

Hawaii Foundation for History and the Humanities

Program for the Cook Bicentennial

by

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The Hawaii Foundation for History and the Humanities is deeply involved in the Cook Bicentennial as part of its ongoing concern and interest in Hawaii's past, present and future. As you are most likely well aware of the background of the Foundation, I will concentrate on our present and immediate future plans and activities -- especially those of the present year of celebration.

The Foundation was originally organized and developed through legislative action almost a decade ago. It is a unique body being both State and privately supported. As a State organization the law says that it is to develop and maintain historic preservation as well as cultural activities for the citizens of Hawaii.

Later in 1971, the Historic Places Review Board was added to the Foundation and entrusted with the review of all sites, historic and prehistoric, and to make recommendations for local, State and National registry.

In 1972, the Multi-Cultural Center was established to carry out programs in ethnic studies.

Through these and other Foundation activities, we have been involved with the identification and preservation of archaeological sites and their contents and the oral history and documentation of Hawaii's ethnic past.

In addition, we aid and assist museums and local groups that carry out historic and cultural research and preservation. Lastly, we are involved with symposia, conferences, publications, and other media that transmit knowledge and information of these activities.

In January of this year, the Governor of Hawaii proclaimed 1978 as a year of celebration. A year marking the 200th anniversary of a point in time -- a point marking a cultural continuum starting with the arrival of the first Polynesian immigrants to Hawaii, continuing with later arrivals from other islands of Polynesia, added to by immigrants from Europe, Asia, the Western Pacific and the United States.

Although the Foundation interprets the scope of history and the humanities with a broad view to ethnic and cultural phenomena, it nevertheless is emphasizing during this bicentennial year the history and cultural heritage of its people of Hawaiian-Polynesian ancestry.

Consequently, a much larger number of events scheduled for this year is concerned with activities interpreted as Hawaiian in cultural background. I will not even attempt to mention all of even a portion of the items on our calendar. I did, however, bring with me an up-to-date listing of events for anyone interested. For those of us here I would think you might be especially concerned with the following activities: the restoration and preservation of Fort Elizabeth, Kauai; the coming to Hawaii of Dr. Churchill, a well-known botanist, who will give a series of lectures at the University of Hawaii in late April or early May; and the still in the planning stages, possibility of a conference concerned with Hawaiian archaeology.

One of the most important projects, however, is what we have called, "Nana I Ke Kumu" - "Look to the Source." It will be the Foundation's

Bicentennial Conference and Examination of Hawaiian Values. This search for the Hawaiian system of values is long overdue. Scholars, starting with Cook, have long been intrigued with the culture of the inhabitants of these islands and we have come a long way in the recording and analysis of this cultural heritage.

Non-material culture is not as readily recordable as that which is viewed through one's senses. The time, however, is long overdue for an examination of the glue that held together the more readily known aspects of Hawaiian culture. The recognition of values pertaining to land, through such traditions as "kapu" and "'ohana" (guardianship through controls and family), is available to us and may serve as a working approach to broaden knowledge and insight into this study.

In the examination of values, the Bicentennial Conference will attempt to explore four sequential themes: the religion, oral traditions, and belief system of the Hawaiians; how these influenced and molded their interpersonal relations; the ethical rules including the "kapu" system; and the concept of land and its use.

This project will involve the full use of media techniques. We have already videotaped many sessions with knowledgeable informants on all of the islands. Bibliographies are being prepared on the theme and "overview" papers will be available for circulation to all the panel members prior to the conference sessions. These sessions will be filmed and edited. They will be shown throughout the State. Input will be solicited and these reactions in turn will be reviewed by the panelists.

Finally, a second round of televised sessions will be held with panelists interacting with researchers and perhaps outside advocates. This product will be edited for presentation at summary sessions to be

held in September or October.

If all goes well, this project alone will go a long way toward an understanding of Hawaiian values. It, like our other ongoing and ad hoc projects and activities, will aid in carrying out the stated goals of the Hawaii Foundation for History and the Humanities.