

Queen For A Dole: Hawaii's last monarch, Queen Liliuokalani, was dethroned and imprisoned in 1893 when U. S. Marines were ordered to defend by military force, the American pineapple and sugar interests in Hawaii. American businessmen who opposed rising tariffs, primarily Sanford B. Dole, suggested annexation to protect their investments. In the year of her death, Liliuokalani asked that her story be told because: "The same betrayal of all peoples can happen if they do not understand."

When missionaries arrived in 1838, Hawaii was a matriarchal society, spiritual and interlocked with nature. Where there was life, there were gods. Perceived as savage, sermons of a vengeful Calvinistic God were preached to them in New England style churches by missionaries who did not understand many values, i.e., the *aloha* and the *hanai*. Hawaiian self-worth faltered. Some worked for *haole* (foreign) businessmen, many women became *haole* domestic servants. As missionary laws grew dominant, *haole* promised to put natives in authority when they were deemed ready to hold political power.

In 1863, King Kamehameha IV died of "grief." Many Hawaiians believed he no longer could cope with the *haole* world. Dedicated to Hawaiian policies, he refused to sign the 1852 constitution fearing his people were not ready for a democracy designed for and by Americans. History verifies Hawaiians' proclivity for *aloha* and *mana*, (guidance and leadership) from their kings. Mark Twain noted Hawaiians loved their chiefs with a "fanaticism."

Kamehameha V toured the islands, to poll his people who displayed an intense devotion to monarchy and resistance to foreign democracy. When the Constitutional Convention he convened produced *haole* resentment, but not a constitution, he solely crafted the Constitution of 1864. Angry *haole* proposed a "military display of power." Kamehameha countered that American and British ships remain at bay. His constitution then successfully governed Hawaii for twenty-three years, though political untruths infiltrated the U.S. In 1872, with Hawaii against annexation and without a named successor, Kamehameha V died.

Hawaiians voted lineage to elect Lunalilo who claimed to be heir but, unaccustomed to democratic voting, failed to consider his platform which pledged return to the constitution of 1852. He appointed all but one Americans to his cabinet. After only a year and twenty-five days as king, Lunalilo became very ill and died. Cabinet members elected David Kalakaua who mollified foreign landowners and backed the reciprocity treaty with the United States. Most Hawaiians, including Liliuokalani, did not. They did not understand politics where businessmen were leaders. In 1876 the U.S. Congress passed a motion honoring the reciprocity treaty which opened the door to annexation. After the king heard of assassination plots, he attempted reforms to re-empower Hawaiians, but died aboard a ship returning from a U.S. royal visit in 1891.

Under the Bayonet Constitution of 1887 that had been forced upon the islanders, Queen Liliuokalani inherited the throne. The matriarchal society of the islands had all but vanished. For almost fifty years, no position of political importance was held by a woman. Women were seen as unsuitable for political office. American antipathy toward monarchy, ardor for democracy, and belief in patriarchy doled her a "she may reign but not rule" posture of political and gender disrespect. Charles Bishop advised her to leave

politics and business to the ministers, and suggested she would “live longer and happier...by not trying to do too much.” But do, she did.

As princess, she opened a college for Hawaiian girls and a bank for women. As queen, she was a champion to women and for women’s rights. She appointed a new cabinet; reappointed her council except for two; requested portfolios from all ministers; and began to enact a more equitable constitution for her people. One of her first official acts designated 10-acre sections of crown land for Hawaiian homesteads; 5-years rent free and \$1 annual per acre after. That her empire was for her people was obvious. She polled the population as had Kamehameha V. Her people wanted: “A strong monarchy, a voice for themselves in government, and no annexation to a foreign power. Liliuokalani was intelligent, educated, wise, and ethical. Still, after two short years, she was deposed.

President Grover Cleveland believed the overthrow was illegal and offered to give back her throne if she granted amnesty to everyone responsible. She refused his terms. A provisional government was installed with Sanford B. Dole as head of her people. Within a year, the Republic of Hawaii was proclaimed by the U. S. Congress and immediately recognized by the United States government. Hawaii was annexed to the United States in 1898 through a joint resolution of the U.S. Congress.

The queen lived as a private citizen until her death in 1917.

In 1993 President Clinton signed the Apology Resolution for the alleged role of the United States in the overthrow of Hawaii’s last monarch, Queen Liliuokalani.

Sources: *Scholastic Encyclopedia of Women in the United States* by Sheila Keenan; *The Betrayal of Liliuokalani* by Helena G. Allen; *Hawaii’s Story* by Hawaii’s Queen Liliuokalani.