



Center for Labor Education & Research
University of Hawai'i – West O'ahu

MEDIA: POSITIVE IMAGES OF AGING

The Power to Preserve History and
Culture in the 21st Century

Christopher R. Conybeare
Center for Labor Education and Research
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu



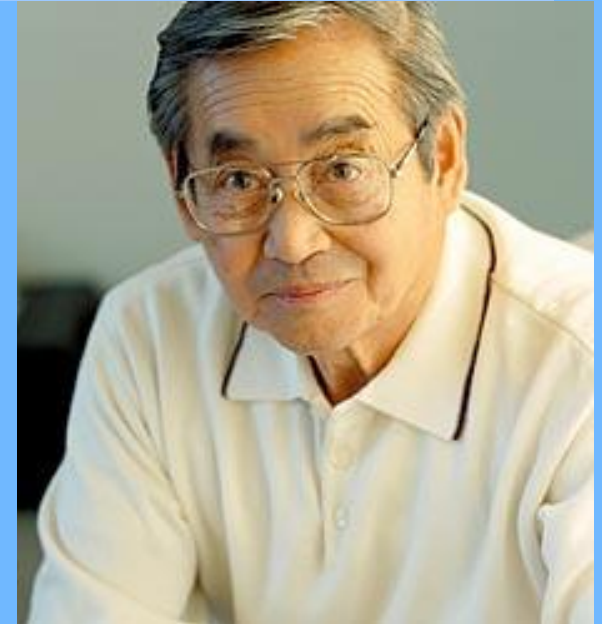
Three Trends of the 21st Century

- » Globalization
 - One world, one society
- » Urbanization
 - Leaving the countryside for the city
- » Aging
 - Longer life
 - Fewer babies



Traditional Roles for Elders

- » Preserve culture
- » Transmit knowledge
- » To draw on years of experience to:
 - Help solve disputes
 - Help younger people see a bigger picture
 - Help society learn from the past so the same mistakes are not made again



But...urbanization and globalization challenge traditional roles of elders.

Urbanization

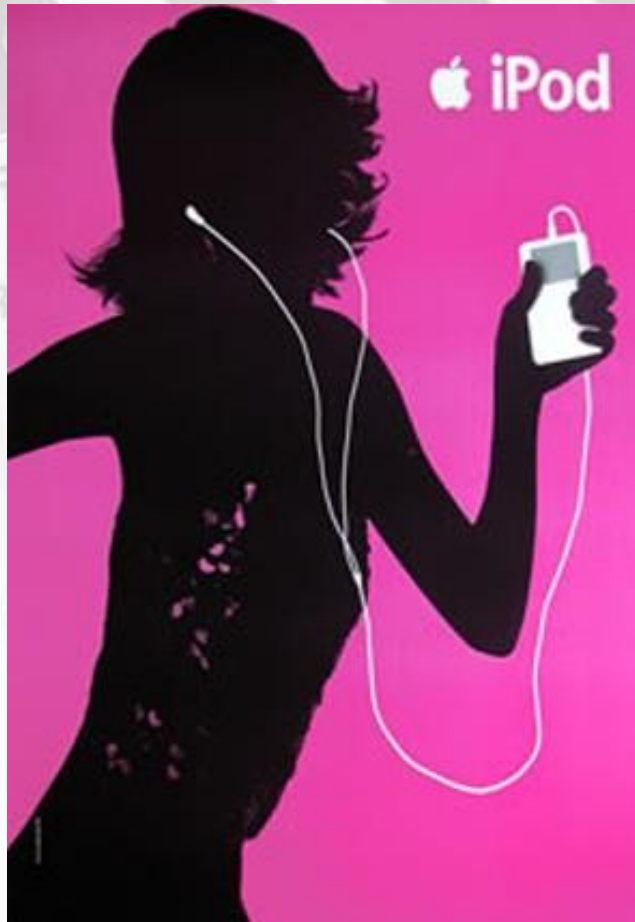
- » Young adults move to cities, leaving elders in countryside
- » Elders more “isolated” whether in cities or countryside.



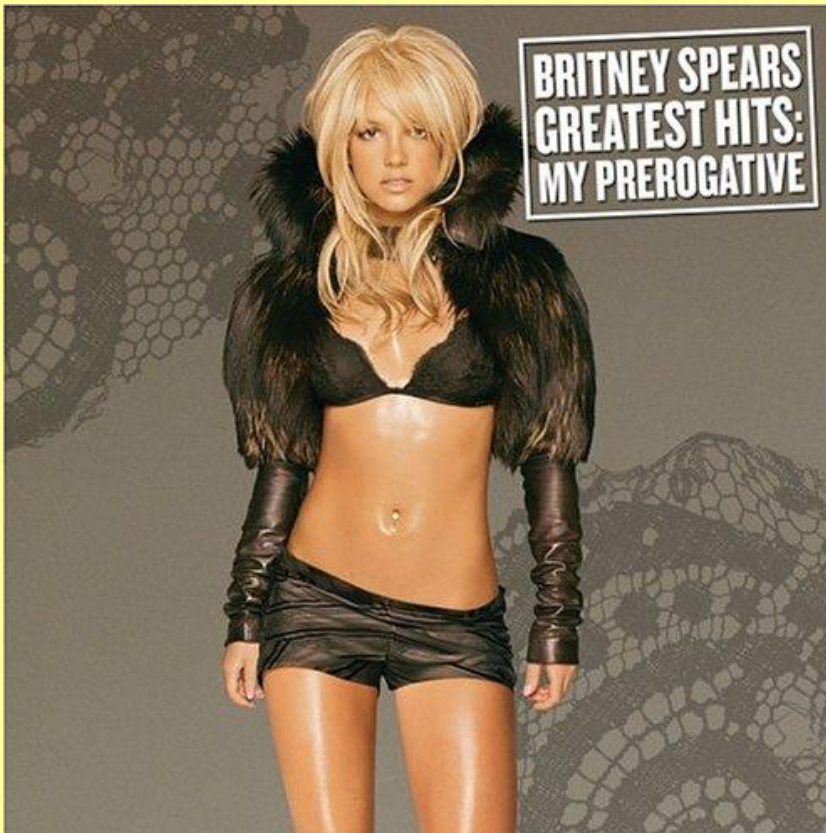
Globalization

- » Youth and young adults are “plugged in” to knowledge and culture from around the world via “new media”
 - Television
 - I-pods
 - Internet
 - » Instant news
 - » Downloads
 - » Blogs
 - » MySpace

New Media – Youth Culture



All Celebrities...all the Time



WORKING CLASS HISTORY NOT DOCUMENTED

- Working class history in Hawai‘i was rarely documented in traditional academic settings
- Yet the trade union movement was largely responsible for helping transform an oligarchic political economy to a robust democracy in the 20th century.



Ethnic Strikes



Young women from the Waipahu Plantation on their way to catch the train to Honolulu to participate in the 1920 strike parade. Yasu Sato recalled: "We marched in Honolulu through downtown. We held large banners telling people how little we got paid. Some of the haole ladies watching the parade cried, they felt so sorry for us." Ruth Nobuko Maki collection.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTARY FOR TELEVISION

- The University of Hawai'i West O'ahu's Center for Labor Education and Research (CLEAR)
 - raised public and private funds
 - created general audience television program in historical documentary format
 - useful also in classroom instruction



OUR THEME



*“Ordinary people
who did the
extraordinary”*

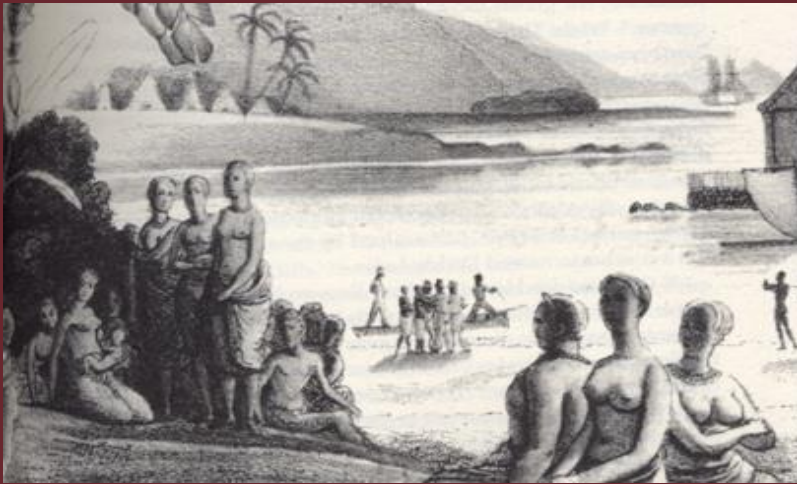


- They stood up to oppression
- Preserved and transmitted cultural knowledge

Here is Hawai'i history in a nutshell, as told to us by our "elderstars"



HAWAIIANS & MISSIONARIES



- **Native Hawaiians – Polynesians settled Hawai‘i over 1,000 years ago.**
- **European contact**
 - late 18th century
- **Missionaries from New England**
 - early 19th century.



AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN FROM MISSIONARY FAMILIES

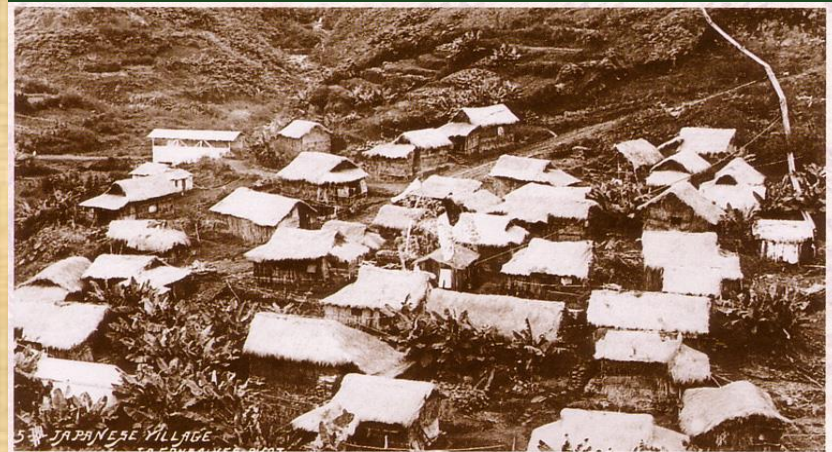


Established vast
agricultural
plantations for
sugar and
pineapple



PLANTATION LABOR

- Laborers included:
 - Native Hawaiian
 - Immigrants from China, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and other countries
- Immigrants kept racially isolated in ethnic “camps”
- Racism was used to divide and conquer.



In 1890 the homes of Japanese plantation workers in Wainaku [Bishop Museum]

THE BIG 5

- Land-owning families:
 - Evolved into 5 huge companies
 - Controlled almost every aspect of the workers lives, from housing to healthcare
 - Responsible for the overthrow of Hawai'i's Queen and annexation by the US in 1898

The Big 5

1. Castle & Cooke
2. Alexander & Baldwin
3. Hackfeld
4. C. Brewer
5. Theo. Davies





PLANTATION WORK

- Hard manual labor
- Small pay
- Workers lived in plantation housing and bought food on credit from the company store.
 - Many were never out of debt to their employers

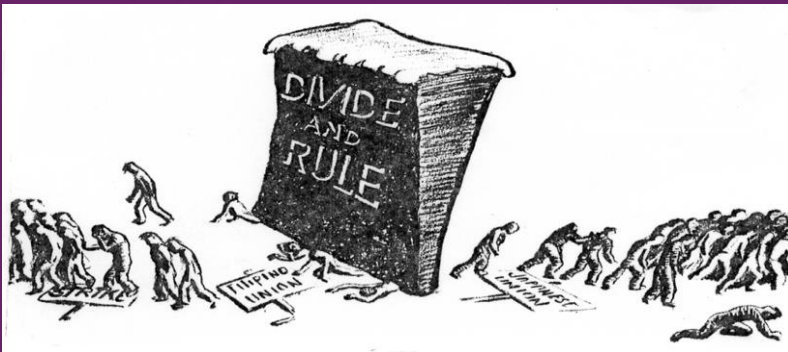


Plantation Bango

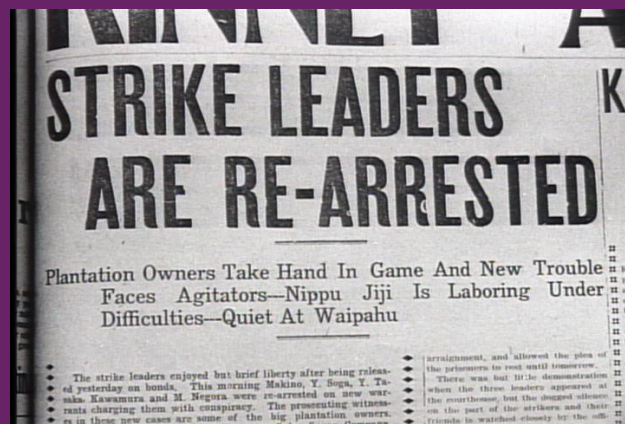




EARLY UNIONS BY RACE



- Formation of trade unions based on ethnicity.



- Racial manipulation doomed these efforts

STRIKE LEADERS BEHIND BARS

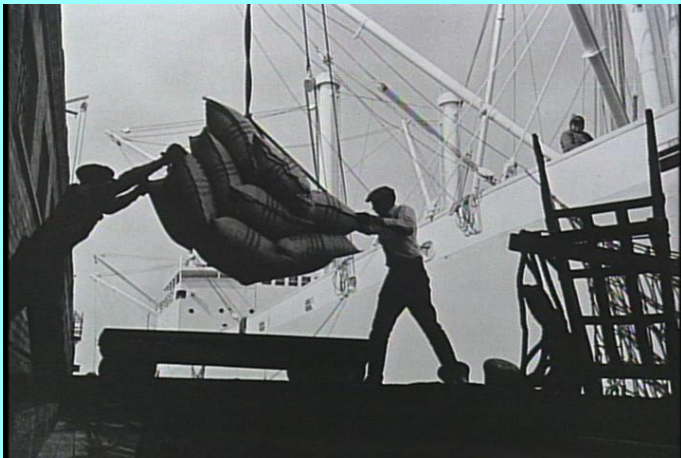


— Advertiser Photo.
STRIKERS AROUND THE YAMASHIRO HOTEL, BEKETANIA AVENUE, DURING THE RAID OF HIGH SHERIFF HENRY'S POSSE.

1930's - CROSS-ETHNIC UNITY



- In the 1930's, workers began to work together.
- Movement started on the “dock” with the formation of the ILWU.



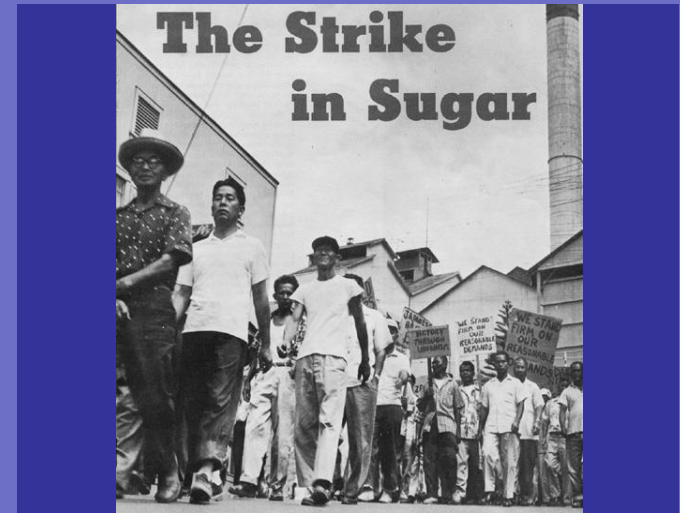
***“An injury to one
is an injury to all.”***



JOE KAHEE
Stevedore

BIG 5 RULE ENDS AFTER WWII

- After WWII
 - 1946 Sugar Strike
 - 1949 Dock Strike
 - Modern economy and multi-party democracy
 - 1959 Hawai'i becomes a US state





CAPTURING CULTURAL TRADITIONS



- *Rice & Roses* features stories on all Hawai'i's indigenous and immigrant residents
- Barbara Kawakami
 - Born and raised on a plantation
 - Dropped out of High School to help her family earn income as a seamstress.
 - Went on to collect immigrant clothing and stories.





KOJI ARIYOSHI

Inspires Next Generations

- Labor Activist
- Journalist Publisher
- Historian
- Mentor to Students
- Advocate for China–US Friendship





INTERVIEWS INSPIRE ARCHIVE

- Subject told us
 - “You are asking the questions I wish my grandchildren would ask.”
- Created archive of
 - 200+ interviews
 - 150+ hours of television programs
 - Personal film, photos, audio tapes, and artifacts.



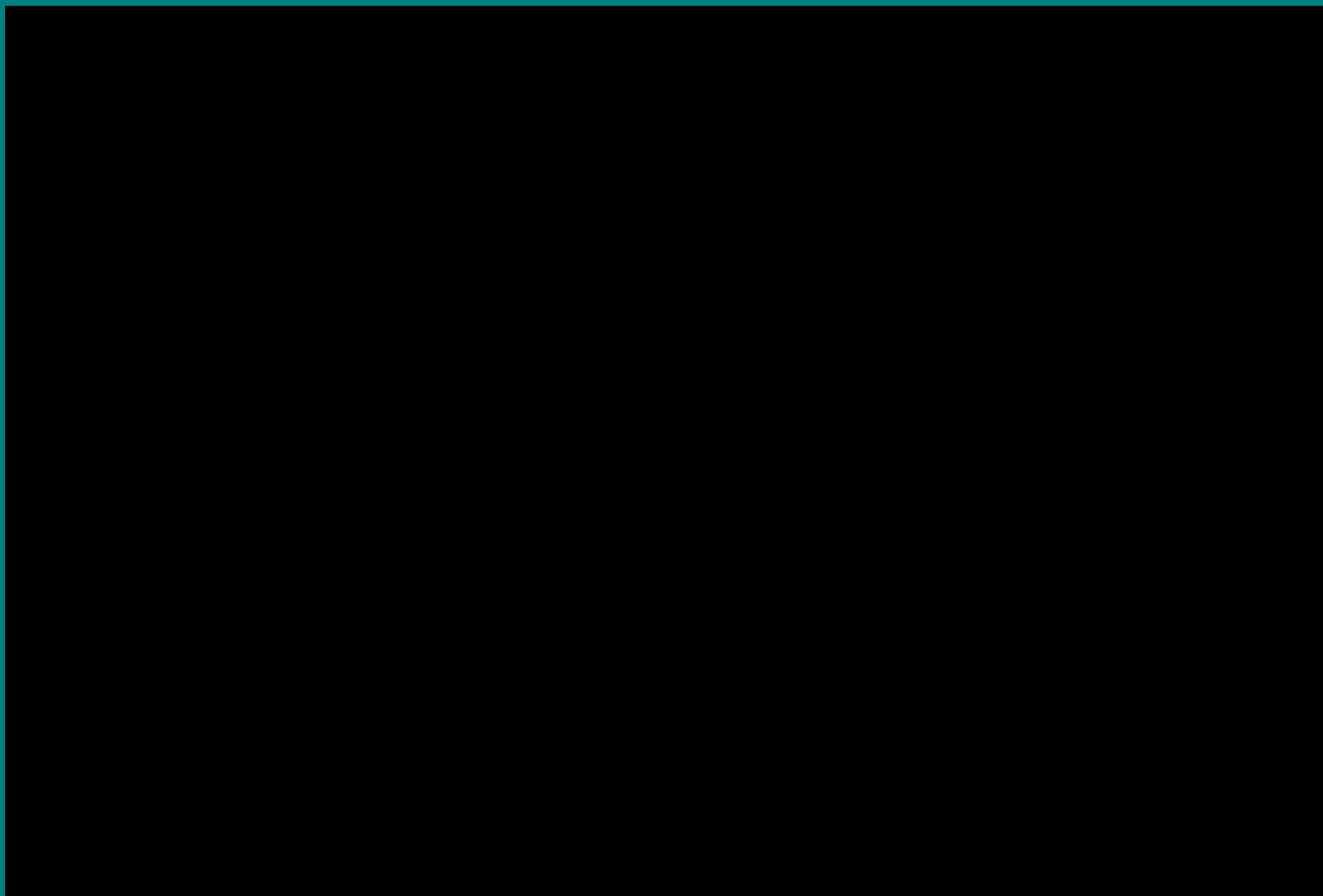
USES



- Programs
 - In classrooms
 - On public television
 - Through state library system
- Other archived materials
 - Documentary film makers
 - Historians, teachers, students
 - Community groups

Elder Stars for the 21st Century





CONCLUSION

Use of “elderstars” is an excellent and compelling way to transmit knowledge of history, culture, and aging.

CLEAR collaborates with others to create new educational products for the teaching of gerontology.

