

# Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole

1871–1922

DELEGATE 1903–1922  
REPUBLICAN FROM HAWAII

From royal prince to revolutionary to Hawaiian Delegate, Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole traveled a unique route to the United States Congress. Known primarily as “Kuhio” or by his childhood nickname “Prince Cupid,” he remains the only Member of Congress born into royalty. As a royal, Kuhio consistently attracted support from Native Hawaiians who were nostalgic for the fallen kingdom and from *haoles* who respected his symbolic status. In the nation’s capital and on elaborate tours to the islands, however, the prince relied on his charm and personal diplomacy rather than his royal status to ensure advantages for Hawaiians. As the second Delegate from Hawaii, Kuhio won federal funds for infrastructure improvements, arranged the expansion of the Pearl Harbor naval base, and paid homage to his Hawaiian heritage through the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, his final, most controversial, and, arguably, most important accomplishment.

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole Piikoi was born on March 26, 1871, in the village of Kukuiula in the Koloa District of the island of Kauai. Kuhio was the youngest of three sons of High Chief David Kahalepouli Piikoi and Princess Victoria Kinoiki Kekaulike, both members of the fast-disappearing Hawaiian royal caste.<sup>1</sup> Princess Victoria’s sister, Kapiolani Napelakapuokakae, married into the royal line of Hawaii in 1863 when she wed King David Kalakaua. The couple remained childless so the king anointed his wife’s family as his eventual heirs. In 1880 Kuhio’s father, David Piikoi, died and King Kalakaua appointed Kuhio’s mother governor of the island of Hawaii. The king issued a royal proclamation making Kuhio and his two brothers princes in 1883 and made them wards following their mother’s death a year later. He then incorporated Princess Kekaulike’s line into the Kalakaua dynasty through the so-called Bayonet Constitution of 1887.<sup>2</sup>

King Kalakaua provided the best education available for his sister-in-law’s sons. As a child, Kuhio and his brothers lived in Honolulu, and it was at St. Alban’s School where classmates first started calling him “Prince Cupid.” Later Kuhio attended Oahu College, today known as Punahou School, in Honolulu, where he earned a reputation as an outdoor sportsman.<sup>3</sup> Kuhio then joined his brothers at St. Matthew’s Military Academy in San Mateo, California, but their education was interrupted when the sudden death of Kuhio’s brother, Edward, forced their return home. In 1888 King Kalakaua sent Kuhio to Japan with the hope of setting up a marriage with the Japanese royal family. Kuhio spent nearly a year as the guest of the Japanese government, learning the art of diplomacy, but he made no effort to secure a marriage.<sup>4</sup> Upon returning home, Kuhio briefly took up a position in the Ministry of Interior and Customs.

Continuing to groom Kuhio and his brother, David, to be potential heirs, Kalakaua sent them to study business in Gloucestershire, England, at the Royal Agricultural College. The pair toured Europe, greeted as equals in royal courts across the continent.<sup>5</sup> The brothers returned from England in early 1891; King Kalakaua died in January while visiting San Francisco. His sister, Liliuokalani, succeeded to the throne and set Princess Kaiulani, daughter of Kalakaua’s youngest sister, Miriam Likelike, as her heir apparent, cementing Kawanakoa and Kuhio, respectively, as presumptive heirs behind the princess.

Liliuokalani took the throne in the midst of an economic depression and unrest among disenfranchised Native Hawaiians. Following her husband’s passing, Kuhio became a close confidante and adviser to the queen.<sup>6</sup> At this time, he and his brother dropped their father’s surname, Piikoi, leaving Kalanianaʻole and Kawanakoa as their surnames for official business, in order to stand out from one another as they gained increased political prominence.<sup>7</sup>





On January 16, 1893, Queen Liliuokalani attempted to install a new constitution, undoing what she saw as the deleterious effects of the Bayonet Constitution and restoring power to the monarchy. This shocked the wealthy business class, led by Sanford B. Dole, a *haole* who had muscled his way onto the Hawaiian supreme court and then Liliuokalani's privy council. Dole and his friends among the immigrant elite then formed the Committee of Safety. Three days later they marched an organized volunteer militia in to occupy the government building with the aim of appealing for annexation by the United States. Dole remembered that Kuhio, working as one of the clerks there, quickly acquiesced to the takeover and began sending letters informing foreign diplomats of the change in government. "I must say the young prince worked with a vim," Dole recalled, "although the overthrow of the monarchy meant the end of royal honors."<sup>8</sup>

After it became clear that President Grover Cleveland's administration would not annex the islands, a provisional government reorganized as the Republic of Hawaii on July 4, 1894. Its constitution emulated parts of the U.S. Constitution, though it also prohibited many Native Hawaiians and citizens of Asian descent from voting, frustrating Kuhio. In the last weeks of 1894, Kuhio plotted a coup alongside his friend John Wise and agitator Robert W. Wilcox. However, Kuhio and Wise encountered roadblocks in their attempt to join Wilcox at the government building at the center of the insurrection. They eventually gave up and returned home in the early hours of January 7, 1895. President Dole declared martial law, and the pair was arrested the next day and held without charge. On February 11, they were at last charged with neglect in reporting treason.<sup>9</sup> A military tribunal found Kuhio guilty and sentenced him to one year in prison and a fine of \$1,000. Government officials offered him clemency if he revealed the names of his coconspirators, but Kuhio refused.

While serving his sentence, Kuhio received regular visits from Chiefess Elizabeth Kahanu Kaleiwohi-Kaauwai. Kuhio was released months ahead of schedule, in September 1895, and he married Kahanu soon after.<sup>10</sup> Faced with uncertainty about the future of the Hawaiian

government on the eve of annexation and coping with the sudden deaths of his beloved cousin, Princess Kaiulani, and Queen Kapiolani, Kuhio left Hawaii with his new wife for a belated and prolonged honeymoon in late 1899. Part of his travels took him to South Africa at the height of the Second Boer War, where he was a guest of the British Army. The couple did not return until September 1901.<sup>11</sup>

In his absence, his former ally Wilcox defeated Kuhio's brother David to become the first Hawaiian Delegate in the U.S. Congress on the strength of Native Hawaiians who had been re-enfranchised under the Hawaiian Organic Act of 1900. Kuhio joined Wilcox's Home Rule Party, which became the dominant political party on a platform of restoring the rights and power of Native Hawaiians, but Kuhio grew disenchanted with the Home Rule Party after witnessing some of its racially charged politics firsthand. The party often derided *haoles* and conducted legislative business in the Hawaiian language rather than English in defiance of the Organic Act.<sup>12</sup>

In July 1902, the party tapped Kuhio to lead a reorganization committee. Kuhio's proposals prioritized attracting younger moderates, but Wilcox preferred the status quo, seeking to retain his ally David Kalauokalani as party president. When Wilcox loyalists tabled Kuhio's plan indefinitely at the convention, he resigned his party affiliation and led a walkout of nearly half the delegates. He demanded Kalauokalani's ouster in exchange for bringing his faction back under the party tent, but that was a nonstarter for Wilcox. On July 14, Kuhio and his followers formed the Independent Party, or Hui Kokoā, and newspapers rumored that Queen Liliuokalani had given her tacit support.<sup>13</sup> He also lured his old friend John Wise away from the Democrats. Hui Kokoā's platform read as a rebuke of Home Rulers' racial politics.

Meanwhile, business interests frustrated with the Home Rule Party turned to the Republican Party.<sup>14</sup> Republicans initially rejoiced at Home Rulers' fragmentation but soon worried that Kuhio's status as a royal could draw a decisive number of votes. Over the course of August, Kuhio considered merging his party with either one of the major parties from the mainland. Kuhio leaned



toward Democrats, but Democrats remained skittish and afraid of insulting Wilcox and the remaining Home Rulers. Native Hawaiians viewed Republicans as the party of *haoles* and the reviled territorial governor Sanford B. Dole. But a speech at the opening of the territory's Republican convention cemented Kuhio's choice to run as a Republican. Former Nebraska Senator John M. Thurston declared, "You might as well send a frog to chipper at the doors of the Court of St. James for what you want as send to Washington a Delegate who is not one of or in harmony with either of the two great political parties." After Kuhio met with key Republican operatives, Republicans readily incorporated elements of his platform into their own. This included many former Home Rule positions: the creation of county and municipal government, a legislative settlement for Queen Liliuokalani, and the revision of the tax system.<sup>15</sup> Kuhio joined the convention as a nominee for Delegate, announcing, "I am a Republican from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet." Republicans nominated him by acclamation.<sup>16</sup>

The Home Rule-leaning newspaper *Independent* excoriated Kuhio as a race traitor, tying him to Dole and other *haoles*, whom it portrayed as oppressors. Wilcox called him "that very inconsequential little mouse."<sup>17</sup> Many more Hawaiian institutions lined up behind Kuhio's candidacy, however. The Portuguese Political Club even renamed itself the Portuguese Republican Club as a show of support for the prince.<sup>18</sup>

Democrats, led by Kuhio's brother David, even allied with the Home Rule Party to counterbalance Kuhio's popularity. The brothers bore no ill will toward one another, and in either outcome a member of the royal family would end up leading the party in power. Home Rulers emphasized "Hawai'i for the Hawaiians" and campaigned for Wilcox's re-election, while Republicans attacked the incumbent as an ineffective demagogue. Republicans zeroed in on Wilcox's proposal to cede control of the community of people on Molokai suffering from leprosy to the federal government. When it became clear that, under federal control, inhabitants of the settlement would be strictly separated by gender, among

other changes, residents reacted strongly, and Wilcox faltered.<sup>19</sup> Kuhio's campaign developed around embracing Americanism, saying at stump speeches, "Monarchy had accomplished a useful means, and democracy arises to carry on the work."<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, Republicans swept both the legislature and the delegacy. Kuhio won a large percentage of the white vote and attracted considerable Native Hawaiian support as well, tallying 6,636 votes to Wilcox's 4,696.<sup>21</sup> Kuhio's victory fatally weakened the Home Rule Party. For a few elections, they split votes with Democrats, who eventually absorbed the remaining Home Rulers.

Kuhio arrived in Washington, DC, with much exuberance, though the reality of his isolated position rapidly set in. When President Theodore Roosevelt greeted Kuhio in 1903, he balked at the name Kalaniana'ole. "I shall not call him Prince Cupid, and I cannot pronounce his last name. I never would be able to remember it, anyhow," the President complained. "Can't we cut it off somewhere and make it simpler?" From then on, most Washingtonians simply referred to him as "Kuhio" or "Prince Cupid," after his childhood nickname.<sup>22</sup> Racial prejudice was apparent in the House of Representatives' barbershop, when the proprietor curtly informed him, using a racial epithet, that he would not cut the Hawaiian's hair. Not one to suffer fools, Kuhio grabbed the barber by the collar and hauled him out of the shop.<sup>23</sup> On January 4, 1904, Kuhio gained some unwanted notoriety when he was arrested for disorderly conduct after scuffling outside a DC bar. He refused to pay a fine or to alert friends to his predicament and stayed overnight in jail, incorrectly claiming that, as a Member of Congress, he was exempt from arrest. The next morning the court notified friends, who bailed him out.<sup>24</sup>

He enjoyed better luck in his first lottery for a desk in the House Chamber, drawing ahead of powerful Appropriations Chairman James Hemenway of Indiana. When Hemenway asked to swap desks, Kuhio complied. He was only too happy to extend the small favor and win the indebtedness of a well-placed ally. Kuhio bragged to a friend, "This damn little Delegate had a seat that some of the fellows would give anything to get."<sup>25</sup>



After settling into his position, Kuhio wrestled with mainland ignorance of Hawaii. He was appointed to the traditional seats on the Territories Committee and the Post Office and Post Roads Committee, but often found himself testifying before the Merchant Marine and Fisheries or Naval Affairs panels instead.<sup>26</sup> He struggled to pass bills approving a franchise grant to expand the installation of electric lights in Hawaii. Afterward in the 59th Congress (1905–1907), he concentrated on getting money to build, repair, and maintain lighthouses on the islands and encouraging greater trade (H.R. 10512, H.R. 21927).<sup>27</sup> No one seemed to know whether funding existed for the project, so Kuhio shuffled back and forth between the Navy Department's Lighthouse Board, Speaker Joe Cannon, and a clerk of the Appropriations Committee before discovering the funds had been suspended under the belief that Hawaii was an insular possession, like Puerto Rico or the Philippines.<sup>28</sup>

Over and over the prince became aware that neither congressional colleagues nor federal bureaucrats knew much about Hawaii. So he dedicated himself to educating American administrators about the islands. Much of this process happened off the House Floor, and Kuhio reveled in these extracurricular venues.<sup>29</sup> Much of his time was spent in committee rooms hosting card games, playing golf, and attending various functions to expand his social circle and influence. Sometime after 1904, the prince set up a luxurious getaway for guests near Pershing Square, dubbing it the Bird's Nest. Furnished with a bar, poker tables, pool tables, and his African hunting trophies, it became a getaway for officials where Kuhio would hold forth on Hawaii's beauty, fertility, and strategic position in the Pacific. When Princess Kahanu made the trip to the capital, the couple hosted dinner parties for Members featuring the guest of honor from the islands.<sup>30</sup> Kuhio even arranged for an exhibit on Hawaii in the Alaska–Yukon–Pacific Exposition of 1909 in Seattle, Washington.<sup>31</sup>

However, starting in May 1907, Kuhio's preferred method was to host colleagues on extended tours of Hawaii.<sup>32</sup> The territorial legislature even chipped in for the three-week tour of Hawaii that spring. These excursions became more popular over time. The 1915 entourage

included 27 Representatives, 10 Senators, congressional family members, staff, and a gaggle of press. Hawaiians sailed out to greet the congressional visitors before they reached land, presenting leis and playing Hawaiian music from an accompanying tugboat.<sup>33</sup> The firsthand experience often helped grease the skids for legislative action afterward. "I have a few things to take up with the prince about the merchant marine and transportation facilities that come within the jurisdiction of my committee," wrote Representative William Wilson of Illinois after one tour, "and I intend to help rectify those unreasonable sailing conditions when we get together."<sup>34</sup>

Kuhio's attempts to focus federal attention on the Hawaiian Islands also included more traditional efforts at legislative lobbying. In 1903 he wrote letters to every Member of Congress on the necessity to dredge and improve the Honolulu Harbor. When contacts at the War Department turned him aside the following year, Kuhio went directly to President Roosevelt himself, prevailing upon him to lean on the chairmen of the Rivers and Harbors and Appropriations Committees as well as the irascible Speaker Cannon. Kuhio even took to the House Floor on occasion, as he did in 1905, to implore the House not to ignore Hawaiian problems. "Do not make it possible for my people to reproach me because that in this great national family injustice is done to its youngest and weakest child," he said. "Do not leave it possible for any Hawaiian to say that, either politically or economically, he was better off under the old monarchy than he may be today under the American flag."<sup>35</sup>

More often than not, Congress applauded Kuhio's pluck but rewarded it with little substantive legislation. But his constant pressure prodded executive agencies into making some of the improvements requested of their own accord. By the end of 1906, the Department of Commerce and Labor had started construction of a lighthouse at Makapuu Point. Kuhio won appropriations for improvements across several omnibus bills, but did not manage to pass a full harbor improvement bill until 1916, when he pushed through Congress an overhaul to the Board of Harbor Commissioners.<sup>36</sup>



Faced with repeated stonewalling in committees, particularly on the issue of harbor improvements, Kuhio changed his tactics. In a period of increasing tensions between the United States and Japan, his new idea was to tie the federal government tighter to Hawaiian infrastructure through renewed focus on military and naval bases on the islands. He took his case before the House Naval Affairs Committee in 1908. “Gentlemen of the committee, this Government has for ten years neglected the safeguard of preparing a naval base in the mid-Pacific,” Kuhio declared. It amounted to an “inexcusable neglect” not of a special Hawaiian interest, but of a national security necessity.<sup>37</sup> Kuhio’s persistent lobbying on the issue over the course of a decade paid dividends after he led a 1919 tour for Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels and the navy board to visit Pearl Harbor. Daniels agreed with Kuhio’s assessment, and Congress responded to the secretary’s report with an appropriation of \$27 million for recommended improvements and expansions.<sup>38</sup>

Kuhio spent much of his time protecting Hawaii from federal policy changes that conflicted with its interests. In 1917 he testified against the passage of a bill introduced by Missouri Democrat Joshua Alexander, which would have sharply regulated wireless radio usage and traffic within the United States. Laden with communications from Hawaiian businessmen, Kuhio argued that radio was essential to the growth and development of the islands and that new federal regulations would hurt Hawaiian economic expansion and the ability of its people to assimilate into American culture.<sup>39</sup> The committee accordingly scuttled the bill.

After World War I, Kuhio pressured Congress to continue the suspension of coastwise laws that forbade foreign ships from serving as passenger steamers between Honolulu and San Francisco without the payment of a hefty fine per passenger. Members on the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, however, were eager to roll back the wartime suspensions. But with American ships still pressed into service as military transports, Hawaiians relied primarily on foreign ships to travel to and from the mainland. Kuhio reasoned that an exemption for Hawaii would keep travel open until more American

ships were returned to service. The committee ignored Kuhio’s plea.<sup>40</sup>

Prohibition dominated much of the political discussion during Kuhio’s tenure in Congress, as the temperance issue was used as a wedge to critique Hawaiians’ fitness for self-rule. The Hawaiian legislature passed a liquor licensing law in 1907 in the hope of slowing liquor traffic in the territory. In 1910 John G. Woolley of the Anti-Saloon League of America testified before Congress that the legislature’s licensing law had failed. Portraying the average Hawaiian as a drunkard and local politicians as being in the pockets of liquor lobbyists, Woolley pushed Congress to dismantle territorial home rule. Kuhio took pains to point out the hypocrisy and cherry-picking in Woolley’s testimony. “There are many good people in Hawaii who believe in prohibition but who do not believe that Congress should enact it,” Kuhio countered. He defended the right of Hawaiian self-government and relied on the history and virtue of the Hawaiian constitution.<sup>41</sup> Only a couple weeks later Kuhio testified in favor of a congressionally approved referendum (H.J. Res. 155, S.J. Res. 80) on the prohibition of liquor sales in the territories, which gave control back to the Hawaiian people, but the referendum failed.<sup>42</sup>

Pressure in favor of prohibition grew, and, in 1917, when Oahu was declared a military zone, serving alcohol on the island was banned. Kuhio viewed the restriction as unfair, since the manufacture and sale of alcohol were still permitted. A year later Kuhio introduced his own bill to prohibit the traffic and manufacture of alcohol during the war (H.R. 9960, S. 3935). However, Kuhio continued to guard Hawaiians’ right to self-government. “We are fully capable of settling all our domestic problems,” he declared, “and the waiver of this right in the instance, I trust will not be made a precedent for future inroads by the Federal Government on the inherent right of the people of the islands to home rule.” The bill passed the House a few months later by a vote of 238 to 30, following considerable lobbying from Kuhio.<sup>43</sup>

As a Republican, Kuhio spent most of his time protecting the islands’ economy, but his position as a



member of the fast-receding royalty stoked a deep sense of personal responsibility to his kin and Native Hawaiians generally. His brother, Prince David Kawanakoa, died in San Francisco in 1908.<sup>44</sup> This left Kuhio and Queen Liliuokalani as the last of the royal line. The queen seemed intent on regaining a measure of her authority and often pressured Kuhio to reacquire crown lands lost during annexation. Kuhio dutifully pressed what he knew to be a futile point. Congress repeatedly denied the land claim, but, at Kuhio's behest, eventually granted Liliuokalani a monthly payment. Still Kuhio's relationship with the queen remained turbulent until her death on November 11, 1917.<sup>45</sup>

Among his many legislative interests, Kuhio most forcefully advocated for Native Hawaiians, whom, he contended, had suffered terribly from the introduction of European disease and the changes in their culture. To that end, Kuhio encouraged the adoption of the English language and American cultural norms and styles to better integrate into the new Hawaii.<sup>46</sup> This motivation, combined with Kuhio's own hopes of becoming the first Native Hawaiian territorial governor, led to a feud with the sitting territorial governor, Walter Frear, a fellow Republican.

Kuhio and Frear had met and worked together on land use bills both in the territorial legislature and before the U.S. Congress. When Frear declined to release certain plots in the southern Kau District of Hawaii for purchase by Native Hawaiians in late 1909, the partnership broke down. Kuhio accused Frear of mismanaging public lands and kowtowing to plantation owners. "The sugar plantations can get anything they want from Frear, but the people do not get any chance," the Delegate railed. "Gov. Frear lied to the people and he lied to me and made me lie to the people in my promises."<sup>47</sup>

Kuhio's attacks grew more strident over Frear's tenure. Complaints that plantation owners were discouraging homesteaders by turning off their water supply or closing routes to market continued to pour in, and the prince vowed to put the issue before the President himself. If that failed, Kuhio pledged to ask Congress to set up a commission to investigate Frear's administration. President William H. Taft's Interior Secretary Walter Fisher requested

a written list of offenses before traveling to Honolulu. His investigation shifted from a focus on Frear's administration to a broader appraisal of the islands' public utilities and homesteading programs. Fisher recommended the creation of a public utilities commission to monitor these services separate from the territorial governor's administration. When many of the allegations against Frear's office proved to be unfounded, Kuhio withdrew his charges and backed Fisher's recommendations. The rivalry between the Delegate and governor cost both men in 1912: Kuhio battled opponent Lincoln McCandless for 54 percent of the vote in his toughest campaign to date and saw his hopes for the governor's office dashed while Frear failed to secure reappointment.<sup>48</sup>

Kuhio believed one of the simplest ways to ensure civil rights for his people was the admission of Hawaii to the Union. He struggled, however, against ambivalence among the more potent political groups on the islands, such as the sugar industry. "Hawaii will make the next bid for Statehood, and the request will come soon," he predicted in 1910, but momentum stalled. Although rumors spread that Kuhio planned to ask for statehood at the very next session of Congress, that request did not come for nine more years.<sup>49</sup> The Hawaiian legislature passed resolutions in favor of statehood in 1911, 1913, 1915, and 1917, but these efforts were largely perfunctory and lacked the full backing of the parties or funding for commissions organized to lobby for statehood in Washington. Each time Kuhio cautioned patience to statehood's proponents, sensing a lack of enthusiasm for the idea in both the halls of Congress and among the powerful agricultural oligarchs of the islands.<sup>50</sup> Kuhio finally brought the first statehood proposal (H.R. 12210) before Congress in 1919. The bill generated little fanfare in Washington and died before being debated in committee, leaving Kuhio to seek other means to protect his people. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, Hawaii's premier paper, stated in 1920 that "Hawaii is not yet ready for statehood."<sup>51</sup>

Frustrated with the machinations of *haole* Republicans both in Hawaii and in their DC lobbying offices, Kuhio began to push more brazenly for accommodations for



his own people, the Native Hawaiians.<sup>52</sup> This advocacy for homesteaders eventually culminated in his trademark accomplishment: the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act in 1921, a bill that Kuhio championed while bucking *haole* elites within his own party. Between the rapid *haole* acquisition of former native land and the domination of the labor market by Chinese and Japanese immigrants, the situation had become dire, Kuhio argued. “If conditions remain as they are today,” he insisted, “it will only be a matter of a short space of time when this race of people, my people, renowned for their physique, their courage, their sense of justice, their straight-forwardness, and their hospitality, will be a matter of history.” Kuhio joined the popular movement among Native Hawaiians for homesteading as a possible solution for the preservation or “rehabilitation,” as it was termed, of the Hawaiian people. He pointed to the successful rehabilitation of the Maori people in New Zealand by the British government under a homesteading program. Circumstances aligned to push his own proposal in early 1920 as leases on significant portions of government land (the former “Crown lands” the queen had been eager to reacquire) were due to expire.<sup>53</sup>

In April 1920, the prince introduced what he initially termed the Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill (H.R. 13500), which set up a comprehensive homesteading program and returned Hawaiians to farming the land. “The legislation proposed seeks to place the Hawaiian back on the soil, so that the valuable and sturdy traits of that race, peculiarly adapted to the islands, shall be preserved to posterity,” Kuhio explained.<sup>54</sup> Later that year, testifying before the Senate Committee on Territories, he claimed, “This is the first opportunity given to a poor man,” and he accused opponents of the bill of protecting the wealthy who were eager to retain their leases.<sup>55</sup> Senator Harry Stewart New of Indiana submitted a companion bill (S. 1881) the following session which quickly moved through Congress. S. 1881 passed the Senate and House by voice vote on June 27 and 30, 1921, respectively, and was signed into law by President Warren G. Harding.

The Hawaiian Homes Commission Act amended the Organic Act to set aside roughly 200,000 acres across

the Hawaiian Islands for 99-year leases to claimants at least 21 years old with 50 percent or more Hawaiian blood. However, the persistent lobbying of the islands’ sugar industry managed to retain the best lands for their sugar plantations while relegating homesteaders to less fertile and more remote acreage. Kuhio supported the exemption for sugar producers as a necessity for both passage of the bill and the maintenance of the Hawaiian economy. He bristled at accusations that he had sold out Native Hawaiians, insisting that he had negotiated the best deal possible. While Kuhio conceded that the program “does have a second class choice of lands,” he touted the provisions which made funds available for farming equipment and home construction. Ultimately, many homesteaders found themselves beholden to larger agricultural firms once again for even such basic needs as roads and irrigation.<sup>56</sup>

Tellingly, the bill also prohibited Japanese laborers from obtaining work on federal construction projects. The provision reflected Kuhio’s tendency to protect Native Hawaiians, whom he frequently defended as prime examples of American values, at the expense of other ethnic groups. As the Native Hawaiian population dropped, he frequently warned, for instance, of competition from the growing pool of Japanese immigrant laborers. He feared the growing ethnic Japanese population would dominate island politics and have the effect of “un-Americanizing the territory.”<sup>57</sup>

Kuhio’s antipathy for Japanese immigrants seemed based less on competition for jobs than it was on racial prejudice, given that he touted economic advantages of bringing in cheap Chinese labor to relieve a severe labor shortage on the islands’ sugar plantations. To bypass federal Chinese exclusion laws, Kuhio introduced H. Res. 93 in 1917 to authorize the immigration of 30,000 Chinese laborers to work rice fields and construct government buildings in Hawaii. Though proponents cited a long history of Chinese agricultural laborers on the islands, the bill received little consideration.<sup>58</sup>

The labor shortage continued, however, and garnered significant attention in 1921 after a strike by Japanese workers. Yet again Kuhio requested that Congress





reverse its aversion to Chinese immigration and import Chinese laborers for a span of five years rather than allow further Japanese immigration. Texas Democrat John C. Box argued that Kuhio's proposal did not represent a "permanent" solution to Hawaii's problems. Kuhio countered that any permanent solution involving the importation of "European" labor would inevitably lead to inexcusable delays. For Hawaii's Chinese population Kuhio had nothing but praise. He attempted to distinguish Chinese immigrants from Japanese immigrants by insisting Chinese Hawaiians had a greater tendency to adopt American norms. "We have Chinese citizens there of whom we are proud," he said. "They make fine citizens."<sup>59</sup> Neither the House nor the Senate took up the proposal for a vote, and the legislation languished until after Kuhio's death a year later.

Kuhio encountered little serious competition for two decades. His election in 1904 was contested by King Kalakaua's former chamberlain, Democrat Curtis P. Iaukea, but the House rejected Iaukea's challenge.<sup>60</sup> Kuhio's campaign strategy was genial and quintessentially Hawaiian. He wrote his own campaign song based on the popular melody of "Aloha No Au I Ko Maka" and handed out white silk handkerchiefs with his initials and picture.<sup>61</sup> Kuhio's perennial opponent was Lincoln McCandless, who abandoned the Republican Party for the Democrats in 1908. Kuhio ignored attempts to replace him within his own party after his 1912 confrontation with Governor Frear, using an endorsement from Illinois Representative James Mann, the Republican leader, who credited Kuhio with \$10.5 million in appropriations for Hawaii across his then decade of service.<sup>62</sup>

Kuhio faced unusually heavy opposition in his final campaign. Pressure built within the Republican Party to replace him. Party leaders, still largely *haoles*, had grown increasingly concerned with Kuhio's fervent support of the Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill benefiting Native Hawaiians. Spurious charges circulated that Kuhio blocked a territorial women's suffrage bill, a policy Kuhio actually supported and that his wife had spoken in favor of in the territorial legislature. Kuhio's old friend and political manager

John Wise exposed the false whispering campaign, and Kuhio's prospects received an unexpected boost when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in August 1920, a mere month before the election.<sup>63</sup> Kuhio defeated McCandless one last time, winning 61 percent of the vote.

During the 1920 election, Kuhio was adamant that he would retire after his term expired in the 67th Congress (1921–1923). He once again eyed appointment as territorial governor, but lost out to Wallace R. Farrington, who had gathered endorsements from all previous living governors, including Kuhio's old nemesis Frear.<sup>64</sup> Exhaustive campaigning and the rigors of constant long-distance travel between Hawaii and Washington finally caught up with the prince. He fell ill in the fall of 1921 and ignored his doctors' prescriptions for bedrest. Kuhio died of a heart attack in Honolulu on January 7, 1922. He was accorded a state funeral in Hawaii with full military honors.<sup>65</sup>

#### FOR FURTHER READING

Kamae, Lori. *The Empty Throne: A Biography of Hawaii's Prince Cupid* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1980).

Sch lup, Leonard. "Prince Cupid: Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole and the Quest for Hawaiian Progressivism," *International Review of History and Political Science* 19 (1982): 54–58.

#### MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

**Hawaii State Archives** (Honolulu, HI). *Papers*: 1903–1922, 4.3 cubic feet. The papers of Jonah Kalaniana'ole document his 19 years as Hawaii's Delegate to Congress. The papers mainly consist of bill files and correspondence. The bill files concern his campaign for Hawaiian Home Lands legislation and federal public works legislation for Hawaii. The correspondence reflects an unusually close consultation between Delegate Kalaniana'ole and the governor on legislation of interest to Hawaii. A finding aid is available at the repository.

*Photographs*: circa 1875–1920, 1 folder. Photographs of Jonah Kalaniana'ole as a child, young man, and during his political career as Hawaii's Delegate to the U.S. Congress. Photos record his activities as a sportsman, as a student with his brothers in San Mateo, California, and as a member of the Order of Kamehameha. Several photographs of commemorations honoring him are also included.



## NOTES

- 1 Barbara Bennett Peterson, "Kuhio," *American National Biography* 12 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 943.
- 2 "Prince Cupid at Home," 24 May 1903, *Washington Post*: E10.
- 3 Peterson, "Kuhio": 943.
- 4 Lori Kamae, *The Empty Throne: A Biography of Hawaii's Prince Cupid* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1980): 67–68.
- 5 Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, "Prince Kuhio: An Introduction to His Life," in *Biography Hawaii: Five Lives—A Series of Public Remembrances*, University of Hawaii, <http://hawaii.edu/biograph/pdf/kuhioguide.pdf> (accessed 7 March 2013).
- 6 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 70–73.
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- 9 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 80–87.
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- 17 "Wilcox and Cupid," 2 September 1902, *The Independent*: 2; "Review of the Press," 9 September 1902, *The Independent*: 1.
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- 19 "Prince in the House," 13 November 1902, *Washington Post*: 3.
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- 23 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 112.
- 24 "Jonah in the Jug," 6 January 1904, *Los Angeles Times*: 3; "Prince Cupid' Arrested," 6 January 1904, *New York Times*: 9.
- 25 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 113.
- 26 For a full listing of Kuhio's committee assignments, see David T. Canon et al., *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789–1946*, vol. 3 (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2002): 570.
- 27 Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 28 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 113–115.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 110–111.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 112, 122; Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 31 Hearing before the House Committee on Industrial Arts and Expositions, *Alaska-Yukon Exposition*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (27 January 1908): 44–45.
- 32 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 128.
- 33 Roderick Matheson, *Congressional Visit to Hawaii: 1915* (Honolulu: Advertiser Press, 1915): 14.
- 34 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 158.
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- 37 Hearings before the House Committee on Naval Affairs, *Pearl Harbor Dry Dock*, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (29 January 1908): 495–496.
- 38 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 176; Peterson, "Kuhio": 944.
- 39 Hearings before the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Radio Communications*, 64th Cong., 2nd sess. (11–26 January 1917): 383–384.
- 40 Hearings before the House Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, *Extending Relief to the Territory of Hawaii by Providing Additional Shipping Facilities Between the Territory of Hawaii and the Mainland*, 66th Cong., 1st sess. (14 July 1919): 3–7.
- 41 Statements before the Senate Committee on Pacific Islands and Porto Rico, *Liquor Traffic in Hawaii*, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (11 February 1910): 18–20.
- 42 36 Stat. 878 (1910); Hearings before the House Committee on the Territories, *Special Prohibition Election in the Territory of Hawaii*, 61st Cong., 2nd sess. (25 February 1910): 6–9; Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 141–142.
- 43 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 171–172.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 132–133; "Hawaiian Prince Dead," 3 June 1908, *Washington Post*: 4.
- 45 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 129–130, 162, 173–75.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 47 "Fight Over Hawaiian Lands," 27 December 1909, *New York Times*: 4; "The Party Split—And After," 13 December 1909, *Hawaiian Star*: 4; "Island Press On Politics," 28 December 1909, *Hawaiian Gazette*: 3.
- 48 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 143–144; "Hawaiian Delegate to Fight Governor of Pacific Isles," 31 May 1911, *Los Angeles Times*: 13; "Knox and Fisher Land," 12 October 1912, *Washington Post*: 6.
- 49 "Hawaii Would Enter Union," 9 July 1910, *New York Times*: 1; "Views of Visitors in Washington," 1 August 1910, *Washington Post*: 6.



- 50 It is unclear for whose benefit the territorial legislature offered these proposals, given the lack of funding or serious push each resolution ultimately provided. Kuhio seemed to recognize, alongside much of the press at the time, the futility of pushing a proper statehood campaign in Congress without more potent backing from Hawaiian authorities. See Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 178.
- 51 Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984): 44–46; John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawaii, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004): 30.
- 52 Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968): 295–296.
- 53 Daws, *Shoal of Time*: 296–297; Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Labor Problems in Hawaii*, 67th Cong., 1st sess. (7 July 1921): 450.
- 54 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 187.
- 55 Hearings before the Senate Committee on Territories, *Hawaiian Homes Commission Act, 1920*, 66th Cong., 3rd sess. (14 December 1920): 128–130.
- 56 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 197; Daws, *Shoal of Time*: 297–299; Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944; “Hawaiian Rehabilitation Bill is Passed; Anti-Beer Measure Favored,” 1 July 1921, *Sacramento Union*: 2.
- 57 Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944; *Labor Problems in Hawaii*: 448.
- 58 Hearings before the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, *Relative to Chinese Immigration into Hawaii*, 65th Cong., 2nd sess. (17 January 1918): 1–3, 48–49.
- 59 Kuhio’s efforts alongside those of businessman Walter Dillingham ultimately led to pressure for Japanese exclusion in the Immigration Act of 1924. See Tom Coffman, *The Island Edge of America* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003): 32; *Labor Problems in Hawaii*: 451–453.
- 60 The House rejected Iaukea’s claim that an early mistake in dispensing the ballots necessarily voided the election and also noted that voting proportions did not fall significantly outside the broader numbers. See “Contest from Hawaii,” 13 December 1904, *Washington Post*: 1; House Committee on Elections No. 3, *Iaukea v. Kalanianaole*, 59th Cong., 1st sess., H. Rept. 2651, (26 March 1906): 1–6.
- 61 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 138–139.
- 62 Ibid., 156.
- 63 Ibid., 178–180.
- 64 Coffman, *The Island Edge of America*: 13.
- 65 Kamae, *The Empty Throne*: 185, 200; Peterson, “Kuhio”: 944.



“DO NOT LEAVE IT POSSIBLE  
FOR ANY HAWAIIAN TO SAY  
THAT, EITHER POLITICALLY  
OR ECONOMICALLY, HE WAS  
BETTER OFF UNDER THE OLD  
MONARCHY THAN HE MAY  
BE TO-DAY UNDER THE  
AMERICAN FLAG.”

Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole  
*Congressional Record*, February 23, 1905