

MENSTRUAL
HEALTH,
HEALING,
AND JUSTICE
FOR NATIVE
HAWAIIAN WOMEN



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OUTLINE

The reclamation of Ancient
Hawaiian menstrual practices
through a modern menstrual
health framework

Menstruation

Menstrual Health

Colonialization

Ancient Hawai'i

Native Hawaiian Women

Contemporary

Menstrual Experiences

Challenges to

Menstrual Health

Recommendations

Integrating Ancient
and Modern

MENSTRUATION



ACHIEVING MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Menstruators must be able to:

- 1 Access educational information pertaining to menstruation over the life course
- 2 Effectively take care of themselves during menstruation
- 3 Access timely diagnosis, treatment and care for menstrual discomforts or disorders
- 4 Experience positive, respectful, and supportive environments
- 5 Choose whether and how they participate in life throughout their menstrual cycle

COLONIALIZATION

Overwriting of people's histories,
cultures, lives, and futures to express a
singular dominant worldview ->

False negative interpretations of
menstruation



TOXIC

POLLUTING

DIRTY

TABOO

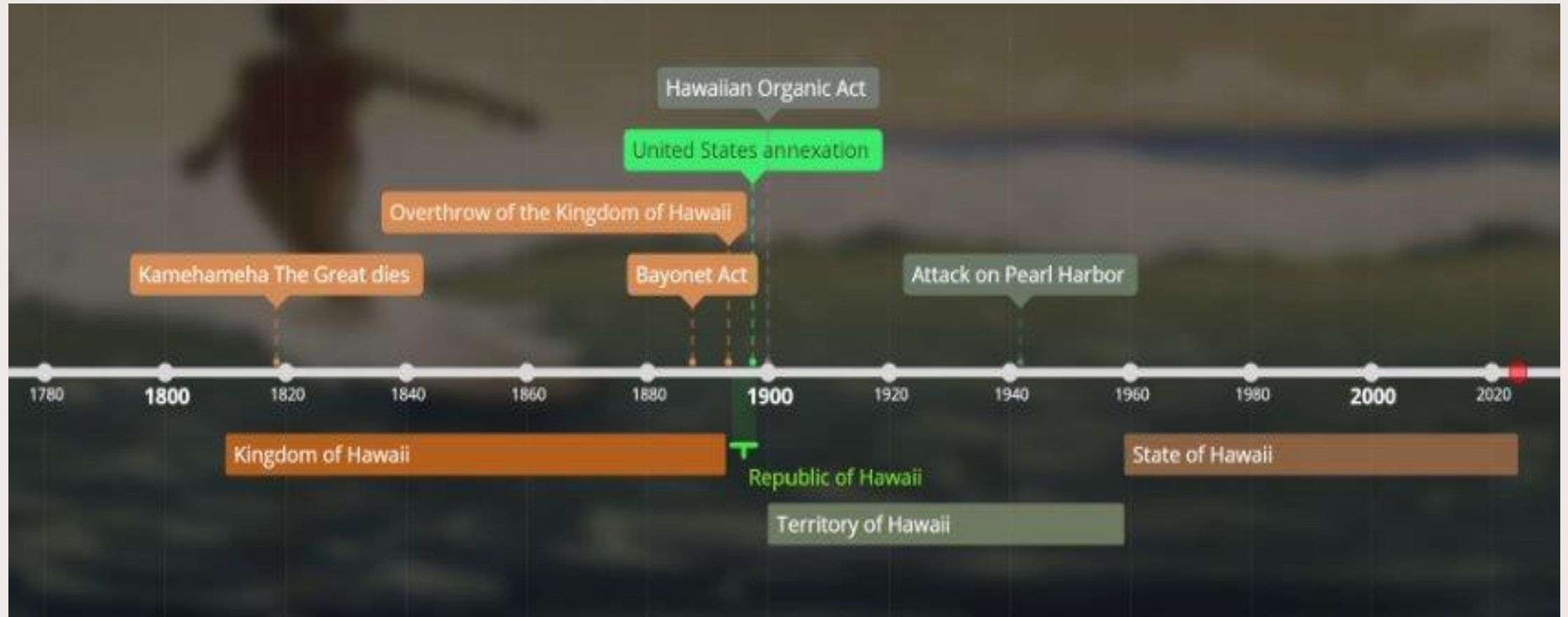
POLITICS OF TABOO

Fun Fact:

The word “taboo” originated from the Polynesian word “tabu” or “tapu”
Kānaka Maoli use the word “kapu”

- Originated from Western Scholars
 - Theorized universal menstrual taboo
 - Perpetuation of gender oppression
- Mainstream rhetoric

COLONIALIZATION OF HAWAI'I



(Historical Resources Hawai'i, n.d.)

ANCIENT HAWAII'I



Reine Kahaloa.

INDIGENOUS FEMINISTS



Reconstruction of a hale pe'a
(MUM, 2011)

Kapu and Noa

- States of being
- Integral for balance in society
- Protects individuals and the community

Hale pe'a - Menstrual house

- Place women resided during menses
- Menstruation is sacred -> Menstruating females were kapu
 - Kapu to non-menstruating females and males
- Responsibility to menstruate -> Restorative area

ASSERTION OF WESTERN VALUES AND NORMS

“one of the basic tenants of the Polynesian religion **exalted the male principle** and **subordinated *to it* the female principle**”

(Bushnell, 1966, p. 320)

“the precincts of the menstrual house were ***so* charged with the uniquely feminine essence of defilement** that men were forbidden to go near it. If a man entered the hale pe’a the price of his intrusion was death”

(Bushnell, 1966, p. 327)

Purposeful misinterpretation, mistranslation, and fabrication of “Ke Ano o Ko

Luukia Noho ana ma kela wahi Puukawaiwai”

Thrum

(as cited in Kuahiwinui, 2018)

RECAP

INDIGENOUS SCHOLARS

- Reclaim concepts of kapu, noa, and the hale pe'a
- Resituate women's status in Ancient Hawai'i
- Menstruation is a natural, healthy part of life that should be honored for it is a sacred and divine act

WESTERN SCHOLARS

- Hale pe'a separated clean from unclean and was restrictive
- Gender hierarchy in Ancient Hawai'i
- Menstruation is dirty and should be taboo

Through an Indigenous Feminist perspective and decolonized approach, individuals can unlearn the flawed and problematic interpretation of Ancient Hawai'i history, women, and menstruation that Western scholars and academia continue to portray.

NATIVE HAWAIIAN



WOMEN

MENSTRUAL EXPERIENCES

Jabola-Carolus and Yee (2021)

- Financial difficulty and lack of access to period products -> **Period Poverty**
 - Negative impact on education and workplace
 - Inability to fully participate in society during menstruation
- Prevalence of period shame, embarrassment, and taboo
- Findings associated with continued impact of colonialization in Hawai'i

MENSTRUAL HEALTH



RECOMMENDATIONS



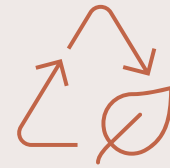
Community

Discuss menstruation and menstrual health with others



Self-Care

Find ways to honor yourself throughout the menstrual cycle



Sustainability

Build sustainable menstrual habits



Institutional Reform

Get involved!

MAHALO
MAHALO
MAHALO
NUI LOA

Thesis Advisor

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Global Honors Cohort

Ohana and Friends