

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE FEDERAL HEARING ON RECONCILIATION TO BE HELD
ON KAUAI, DECEMBER 5, 1999

My name is Frances N. Frazier. I am not a pure-blooded Hawaiian, but my mother's Hawaiian ancestors lived for generations on this island of Kauai.

I am a professional translator of Hawaiian documents, and also a writer. I was employed by the Hawaii State Archives in Honolulu as their Hawaiian translator, from 1973 to 1976, when I resigned to move to Kauai. During those three years I translated the entire voluminous Native Register, of all the land claims made beginning in 1845 by the native Hawaiian people. I then completed the translation of the Native Testimony on those claims.

After my resignation from the Archives I moved to Kauai and continue to work as a professional translator of Hawaiian legal documents from the Bureau of Records and other sources.

The point in bringing up my qualifications to comment on "Reconciliation" is that the business of the Hawaiian Kingdom was conducted in the Hawaiian language right up to the time that Queen Liliuokalani was dethroned. I can testify that there are thousands of documents and records to prove that a viable Hawaiian government existed. The Kingdom of Hawaii was not composed of pastoral, roaming tribes of people with no central government. It was an authentic government recognized by the United States, Great Britain, France and other nations.

In a political context, please do not consider us Hawaiians as being the same as the First People of North America, who now live on reservations and are administered by the United States. We consider them our friends and sympathize with them, and with them we share a closeness to and reverence for the natural world. And some of us also share their poverty. But I wish to point out that we Hawaiians occupy a different place in the history of this planet.

For most of this millennium we lived on the Hawaiian archipelago in complete isolation from the rest of the world, until Captain Cook arrived. During those centuries before contact with the rest of the world in the shape of Captain Cook, Hawaiian people were accomplished farmers, fishermen and seamen, able to engineer efficient irrigation systems at which early visitors marveled. At times they were warriors, but the testimony of the first foreign visitors was that in their well-developed social organization our ancestors were a peaceable folk [except for the aberration concerning Captain Cook.] Shall we consider the death of Captain Cook an expiation for the deaths of thousands of Hawaiians who began to die right after that first contact with the deadly microorganisms that arrived on his ships?

We are beginning to retrieve our mother language which was disdained and discarded by those who took over our government. It was considered to be primitive by persons ignorant of

the poetic and philosophic nuances of our language, as well as its possibilities of practical adaptation which is going on right now.

We are entitled to special consideration because of our history and we want redress for past injustices and unlawful takings..

We are disappointed that so little time has been allotted us. When James H. Blount was sent to Hawaii to inquire into the state of things, he took time enough to arrive at a fair-minded assessment resulting in his recommendation that the government be given back to the people of Hawaii. This resulted in President Cleveland's remarks about the "Act of War" with which we are all familiar.

What is needed now is to break out of the circular argument that has been going on and on for more than a hundred years with no visible results. We need an ongoing dialogue – but most of all, we need a solution which will be acceptable to us all.