Hawaii's First Newspapers - *Students make history, too!*

The first newspaper printed in Hawaii was a student newspaper, Ka Lama Hawaii (The Hawaiian Luminary), produced Feb. 14, 1834 at Lahainaluna on Maui. It was written in Hawaiian, as were many of the early Island newspapers.

The missionaries, who ran the schools in the mid-1800s, introduced the idea of newspapers as a teaching tool. The first edition of Ka Lama, for example, was dominated by an essay on the habits and habitats of *He Liona*, the lion. That same year saw the start of the first regular published newspaper, Ke Kumu Hawaii, also written in Hawaiian.

The missionary leaders saw these small newspapers not only helping to increase literacy and to teach academic subjects such as geography, but also as an excellent medium for teaching Christian principles.

Hawaiian scholar Ester Mookini recounts in her book *The Hawaiian Newspapers*: "The paper served a dual purpose of providing reading material for the schools and presenting in an effective manner the views of the missionaries upon religious and moral questions." The first Hawaiian language newspaper established by a Native Hawaiian came about 27 years later with Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika (Star of the Pacific), published by J.K. Kaunamano. Among its editors was soon-to-be-king David Kalakaua. One of Kalakaua's many nicknames was "the editor king."

In 1836, two years after Hawaiian language newspapers took hold, the first English language paper was born, the Sandwich Island.
Gazette and Journal of Commerce. This version of the Gazette was sporadically published and lasted three years.

It wasn't until 1856 that the first regular English language paper was established, the weekly Pacific Commercial Advertiser. The Advertiser has published continuously since then, becoming daily in 1882 and switching names to today's Honolulu Advertiser in 1921.

The Pacific Commercial Advertiser continued the tradition of Hawaiian language newspapering as well, including a Hawaiian section, Ka Hoku Loa O Hawaii (The Morning Star of Hawaii), during its first five years. Whitney spun this Hawaiian language section off into a separate newspaper, Ka Nupepa Kuokoa.

The first Hawaiian language daily newspaper, Ka Manawa (Time), was established in 1870, and edited by David Kalakaua.

The Kingdom of Hawaii produced its own English/Hawaiian newspaper, the Polynesian, first in 1841 and then for a 20-year run from 1844-1864. Among the Polynesian's editors was Hawaii's first woman journalist, Elizabeth Swain Jarves, who took over the paper when her husband became ill and left Hawaii.

In 1855 a most remarkable newspaper appeared -- The Folio, Hawaii's first women's newspaper. It put forth the arguments of the mid-century feminist movement, including among others women's rights to vote and take on leadership roles in the church.

Although it was a single-issue newspaper, it was reprinted entirely in the popular monthly the Friend, giving it a wide readership.

The articles in The Folio were anonymously written, but newspaper scholar Helen Chapin says signs point to Catherine Whitney as the editor and principal author. Whitney was married to Polynesian editor and Advertiser founder Henry Whitney.
The end of the century brought turmoil as the kingdom was overthrown and the Islands were annexed by the United States. This period brought the last great era of Hawaiian newspapers as activist editors fought for the eroding rights of Hawaiians.

Journalist-warriors of the time included Joseph and Emma Nawahi with Ke Aloha Aina; Joseph Mokuohai Poepeoe with Kuokoa Home Rule and Ka Na‘i Aupuni; and Theresa Laahui Cartwright Wilcox with the Liberal and Home Rule Republika.

The longest running of these papers was Ke Aloha Aina, begun in 1895 by Joseph and Emma Nawahi. Joseph Nawahi was a journalist-statesman who severed in the first Territorial legislatures. After his death, Emma Nawahi edited the paper through its last issues in 1920.

**READING RESPONSE:** Over 90% of Hawaiians were literate a century ago. Think about the differences between Hawaiians today and in Hawaiians in the 1800s when they first learned to read and published their own newspapers. Are the people different, or just the times? Why?