to the Cookes' acculturation efforts as was Pauahi.

Scholars cannot know exactly what the comparatively well-behaved Pauahi thought about Kapuāiwa's behavior. She, like Amos and Juliette, probably perceived his rebellions to be a rejection of the Cookes and their American Protestant ideals. The prince's resistance may have repelled the princess, especially if she interpreted his actions as a critique of Americanized royals like herself. In this way, the young royals' contrasting reactions to Westernization help to explain not only Kapuāiwa's compliance with Pauahi's wish to call off their arranged marriage, but also her eventual choice of an American husband.

The Cooke journal entry on March 14, 1849 is the first of any source to mention Bishop in connection with Pauahi. Their courtship was typical of those in the nineteenth-century, consisting of “calls received, walks taken, visits exchanged... [and] communication through writing.”³⁹ In a letter dated August 30, 1849, Amos captured a sense of the romance between Pauahi and Bishop when he wrote:

Juliette and Bernice are engaged in sewing and Mr. Bishop is reading to them from the “Life of Hannah More.” Probably you are aware that Miss Bernice has a beau who calls almost every evening and probably will till they find a home of their own... Mr. Bishop has called again and commenced his reading, but, alas, it is broken in upon for I hear the voice of a Mr. Hitchcock, formerly Editor of the “*Polynesian*.” ... For all who call, Bernice is obliged to grind out a few tunes on the Aeolian attachment as an accompaniment to her singing. It is getting to be an old story, especially to her, except when Mr. B. is present. It is very apparent that her thoughts and affections are centering in him, and well they may, for he is in every way worthy of her heart and hand. I hope and pray that it may turn out to be a match made in heaven, and that heaven’s blessing may ever attend them, both in this world and in that which is to come.⁴⁰

Although it is risky to speculate about the emotional quality of any private relationship, it is reasonable to believe that love fueled the couple’s union. Certainly, some attachment existed between the two given that they overcame serious objections to both their courtship and marriage.

In September of 1849, the princess took measures to end her arranged marriage with Kapuāiwa. She “had a frank talk with Governor Kekūanā‘oa about his desire that she marry Lot. She told him she did not like Lot.”⁴¹ A week later, Kekūanā‘oa, Pākī, and Kōnia sought to negotiate a public announcement of the engagement with an understanding that the marriage would occur upon Kapuāiwa’s “return from France. They wished her to decide at once without seeing him & without his saying to her whether or not he loves her.”⁴² The princess reacted by writing a note to her betrothed:

She told him the wishes of their parents & said she would consent in accordance with their commands but she knew it would make her always unhappy for he did not love her, nor did she love him. After this, she wrote to the Governor & said if they wished her buried in a coffin, she would submit to their authority. That she would as soon have them bury her as to promise to marry Lot.⁴³

Pauahi’s challenge to the established order and reluctant, almost rebellious submission highlights emerging tensions between patriarchy and individualism. Her strategy was ineffective with her royal parents, who declared, “she was deceiving herself.”⁴⁴ Interracial marriage scholar Deborah Moreno theorizes that in order for a native elite woman to marry against the initial desires of her family, she first needed to acquire the alliance of her mother; working together, the mother-daughter pair then needed to convince the woman’s father of the groom’s suitability.⁴⁵ Pauahi, however, failed to accomplish either of the objectives Moreno outlines.

Although ineffective with the elder generation of *ali'i*, Pauahi's appeal to emotional intimacy and personal compatibility worked on Kapuāiwa. After receiving the aforementioned letter, the prince "wrote saying he exonerated her from all her promises in her youth, that he would not be the means of rendering her unhappy, that he knew he was unworthy of her, but that there was one who was worthy, even the one she loved & he hoped she would be happy with him."⁴⁶ Having been raised during the Victorian era when romantic expression was idealized, perhaps Kapuāiwa felt obligated to release a fiancée who claimed she did not love him.⁴⁷ An equally (if not more) likely explanation for his easy capitulation is that he had no wish to marry a woman who appeared captivated by the culture for which he held little esteem. Support for this argument comes from the fact that he twice proposed marriage to Emma Rooke, a scholar at The Chief's Children's School whose anti-American and pro-British sentiments were well known.⁴⁸ In any case, the prince made clear his awareness of and encouragement for the relationship between Pauahi and Bishop in his letter. In this way, Pauahi's strategic discourse and broken engagement attests to the possibility for feminine agency against a backdrop of patriarchal pressure.

On November 1, 1849, Amos noted that there was still "much opposition with [Pauahi's] parents and native friends" toward her relationship with Bishop.⁴⁹ So strongly opposed were Pākī and Kōnia to Bishop's suit that they threatened to disown her, informing Pauahi that she "must look to Mr. and Mrs. Cooke for all her *pono* [care]."⁵⁰ A week after she read her parents' disapproving letter, Pauahi wrote to Bishop "in such a manner as to release him if he wished."⁵¹ Bishop responded the same night, appearing at The Chief's Children's School where he convincingly promised his continued suit and devotion. In this sense, Pauahi's actions appear to be part of classic nineteenth-century courtship performance. Karen Lystra, a social historian who studies marriages of the Victorian era, observes that wooing featured at least one dramatic emotional crisis by the woman as a test to gauge her partner's emotional commitment. According to Lystra, Pauahi did not need to "create a major or minor crises" for she had the "life material" of her family's opposition as an "obstacle in the pathway of love," which Bishop needed "to overcome [by] actions or words of reassurance."⁵² If viewed in this light, Pauahi and Bishop were actors performing a highly ritualized and well-established script. That is not to say, however, that the couple did not benefit from the testing of their romantic bond, since the structured nature of courtship and its internal mechanisms tended to ensure "a strong emotional identification between men and women [that] was vital to the privatized, autonomous, and sentimental choice of a lifetime partner."⁵³

Bishop, too, appears to have manipulated romantic conventions in his performance of courtship rituals. The New York native's "emigrating fever" during his early adulthood years makes it possible to imagine that political gain was a strong motive in his courtship of Pauahi.⁵⁴ In the early 1840s, Bishop and his friend, William L. Lee, were in their mid-twenties and "neither was satisfied with his outlook. They felt the stir of the westward movement and saw no signs of large opportunities in the staid old communities in which they lived."⁵⁵ Serious economic depressions precipitated by the Panic of 1837 and the collapse of the United States Bank of Pennsylvania cast long shadows over their future employment prospects in the East. Moreover, young bachelors in American cities faced dismal marriage prospects, outnumbering

unattached women by a substantial margin.⁵⁶ The opening of the Western-Pacific frontier offered Bishop and Lee not only a space for them to use their “Law books and surveyor’s compass,” but also opportunities for finding a wife (whether white or non-white).⁵⁷ Because hegemonic ideology understood marriage as a relationship between a dominant man and subservient woman, marriage between a white American male and a female of color, such as Pauahi, “did not upset the American concepts of racial hierarchy that held all colored individuals as naturally inferior.”⁵⁸ In fact, many nineteenth-century Americans viewed sexual amalgamation as an “integral part of the colonial experience [that] disable[d] native society.”⁵⁹ ABCFM missionary Laura Judd, for instance, supported Bishop’s suit, believing that “those who intermarry should surely bring the civil and social blessings of the fatherland to the one of their adoption.”⁶⁰ For Bishop, marriage to Pauahi represented a fulfillment of Manifest Destiny that promised landed wealth, domestic and sexual services, as well as valuable membership in the native community.⁶¹

Deborah Moreno, a researcher studying intercultural marriages between foreign traders and propertied California women during California's Mexican period (1822-1846), argues that while interethnic marriages such as the Bishop’s may have appeared romantic on the surface, they were actually calculated maneuvers to form mutually beneficial alliances. Although her geographical scope differs from this study’s concern with Hawaiian royal romantic alliances, Moreno’s thesis is useful for comparative purposes. She profiles the typical foreign husband as having: 1) previously resided along the eastern seaboard; 2) apprenticed around the age of fourteen under a whaler, trade ship, or merchant; 3) acquired citizenship in his adopted country; and 4) gained socio-political power via land and commercial investments.⁶² Her historic profiling fits Bishop almost perfectly. Bishop was born in Glen Falls, New York on January 25, 1822. At the age of fourteen, he apprenticed under a mercantilist from whom he learned clerking and bookkeeping. Between the time of his arrival in Honolulu on October 12, 1846 and his naturalization on February 27, 1849, Bishop gained socio-political power as secretary to the Minister of the Interior and United States Consul, co-founder of the Lihue Sugar Plantation, and Collector Generalship of Customs. Although marriage to Pauahi did not seat Bishop upon the throne as predicted by *The Sandy Hill Herald*,⁶³ it did afford Bishop greater visibility and political power in the form of lifetime membership in the House of Nobles, chairmanship of the Legislative Finance Committee, and presidency on the Board of Education. Whether he acknowledged it or not, marriage to Pauahi was a politically advantageous alliance for Bishop.

A romantic union with Bishop may have been a carefully calculated political maneuver on Pauahi’s part as well. Ever since Western contact, the Native Hawaiian population had been in rapid decline, falling from approximately 300,000 in 1778 to 82,035 in 1850.⁶⁴ When Pauahi and Bishop first met in 1849, a series of measles, whooping cough, dysentery, and influenza epidemics had just ravaged the islands, claiming an estimated 10,000 lives (more than one-tenth of the population) within a span of four months.⁶⁵ In addition to worrying about the health of her subjects, Pauahi was also concerned with political affairs. In 1841, 1846, and 1847, she attended legislative sessions that left her well-aware that American interests, both strategic and

economic, were becoming harder for the government to resist.⁶⁶ A diplomatic marriage to Bishop would allow Pauahi to gain advantage for her country via a connection to an increasingly valuable and threatening outside presence. Her appeal to romantic love may have been a necessary one for her to invoke in order to achieve a strategic alliance that would help her to protect her kingdom in the Western-Pacific crossroads.

Power struggles and emotion were subtle but powerful tensions in the couple's relationship. In selecting Bishop for a husband, Pauahi ultimately limited her ability to control relations between Hawai'i and the United States, for she renounced the throne twice in the name of her marriage. The first was when she ended her engagement to Kapuāiwa, who assumed the throne as Kamehameha V on November 30, 1863. The second occasion, in 1872, is related in a letter by John Dominis:

King Kamehameha V turned to Mrs. Bishop, who was sitting at his bedside and declared: "I wish you to take my place, to be my successor" She replied, "no, no, not me; don't think of me, I do not need it." The king said, "I do not wish you to think I do this from motives of friendship, but I think it best for my people and my nation." Mrs. Bishop said, "oh no do not think of me, there are others; there is your sister, it is hers by right" The king answered, "she is not fitted for the position." "But we will all help her; I, my husband, your ministers; we will all kokua [help] and advise her." The king replied, "no, she would not answer." Mrs. Bishop then said, "There is the Queen, Emma; she has been a Queen once, and is therefore fitted for the position." The king said, "She was merely Queen by courtesy, having been the wife of a king."⁶⁷

Pauahi allegedly faced pressure from Americans to seek the throne "due to her pro-American sympathies ... but would not accept the throne, even if offered, because she desired to protect her marriage."⁶⁸ In order for Pauahi to have been a "serious contender for the throne... at least two conditions had to exist: the first was husbandly approval and the second was an assurance of support by a majority of the legislators. Neither of those conditions obtained."⁶⁹

Bishop did not want the throne for his wife. His reluctance may have stemmed from his belief that Kalākaua, as a male, was the best contender. In this sense, gender emerges as the main issue at stake, and Bishop's denial appears to be a selfish design to protect patriarchal power. It is likewise telling that when Emma posted a proclamation naming herself as successor and denouncing Kalākaua, his supporters wrote above her poster: *'A'ole mākou makemake e 'ike I ka palekoki e ho'okomo ana I ka lowewawae* ("We do not wish to see the petticoat putting on breaches").⁷⁰ While Kapuāiwa may have been willing to place Pauahi on the throne regardless of her sex, most nineteenth-century Native Hawaiians and Americans were not ready to legitimate female political authority. Pauahi herself appears to have been reluctant to move outside of the Protestant family structure wherein which husbands demanded wifely fidelity and submissiveness. One recorded event between husband and wife is revealing of this dynamic: "Every chief in the country," Bishop wrote, "was opposed to [cessation of Pearl Harbor to the United States] and only the fact that I was committed to it, kept my own good wife from so expressing herself."⁷¹ In private, the princess was less reserved, informing Bishop that he "ought to have known that the natives would not favor cessation."⁷² As evidenced by her privacy in

expressing this opinion, the princess placed her marriage above Native Hawaiian political interests.

Yet Pauahi's marriage to Bishop did not limit her ability to control Native Hawaiian affairs entirely. Her focus on civic engagement rather than political leadership was more in keeping with nineteenth-century gender ideologies, which encouraged female advocacy in the social realm. The princess devoted herself to Native Hawaiian youth, whom she felt needed more opportunities in academia. Thus, in her last will, Pauahi directed Bishop to use her estate to "erect and maintain in the Hawaiian Islands two schools, each for boarding and day scholars, one for boys and one for girls to be known as, and called the Kamehameha Schools... giving preference to Hawaiians of pure or part aboriginal blood."⁷³ The estate, which included thousands of acres in land, was cash poor. Although Bishop "did not promise to do anything for the Kamehameha Schools out of [his] estate," his interest in Pauahi's plans and her "very generous gifts," motivated him to convey "the life interests given by her will and [add] a considerable amount of [his] own property on O'ahu, Hawai'i, and Moloka'i."⁷⁴ His financial resources proved crucial to the establishment of Kamehameha Schools. Even supposing that the Bishop marriage was not hatched for strategic purposes, Pauahi's will and Bishop's execution of her wishes suggests that the match was also one forged by mutual love: what Pauahi bequeathed to Bishop as a sentimental token, he freely relinquished for the benefit of her beloved subjects.

The marriage of a Native Hawaiian princess and an American businessman at a time when Hawai'i was the object of imperialist designs is a pivotal moment in the history of American-Pacific relations. Demonstrating the powerful consequences of cross-cultural contact and the failure of ideologies to command absolute obedience from individuals, the broken Kapu'waiwa betrothal and enduring Bishop marriage defied anti-amalgamation sentiment and long-established traditions of ethnic and intra-status endogamy. In particular, the princess' ability to direct her own marital destiny is a significant instance of women's agency in world history. Unlike most women of her time and culture, Pauahi moved outside of the Native Hawaiian world of her birth and chose to enter into the Western world introduced to her by American evangelical missionaries at The Chief's Children's School. Bishop, too, was no ordinary individual. The New Englander ascended the social ladder, acquired landed wealth, and gained political power with exceptional speed and ingenuity as an American settler in Hawai'i. Together the Bishops navigated conflicting ethnic, religious, class, and gender tensions amidst intricately complicated, power-laden scenarios. Analysis of the historical accounts of their courtship and marriage reveals the convergence and simultaneous operation of power struggles and mutual love. At different times during the course of their marriage, and to various extents, Pauahi and Bishop both balanced their desire to acquire political power with the need to preserve marital harmony. Pauahi's rejection of political activism in the public realm suggests that private marital harmony was more important to the princess than the need to safeguard national independence from imperial advances by the American government. This prioritization ultimately supports the conclusion that this historic and much-contested marriage was, in the end, a love match. However, because political agency was abandoned in the name of love, intimacy here takes on an oppressive quality, which in turn makes the marriage appear more

strategic in nature. And yet, as Bishop's establishment of the Kamehameha Schools in accordance to his royal wife's wishes indicates, political interests did not necessarily or automatically negate emotions. Thus, the historical evidence suggests that while both political and romantic interests informed the Bishop marriage, imperialistic influences were the stronger force insofar as Western-Pacific contexts characterized this historic marriage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would have remained a dream had it not been for the generosity of many. I am deeply indebted to my advisor, Professor April Haynes, for providing me with a gripping introduction to histories of women and gender. I owe my successes in historical scholarship to her continual interest, encouragement, and guidance. I am grateful to the University of Oregon, especially the Department of History, for supporting this type of undergraduate-level work. I would also be remiss were I not to mention Kamehameha Schools and its founder, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, for providing me with the education and tools necessary to succeed.

Special thanks are also due to Shaun Kamakea-Young for his invaluable assistance with translations as well as Kyrie Nakatsu and Lauren Ota for their encouragement throughout this process. Finally, my greatest acknowledgement belongs to my grandparents, Edwin and Eleanor Harada: I would not be who or where I am without you.

REFERENCES

- Alexander, W. D.. *A Brief History of the Hawaiian People*. New York: American Book Co., 1899.
- Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop. *Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop Will and Codicils*.
<http://www.ksbe.edu/pauahi/will.php>. Accessed January 13, 2013.
- Carando, Joanne. "Hawaiian Royal Incest: A Study in the Sacrificial Origin of Monarchy." *Transatlantica* 1 (2006). <http://transatlantica.revues.org/525> (accessed May 2, 2012).
- Castaneda, Antonia "Engendering the History of Alta California, 1769-1848: Gender, Sexuality, and the Family." *California History* 76, no. 2 (1997): 230-259.
- "Extracts from Minutes of the General Meeting of the Sandwich Islands Mission." Honolulu: Mission Press, 1839; 1841.
- Greenberg, Amy. *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Grimshaw, Patricia. *Paths of duty: American missionary wives in nineteenth-century Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989.
- Handy, Edward and Mary Pukui. *The Polynesian family system in Ka'u, Hawai'i*. Rutland, Vermont: Polynesian Society, 1950.

- Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Island Missions. Lahainaluna: Press of the Missionary Seminary, 1838.
- Kanahele, George. Emma: Hawai'i's Remarkable Queen: A Biography. Honolulu: Queen Emma Foundation, 1999.
- . Pauahi: The Kamehameha Legacy. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1986.
- Kent, Harold. Charles Reed Bishop: Man of Hawai'i. Palo Alto, California: Pacific Book Publishers, 1965.
- Krout, Mary. The Memoirs of the Honorable Bernice Pauahi Bishop. New York: Knickerboker Press, 1908.
- Liholiho, Alexander. The Journal of Prince Alexander Liholiho. Edited by Jacob Adler. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1967.
- Liliuokalani. Hawai'i's Story. Rutland, Vermont: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1964.
- Lystra, Karen. Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Moreno, Deborah. "Here the Society is United: Respectable Anglos and Intercultural Marriage in Pre-Gold Rush California." *California History* 80, no. 1 (2001): 3-17.
- Pascoe, Peggy. What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Richards, Mary, comp. The Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's School: 1839-1850. Vermont: Charles Tuttle, 1970.
- Rothman, Ellen. Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984.
- Schmitt, Robert. Demographic Statistics of Hawai'i: 1778-1965. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1968.
- . "Death in Hawai'i: The Epidemics of 1848-1849." *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 35, (2001): 1-13.
- Sollers, Werner. Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Stoler, Ann. Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Tapuga, William. "Education, Change, and Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Hawai'i." *Pacific Studies* 5 (1981): 57-70. Accessed January 13, 2013.

“The Genealogy of the Chiefs of Nā Lani Kamehameha.” Kamehameha Schools: Bernice Pauahi Bishop Estate, 1994.

Wiesner, Mary and William Wheeler. *Discovering the Global Past: A Look at the Evidence*. 2nd ed. Massachusetts: Cengage Learning, 2007.

NOTES

¹ Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 232.

² Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³ Edward Handy and Mary Pukui, *The Polynesian family system in Ka ‘u, Hawai ‘i* (Michigan: Polynesian Society, 1950), 105.

⁴ Ann Stoler, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁵ Laura Judd, *Honolulu: Sketches of Life: Social, Political, and Religious in the Hawaiian Islands from 1828 to 1861*, (Honolulu, 1928), 57-58.

⁶ Liliuokalani, *Hawai‘i’s Story*, (Vermont: C.E. Tuttle Co., 1964), 4.

⁷ George Kanahale, *Pauahi: The Kamehameha Legacy*, (Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools Press, 1986), 56.

⁸ W.D. Alexander, *A Brief History of the Hawaiian People* (New York: American Book Co., 1899), 32-33.

⁹ *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Island Missions*, 53.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹¹ Liliuokalani, 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³ Mary Krout, *The Memoirs of the Honorable Bernice Pauahi Bishop*, (New York: Knickerbroker Press, 1908), 21.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Amos Cooke, in *The Hawaiian Chiefs’ Children’s School: 1839-1850*, comp. Mary Richards (Vermont: Charles Tuttle, 1970).

¹⁶ Liliuokalani, 5.

¹⁷ Sandwich Islands Mission Meeting Minutes Collection, 1837: 4, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society (hereafter cited as HMCS).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁰ William Tapuga, "Education, Change, and Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Hawai'i," *Pacific Studies* 5 (1981): 57, accessed January 13, 2013.

²¹ Hiram Bingham to Calvin Bingham (February 1, 1820), in *Ibid.*, 57.

²² *Ibid.*, 58.

²³ "Extracts from Minutes of the General Meeting of the Sandwich Islands Mission" (Honolulu: Mission Press, 1839), 19.

²⁴ Liliuokalani, 5.

²⁵ "Extracts" (1839), 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Amos Cooke (October 28, 1840), in Richards, 87.

²⁸ "Extracts" (1841), 7.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Amos Cooke to ABCFM (May 1848), in Richards, 306.

³¹ Gorham Gilman (1845), in Krout, 47.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Judd, 118.

³⁵ Kuakini, in American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *Thirty First Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: September 1840*, (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1840), 220.

³⁶ *Instructions of the Prudential Committee*, 453.

³⁷ Amos Cooke (December 30, 1845), in Richards, 247.

³⁸ Amos Cooke (August 13, 1839), in Richards, 34.

³⁹ Ellen Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1984), 105.

⁴⁰ Amos Cooke to Unknown (January 28, 1850), in Richards, 342.

-
- ⁴¹ Amos Cooke (August 30, 1849), in Richards, 334.
- ⁴² Amos Cooke (September 8, 1849), in Richards, 335.
- ⁴³ Amos Cooke (September 7, 1849), in Richards, 335-336.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Deborah Moreno, "Here the Society is United: Respectable Anglos and Intercultural Marriage in Pre-Gold Rush California," *California History* 80, no. 1 (2001): 9.
- ⁴⁶ Amos Cooke (September 7, 1849), in Richards, 335-336.
- ⁴⁷ J. Harris, ed., *Society and Culture in the Slave South* (Great Britain: TJ Press, 1992), 192.
- ⁴⁸ George Kanahale, *Emma: Hawai'i's Remarkable Queen: A Biography*, (Honolulu: Queen Emma Foundation, 1999).
- ⁴⁹ Amos Cooke (November 9, 1849), in Richards, 331.
- ⁵⁰ Amos Cooke (June 6, 1850), in Richards, 344.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 151.
- ⁵³ Lystra, 158.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Greenberg, 113.
- ⁵⁷ Smith, 12.
- ⁵⁸ Greenberg, 125.
- ⁵⁹ Hurtado, 6.
- ⁶⁰ Judd, 118.
- ⁶¹ Hurtado, 42.
- ⁶² Moreno, 4-5.
- ⁶³ "The Husband of a Princess," *Sandy Hill Herald*, quoted in Kent, 39.
- ⁶⁴ Robert Schmitt, *Demographic Statistics of Hawai'i: 1778-1965* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1968), 41.

⁶⁵ Robert Schmitt and Eleanor Nordyke, "Death in Hawai'i: The Epidemics of 1848-1849," *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 35, (2001): 1.

⁶⁶ Merry Wiesner and William Wheeler, *Discovering the Global Past: A Look at the Evidence*, vol. 2, *Since 1400*, rev. ed. (Massachusetts: Cengage Learning, 2007), 7: 209.

⁶⁷ John Dominis to Charles Reed Bishop (January 7, 1873), in Kanahale, 265-266.

⁶⁸ Emma to Peter Ka'eo, in Kanahale, 277.

⁶⁹ Kanahale, 277.

⁷⁰ Kanahale, 283.

⁷¹ Charles Reed Bishop to Elisha H. Allen (November 6, 1867), in Kent, 64.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop (October 31, 1883), Ke Ali'i Bernice Pauahi Pākī Bishop Will and Codicils.

⁷⁴ Charles Reed Bishop to S.M. Damon (October 9, 1911), in Kent, 145-146.