

# Background and Introduction

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**T**he bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawai'i marked the beginning of American involvement in World War II, and over the years since this Hawai'i site has become a major symbol of the war itself. However, until very recently, very little has been known about Hawai'i's detention of more than 2,000 of its local residents and its imprisonment of nearly 17,000 enemy nationals captured during the war.

Hidden deep within a gulch located just a few miles inland from the famed World War II site of Pearl Harbor, lies the Honouliuli Internment and Prisoner of War Camp. The US Army's Honouliuli Camp that opened in March 1943 was the largest and longest lasting of at least 13 internment sites and 13 POW compounds found throughout the islands of Hawai'i. Articles in this volume focus on the Honouliuli Camp and the very important role Hawai'i played in the wartime activities of internment and imprisonment.

To aid readers' understanding of the articles that follow, we begin with a brief background on Honouliuli within the context of Hawaiian history, from ancient times up through the beginning of the war. We will see that in addition to the prominence of this area during World War II, Honouliuli has held a deep significance throughout Hawaiian history.

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### Honouliuli's Prewar Significance

The wider Honouliuli area is an ancient Hawaiian *ahupua'a* (land division), one of 13 within the *moku* (district) of 'Ewa. It consists of mostly arid, yet very fertile, lands located in the leeward portion of West O'ahu that stretch from the oceanfront up into the slopes of the Wai'anae Mountains. The indigenous Hawaiian term, Honouliuli, translates as "blue harbor" or "dark bay," with the area taking its name from the beauty and bounty of that oceanfront region. This is an area with its own unique traditional history, as told in numerous stories and songs, and holding a number of significant Native Hawaiian cultural sites (Sterling and Summers 1978).

During ancient times, all land had been managed by Hawai'i's *ali'i* (high chiefs) who granted use rights to their subjects. Western contact beginning in the late eighteenth century led to the unification of a Hawaiian kingdom under Kamehameha I and the islands' entrance into the world economy—first as a major Pacific port of call and then with the development of agricultural plantations, particularly for sugarcane. Later heirs to the throne worked to enact the Great Mahele ("to divide or portion"); by 1848 the land could be split into parcels owned or leased by Hawaiians and various settlers to the islands (Merry 2000). During the decades that followed, plantations imported contract laborers, particularly from China, Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines (Takaki 1983).

By the late nineteenth century, much of the Honouliuli area was included in the extensive landholdings of the Oahu Sugar Company on Campbell Estate property headquartered in the town of Auali'i (today known as Waipahu, "gushing water," referring to the company's success in bringing needed water to the area from the windward side of the island through the construction of the Wai'ahole Ditch in the early twentieth century). The area just inland from the shore held a small Honouliuli town with shops, residences, and small truck farms.

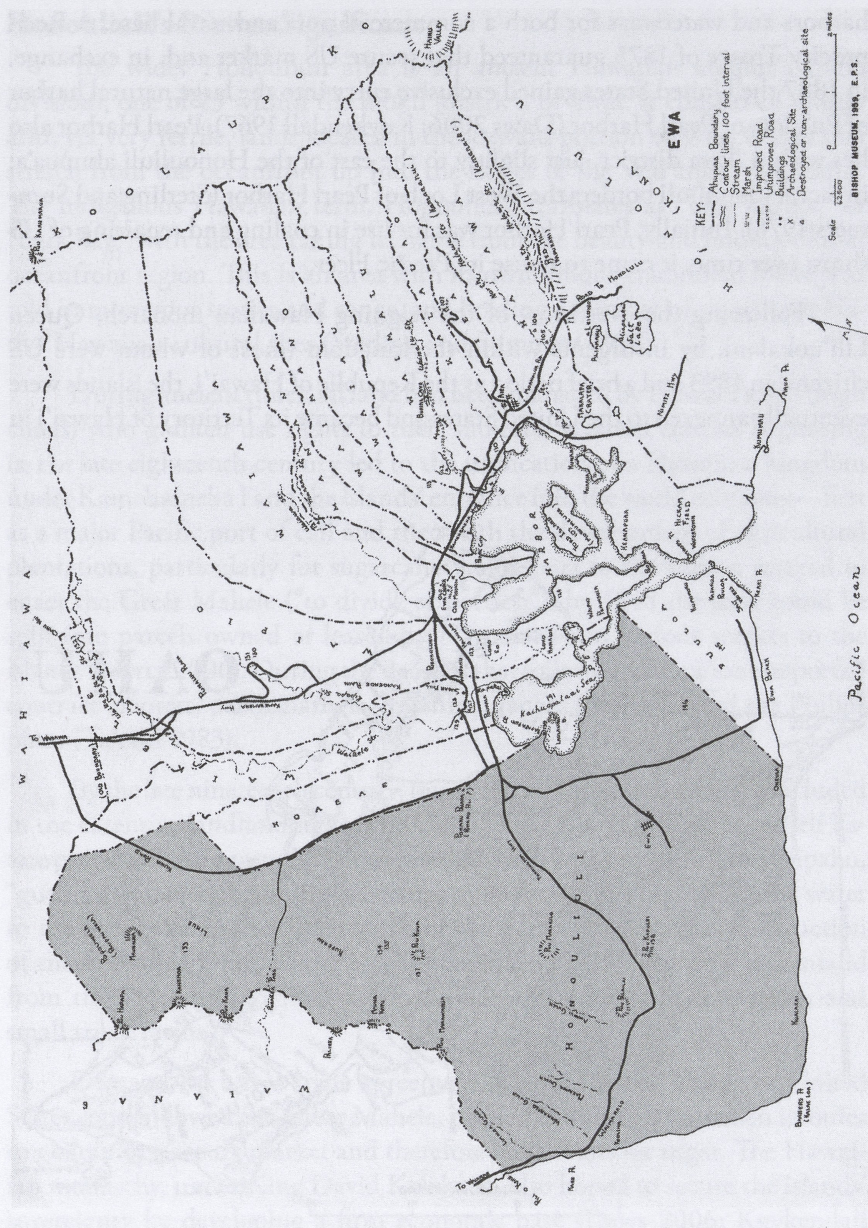
Demand for a free trade agreement between Hawai'i and the United States soon followed the Great Mahele, pushed by local businessmen in order to guarantee a secure market and therefore bank loans for sugar. The Hawaiian monarchy, under King David Kalākaua, also hoped to secure the islands' sovereignty by developing a firm economic base (Daws 2006; Kuykendall 1967). The United States, by then dependent on Hawai'i's sugar export and also interested in its strategic capacity, was particularly interested in its various

harbors and waterways for both a commercial port and naval base. A Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 guaranteed that secure US market and, in exchange, in 1887 the United States gained exclusive entry into the large natural harbor of Pu'uloa, or Pearl Harbor (Daws 2006; Kuykendall 1967). Pearl Harbor also lies within 'Ewa district, just slightly to the east of the Honouliuli ahupua'a; in fact, Honouliuli borders the West Loch of Pearl Harbor (Sterling and Summers 1978). Initially, Pearl Harbor was for use in coaling and repairing of US ships; over time, it came to house its Pacific Fleet.

Following the overthrow of the reigning Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili'uokalani, by insurgents within the kingdom (most of whom were US citizens) in 1893 and a brief period as the Republic of Hawai'i, the islands were eventually annexed to the United States and became its Territory of Hawai'i in



The Honouliuli ahupua'a (shaded). Map of O'ahu prepared by Hawai'i Territory Survey, 1929 (Sterling and Summers 1978).



The Honouliuli ahupua'a (shaded). Map of 'Ewa prepared by Bishop Museum, 1959 (Sterling and Summers 1978).

1898 (Siler 2012; Kuykendall 1967). The US military presence in the islands would multiply over the next few decades, and in the early twentieth century Pearl Harbor became the preeminent American military facility in the Pacific.

### **Martial Law, Democracy, and Social Justice in Wartime Hawai‘i**

The Japanese attack on Hawai‘i on a tranquil Sunday morning on December 7, 1941, was targeted on Pearl Harbor, which had recently come to house the US Pacific fleet, including its battleships lined up on “Battleship Row” and also its aircraft carriers (which fortunately were out to sea that day) (McKay 1946; Judd 1943). Bombs also fell on several other major US military installations in Hawai‘i where aircraft were lined up wingtip to wingtip, making them easy targets for the Japanese and preventing US airmen from getting planes off the ground. In addition, bombs dropped on civilian residents and businesses in the surrounding area and in the city of Honolulu (some the result of “friendly fire” from misfired Navy anti-aircraft shells). The magnitude of destruction, both in the loss of lives of servicemen and civilians and of vital supplies, was devastating and took only minutes to be realized (McKay 1946; Judd 1943). In addition, the first prisoner of war was captured from a disabled Japanese midget submarine.

This attack was thought to be a preview of a dreaded land invasion by the Japanese, and by 11:30 a.m., Governor Joseph B. Poindexter after speaking with President Roosevelt, issued a proclamation invoking martial law and suspending the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus pursuant to Section 67 of the Hawaiian Organic Act (Anthony 1943; King 1942). Walter C. Short assumed the position of military governor shortly thereafter, replaced several weeks later by Delos Emmons. Later that day, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan in his “Day of Infamy” speech (Anthony 1943). On that one day, December 7, 1941, Hawai‘i had become the center of the War in the Pacific.

The Territory of Hawai‘i was the only locale within the United States to experience martial law. Invoking martial law has been used in situations of civil unrest, fear of imminent attack, or threat of war and insurrection; in such cases, the US government feared a society might become unstable or the traditional lines of authority could become eroded. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, this situation certainly seemed a possibility in Hawai‘i. Instituting martial law in Hawai‘i allowed the US military to take control of the courts of law, law enforcement duties, and to designate policy and procedures that

controlled civil liberties (Scheiber and Scheiber 1997). As a result, American ideals of democracy and social justice were quickly swept aside by military concerns for security and expediency (Scheiber and Scheiber 1997).

Under martial law lasting until October 27, 1944, a series of nearly 200 General Orders were issued by the Office of the Military Governor (OMG) outlining in detail who, what, when, and under what circumstances life was to be regulated (Anthony 1943). Martial law established curfews, blackouts, censorship, freezing of wages, restrictions on travel, mass fingerprinting, control of banks and businesses, and the temporary suspension, closing, or even military takeover of schools (King 1942; Anthony 1943; Margold 1942). Hawai‘i’s landscape was dramatically altered, especially on O‘ahu—important landmarks were camouflaged, beaches were strung with barbed wire, shelters were constructed, business doorways and windows were taped, machine-gun nests were set up at key locations, and access to military bases was restricted (King Kamehameha V Judiciary History Center 1991; Brown 1989). Gas masks were distributed, food and gas were rationed, and work restrictions and clothing identity badges were instituted for certain ethnic groups (Allen 1950; Dodge 1984). Military provost courts tried cases for the more minor crimes, with trials averaging five minutes and defendants not given copies of their charges; military commissions handled the more serious offenses (Anthony 1943; King 1942).

As a result of martial law, the lives of all of Hawai‘i’s peoples were changed—they were disrupted, disenfranchised, dismantled, and in some instances devastated (Office of the Military Governor 1945; Adler and Pinao 1995). This was particularly true of the more than 2,000 local residents who had been earlier identified on US Department of Justice and FBI lists (Scheiber and Scheiber 1997). Those lists consisted of individuals whose past or present personal ties or life circumstances linked them (at least in the minds of the American military, most of whom were unfamiliar with Hawai‘i’s peoples) to “enemy groups” and who were, therefore, suspected of questionable loyalty, as well as other individuals who were believed to act suspiciously (Roehner 2009).

Thus, those who were selectively targeted were rounded up beginning December 7, 1941, were very hastily tried, and thousands were interned, initially at Sand Island and other temporary camps located on O‘ahu and the neighbor islands. Opening in March 1943, Honouliuli was the last civilian internment camp to be constructed in Hawai‘i, and most of the civilians still under custody were transferred there, or sent to internment camps or relocation

centers on the mainland (Scheiber and Scheiber 1997). By that time, Hawai'i had also been designated as an important base camp to hold an increasingly very large and very diverse group of prisoners of war (Sato 1976), and several of the compounds at Honouliuli held POWs.

### **Internment and Imprisonment in Hawai'i**

Honouliuli Internment and POW Camp's remote location, restrictions on access to and general secrecy surrounding military installations and activities, the lasting stigma and trauma associated with internment and imprisonment, as well as generational and cultural restrictions on speaking openly of such wartime hardships, have meant that Honouliuli's story is all but forgotten today.

On those occasions when Honouliuli's story has been told, it has frequently been subject to stereotypes and misunderstandings. Those members of the local community who know about this chapter of World War II history have believed that only individuals of Japanese ancestry were subject to internment, particularly elite Japanese males. Most believed that those who were retained were sent to camps on the US mainland; they have been surprised to learn about camps located in Hawai'i. Even less has been known about other individuals and groups who were interned within Hawai'i. Furthermore, very few have known about the wartime presence in Hawai'i of prisoners of war.

Circumstances and conditions of internment and imprisonment varied throughout the United States during World War II. Today, we know that the Hawai'i context, and especially that of the US Army's Honouliuli Internment and POW Camp, was like no other. It differed in terms of the number and types of peoples interned and imprisoned; the legal basis and process for internment under martial law; conditions within the Camp; relations among those within the Camp itself and outside the local community; as well as its profound and lasting impacts on those directly and indirectly involved and on subsequent generations in Hawai'i. These differences are significant for understanding the wider story of World War II internment and imprisonment, not only in Hawai'i but also in the wider context of the continental United States.

The first World War II internment activities actually began in Hawai'i. Even before the war began, some members of Hawai'i's Japanese community—those of the first generation who remained citizens of Japan, as well as others who were US citizens—had been specifically targeted for internment. However, they would be far fewer in number and percentage of that population than on the US mainland. They were, in fact, often males from among

society’s Japanese elite, but others were simply in the wrong place during the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Some, furthermore, actually identified themselves as Okinawans.

We have now learned that a few Japanese women were also interned. In addition, a few Japanese families, along with their young children, were sent from Micronesia to be interned in Hawai‘i. And, while most of Hawai‘i’s more than 2,000 Japanese internees were in fact sent to various camps on the US mainland, they were often followed by their spouses and children who resided with them in the camps there.

In addition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Hawai‘i also picked up nearly 140 residents of European descent for internment—of German, Italian, Austrian, Norwegian, Danish, Lithuanian, Swedish, Finnish, Irish, and Jewish heritage. Those classified as “German” or “Italian” alien enemies residing in Hawai‘i were interned *en masse*, regardless of their actual ancestry or citizenship status. This included all able-bodied adults—husbands, wives, and their children over the age of 14. Internment in Hawai‘i, then, cast a much wider net than just discrimination against resident Japanese.

Over the course of the war, Honouliuli Camp would hold approximately 300 internees who came from a wide variety of life circumstances and ethnic backgrounds. Significantly, most of those who were retained at or later returned to Honouliuli were American citizens held under the authority of martial law.

Those individuals who were singled out for internment were stigmatized, both during and after the war. The effect on loved ones left behind—spouses, the elderly or infirmed, and young children—was also devastating. They had been left to fend for themselves, treated with suspicion, and even avoided by others out of fear of perceived guilt by association. Indeed, internment continued to loom as a threat, with instances of pickups and interrogations continuing for several years. The lasting impacts of those experiences on family members are still felt today.

Adding to the complexity of internment at Honouliuli Camp, Hawai‘i’s largest prisoner of war camp was located immediately adjacent—this combination within one camp was rare for Hawai‘i, as well as for the US mainland. POWs housed at Honouliuli included Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, Filipinos, and others sent from various locations in the Pacific Theater—plus Italians picked up from the Atlantic Theater. They were guarded by an African American infantry unit.



The diverse backgrounds of the internees and the POWs held at Honouliuli significantly overlapped with the majority of peoples found in Hawai'i's local community and also many of the internees held at the Camp. This created highly varied and unusual conditions for imprisonment and internment. Honouliuli also served as a main transition point for internees and POWs sent to other destinations on the US mainland. While some categories of POWs were immediately evacuated to the US mainland, others remained and even mingled with or on very rare occasion actually lived within the local community.

Either directly or indirectly, World War II internment and imprisonment affected every person and most aspects of life in Hawai'i—while the war raged and even decades afterward. It profoundly changed family relationships, friendships, the practice of religious worship, dietary habits, the local economy, labor, etc. It also changed the entire political landscape. During the war, it served as an impetus for the distinguished records of the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in the Atlantic campaign as well as local involvement in the Military Intelligence Service. Afterward, it helped to spark multiethnic labor movements, the “Democratic Revolution,” and paved the way for some of the most progressive legislation in the nation. The Democratic Revolution's influences have continued to shape local debates on issues such as taxation, land reform, environmental protection, human, women's, and LGBT's rights, comprehensive health insurance, and collective bargaining—issues that are currently at the forefront of national and international debates, as well.

### **Breaking the Silence**

In our research, we have found that there are volumes of information to learn about Honouliuli's story, but that information is scattered among various collections. While some oral histories have been collected and archived, what exists is largely anecdotal and simply descriptive. There has been little in-depth research or publication on the various aspects of the Honouliuli experience, on the full range of peoples housed there during World War II, or on the lasting impacts on families and the wider Hawai'i community. The challenge of more fully uncovering, critically analyzing and interpreting, and preserving in a scholarly publication what would otherwise be lost to history is taken up by our multidisciplinary University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu (UHWO) research team consisting of 10 faculty members from nine different academic disciplines.

The Honouliuli site is adjacent to the UHWO’s mauka (inland) property, a visible link to our campus. As an archaeological site, the Honouliuli Internment Camp has been added to both the State of Hawai‘i and the National Register of Historic Places and is under consideration to become a part of the National Park Service. With abundant features and artifacts, Honouliuli has the potential to provide important archaeological information about the administration of an internment and prisoner of war camp and how, in their everyday lives, people reacted to and coped with their confinement. Archaeologists have joined UHWO for three summer field schools at Honouliuli, providing a perspective on the physical remains. As a tangible link to the ways that fear and paranoia resulted in the suppression of civil rights during World War II, these remains can inform and add to discussion about the relationship of national security and the US Constitution.

In presenting the research of our community partners—especially Den-sho, the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai‘i, and Hawai‘i’s Judiciary History Center—along with our combined UHWO research in this volume, we share our findings that the Honouliuli site is not only locally very important to many different groups within our midst, but that it also holds national and international significance. The articles that follow aim to “break the silence” about internment and imprisonment in Hawai‘i, particularly at the most significant site for such activities, Honouliuli Camp. In addition, we wish to tell a more complete, more complex story about Honouliuli, particularly about the lessons that site holds for challenges to democracy and social justice, especially during times of conflict. We also hope our readers will take away an understanding that Honouliuli’s story and the lessons it holds are universal and timeless. In that sense, Honouliuli is *everybody’s story*.

### Articles in this Volume

Leilani Basham’s “Ka I‘a Hāmau Leo: Silences that Speak Volumes for Honouliuli” draws on Hawaiian language resources to describe and explain the landscape that housed the World War II Honouliuli Internment and Prisoner of War Camp. Her research examines ‘ōlelo no‘eau (proverbs), mele (songs, poetry), and mo‘ōlelo (histories, stories) that relate to the ahupua‘a (land division) of Honouliuli and the wahi pana (cultural sites) within its boundaries. The information contained in the oral and written traditions of the Hawaiian language highlights the historical and cultural richness of the ahupua‘a of Honouliuli. The intrusion of an internment camp in its midst was largely unknown for many passing years.

To erase from memory and history the incarceration of internees and prisoners of war in the Honouliuli Camp is to lose the profound lessons learned only through exposing the injustices of war that threaten democratic principles. In their article "Finding Honouliuli: The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i and Preserving the Hawai'i Internment Story," Jane Kurahara, Brian Niiya, and Betsy Young describe the efforts of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i (JCCH) and its Hawai'i Confinement Sites Committee to discover, collect, preserve, interpret, and educate the public, especially the schoolchildren, about Hawai'i's internment story, particularly for those of Japanese ancestry. These endeavors are accomplished through networks of community partnerships as well as state and federal support.

As our researchers discover facts and insights about the internment experience in Honouliuli Camp, the archaeologists, along with their UHWO students, uncover the physical evidence of its operations in wartime Hawai'i. Jeff Burton et al. dig into the past in "Hell Valley: Uncovering a Prison Camp in Paradise" and find two standing structures, building foundations, rock walls, artifacts, and other features of the 122.5 acre internment site that is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to their fieldwork, Burton et al. use oral histories and archival research to document the day-to-day living conditions of the internees and prisoners of war. The significance of their research extends beyond its archaeological finds as the authors note the political, racial, ethnic, and social implications of the internment.

While the internees in Honouliuli Camp were mostly American civilians and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry, Alan Rosenfeld identifies people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds among the "German" and "Italian" internees, including individuals of Scandinavian and Irish backgrounds. These individuals were apprehended under the wide-ranging auspices of J. Edgar Hoover's Alien Enemy Control program. In "Neither Aliens nor Enemies: The Hearings of 'German' and 'Italian' Internees in Wartime Hawai'i," Rosenfeld details how justice is compromised by opting for security at all costs.

Suzanne Falgout points out that POW compounds were adjacent to the internee compound in Honouliuli Camp. As many as 4,000 POWs including Japanese, Okinawans, Koreans, and Filipinos from various locations in the Pacific Theater as well as Italians from the Atlantic Theater were incarcerated at Honouliuli. Falgout's research, "Honouliuli's POWs: Making Connections, Generating Changes," explains the varying conditions of imprisonment of the different POW groups that depended on their ethnicity, reputation, wartime

political status, and connections made with members of their own group in the Camp, members of the local community, and the US military. These connections had local, national, and transnational significance, not only during the period of imprisonment but after the war as well.

In her article "Transnational Identities, Communities, and the Experiences of Okinawan Internees and Prisoners of War," Joyce Chinen focuses on local Kibei Nisei Okinawans (born in Hawai'i, taken back to Okinawa, and then returned to Hawai'i), POWs from the Pacific Theater, and POWs taken in the Battle of Okinawa. She notes that although the Okinawan internees and POWs were categorized as Japanese, they were culturally distinct from the Japanese population. Chinen investigates the reasons why the three Okinawan subgroups were imprisoned and describes how the local Okinawan community in Hawai'i responded to them.

Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, various leaders in Hawai'i's Japanese community had already been identified by the FBI and US Justice Department as threats to national security in the event of war. Buddhist and Shinto priests were high on the US government's lists of potential enemy aliens and they were interned categorically. In "Reviving the Lotus: Japanese Buddhism and World War II Internment," Linda Nishigaya and Ernest Oshiro use rational choice theory to clarify some of the difficult individual and group decisions that were made by Buddhist priests and their leadership to protect the future of Buddhism and its followers in Hawai'i and the US mainland.

Amy Nishimura exposes civil rights violations based on religious identification that led to the incarceration of Shinto priestesses and disciples in Honouliuli Camp. The unjust treatment of two Japanese American priestesses imprisoned in Honouliuli Camp is revealed in "From Priestesses and Disciples to Witches and Traitors." From her examination of transcripts of the martial hearings of two priestesses, Nishimura uncovers their wrongful entrapment in a patriarchal, militaristic justice system that denied their true identities as lawful Japanese American Shinto priestesses.

The effects of internment extend far beyond the barbed-wire fences of confinement to family members left waiting in confusion and fear as was the case in Hawai'i, unlike the situation on the US mainland where whole families were interned. Susan Matoba Adler, whose Nisei parents were interned at Manzanar, explores "The Effect of Internment on Children and Families: Honouliuli and Manzanar." Through interviews and literature reviews, Adler

finds that in Honouliuli and Manzanar the Japanese nuclear family unit weakened and the traditional roles of women changed during the period of displacement and political unrest.

How long and in what ways do the effects of wartime internment last? Focusing on the psychological effects of internment, Garyn Tsuru applies historical trauma theory in his examination of the intergenerational effects of trauma on three families of Honouliuli internees. Tsuru compares and contrasts the experiences of these families with what is known about families interned in camps on the US mainland in his article "Psychic Wounds from the Past: Investigating Intergenerational Trauma in the Families of Japanese Americans Interned in the Honouliuli Internment and POW Camp." Although the conditions of internment in Hawai'i under martial law differed from the US mainland, the wartime civil injustice suffered in both cases left interned families with lingering negative consequences for generations. ❖

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