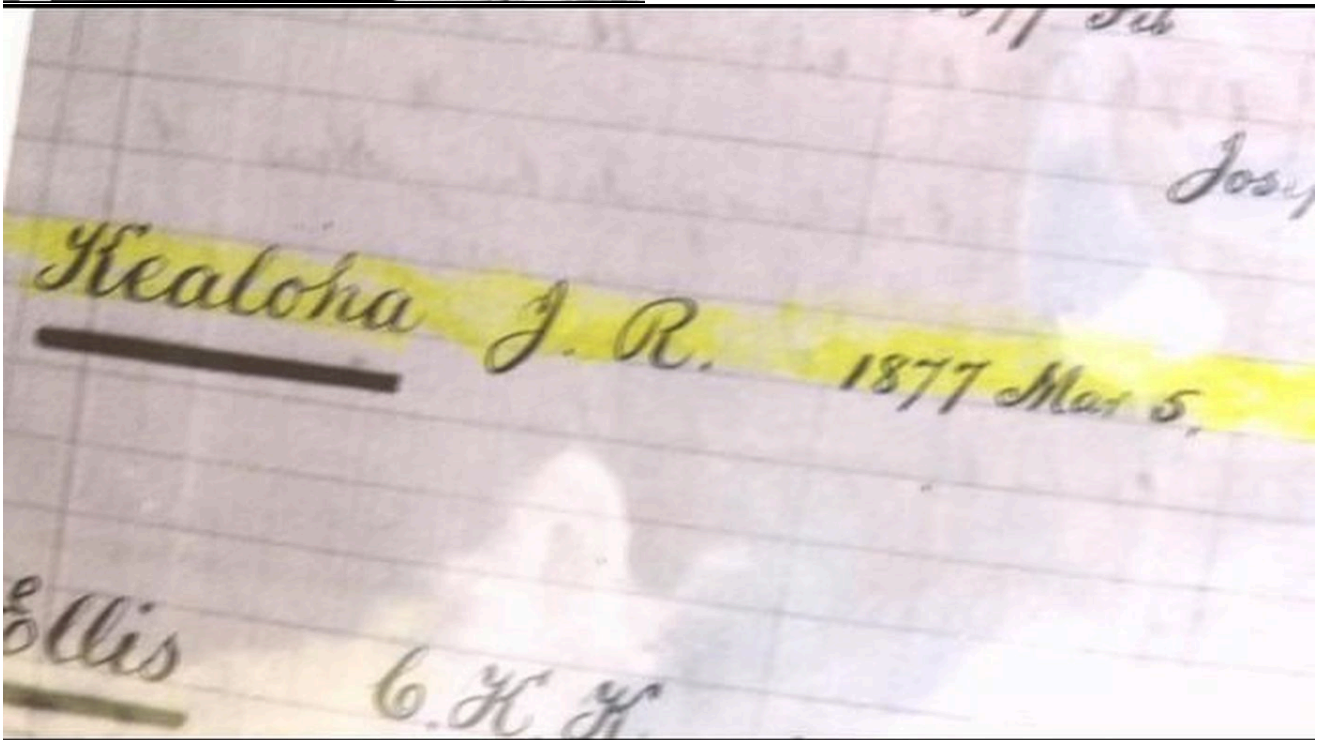


Hawaii's little known role in the Civil War





HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Nanette Napoleon walks the grounds of the Oahu Cemetery. A rudimentary plot map shows her that somewhere in the vicinity of where she stands, Private J.R. Kealoha is buried.

There is no headstone to mark the spot.

Little is known about Private Kealoha. All that Napoleon has is his record of death, and information from a newspaper article written in 1865.

"He actually served under a different name, as many of the Hawaiians did. Instead of Kealoha, he would have been given a nom de' guerre, which is a name that's usually for the Hawaiians one that was easier to pronounce" said her research partner, Dr. Justin Vance.

Nonetheless, Napoleon and Vance have recently finished paperwork petitioning the U.S. Veterans Administration for a military headstone on behalf of Kealoha.

His is a tale like many others that the two have uncovered over the years. They have identified 119 soldiers from Hawaii who participated in the conflict.

"Most of our guys served in the Union army, but not all of them. Some of them in the Confederate Navy" noted Napoleon.

It's these stories Napoleon, Vance and Todd Ocvirk are bringing to light in the upcoming documentary "Hawai'i Sons of the Civil War".

Their motivations are simple.

"Those from Hawaii who served in the war have been forgotten. I'd say since the 1870's until the 2000's" said Vance.

While still in the fundraising stage, the trio hopes to have the film debut in 2015—during the 150-year anniversary of the end of the war.

They are also hoping their petition to have Kealoha receive a headstone will be accepted by then.

While that is a major goal of their, Napoleon is quick to note that it's not the only one.

"That's one of our 'Holy Grails'; to find a descendant of this Kealoha".

If you would like to make a donation for production of the documentary, you can do so at:

<http://hawaiisonsofthecivilwar.com/funding/>

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Native Hawaiians served on both sides during Civil War

By [William Cole](#)

Advertiser Military Writer



A bronze plaque will be dedicated at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in honor of Hawai'i sons of the Civil War.

Nanette Napoleon



Henry Hoolulu Pitman, son of the last Hawaiian high chiefess of Hilo, served in the Union Army.

Nanette

Henry Ho'olulu Pitman, the son of a Hawaiian high chief, was born in Hilo, served as a young man in the Union Army during the American Civil War, and died from the effects of being held in the South's Libby Prison.

James Bush, also part Hawaiian, was in the Union Navy in the war between the states, and he received a veteran's pension when he was older.

The history of Isle service on both sides of the war isn't widely known, said Justin Vance, a Civil War and military history professor at Hawai'i Pacific University.

As the nation today remembers its war dead, a few in Hawai'i are trying to recognize the service of Isle residents from the conflict that preceded the establishment of what is now known as "Memorial Day."

Twelve Native Hawaiian sailors served on the Confederate ship CSS Shenandoah. The Shenandoah went on a rampage, mostly in the Pacific, that resulted in the sinking or capture of 37 Union ships. Those ships represented "a huge chunk of the whaling fleet," and the Pacific industry would never fully recover from the Confederate attacks, Vance said.

As many as a few dozen Punahou School students signed up for the Union Army, and five were killed in the war, Vance said.

To honor these men, the Hawai'i Sons of the Civil War Memorial Committee in September plans to install a bronze and stone memorial at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl. It will be dedicated to those from Hawai'i who served in the war, which was from 1861 to 1865.

Napoleon



The Confederate ship CSS Shenandoah, which had 12 Native Hawaiian crew members, captured or sank 37 Union ships, most of them in the Pacific, late in the American Civil War.

Courtesy of Naval Historical Center

The organization, an ad hoc group of people interested in the Civil War, said it will be the first memorial of its kind in the Islands honoring individuals from Hawai'i.

"Nobody really knew that our boys went to fight in the Civil War," said Edna Ellis, 84, a Chinatown resident and the great niece of Union Navy veteran James Bush.

'DECORATION DAY'

In 1868, three years after the Civil War ended, a group of Union veterans established "Decoration Day" on May 30 as a time to decorate the graves of service members with flowers, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were being held on May 30 throughout the nation, the VA said. The national holiday is being observed today at Punchbowl and the Hawai'i State Veterans Cemetery in Kāne'ohe.

According to Vance, about 40 individuals who were born and raised in Hawai'i served in the Civil War. As many as 200 immigrants to Hawai'i who were living here at the outbreak of the war in 1861 may have served in the conflict.

Exact numbers are difficult to determine in part because the last names of Native Hawaiians were often "made up" when they signed on to whaling ships and then into Civil War armies and navies, he said.

Some Native Hawaiians appear on the rosters of "colored" regiments in the Union Army, Vance said.

Approximately 30 Civil War veterans who later died in Hawai'i are buried in a "Grand Army of the Republic" plot at O'ahu Cemetery, he said. The Grand Army of the Republic was founded by Union veterans in Decatur, Ill., in 1866.

King Kamehameha IV in 1861 declared the Kingdom of Hawai'i to be neutral in the conflict, Vance said. Hawai'i residents found their way into the American Civil War by volunteering and, in the case of some

sailors, through the fate of their whaling ships.

"Hawaiians were great sailors, and so they served on the whaling ships and lots of merchant ships before the war," Vance said. "When the war started, many of those ships were drafted into service in the Union Navy, and for their livelihood, (those Hawaiians) would end up as sailors in the Union Navy."

Nanette Napoleon, a historical researcher and writer, said Hawai'i had ties to the North through its missionaries and whaling industry, and that led to involvement in the Civil War on the Union side.

CONFEDERATE SHIP

The Shenandoah, by contrast, was a Confederate ship. The 1,160-ton steam cruiser cut a swath through the Pacific late in the war, capturing two dozen vessels in the Bering Sea and destroying all but a few, according to the Naval Historical Center.

Most of the vessels being attacked were whalers providing oil, and the intent was to impact the North's economy, said Vance, whose great-great-grandfather, Joseph Vance, was with the Union Army out of Iowa.

He said the dozen Hawaiians on the Shenandoah were probably from captured ships. Sailors on the losing end of an engagement with the Shenandoah could be put in chains below deck, marooned on an island or be given the chance to join the crew of the Southern vessel.

Vance also estimates there were about 5,000 American missionary families living in Hawai'i at the time of the Civil War.

"Many of them went back to enlist in the Union Army to do their duty," he said.

Vance said little is known about the Union Navy service of James Bush.

"We don't really know," he said. "The Union had a Pacific squadron that was based out of California."

Edna Ellis said her great uncle was half Hawaiian. His brother, John

Bush, had a newspaper on O'ahu.

Henry Ho'olulu Pitman, who was born in Hilo and fought for the Union Army, was the son of Benjamin Pitman of Boston and Kino'ole O Liliha, the last Hawaiian high chiefess of Hilo, family said.

Kino'ole O Liliha Pitman Spieler, who lives in Kailua, said after her great-grandmother died, Benjamin Pitman married again, his second wife also died, and he moved back to Boston with the children.

Henry Ho'olulu Pitman fought for the Union Army at the age of about 18. He was assigned to a black regiment.

"His father was an American from Boston and he was (living) there," Pitman Spieler said. "I would assume that he felt it was his duty to join in the war."

Napoleon, the researcher and writer, said Henry Ho'olulu Pitman was captured by the South in 1862 early in his enlistment. He died in 1863, she said.

Pitman Spieler said he was held in Libby Prison. The Confederate lockup in Richmond, Va., was notorious for its poor conditions, and the Hawaiian soldier contracted "lung fever," according to one account.

Portraits of Pitman Spieler's great uncle and his parents are part of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem. Mass.

"I'm very proud of a young man of his age — he was quite young — who served in the Civil War for his family," Pitman Spieler said.

The Hawai'i chapter of the Civil War Roundtable, a national organization, is spearheading a drive to raise the remaining 30 percent of the \$3,500 cost for the bronze plaque and stone base commemorating the service of the Hawai'i Sons of the Civil War.

Donations can be made to the O'ahu Cemetery Association at 2162 Nu'uuanu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.