

# Ethnicity and Elections in Hawai'i

## The Case of James K. Kealoha

Michaelyn P. Chou

Michaelyn P. Chou, "Ethnicity and Elections in Hawai'i: The Case of James K. Kealoha," *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* – The Journal of the Chinese Historical Society of America (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America with UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 2010), pages 105–111.

### INTRODUCTION

Hawai'i is unique among American states. It is the only state that was once a kingdom and is composed entirely of islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. While Hawai'i's multiethnic population represents many ethnic groups and cultures, no one ethnic group is numerous enough to comprise a majority of the residents. Many of the people are of Asian ancestry. The concern that any one culture might gain undue influence over other resident nationalities has long been a factor in Hawai'i's economic and political development.

In Hawaiian politics, there is some evidence of ethnic groups voting only for candidates of their own heritage and ancestry, giving rise to accusations of bloc voting, or "plunking." Research over the years has ranged from studies disproving the practice and its viability in influencing elections to more recent studies indicating that ethnocentric voting can make the difference in close elections. Ethnic appeals cannot be discounted, especially in Hawai'i, and are an inevitable ingredient, however subtle, in campaigns of both the Republican and Democratic parties even today. While the GOP fielded slates that included Hawaiians, Asians, and members of other races, its powerful Caucasian leadership controlled Hawai'i for over fifty years. Providing opportunities for qualified persons of all ethnic heritages was a major factor in the rise of the Democratic Party under John A. Burns, who consolidated the Democrats' 1954 victory over the GOP by finally capturing the governorship in 1962. The Democrats have controlled island politics since then.

Originally settled by Polynesians, Hawai'i became a monarchy between 1795 and 1810 when Kamehameha I consolidated his power over rival chieftains on his own Big Island (Hawai'i), Maui, Kahoolawe, Lanai, Molokai, Oahu, Kauai, and Niihau. Discovered for the Western world in 1778 by Captain James Cook, an English explorer, Hawai'i became

increasingly tied to the business and political interests of Americans and Europeans who settled there and gained influence with the Hawaiian monarchs. In 1893 Americans and Europeans overthrew the monarchy and established the Republic of Hawai'i. The United States annexed Hawai'i in 1898 and made it a territory in 1900. American laws, including the discriminatory Oriental exclusion acts (1882–1943), then became applicable to the Chinese in Hawai'i.

Under the territorial system of government, four counties—Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and Hawai'i (the Big Island)—were established. However, Hawai'i's peoples had a limited franchise. They could elect county officials and seat representatives and senators in the bicameral territorial legislature, yet they could not vote for their governor or for the U.S. president. Their elected delegate to Congress represented them but had no vote. Essentially second-class citizens, they agitated for statehood. Not until 1959, after proving their patriotism in World War II and disproving the charge of Communist influence, did they achieve full American rights.

From 1900 to around midcentury, more Asian legislators were Republicans than Democrats, and the majority of the Republicans hewed to the party line. The Hawaiians and part Hawaiians tended to be Republicans as well. Political campaigns were colorful. Candidates of all ethnic backgrounds who could sing and dance along with the mandatory Hawaiian musicians and hula dancers were especially favored by the crowds.

James "Kimo" Kealoha (1908–83) was a Chinese Hawaiian from the Big Island who, as a Republican, rose from Hawai'i County leadership to statewide influence in 1959, only to lose political power three years later. His career can serve as a case study of a politician influenced by ethnic factors. This article first examines the role of ethnicity in the electoral process, particularly among voters of Chinese, Hawaiian, part Hawaiian, and Japanese ancestry, then discusses and evaluates Kealoha's career in this context.

### THE CHINESE IN HAWAII

It is not by accident that Hawai'i is a polyglot community with many ethnic Asians. Major demographic changes were

induced when Caucasian (haole) sugar growers, unable to secure enough Hawaiian field hands and in need of cheap, reliable labor, began to bring in Chinese contract laborers in 1852. Approximately forty-six thousand Chinese male workers arrived prior to annexation. However, the planters' initial satisfaction turned sour when, at the end of their contracts, about half the recruits returned to their homeland or gravitated to Honolulu and other urban areas, where they competed successfully against lower-class haoles and Hawaiians for jobs. The kingdom's Chinese Exclusion Act of 1886 prohibited their importation after 1888, but exemptions permitted some fifteen thousand more Chinese to enter in the 1890s (Fuchs, 1961: 87). The haole planters feared domination by any one group of Asian laborers. The Chinese were followed by Portuguese, who, as "pseudo-haoles," got better jobs as *luna* (overseers). In turn over one hundred ten thousand Japanese and more than one hundred thousand Filipino workers were recruited. The Asian ethnic groups lived and worked separately from one another (Morrison, 1977: 49–50). Other nationalities arrived as well.

In 1845 a man named Ah Sing was the first of some 750 Chinese to become a naturalized citizen of the kingdom (Glick, 1980: 328–29). A few Chinese, notably Chun Afong, gained some influence in the Hawaiian government. Under the 1840 and 1852 constitutions granted by King Kamehameha III, some Chinese met residency and tax requirements and enjoyed the right to vote (Constitution, 1840; Constitution, 1852). In 1855, however, Kamehameha IV disparaged the Chinese in his opening speech to the legislature (Kamehameha IV, 1855). The 1887 constitution specifically disenfranchised the Chinese while permitting some Caucasians to vote even if they were not citizens of Hawai'i (Constitution, 1887). At a mass protest meeting, a Chinese named C. Monting spoke out. Eventually the king conceded the vote to Hawai'i-born Asians, including Hawai'i-born Chinese, although it was doubtful whether more than a hundred Chinese were then of voting age (Glick, 1980: 224).

Under the territorial government naturalized Chinese and Chinese born in the Islands became American citizens and had the right to vote and hold elective office. However, anti-Oriental immigration laws also applied. Despite the fact that Hawai'i-born children of Chinese aliens were American citizens, they endured forms of discrimination. One indignity was having to carry special identification cards issued by the immigration bureau when traveling on the U.S. mainland (Chou, 1980: 194). It is no wonder that the electorate of Asian ancestry in Hawai'i took their voting privileges seriously. By the mid-1920s Chinese and Japanese surnames began to appear next to Hawaiian and Caucasian ones on Hawai'i's ballots.

#### ETHNIC VOTING

Economic alignments, popular personalities, political party activities, some racial voting, persistence, and hard work

influenced every territorial election (Purdy, 1947). Moreover, in Hawai'i's multicultural society, ethnocentric voting always has had a role. Under the late monarchy the native Hawaiian vote was the most significant, but death and intermarriage changed this. With no immunity to disease brought in by Westerners and demoralized by events they could not control, the native Hawaiians decreased in number from an estimated three hundred thousand in 1788 to a little over forty thousand (many only part Hawaiian) by 1893. Between 1900 and the early 1920s the Hawaiians remained the majority of voters, but they apparently lost that position in 1924. The part Hawaiian voters are difficult to identify, however, and early researchers like Littler omitted them. Concurrently the Japanese increased in population and political influence as island-born children of immigrants matured to voting age (Littler, 1927).

In the 1920s the percentages of eligible ethnic peoples who actually voted were as follows: pure Hawaiians, 73 percent; Caucasians, 52 percent; Portuguese, 45 percent; Chinese, 31 percent; and Japanese, 25 percent. Low participation among the last two groups was due to the failure of Asian women to register. An estimated 85 percent of the total registrants actually voted (Littler, 1927). In 1930 it was estimated that of the eligible voters, 6,398 were Chinese (10.7 percent) and 9,759 Japanese (15.3 percent). Of those eligible to vote, 69 percent of Chinese, 71 percent of Japanese, and 82 percent of all races registered. Of those registered, 84 percent of Chinese, 86 percent of Japanese, and 83 percent of all races actually voted.

In 1936 the Chinese cast 5,701 votes, 8.9 percent of all ballots. Reflecting their increase in population and as qualified voters, the Japanese cast 16,215 votes, or 25.2 percent. There is no evidence that the Chinese or Japanese voted in ethnic blocs at this time. While politicians might try to secure support from their own ethnic stock, total support was impossible to achieve. With nearly a dozen voting groups to reach, none of which had a majority or near majority, shrewd candidates realized they had to have broad appeal. Interestingly enough, the Japanese thought that while they did not vote in ethnic blocs, the Chinese did; the Chinese did not think themselves guilty but suspected the Japanese. Meanwhile, both Chinese and Japanese felt that the greatest amount of bloc voting was done by haoles (Robison, 1938).

After reviewing fifty-seven years of territorial voting, Lind determined that charges of racial bloc voting were unwarranted. He attributed any short-ballot voting to lack of information about all candidates rather than ethnic plunking. While younger, inexperienced, and relatively colorless candidates received considerable support from constituents of the same ancestry, the older, more experienced, and politically stronger candidates often incurred active opposition from their own racial group, sometimes to the point of losing virtually all such support. All politicians were subject to this phenomenon. Moreover, ethnic enclaves did not constitute political units. None of the ethnic groups belonged exclu-

sively to one political party. Chinese, Korean, Japanese, pure Hawaiians, Filipinos, Puerto Ricans, and others were repeatedly elected to territorial offices, including some of the more important posts, although in 1957 none of them represented as much as 10 percent of the voting strength of Hawai'i (Lind, 1957).

The career of Hiram L. Fong, former territorial Speaker of the House (1949–54) and for over seventeen years the only Republican representing Hawai'i in Congress (1959–77), proved the necessity of crossing ethnic and party lines even after statehood. Of full Chinese heritage, Fong recently noted that 17 percent of voters of Chinese ancestry never voted for him (Fong, June 18, 1988).

The successful overthrow of the Republicans by the Democrats in 1954 reflected a number of changes in the Hawaiian electorate. On Oahu, the most populous island, which also comprises the City and County of Honolulu, the chief determinant becomes voter preference for one party over another. Nevertheless, as was acknowledged, "ethnic matters are of considerable importance, and, in a close election, could be decisive" (Digman, 1957, 24). By the mid-1950s, for example, the increasing number of voters of Japanese descent began to display cohesiveness in party preference, showing a positive correlation with the Democratic Party. In general, though, Japanese candidates won by greater margins in areas more heavily populated by Japanese, regardless of party. This was so in strongly Democratic areas as well as in marginally Republican areas, while in smaller Japanese neighborhoods, Japanese candidates won by larger margins. The Japanese now tended to vote ethnically more often than other racial groups (Chun, 1970: 157–58). The political ethnocentricity of the Japanese was also noted in another study of district and precinct voting patterns between 1949 and 1959 (Lujan, 1960).

In contrast, the Chinese made up a small segment of the population and no longer lived in Chinatown-like enclaves. Hence it was difficult to identify areas that were heavily populated with Chinese. Two precincts that have been studied were both lower class, so a "normal Democratic tendency" was expected. However, Chinese seemed motivated by economic factors. From 1948 to 1959, of the twenty Chinese candidates for territorial (in 1959, state) offices, the party split was even: ten Republicans and ten Democrats. Hawaiians tended toward Republicanism, and Caucasians had definite GOP leanings. Haole executives were staunch Republicans (Lujan, 1960: 81–87). Another researcher noted that the Chinese tended to vote along straight party lines with Chinese candidates running according to their status and wealth. "The Chinese, lacking strong interests in politics, have a relatively stable number in the Legislature. Monetary affairs interest them more than politics" (Chun, 1970: 157–58).

Haole Republicans had a good chance of succeeding in upper-class areas largely populated by Caucasians, whereas nonhaole candidates tended to fail in haole-dominated areas. While classed economically as Democrats, lower-class haoles often shared traditional Republican loyalties but were

attracted more and more to the Democrats (Chun, 1970: 157–58).

While ethnicity played a major role among the more numerous Japanese, for other minorities ethnicity was a less important factor than the efforts of the political parties to achieve balanced slates of candidates. "Precisely how ethnicity has affected the consciousness of politicians remains to be judged. Its effect upon their support concerns the grassroots, the level at which patterns of ethnic intermarriage and inter-ethnic and intraethnic socialization may have most particular effect" (Day, 1974: 370). Between 1926 and 1966, leaders from Hawai'i's different ethnic groups were elected not as a matter of social percolation but as a result of both political parties attempting to produce balanced slates (*ibid.*; Littler, 1929: 70–77).

A Chinese contemplating political office, mindful of the small percentage of Chinese in the electorate, first consulted family and Chinese community leaders to enlist their financial and moral backing. Friends were next approached, especially those of Hawaiian heritage, because of their superior numbers and also because many marriages between Hawaiians and Chinese had forged networks of relatives and friends available for campaigning.

"In the early years, the Chinese in Honolulu as elsewhere were a whole lot more cohesive a group, living and doing business together, supporting one another along ethnic lines. But even in Honolulu, the Chinese organizations usually did not push their way far into politics. The Chinese helped fellow Chinese, a few Chinese organizations were very supportive, but usually they steered clear of public campaigning as organizations" (Ching, 1988). Since many Chinese operated small businesses, it is understandable that they were unwilling to alienate their clientele by taking political positions that might prove unpopular.

Although the ethnic Chinese population dropped steadily from 16.7 percent in 1900 (when few qualified to vote) to 6 percent in 1960, nonetheless the Chinese were periodically accused of plunking (Chou, 1980: 432–42). As American-born children of immigrant minority parents matured to voting age, ethnic factors could never be overlooked. When the Republican Party was in control of Hawai'i from 1900 to 1954, the GOP fielded candidates of Hawaiian, Chinese, Japanese, and Chinese Hawaiian ancestries, particularly in racially mixed neighborhoods. The goal of ethnic balance in political slates received major impetus in the Democratic Party, especially in the case of American Japanese veterans of World War II who joined under John A. Burns's leadership.

#### POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the ethnic appeal was to the native Hawaiians because they were the most numerous citizens. Candidates of all persuasions were obliged to adopt a campaign style geared for maximum

attendance from rural neighborhoods and urban centers during the short campaign period. Whole families turned out for political rallies, with youngsters collecting and trading candidates' cards. Rallies took on the aura of entertainment. A good troupe of Hawaiian musicians and hula dancers was essential, along with the ritual use of flower leis. The ability to speak Hawaiian was important in earlier years. Candidates skilled at singing, playing ukulele, and dancing the hula felt confident of translating performance into votes (Littler, 1929: 87–91).

Yew Char, the first person of Chinese ancestry to be elected to the territorial legislature (in 1926) and a Democrat, danced the hula very well. Samuel Wilder King, part Hawaiian delegate to Congress and later appointed governor, spoke fluently in both Hawaiian and English. Ben Dillingham, scion of a wealthy, powerful Caucasian family and longtime Republican legislator, could sing "Three Blind Mice" in Hawaiian. Other candidates, like Fong, who were not Hawaiian nevertheless managed a few words in Hawaiian at the rallies and adopted Hawaiian names that were printed on campaign ads and ballots (Chou, 1980: 318–19, 735).

Under such conditions political parties assumed the role of organizers. The Republican Party had little opposition for over fifty years under the leadership of influential Caucasians. The GOP assigned campaign arrangements to county committees. Primary candidates were assessed a fixed amount for costs, usually under fifty dollars (more than a plantation laborer's monthly income), and drew lots to decide their places on the programs for the rallies. A party official presided over the rallies, which were held on weekends, often in as many as three different locations a day. When there were many candidates, each one was limited to a three-minute speech. A warning bell, if ignored, was immediately followed by musicians and dancers swinging into action as the next speaker came on. The party bore expenses for the general elections. This involvement, particularly for the GOP, minimized bitterness among candidates, maintained discipline, and encouraged loyalty to the party (Day, 1974: 150; Littler, 1929: 86–87; Chou, 1980: 319–20).

Voter turnout in Hawai'i between 1926 and 1966 was high, usually above 70 to nearly 90 percent on Oahu and between 80 and often better than 90 percent on the neighbor islands (*Voter Registration Program, 1972–1974*: 43–44). The neighbor islands' votes were very important. However, the Oahu electorate was so large that no neighbor islander could win a statewide office without a strong showing on Oahu.

#### JAMES K. KEALOHA

For James Kealoha, a Chinese Hawaiian, the Big Island was both birthplace and catalyst for politics and public life. At the youthful age of twenty-six, he won election to the Territorial House of Representatives as a Democrat in 1934. Two

years later, he was reelected with the most votes cast in the First District, which by tradition gave him the right to serve as Speaker pro tem in 1937. Reassigning from a divided and squabbling Democratic Party in 1938, Kealoha became a Republican while retaining many Democratic friends. Elected at the age of thirty to fill a vacancy in the Territorial Senate, he was the youngest senator in Hawaiian history and also served as president pro tem of the upper chamber. Not surprisingly, he was dubbed a "boy wonder" in island politics.

In 1940 Kealoha focused on local government and was elected to the Hawai'i County Board of Supervisors, on which he served until 1946. A failed attempt to become county chairman in 1946 turned into a successful one in 1948. With his genial ways and administrative skills, Kealoha maintained his power as chairman until statehood was achieved in 1959. At that point, Kealoha was elected the state's first lieutenant governor.

Kealoha was born in Pahoia on April 29, 1908. His father, Lee Wing Chau, was a Chinese immigrant and his mother, Alice Makaanui, was Hawaiian. Lee Wing Chau was born September 13, 1867, to Lee Doo Chou and his wife in Taishan, Guangdong, China. Using personal resources, Lee arrived in Hawai'i in 1897. By 1902 Lee had learned enough about retailing to open his own business, the Kwong See Wo Dry Goods and General Merchandise Store, in Hilo. A member of the See Yip Society of Honolulu, Lee became president of the Hilo Chinese School (Wah Mun) as well as the Hilo Chamber of Commerce (*Chinese of Hawai'i, 1956–57*: 100; *Who's Who in the Island of Hawai'i*: 111).

According to Chinese custom, Lee decided to send Kealoha to live in China. When the boy's mother learned of it, she reclaimed him and divorced Lee (Cooper, 1988). In 1913 Lee married Edith Sy Moi Yap in Hilo. They had a son, Wing Wo, and a daughter, Gladys Toy Len (Mrs. Clarence Chang). Mrs. Chang has said that she did not know about her half brother until she was in high school (Chang, 1988).

Like many island children, Kealoha worked. At age twelve he earned \$10 per week as a dishwasher and waiter at the Waiakea Restaurant and later \$25 a week plus the use of a bicycle as assistant bookkeeper. His part-time job assisting his father became full time after he graduated in 1926 from Hilo High School, where he set track records. Delivering orders took him regularly all over the island of Hawai'i, which is the largest of the island chain. Japanese formed the dominant ethnic group, and the lifestyle was rural and small-town. Everyone welcomed the handsome Chinese Hawaiian who spoke Hawaiian, Chinese, and Japanese. At 5'10" and 165 pounds, Kealoha possessed an affable manner and concern for people that quickly gained him wide recognition. "I got to know everyone on the island, and they knew and trusted me," he said (Cooper, 1988). He may not have realized it at the time, but his travels helped build an invaluable following of supporters that was essential for political power.

Lee sent his Chinese children to college but kept Kealoha to help at the store. If Kealoha was unhappy about his lack of higher education, "he never showed it. He harbored no ill will, was happy all the time, and a fine example of how to get along with people," recalled his half sister. She also thought he had "more Hawaiian than Chinese" characteristics (Chang, 1988). Later on, Kealoha opened his own business, the Kuhio Grocerteria, but closed it for a life in public service (Cooper, 1988).

Kealoha married Muilan Young, a Chinese Hawaiian, and they had two daughters, Leihulu Emma (Mrs. George Cooper) and Leiohu Lillie (Mrs. Eldredge Sequiera). His stepmother, Edith, regularly drove the girls to the Lee family store for after-school care (Cooper, 1988; Chang, 1988).

Chinese Hawaiians were not as fully acceptable in Chinese social organizations in the 1930s as they later became. By virtue of their business success, the Chinese enjoyed higher economic status than the Hawaiians, but Chinese Hawaiians in Honolulu were more comfortable in Hawaiian civic organizations than in the more ethnocentric Chinese clubs. Some economically advantaged Chinese Hawaiians joined Caucasian groups (Chow, 1935: 11–13). Of the numerous clubs Kealoha joined, one was Chinese, the Hawaii Chinese Civic Association, and two were Hawaiian, the Order of Kamehameha and Hale O Na Alii (Thumbnail Sketch, 1962).

Kealoha never took his father's surname, using instead the Hawaiian word "aloha" and adding a middle name, "Kimo" (James). However, he carried two passports, one under the name of James Kealoha Lee. Not until he was elected lieutenant governor was he recognized as a Lee. He especially treasured a gift of a painting from the Lee family association in Taiwan. He often used the informal "Jimmy Kealoha," as in campaign literature (Thumbnail Sketch, 1962). To daughter Leihulu, he was a blend of both ancestries. He cooked various ethnic foods, including the Japanese *fugu*, a potentially fatal balloon fish soup. A masterful old-style campaigner, he easily swung into the hula to favorite tunes like "Manuela Boy." Besides Hawaiian, he delivered speeches in Chinese and Japanese, which he wrote phonetically. He was rarely without his panama hat, trimmed with a Hawaiian feather lei (Cooper, 1988).

As chairman of the Hawai'i County Board of Supervisors, he won civil defense awards and cemented political power. He was a special guest at the first Japanese Mayors' Conference in Tokyo (after which he visited island troops in Korea), presided at the U.S. Conference of Mayors in New York in 1952, and was one of five delegates to the World Conference of Mayors in Rome in 1955, where he was granted an audience with Pope Pius XII and delivered the concluding conference address (Thumbnail Sketch, 1962). These were heady experiences for a Chinese Hawaiian who had only a high school education.

With statehood imminent, the Republican Party sought a balanced slate reflecting political experience, administrative

ability, and the all-important ethnic factor. William Quinn, a forty-year-old Irish American from the mainland, was the appointed governor. Now, as a gubernatorial candidate, Quinn suggested Kealoha for the lieutenant governor slot (*Honolulu Advertiser*, hereafter cited as *HA*, April 5, 1959: A1). Running on a liberal platform of land and tax reform, the two were popular campaigners. At rallies, Quinn sang in a clear Irish tenor, while Kealoha performed his usual crowd-pleasers. They were irresistible. Three years later, the state would turn heavily Democratic, but in 1959, "individual Republicans, among them victorious Quinn, Kealoha, and Fong, showed amazing strength in Democratic districts" (Fuchs, 1961: 415–16). The GOP also recaptured control of the Senate.

Kealoha achieved an impressive margin of victory in 1959. While Quinn was elected governor with only 3,800 more votes than Democrat John A. Burns, Kealoha beat his Democratic opponent, Mitsuyuki Kido, an American Japanese, by 14,600 votes. As expected, Kealoha took East Hawai'i, 8,666 to 7,398, and West Hawai'i, 3,458 to 2,233, but lost Maui, 7,535 to 7,588, and Kauai, 4,511 to 5,216. The biggest surprise was Oahu, the most populous island and a Democratic stronghold. Kealoha began campaigning there as a virtual unknown but won with 65,586 votes to Kido's 52,721. The affable fifty-one-year-old Kealoha reportedly "smiled his way into another victory" (*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, later cited as *HSB*, July 29, 1959: A1, 1B).

Ethnicity was seen as a factor. "To thousands of voters of all races, it seemed only just that a Hawaiian should be elected to one of the top offices of the new state" (*HA*, July 29, 1959: A1). Kealoha was ready for the challenge. That same day he said, "Governor Quinn and I have worked out a program to help develop the Neighbor Islands to an even level with Oahu" by encouraging tourism (*HSB*, July 29, 1959: 1B). His strong showing at the polls apparently gave him a feeling of equality with Quinn, who had never won elective office before.

Ethnicity helped write a balanced slate in the Quinn-Kealoha statehood victory. Ethnicity also played a part in Kealoha's loss to Quinn in the Republican primary election of 1962. Almost as soon as Kealoha spoke his historic oath of office, it was reported that he was miffed with Quinn and might challenge Quinn for reelection (*HA*, October 4, 1959: A2). At year's end Kealoha noted he liked his job (*HA*, December 13, 1959: A28), but two years later it was reported that a "rich Chinese" would organize his 1962 campaign (*HSB*, December 17, 1961: 1). At a press conference Kealoha announced his intentions, citing a "definite and substantial desire and need for my candidacy" and stating, "I would be remiss in my larger responsibilities to our people if I ignored such a mandate for political reasons." He called for support from Democrats, Republicans, and independents. In no way was his early announcement intended to obstruct the governmental process, he said. Kealoha felt that Quinn had not

delegated enough duties to him; had not shared in a joint campaign office during the election; and most importantly, had not kept his promise of a “joint venture” in a “patronage split.” Quinn acknowledged that he expected the two to work together but had “not parceled out appointments” and denied there had been a 50:50 patronage agreement (*HSB*, January 24, 1962: 1). While they announced a mutually satisfactory arrangement, relations were already strained and they never became partners in governance.

By 1959 approximately 18 percent of the population was part Hawaiian. Part Hawaiians identified with their native heritage so greatly that they generally did not think of themselves as cosmopolitan, or “mixed,” but as Hawaiian. Hawaiians and part Hawaiians still found it difficult to compete with the dominant haoles and Asians. “Far more than any other group, they considered themselves as being treated unfairly” (Fuchs, 1961: 443). Kealoha very likely thought of himself as a role model for other part Hawaiians. Hence he felt that he could not miss an opportunity to advance himself. He explained, “This is the last chance for a local boy. Four years from now may be too late . . . the racial makeup of Hawai‘i is changing. The influx of the Mainland people is diluting the voting strength of the native sons.” It was “now or never for a fellow like me,” he said. As governor, he hoped to “cement good relations between the newcomers and local people” (*HA*, January 25, 1962).

As lieutenant governor, Kealoha saw his role as more international and Hawai‘i’s part as pivotal in the “people to people” program between nations that was established by President Dwight Eisenhower. In 1960, heading a delegation of four prominent citizens of Chinese ancestry, Kealoha went on a two-week tour of the Far East to lay the groundwork for a Chinese–American Brotherhood program and to seek ways and means to improve relations with peoples of the Far East (Thumbnail Sketch, 1962).

Kealoha’s decision to run for governor was not a sudden one. He had nursed it some twelve years. An action plan mapped out in Hilo five years before had included a cabinet post, preferably as territorial land commissioner under Governor Wilder King, then the office of mayor of Honolulu, and finally that of governor after statehood. The program had been stymied by King, who wanted Kealoha, as the only neighbor island chief, to retain GOP power there (*HA*, January 25, 1962: 1).

The Republican Party decided to stay out of the fray until after the primaries. As the titular head of the GOP, however, Quinn retained many supporters. For Fong, the GOP’s only elected legislator in Congress and a powerful, wealthy politician, the issue was not ethnicity but party loyalty. He advised Kealoha not to oppose Quinn, but the Big Islander would not be deterred (Fong, June 23, 1988).

Kealoha’s supporters were mainly Democrats or independents with Democratic leanings. Whether the Democrats preyed upon Kealoha’s ambitions in hopes of dividing

the GOP can only be speculated upon. Between 1959 and 1962 the Democrats under Burns forged bonds of party loyalty that took on the aspects of a crusade, but Kealoha either ignored the signs or was not fully aware of them. In any event, Kealoha misread the number of his followers and the importance of the “local boy” issue. He lost the primary battle to Quinn by a vote of 33,272 to 44,205 and beat Quinn only on the Big Island. On the Democratic side, John A. Burns won with 71,540 votes (*Results of Votes Cast, Primary Election, 1962*). In the general election shortly thereafter, Burns defeated Quinn handily, 114,308 to 81,707 (*Results of Votes Cast, General Election, 1962*).

An ironic twist of fate saw William S. Richardson (1919–2010) elected lieutenant governor. Richardson, a war veteran and lawyer, was of Chinese, Hawaiian, and English ancestry.

It was felt that the acrimonious fight between Kealoha and Quinn “materially contributed to the latter’s defeat” (Meller and Tuttle, 1964: 84). The Democrats were undoubtedly helped by the Kealoha/Quinn split. But probably Burns’s win was more a case of the superior strength of the Democratic Party and the leadership role Burns had played in its revitalization (Coffman, 1973: 23).

It would appear that leaders in any group are less ethnically self-conscious than nonleaders, which is a result of the social centrality of leadership itself. The selection process of political parties and the elements of their strategies need more systematic evaluation. While members of different ethnic groups might use the same offices differently as springboards to higher office, no great difference in political opportunities has been detected. It is difficult to equate ethnic support with success at the polls (Day, 1974: 370–71, 375).

Ethnicity becomes, then, a matter of self-perception, a personal view of the world that is influenced by heredity combined with the effects of the total environment. To be of Chinese ancestry in Hawai‘i is one thing. To be Hawaiian is another. To be Chinese Hawaiian is yet another. For James “Kimo” Kealoha, ethnicity was a significant aspect of his historic political career.

Kealoha can be viewed as one who enjoyed political power at the local level and limited power at the state level. When he overestimated his power base, gave too much credence to his attraction as a “local boy,” and overstepped a cardinal political party rule, his loss became permanent. After a failed attempt to run for Congress in 1966, his public-service career was over. But Kealoha’s historic election as Hawai‘i’s statehood lieutenant governor, the first state official of Chinese Hawaiian ancestry, placed him in the annals of Hawaiian history. When he died in 1983, Quinn called him a “major political figure” (*HA*, August 26, 1983: AL4).

In the final analysis, Kealoha’s loss authenticates research on ethnic voting. It is indeed difficult to depend upon ethnic appeal to win at the polls, particularly if the political battles are not close. No implication is made here that ethnicity alone cost Kealoha the election. The people of Hawai‘i were

ready for a political change, and they would not be deterred. As for the ethnic factor, Kealoha's loss "is in itself indicative of the ethnic integration which Hawai'i has achieved" (Day, 1974: 375).

## REFERENCES CITED

- Chang, Toy Len Lee. 1988. Telephone interview with Michaelyn Chou. Honolulu, August 1.
- Chinese of Hawai'i*. 1956–57 Vol. 3. Hong Kong.
- Ching, Harold W. 1988. Letter to Michaelyn Chou. August 27.
- Chou, Michaelyn P. 1980. "The Education of a Senator: Hiram L. Fong from 1906 to 1954." Unpub. PhD dissertation, University of Hawai'i at Manoa.
- Chow, Richard. 1935. "Chinese Hawaiian Mixture," *Social Process in Hawaii* 1: 11–13.
- Chun, Bing M. 1970. "The Japanese Influence in Hawaiian Politics." Unpub. MA thesis, University of Kansas.
- Coffman, Tom. 1973. *Catch a Wave*. Honolulu: University Press of Hawai'i.
- Constitution. 1840. "Respecting the Representative Body," First Constitution of Hawaii.
- . 1852. "Of the House of Representatives," arts. 75–80, Constitution of Hawaii.
- . 1887. Granted by K.alakaua, July 6, 1887, arts. 59–63.
- Cooper, Leihulu Emma Lee. 1988. Telephone interview with Michaelyn Chou. Honolulu, October 6.
- Day, Horace T. 1974. "A Study of Political Opportunity Structure: Political Opportunity in Hawaii, 1926–1966." Unpub. PhD dissertation, University of Hawai'i.
- Digman, John M. 1956. "Ethnic Factors in Oahu's 1954 General Election," *Social Process in Hawaii* 21: 20–24.
- Fong, Hiram L. 1988. Telephone interviews with Michaelyn Chou. Honolulu, June 18, 23.
- Fuchs, Lawrence H. 1961. *Hawaii Pono: A Social History*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Glick, Clarence E. 1980. *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii*. Honolulu: Hawai'i Chinese History Center and University Press of Hawai'i.
- Kamehameha IV. 1855. "His Majesty's Speech at the Opening of the Legislature," April 7.
- Lind, Andrew W. 1957. "Racial Bloc Voting in Hawaii," *Social Process in Hawaii* 21: 16–19.
- Little, Robert. 1929. *The Governance of Hawaii*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- . 1927. *The Vote Cast by Various Races Living in Hawaii*. Honolulu. Clippings from the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, May 21–24.
- Lujan, Herman. 1960. "The Group Composition of Political Parties in Hawaii." Unpub. MA thesis, University of California at Berkeley.
- Meller, Norman, and Daniel W. Tuttle Jr. 1964. "Western Politics: Hawaii," *Papers on Hawaiian Politics, 1952–1962*, compiled by Daniel W. Tuttle Jr. Honolulu: Department of Political Science, University of Hawai'i.
- Morrison, Judith K. 1977. "Being Chinese in Honolulu: A Political and Social Status or a Way of Life." Unpub. PhD dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Purdy, Millard. 1947. "A Note on the 1946 Elections in the Territory of Hawaii," *Social Process in Hawaii* (May) 11: 81–83.
- Results of Votes Cast, General Election, 1962*. 1961. Office of Lieutenant Governor. Honolulu.
- Results of Votes Cast, Primary Election, 1962*. 1961. Office of Lieutenant Governor. Honolulu.
- Robison, F. Everett. 1938. "Participation of Citizens of Chinese and Japanese Ancestry in the Political Life of Hawaii," *Social Process in Hawaii* 4: 58.
- "A Thumbnail Sketch of James K. Kealoha." 1962 Campaign literature. *Voter Registration Program, 1972–1974*. 1975. Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Honolulu.
- Who's Who in the Island of Hawaii*.

