

Nūpepa ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i — Hawaiian-language Newspapers

Published – 1834-1948

114 years of continuous publication

of Newspapers – over 100 different Newspaper Titles

Up to ten Hawaiian papers competing at same time

of Pages – approximately 125,000 pages published in 114-year span

Most pages the size of the Wall St. Journal

Text per page – one newspaper page averages 12-14 letter-size text pages

If typed out, double spaced

Size of repository – 1.5 million letter-sized pages of text

If 125,000 pages were transferred to typescript, letter-sized sheets

Comparison – More published material than the rest of the Pacific combined

Larger archive than the sum of all Native American writings

Content – Local and foreign news, editorial narrative, history, education,
cultural practice, Hawaiian and foreign literature, commercial data

% Translated – approx. 2% of the whole repository is available in English

This includes all books and articles extracted to date

% OCR'd – approximately 15,000 pages (10-15% of whole)

This OCR'd material can be searched by word or phrase

% to be OCR'd – 55,000 existing microfilmed pages remain to be OCR'd

Only 70,000 pages of 125,000 are microfilmed/located

Cost/page – \$60/pg. for high-quality OCR; \$100/pg. full cost

Full cost includes all costs resulting in web access

Time to date – OCR initiated in 2001

Intermittent funding has resulted in varied staffing levels

The Hawaiian-Language Newspapers

Probably the largest cache of untranslated historical material in the Western world, the Hawaiian-language newspapers of the 19th and early 20th centuries document a history of the Hawaiian people and the larger world in which they existed. The newspapers span from 1834 to 1948, containing data from the time of emergence into nationhood as a British protectorate, through the entire era of independent monarchy and subsequent republic, and the first five decades as a U.S. Territory.

The Hawaiian population of the time boasted higher literacy rates than America and Europe, and most of the published material was produced by the general population through independent presses. These two aspects, combined with the fact that the newspapers were embraced as a national repository for historical and cultural knowledge, make this archive uniquely valuable for historical information in many fields: history, language, culture, science, economy and politics.

This archive has lain dormant for most of the last century, even while it was still being generated. The transition from a Hawaiian-speaking population to an English-speaking state has left the newspapers largely inaccessible to all but the most determined researchers – who must be willing to manually search, page by page and must also be fluent in older forms of Hawaiian language. Because of the language gap, no indexes, finding aids or summaries have been generated by the various libraries and archival institutions. The OCR project *Ho'olaupa'i*, begun in 2001, has been the only systematic attempt to make these materials accessible to a broad range of researchers and users.

In the course of over seven years, with varying funding and staff, 15,000 pages of the 125,000-page archive has been placed on the internet as word-searchable text. This initial resource has already changed the entire paradigm of Hawaiian-related research in every field. The potential impact of rearticulating the historical knowledge contained in this archive is immense.