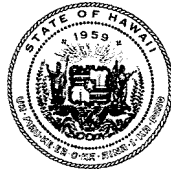


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29 Sept 2021

Aloha mai kākou (let there be aloha among us)

The Hawai'i State Archives has been one of the only memory institutions in the state to remain open to the public during the pandemic. As our institution searched for ways to serve the public more effectively given all the constraints, I found myself reflecting upon the actions of our ancestors so that we could draw upon their wisdom. As archivists, it is our kuleana (duty, responsibility) to preserve the voices of the past. We achieve this through the application of archival functions on predominately paper records. We reviewed our own holdings for what 'ike (knowledge) they could impart. Our responsibilities extend far beyond those of the written record to also include visual records, artifacts, and audio recordings; which it is in those that we found something amazing.

One of the incredible records series we came upon was titled Hawaiian Chants and Mele; it contained some of the earliest written recordings of traditional Hawaiian storytelling through mele (song, chant, or poem). As we researched these records further and consulted our advisory council of academics and cultural practitioners, we were surprised to learn how many of these important mo'olelo (stories) had been lost to time. We were moved by the lyrical beauty of the words that tugged at our ears and heart with the undulation of the rustling waves and murmuring surf. It is from these writings we drew our inspiration for this year's Archives Month theme – Songful Voices of the Ancestors.

We are excited to announce that we have digitized thousands of pages of mele containing personal histories and place names not seen for generations. Every Thursday in October, we will be releasing curated portions of these amazing works online to share these stories and inspire others during these trying times. To assist in providing context of the importance of this never-before-digitized mele, our advisory council has created a series of videos recreating the original pieces and discussing how access to these records have shaped their understanding and practice. Please join us online every week at: <https://ags.hawaii.gov/archives/archives-month/archives-month-2021/>

E Mālama Pono (take care of yourself body and soul)

Adam Jansen, Ph.D.  
State Archivist  
Hawai'i State Archives