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Introduction

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Hawaii has long been a crossroads of the Pacific. Starting many centuries ago, people came to these islands from the Marquesas, Tahiti, and probably the Cook Islands and Aotearoa (New Zealand). In the last couple of centuries, Asians and Europeans came as colonists, laborers, and sailors of fortune. In the decades since World War II, migrants have come from many places, including an increasing number from other Pacific Island countries: from Tonga and Samoa, from Fiji and Guam, from Kiribati and Tuvalu. These Pacific Islanders are part of a vast international web of people on the move, driven by circumstances and drawn by opportunities.¹ A person may be born in a village in Western Samoa, raised in Australia and New Zealand, college educated in California, and employed in Hawaii. That person may have relatives in all those places, and may travel among them from time to time.

Although Pacific Islanders make up an important part of the population of the Fiftieth State, very little scholarship exists to describe their existence, their problems and prospects. Almost all the scholarly work on Pacific Island peoples in Hawaii is about native Hawaiians; very little is about the other island peoples. And even concerning Hawaiians there are some enormous gaps in the scholarly literature.²

The Pacific Islander Americans Research Project (PIARP) was founded in 1991 to begin to remedy that situation. It is an enterprise of the faculty and students of Brigham Young University-Hawaii, sponsored jointly by the Division of Social Sciences and the Institute for Polynesian Studies. Its goals are to advance the scholarly understanding of Pacific Island peoples in the United States generally and in Hawaii in particular, and to prepare students for graduate schools and careers in the social sciences.

B.Y.U.-Hawaii is in many respects a unique school. A private, four-year liberal arts college located on the North Shore of the island of Oahu, approximately thirty-five miles from Honolulu, it is designed to serve the peoples of the Pacific. Thus, by design, over half the B.Y.U.-H. students are Pacific Islanders from two dozen countries.³ Another quarter come from the Asian edge of the Pacific Rim. Less than a quarter are mainland Americans. The faculty are coming increasingly to resemble the Pacific diversity of the student body. B.Y.U.-H. teaches several Pacific Island languages and offers a bachelor's degree in Pacific Islands Studies, as well as programs in Hawaiian Studies and Polynesian Studies. The school is home to the Institute for Polynesian Studies and the journal *Pacific Studies*, and is closely affiliated with the Polynesian Cultural Center. All of this means that there are more Pacific Islander Americans at B.Y.U.-Hawaii than on any other American campus, that we devote a very large share of our resources to Pacific Islander concerns, and that we are uniquely placed to study Pacific Islander Americans.

A word should be said about the term "Pacific Islander." We use it in this volume to describe people whose ancestors were indigenous inhabitants of any of the island groups of the Pacific, from Guam to Easter Island, and from Hawaii to Papua New Guinea. It specifically does include native Hawaiians, although the experiences of Hawaiians are in many respects quite different from other Pacific peoples in America because Hawaiians (those still living in Hawaii, at least) are not immigrants but a colonized people. Because people like the hypothetical Samoan above move about the Pacific with such velocity, living now in one country and now in another, the line between "Pacific Islander," "Pacific Islander American," and "Pacific Islander something else" is not a stable one. There are not two boxes, native and immigrant. Labels inevitably become somewhat imprecise.

This special issue of *Social Process in Hawaii* is a product of the Pacific Islander Americans Research Project. The purpose of the issue is to make a small start at answering the call of Debbie Hippolite Wright and Tracie Kaluai (in the second article following

this introduction) for more information about Pacific Islander Americans, so that not only social service agencies, but also government officials, educators, and the general public will cease to deal with Pacific Islanders on the basis of near perfect ignorance.

The selections that follow range from the highly personal, autobiographical narrative of Tupou Hopoate Pau'u's journey to Tongan ethnic identity, to the formal, scientific investigation by Lynne Hansen-Strain into the ways strong oral traditions affect language learning. The articles are all concerned with the lives of Pacific Island peoples in the islands of Hawaii. Debbie Hippolite Wright and Tracie Kaluai examine what social service agencies know about Pacific Islanders and what barriers their ignorance about Pacific Islanders places in the way of their clients. Dianna Fitisemanu and several colleagues analyze the dynamics of Pacific Islander families, and take issue with some common interpretations of Islander family practices. Dorri Nautu and Paul Spickard trace the images that Hawaiians, Samoans, and Tongans have of each other and the social distance they feel from one another, in an attempt to delineate the relationships among these three Island peoples in Hawaii. Bill Wallace describes the environmental history of the *ahupua'a* of Laie on the island of Oahu.

Nearly all the authors of the articles in this issue are or have been affiliated with PIARP. The Project is a collective enterprise, so that all the research team members at any given time contribute ideas and labor to each intellectual product. Some articles bear the name of single authors, for they were written alone; others have as many as seven co-authors.

At this writing, Tupou Hopoate Pau'u (Tongan) is a senior history student at B.Y.U.-Hawaii. Debbie Hippolite Wright (Maori) is assistant professor of social work there and associate director of PIARP. Tracie Kaluai (Hawaiian) is a graduate student in social work at the University of Washington. Dianna Fitisemanu (Samoan from New Zealand) is about to enter graduate school in organizational psychology at Columbia University. David Hall (Cook

Islander from New Zealand) is a senior computer science student at B.Y.U.-H. Karina Kahanui Green (Hawaiian-Chicano from California) is a senior history student at B.Y.U.-H. Brucetta MacKenzie (I-Kiribati) is a recent B.Y.U.-H. graduate in business. Dorri Nautu (Hawaiian-Filipino and several other ethnicities) is about to enter graduate school in public policy. William Kauaiwiulaokalani Wallace III (Hawaiian-Samoan) is assistant professor of history and a fellow of PIARP. Lynne Hansen-Strain (White American) is professor of linguistics. Paul Spickard (White American) is associate dean for the social sciences and director of PIARP.

Notes

¹For further information on this migration, see the introduction and items on migration in Paul R. Spickard, et al., *Pacific Islander Americans: An Annotated Bibliography in the Social Sciences* (Laie, Hawaii: Institute for Polynesian Studies, 1994).

²Spickard, et al., *Pacific Islander Americans*.

³These include students from Hawaii. All together, fifty-six nations from around the world are represented on campus.