



BISHOP MUSEUM

February 26, 2021

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Bishop Museum and Awaiaulu Launch New Project to Preserve and Digitize Hawaiian Language Newspapers

The goal of the multi-year project, He Aupuni Palapala, is to digitize Hawaiian language newspapers, in all repositories, for free online access.

Honolulu, Hawai‘i—With support from the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority and with contributions from Kamehameha Schools, Bishop Museum and Awaiaulu have partnered to launch a collaborative, multi-year project, *He Aupuni Palapala: Preserving and Digitizing the Hawaiian Language Newspapers*, to newly digitize Hawaiian language newspapers in Hawai‘i repositories for free online access.

“As the largest repository of nūpepa ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (Hawaiian language newspapers), Bishop Museum understands we are at a critical moment to preserve the vast knowledge of generations of Hawaiians that is collected in fragile newsprint,” said *He Aupuni Palapala* project manager, Kau‘i Sai-Dudoit. Sai-Dudoit is also the programs director of Awaiaulu, a non-profit organization dedicated to developing resources and resource people that can bridge Hawaiian knowledge from the past to the present, and into the future.

Images of newspapers currently available online were largely digitized in the early 2000s from microfilm images taken nearly 40 years ago. “What we have are digital images that are two or three generations removed from the original printed source, that were captured with technology now considered obsolete,” said Sai-Dudoit. “They are often not clear, and are sometimes illegible. Many were photographed in their bindings, since compiling a years’ worth of newspaper issues between covers was a way of organizing and protecting the fragile paper. An unfortunate effect is that portions of the text were sometimes hidden in a tight binding or in shadow, outside of the camera view.”

Under the guidance of a preservation specialist, tightly bound volumes will be unbound for new digital imaging and long-term preservation. The project will also make widely available for the first time, the numerous single issues and bound volumes that have been uncovered since the time of the early newspaper microfilm project.

He Aupuni Palapala aims to create new, high-quality scans of newspaper pages available from all known collections in Hawai‘i. This requires a collaboration between Hawai‘i libraries and archives for the initial stage of inventorying the holdings to determine the best available source materials, and a comprehensive plan for digitizing the images.

With four decades of technological advances made, and with attention to the unique challenges of preserving newsprint, *He Aupuni Palapala* will create an entirely new image repository leading to a greater understanding of Hawai‘i.

The project goals recall Kamehameha III’s proclamation to his people in 1825, upon his accession to the throne: “He aupuni palapala ko‘u” (Mine is a kingdom of literacy). “Nūpepa were integral to his vision, providing an outlet for all Hawaiians to share information from one end of the archipelago to the other and from one generation to the next through the printed word, illustrations, and beginning in the 20th century, photography,” said Sai-Dudoit. When the project is completed, Hawai‘i’s largest body of knowledge and firsthand experience from the 19th and 20th centuries will be preserved for current and future generations.

“*He Aupuni Palapala* is a significant project with implications for the history, culture, and language of the islands and its people,” said Melanie Ide, president and CEO of Bishop Museum.

“In the mid-19th century, Hawai‘i was the most literate nation in the world. This amazing accomplishment occurred within less than 15 years of the Calvinist missionaries introducing a written language and printing press to the islands. Evidence of a high level of literary proficiency can be found in over 100 different newspapers published from 1834 to 1948. The newspapers encompass more than 100,000 pages of text, capturing practically every aspect of Hawaiian life, culture, literature, environment, and history,” said Ide. “Not only were these Hawaiian language repositories safekeeping ‘ike Hawai‘i (Hawaiian knowledge) for future generations, but they were also capturing how Hawaiians were engaging and interacting with the larger world around them. There is an urgent need to raise awareness of the importance of Hawaiian language newspapers as a primary resource that should be used in all curriculum-building, research, and knowledge-gathering.”

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About Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum:

Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum’s mission is to inspire our community and visitors through the exploration, celebration and perpetuation of the extraordinary history, culture, and environment of Hawai‘i and the Pacific. The museum was founded in 1889 by Charles Reed Bishop in memory of his wife Bernice Pauahi Bishop, a royal descendant of King Kamehameha I. Today, the Museum thrives as a research and educational center that is widely regarded as the world’s premier institution for Hawaiian and Pacific content. Its vast collections of more than 25 million objects and specimens represent nine disciplines and include more than 22 million biological specimens, over two million cultural objects, 115,000 historical publications, and one million photographs, films, works of art, audio recordings, and manuscripts. These collections tell the stories of the cultures and biodiversity of Hawai‘i and the Pacific as well as the proud legacy of scholarly research spanning 130 years. Bishop Museum serves more than

200,000 visitors each year, including 20,000 children on school visits. To learn more about the museum's research, collections, exhibits, and programs, visit www.bishopmuseum.org, follow @BishopMuseum on Twitter and Instagram, become a fan of Bishop Museum on Facebook, visit Bishop Museum's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/user/BishopMuseum](https://www.youtube.com/user/BishopMuseum), or call (808) 847-3511. Bishop Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.