

History Of Hawaii's Statehood Quest

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That year President Roosevelt visited Hawaii and said afterwards (July 28): "I have seen with my own eyes that you are doing much to improve the standards of living of the average of citizenship . . . There are indeed many parts of the mainland of the United States where economic and educational levels do not come up to those which I find here."

In 1935, in addition to introducing a statehood bill in the House of Representatives, King was responsible for the first on-the-scene investigation of Hawaii's fitness for statehood by a Congressional group. A subcommittee of the House Committee on Territories visited Hawaii and later reported:

"Your sub-committee found the Territory of Hawaii to be a modern unit of the American Commonwealth, with a political, social and economic structure of the highest type."

EQUAL RIGHTS GROUP

The same year the Hawaii Legislature passed a bill introduced by Senator Joseph R. Farrington and Speaker Roy A. Vitousek creating the Hawaii Equal Rights Commission, a bipartisan, unpaid body of four members and the Governor as chairman.

Its purposes were to promote for Hawaii equal rights with the states; prevent discriminatory federal legislation, and assist in obtaining amendments to the Organic Act as requested by the Legislature.

"The commission shall also make a thorough study of all aspects of statehood for Hawaii," the Act read, "and the advisability of submitting the issue to plebiscite at some future date."

The members were Governor Joseph B. Poindexter, chairman; Louis S. Cain, Territorial Superintendent of Public Works, secretary; Chief Justice of Hawaii James L. Coke, former Delegate Houston and former Governor Lawrence M. Judd. John Snell was executive secretary.

When the 75th Congress in 1937 appointed a joint House-Senate committee to conduct the first full-scale hearings in Hawaii, the Equal Rights Commission was ready with a 32-page booklet, "Hawaii, Integral Part of the United States of America," summarizing for the visiting Congressmen Hawaii's case to date. It is typical of numerous publications on the subject over the past 20 or more years.



John A. Burns

In February, 1938, the committee reported Hawaii had "fulfilled every requirement for statehood" and com-

mended the people and races of Hawaii for their way of "maintaining the democratic principles of America," among numerous other compliments.

The report also took note of a certain amount of anti-statehood opinion in Hawaii and recommended a plebiscite, as had been suggested in the Equal Rights Act. The Hawaii Legislature authorized a plebiscite to be held at the general election November 5, 1940.

Tension was growing steadily between the United States and Japan and the time for any test of statehood feeling was most unfavorable. Nevertheless, Hawaii's voters balloted 2 to 1 for statehood.

War, of course, intervened again and statehood receded into the background. Sam King resigned as Delegate to return to active duty in the navy. In November, 1942 Hawaii elected as his successor former Senator Joseph R. Farrington, son of the late Governor and publisher of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Farrington, with a passionate belief in the cause, continued a vigorous and relentless drive for statehood until his death in his Washington office in 1954.

"Joe Farrington did not live to see the consummation of his dreams and hopes of many years, but his part in the fight for Statehood and his tremendous aid never will be underestimated," Speaker Joseph W. Martin said, among the many tributes paid by members of Congress at the time of his tragic death.



Mrs. Elizabeth Farrington

CONGRESS TAKES LOOK

With the end of World War II, Congress resumed its inquiries in 1946 by sending a subcommittee of the House Committee of Territories to Hawaii to conduct new hearings. Henry D. Larcade Jr. (D-La.) was chairman of the subcommittee, which returned and recommended "immediate consideration to legislation to admit Hawaii to statehood."

Hawaii got its war-stymied statehood campaign machinery back into operation that same year with the formation on May 10 of the Citizens' Statehood Committee.

It was appointed by Governor Ingram M. Stainback and composed of the Governor as chairman, an executive board of 17 citizens and a membership of nearly 300 including all members of the legislature, the Hawaii Equal Rights Commission, the Mayor and chairmen of all county board of supervisors, various citizen groups and individual community leaders.

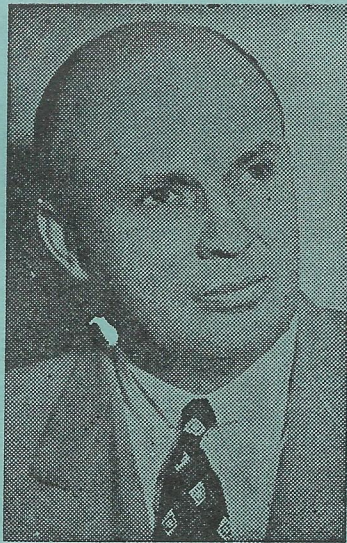
The committee sent its executive secretary, George H. Mc-

Lane, to Washington to establish an office. It was officially opened January 6, 1947, but since the commission had no funds the office operated in the name of the Equal Rights Commission.

Three days earlier, on January 3, Delegate Farrington introduced Congress Bill "H. R. 49," a designation to be repeated on other bills in succeeding Congresses. Congress took its first legislative action on Hawaiian statehood when the House passed this bill June 30, but the bill died in a Senate committee the following May.

NEW COMMISSION

On that same June 30 the Equal Rights Commission expired and the legislature created the Hawaii Statehood Commission to succeed it and the Citizens' Statehood Committee.



Lorrin Thurston

The new commission received an appropriation of \$200,000 and met for the first time June 9.

Abner T. Longley was chairman with King, Ray Coll, Delbert E. Mitzger and David K. Trask as the Oahu members; F. W. Broadbent, Maui; Gavien Bush, Hawaii, and Charles A. Rice, Kauai.

The dozen years since that last day of June in 1947, when a Hawaii statehood bill passed the House for the first time and the Hawaii Statehood Commission was created, were the most eventful in the history of the movement.

On the death of Longley in 1949 Sam King became chairman of the Statehood Commission, serving until he was appointed Governor in 1952. He was succeeded by another ardent statehood champion, C. Nils Tavares, former Hawaii Attorney General.

In 1957 the chairmanship passed to a long-time commissioner, Lorrin P. Thurston, son of Lorrin A., thus duplicating in the Thurston family the Farringtons' father-son relationship in the statehood movement. Thurston is the current and undoubtedly last chairman of the commission, happy to be put out of business with completion of its job.

The commission cooperated closely with the three Delegates in office during its dozen years of operation. Delegate Farrington was succeeded after his death by his widow, Elizabeth P., who was elected to fill out his term and re-elected at the next general election the same year, 1954.

A general Democratic victory in the elections of 1956 sent John A. Burns to Washington as Delegate. The Hawaiian and Alaskan statehood bills had been joined in Congress, obviously dooming both. Opponents



Joseph R. Farrington

of Hawaiian statehood continued to hammer away at the charge of Communist control in Hawaii.

A Senate subcommittee headed by James O. Eastland held new hearings at Iolani Palace late in 1956 and made a strong adverse report to the new Congress in February, 1957. Again the Statehood Commission provided extensive documentation to prove Hawaii a "showcase for democracy."

Alaska meanwhile, with an energetic statehood campaign of its own, adopted the "Tennessee plan" as a new strategy, electing two "Senators" and a "Representative" and sending them to the 85th Congress. Both the Alaska and Hawaii Delegates then agreed on a combined strategy of pushing Alaskan statehood first. With Alaska in, theoretically, Hawaii would quickly follow.

Skepticism gave way to astonishment when Alaska was voted into the Union as the 49th state in the closing weeks of the 85th Congress in 1958. Pending Hawaii bills died, as so often before, in committee. Hawaii prepared new ones for the 86th Congress with the conviction this time they would succeed. They did.

WASHINGTON OFFICE

Over the years the Statehood Commission prepared, at least for each new session of Congress, printed literature summarizing the case to date.

It provided expert witnesses to testify at home and in Washington before Congressional hearings. It led campaigns of letter writing.

The Washington office set up by McLane in 1947 was run later by Cogswell, Jack M. Fox, and since 1951 by Jan Jabulka, long-time Honolulu newspaperman, as executive director. At the commission's Honolulu headquarters in Iolani Palace Mrs. Clara C. West was executive secretary for many years until her retirement.

With the frequent aid of outside writers such as Buck Buchwach, both offices provided written and other evidence to support the partisans of statehood, inside Congress and out, and issued strong and prompt rebuttal to critics and opponents.

Honoluluans such as Benjamin O. Wist, retired University of Hawaii dean, and Mrs. Gerald R. Corbett, often worked out of the Washington office through the years on speech tours and personal contacts with congressmen.

And in the critical years, Former Governor Oren E. Long spent many months in Washington calling on congressmen as

a special envoy from the Statehood commission.

The commission has always been rigidly bipartisan, an example of the unity of opposing political faiths on the statehood question.

NEW CONSTITUTION

In 1949 the 24th Territorial Legislature enacted a bill authorizing an elective convention to draft a proposed constitution for the state of Hawaii.

Sixty-three citizens were elected as delegates and between April 4 and July 22, 1950, wrote a constitution. It was signed by 62 of the 63 and ratified by the Legislature.

At the general election November 7 the electorate approved the constitution as drafted by a 3-to-1 majority.

This was in effect the equivalent of a second statehood plebiscite, with an even stronger majority than in the 1940 voting.

Still another "plebiscite," in effect, was held in February, 1954. Governor King had appointed Gregg M. Sinclair, then president, now retired, of the University of Hawaii, to head a new Citizens Committee for Statehood for Hawaii.

The Committee's outstanding achievement was the Statehood Honor Roll, a petition on a giant roll of newspaper signed by 116,000 citizens throughout the territory and sent to Congress as a plea for immediate statehood.

Big Island Steeped In Tradition

Hawaii—land of volcanoes and orchids—is most steeped in Hawaiian tradition of all the island chain. The birthplace of Kamehameha the Great who unified the islands, it was once the center of Hawaiian civilization.

Hawaii is probably best known for its volcanoes, and the volcano area may be reached from Kona by driving south through the coffee plantations and lava flows from Mauna Loa's 1950 eruption, around south point and past the black sand beach at Punaluu.

Crossing the wild and desolate Kau desert, barren lava fields, the visitor arrives at the Volcano House, a unique hotel situated on the rim of Kilauea crater.

In this area are scenes that might be from the creation of the world. Walking along the trails requires stepping around numerous steam vents. The sulphur banks, Halemaumau firepit, a giant tree fern forest and the Thurston lava tube are also sights of interest.

Near to the Volcano House is the museum of Hawaii National Park where movies of recent eruptions are shown and various displays and exhibits illustrate scientists' knowledge of volcanoes.

Below Kilauea, south of Hilo, is the Puna area where the islands' last volcanic eruption occurred in 1955. Lava fountains springing up in the midst of cultivated farm land gave the volcanologists their first opportunity to study the birth of a volcano.

Hot cinder cones and active sulphur pits still fill the area.

At Kalapana is another beautiful black sand beach surrounded by a large coco palm grove, and at Kumukahi Point the Waiwelawela warm springs.

A STATEHOOD PRAYER

The following is the text of the Statehood sermon delivered by The Rev. Abraham Akaka in Kawaiaha'o Church, at the service commemorating statehood, March 13, 1959.

"One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all" . . . these words have a fuller meaning for us all in Hawaii today. And we have gathered in this Mother Church of Hawaii, our Westminster Abbey of Hawaii, to give thanks to God, and to pray for His guidance and protection in the years ahead.

Our newspapers have been full of much valuable historical data concerning Hawaii's development and growth and aspirations. I will keep copies of these stories as long as I live, and for my children and grandchildren after them. For they have called to our minds the long train of those whose prayers and hopes and sacrifices through the years were fulfilled yesterday.

There remains the formal expression of our people for statehood, and the entrance of our islands into the Union as a full-fledged member.

I would like to speak the message of self-affirmation this morning, that in the days ahead, we take courage to be ourselves, to be the Aloha State.

On April 25, 1820, 139 years ago, the first Christian service of worship was conducted in Honolulu on this very ground. Like our Pilgrim Fathers who arrived at Plymouth, Mass., in 1620, so did the Fathers of a new era in Hawaii kneel in prayer to give thanks to God who had seen them safely on their way after a long and trying voyage.

Gathered around the Rev. Hiram Bingham on April 25, 1820, here at Kawaiaha'o were a few of our kahunas who had come out of curiosity. The text for the sermon of that day, though it was April and near Easter time, was from the Christmas story. And there our people heard these words for the first time:

"Mai makau oukou, no ka mea, eia hoi, ke hai aku nei au ia oukou i ka mea maikai, e olioli nui ai e lilo ana no na kanaka a pau. No ka mea, i keia la i hanau ai, ma ke kulanakauhale o Davida, he ola no oukou, oia ka mesia ka haku."

"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord!"

Although our grandfathers did not realize it then, the hopes and fears of all their years through the next century and more, were to be met in the meaning and power of those words, for from that beginning, a new Hawaii was born.

For through those words, our missionaries and people following them under God became the greatest single influence in Hawaii's whole development—politically, economically, educationally, socially, religiously—so that Hawaii's real preparation for statehood can be said to have begun truly on that day 139 years ago on this spot.

Yesterday when the first sound of firecrackers and sirens reached my ears, I was with the members of our Territorial Senate in the middle of the opening prayer for the day's session. How strange, and yet how fitting it was that the news should burst forth while we were in prayer together.

Things had moved so fast. Our Mayor, a few minutes before, asked if the church could be kept open, because he and others wanted to walk across the street to the sanctuary here for prayer when the news came.

By the time I got back from the Senate, this sanctuary was well nigh filled by people who happened to be near when the sirens started ringing, people from our government buildings nearby.

And as we sang the great hymns of Hawaii and of our nation, and lifted up our voices in psalms and prayers, it seemed that the very walls of this church spoke of God's dealing with Hawaii in the past, of great events both spontaneous and planned that they had seen here. For the love and power of God has been a refuge and a guide for our people through the past century and more.

There are some of us to whom statehood brings great hopes; and there are some to whom statehood brings silent fears. One might say that the hopes and fears of Hawaii are met in statehood today.

There are fears that statehood will motivate economic greed toward Hawaii, that it will turn Hawaii into a great big (as someone had said) spiritual junkyard filled with smashed dreams, wornout illusions—that it will make us a lonely, confused, insecure, empty, anxious, restless, disillusioned—a wistful people.

There is an old mele that reminds me of fears such as these, and the way God leads out of these fears.

"Kaku'i i ka uahi o ka lua, pa i ka lani, haahaa Hawaii, moku o keawe i hanau ia—po puna, po hilo, po i kauahi o kuu aina—ola ia kini, ke a mai la ke ahi."

"There is a fire underground, but the firepit gives forth only smoke, smoke that burst upward, touching the skies, and Hawaii is humbled beneath its darkness—it is night over Hawaii, night from the smoke of my land—but there is salvation for the people for now the land is being lit by a great flame."

We need to see statehood as the lifting of the clouds of smoke, and the opportunity to affirm positively the basic Gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. We need to see that Hawaii has potential moral and spiritual contributions to make to our nation and world.

The fears Hawaii may have are to be met by men and women who are living witnesses of what we really are in Hawaii, of the spirit of aloha, men and women who can help unlock the doors to the future by the guidance and grace of God.

Self-affirmation is the need of the hour. And we can affirm our being, what we really are, as the Aloha State by full participation in our nation and world. For any collective anxiety, the answer is collective courage. And the ground of that courage is God.

We do not understand the meaning of aloha until we realize its foundation in the power of God at work in the world. Since the coming of our missionaries in 1820, the name for God to our people has been aloha.

One of the first sentences I learned from my mother in my childhood was this from the Holy Scripture: "Aloha ke Akua." In other words, Aloha is God.

Aloha is the power of God seeking to unite what is separated in the world—the power that unites heart with heart, soul with soul, life with life, culture with culture, race with race, nation with nation. It is the power that can reunite where quarrel has brought separation; it is the power that reunites a man with himself when he has become separated from the miage of God within.

Thus when a people or a person live in the spirit of aloha, they live in the spirit of God. And among such a people whose lives so affirm their inner being, we see the working of the Scripture: "All things work together for good to them who love God—from the aloha of God came His Son that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly."

Aloha consists of a new attitude of heart, above negativism and legalism. It is the unconditional desire to promote the true good of other people in a friendly spirit, out of a sense of kinship.

Aloha seeks to do good to a person, with no conditions attached. We do not do good only to those who do good to us. One of the sweetest things about the love and aloha of God is that it welcomes the stranger and seeks his good. A person who has the spirit of aloha loves even when the love is not returned. And such is the love of God.

This is the meaning of aloha. I feel especially grateful that the discovery and development of our islands long ago was not couched in the context of an imperialistic and exploitive national power, but in the context of aloha.

There is a very deep correlation between the charter under which the missionaries came—namely, "to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to cover these islands with productive green fields, and to lift the people to a high state of civilization"—correlation between this fact and the fact that Hawaii is not one of the trouble spots in the world today.

Aloha does not exploit a people and keep them in ignorance and subservience. Rather it shares the sorrows and joys of people; it seeks to promote the true good of others.

Today one of the deepest needs of mankind is the need to feel a sense of kinship one with another. Truly all mankind belongs together, for from the very beginning all mankind has been called into being, nourished, watched over by the love of God who is aloha. The real Golden Rule is aloha. This is the way of life we must affirm.

Let us affirm ever what we really are—for aloha is the spirit of God at work in you and in me and in the world, uniting what is separated, overcoming darkness and death, bringing new light and life to all who sit in the darkness of fear and the shadow of death, guiding the feet of mankind into the way of peace.

Thus may our becoming a state mean to our nation and the world, and may it reaffirm that which was planted in us 139 years ago on this ground: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people!"