

HRH Queen Lili‘uokalani

(Nov. 11, 1917)



Lydia Kamaka‘eha Pākī, who would later become Queen Lili‘uokalani, was born on September 2, 1838. She was the third of ten children born to High Chiefs Caesar Kapa‘akea and Anale‘a Keohokālole. Her distinguished lineage included a long line of Hawaiian chiefs. Among them were Keawe-a-Heulu and Kame‘eiamoku, two of the five Kona chiefs who supported Kamehameha the Great in his ascendancy to power as Hawaii’s first king. Her great-great-grandmother, Ululani, was a chiefess of Hilo and the most celebrated poet of her day.

Shortly after Lydia’s birth, Kapa‘akea and Keohokālole gave their infant daughter to Chief Abner Pākī, a counselor to Kamehameha III, and his wife, Laura Kōnia, a granddaughter of Kamehameha I. This custom of hānai or adoption, among persons of rank, was meant to solidify relationships and build family alliances among the Hawaiian nobility. Pākī and Kōnia had a daughter of their own, Bernice Pauahi, who became the foster-sister of Lydia.

Lydia received her education at the Chiefs' Children's School.¹ This elite boarding school for the children of ali'i was established by American Congregational missionaries, Amos Starr Cooke, and his wife, Juliette Montague Cooke. Religious instruction in the Protestant faith and regular attendance at church services were mandatory.² She was baptized in the "Kalowina" or Congregational (UCC) church on December 23rd 1838. The following entry in Levi Chamberlain's journal confirms her baptism in the Congregational Church as an infant:

"Sabbath Dec. 23rd [1838]. Kinau brought out her infant daughter to be baptized. Paki & his wife Konia presented also an adopted child the infant daughter of Keahokalole [i.e. Keohokālole] & Paakea [i.e. Kapa'akea]."³

At 24 years old, Lydia celebrated her own marriage to American John Owen Dominis on September 16, 1862. They had known each other since childhood. Born in Schenectady, New York, John Owen had arrived in the Hawaiian Islands with his parents in 1837, at the age of five. He later had an impressive career in government service, serving in such positions as adjutant general, member of the House of Nobles, privy councilor, and Governor of O'ahu.

The year 1874 marked a major turning point in the life of Lydia and her siblings. King Lunalilo had died without naming a successor to the throne. The Legislative Assembly, under provisions of the Hawaiian constitution, had the responsibility of selecting a new sovereign. Eligibility for any potential candidates was determined by their chiefly bloodline. On February 12, 1874, the Legislative Assembly elected Col. David Kalākaua, Lydia's brother, as the seventh ruler of Hawai'i. As king, Kalākaua immediately set about establishing a new dynasty, naming members of his family in the line of succession. He appointed his younger brother, William Pitt Leleiōhoku Kalāho'olewa, as his immediate successor. With the unexpected death of Prince Leleiōhoku on April 10, 1877, King Kalākaua issued the following proclamation the next day:

"We Kalakaua by the Grace of God King of the Hawaiian Islands, agreeably to Article Twenty Second of the Constitution of Our Kingdom, do hereby appoint, failling [sic] an Heir of Our body, Our beloved subject and sister, Her Royal

¹ Five of eight reigning sovereigns of Hawai'i received their education at the Chiefs' Children's School. They included Alexander Liholiho (King Kamehameha IV), Lot Kapuāiwa (King Kamehameha V), William Charles Lunalilo (King Lunalilo), David Kalākaua (King Kalākaua) and Lydia Kamaka'eha (Queen Lili'uokalani). In addition, Emma (Queen-Consort of Kamehameha IV), and Victoria Kamāmalu (Crown Princess and Kuhina Nui or Premier) were also students there.

² At the time Lydia entered the Chiefs' Children's School on May 23, 1842, there were 16 pupils, of which four were under the age of four. The school provided its royal pupils with an education in Western learning, language, and social etiquette. This prepared them for their future roles as leaders of the Hawaiian kingdom; and served them well as they increasingly moved about American and European society.

³ Levi Chamberlain, *The Levi Chamberlain Journal, November 11, 1822 – January 1, 1849*, Hawaiian Mission Children's Society Library, vol. XXIII, 8.

<http://96.31.65.17:8282/greenstone/collect/levicham/index/assoc/HASH9999.dir/doc.pdf>

Highness LYDIA KAMAKAEHA LILIUOKALANI to be Our Successor on the Throne as Queen after it shall have pleased God to call Us hence.

Done at Iolani Palace in Honolulu, this Twelfth Day of April, in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy Seven.

Kalakaua R.’’⁴

In 1887, Crown Princess Lili‘uokalani and Queen Kapi‘olani represented King Kalākaua at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Her Britannic Majesty Queen Victoria. Their journey to England entailed an eight day passage across the Pacific, a six day journey by train across the United States, and another eight day voyage across the Atlantic. Along the way, the Royal party made stops in San Francisco, Washington D.C., Boston, and New York.

One of the highlights of Lili‘uokalani’s visit to Washington, D.C., was a State Dinner at the White House, at the invitation of President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland. His Excellency, The Honorable Henry A. P. Carter, Hawaiian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, reported that this dinner “...surpasses in the elegance of its appointments any similar entertainment which I have witnessed at the Executive Mansion, and showed the evident desire of the President to do honor to his distinguished guests.”⁵

While in Boston, a reporter from the Boston Globe interviewed Princess Lili‘uokalani and wrote a description of her, which was later reprinted in The Pacific Commercial Advertiser:

“H.R.H. Princess Lili‘uokalani, of the Sandwich Islands, who, with the Queen has been spending the past week in Boston is a large, magnificent-looking woman, with all the stately graciousness of movement and manner that we have always imagined as belonging to that of royalty which republican eyes so seldom see. She has a clear, brown skin, very wavy black hair, sprinkled with gray, and knotted in simple fashion high on her head, earnest dark eyes, and a rare but very pleasant smile that lighted up an otherwise thoughtful, and even serious, face.”⁶

Besides her physical traits, the reporter delves further into her character and interests:

“In every sense of the word, an unusually intelligent and talented woman, and one who realizes to the full the privileges, the opportunities and the duties of her high

⁴ The Hawaiian gazette. (Honolulu [Oahu, Hawaii]), 18 April 1877. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025121/1877-04-18/ed-1/seq-2/>>

⁵ The Pacific commercial advertiser. (Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands), 02 June 1887. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85047084/1887-06-02/ed-1/seq-2/>>

⁶ The Pacific commercial advertiser. (Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands), 15 June 1887. Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85047084/1887-06-15/ed-1/seq-2/>>

position. Both herself and the Queen are doing all they can to elevate the women of her own nation, and when she learned that I was especially interested in this subject and would like to tell the readers of “The Woman’s Hour” about it, she gladly talked with me for a long time on this topic.”⁷

Lili‘uokalani believed that the status of women in Hawai‘i could be elevated through education and self-reliance. In 1886, she founded the Lili‘uokalani Educational Society, for the proper training of Hawaiian girls. She served as president of two women’s societies that assisted those in need, the Ho‘oulu Lāhui O Kaumakapili and the Ladies’ Mutual Benevolent Society. In her later years, she also held the office of President of the ‘Ahahui ‘Iolani O Nā Wahine Hawai‘i, also known as the ‘Iolani Guild. This women’s organization, under the auspices of St. Andrew’s Cathedral, also assisted with relief of the poor.

Lili‘u will be long remembered for her extraordinary musical talent. Her natural music ability was recognized in school, carefully nurtured over the years, and put to good use. Lili‘uokalani later stated: “To compose was as natural to me as to breathe, and this gift of nature, never having been suffered to fall into disuse, remains a source of the greatest consolation to this day.”⁸ It is estimated that Lili‘uokalani alone had written over 150 musical compositions during her lifetime, including *Aloha ‘Oe* (Farewell to Thee) and *Ke Aloha O Ka Haku* (The Queen’s or Lili‘uokalani’s Prayer).

At the close of 1890, King Kalākaua appointed Lili‘uokalani as Princess Regent for a second time. The King intended to travel to California, in the hopes of improving his health. As fate would have it, he would never return home alive. He died at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco on January 20, 1891. A little over a week later, on January 29, 1891, the U.S.S. *Charleston* arrived in Honolulu Harbor bearing the remains of the King. Princess Regent Lili‘u automatically assumed the throne as Queen Lili‘uokalani.

On January 14, 1893, Queen Lili‘uokalani attempted to promulgate a new constitution. Her intention was to restore royal prerogatives and voting rights that were taken away by the previous constitution forced upon her brother in 1887. For her new constitution to take effect, the Queen sought the approval and signatures of her cabinet, as required by law. Cabinet members, fearing repercussions from certain segments of the population, withheld their signatures. The Queen eventually postponed promulgation of a new constitution. But, word of the Queen’s initial intentions had already galvanized her opponents. Mass meetings by the opposition were held, and threats of an armed conflict were ever present. On January 17, 1893, after taking control of key government buildings, a Committee of Public Safety declared the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani, the abrogation of the Hawaiian monarchy, and the

⁷ The Pacific commercial advertiser. (Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands), 15 June 1887. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress. <<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85047084/1887-06-15/ed-1/seq-2/>>

⁸ Op. cit., Lili‘uokalani. <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/liliuokalani/hawaii/hawaii.html#V>

establishment of a provisional government. In order to avoid a civil war and further loss of life, however, the Queen yielded her authority as sovereign of the Hawaiian Kingdom not to the insurrectionists, but

to the superior force of the United States of America whose Minister Plenipotentiary, His Excellency John L. Stevens, has caused United States troops to be landed at Honolulu and declared that he would support the Provisional Government. Now to avoid any collision of armed forces, and perhaps the loss of life, I do this under protest and impelled by said force yield my authority until such time as the Government of the United States shall, upon facts being presented to it, undo the action of its representatives and reinstate me in the authority which I claim as the Constitutional Sovereign of the Hawaiian Islands.

She had hoped the United States restore Hawaii's sovereignty to the rightful holder, much in the same way as Great Britain's Rear Admiral Richard D. Thomas had done earlier in 1843 when the Kingdom of Kamehameha III was unlawfully seized by British subject Lord George Paulet. Unfortunately, however, that was not to be the case. Reflecting back years later on the justification her captors used to remove her from the throne, Lili'u addressed the American public in her autobiography, *Hawai'i's Story by Hawai'i's Queen* on the issue of the overthrow and restorative justice using a comparison to the plight of the Hawaiian people from the biblical passage from the old testament First Book of Kings:

"Oh honest Americans, as Christians hear me for my downtrodden people!.. "Do not covet the little vineyard of Naboth's, so far from your shores, lest the punishment of Ahab fall upon you, if not in your day, in that of your children, for 'be not deceived, God is not mocked.' The people to whom your fathers told of the living God, and taught to call "Father," and whom the sons now seek to despoil and destroy, are crying aloud to Him in their time of trouble; and He will keep His promise, and will listen to the voices of His Hawaiian children lamenting for their homes."

Two years after the 1893 illegal overthrow, supporters of the Queen staged a counter-revolution in 1895 to restore her to power. This failed attempt ended with the Queen's arrest, forced abdication, and humiliating public trial. She was sentenced to five years in prison and a fine of \$5,000 for misprision of treason against the Republic of Hawai'i. Her sentence was later commuted to imprisonment in the Executive Building, formerly 'Iolani Palace, for nearly eight months.

While imprisoned, The Rt. Rev. Alfred P. Willis, the Second Bishop of the Anglican Church in Hawai'i, was instructed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to visit the Queen even though she was not a member of the Church. This was in most part due to the fact that the Church remained loyal not to the insurrectionists but to the monarchy, which had originally invited the Church to Hawai'i in 1860. As the Queen would later recount

“That first night of my imprisonment was the longest night I have ever passed in my life; it seems as though the dawn of day would never come. *I found in my bag a small Book of Common Prayer according to the ritual of the Episcopal Church. It was a great comfort to me, and before retiring the rest Mrs. Clark and I spent a few minutes in the devotions appropriate to the evening* (emphasis added).”⁹

It was during her time in prison that the Queen began contemplating her conversion from the denomination of her childhood church (UCC) to the Anglican (Episcopal) Church. As she noted in her biography:

“Here, perhaps, I may say, that although I had been a regular attendant on the Presbyterian worship since my childhood, a constant contributor to all the missionary societies, and had helped to build their churches and ornament the walls, giving my time and my musical ability freely to make their meetings attractive to my people, *yet none of these pious church members or clergy remembered me in my prison. To this (Christian?) conduct I contrast that of the Anglican Bishop, Rt. Rev. Alfred Willis, who visited me from time to time in my house, and in whose church I have since been confirmed as a communicant. But he was not allowed to see me at the palace* (Emphasis added).”¹⁰

The Queen also added that the Bishop as well as the Order of Sisters of the Anglican Church continued to visit her throughout her ordeal:

“I received letters; but they were always opened, and, I presume, read, before being delivered. *Rt. Rev. Alfred Willis, the Anglican Bishop of Honolulu, sent me a Book of Common Prayer. Sisters Beatrice and Albertina offered little acts of tenderness and kindness which brought anew to my mind that passage in Scripture, ‘I was in prison and ye visit me.’ Although my Christian jailers denied to me their sacred ministrations and actual presence, yet none the less were these good and true (Anglican) Christians there in the loving tokens of kind remembrance, and in the spirit of the Divine Lord, during my bondage* (Emphasis added).”¹¹

While imprisoned, Lili’u composed “Ke Aloha O Ka Haku” (popularly referred to as “Lili’uokalani’s Prayer”) in March 1895 which she “lovingly dedicated” to her niece, the Crown Princess Victoria Ka’iulani. This hymn is popular with Christian churches in Hawai‘i, and was published in the United Church of Christ’s Hawaiian hymnal “*Nā Hīmeni O Ka Ekalesia*.” The lyrics are as follows:

⁹ Hawai‘i’s Story By Hawai‘i’s Queen, p. 269

¹⁰ P. 269.

¹¹ P.295.

1. O kou aloha nō Your love
Aia i ka lani is in heaven
A 'o kou 'o ia i 'o and your truth
He hemolele ho'i so perfect.

2. Ko'u noho mihi 'ana I live in sorrow
A pa'ahao 'ia imprisoned
O 'oe ku'u lama you are my light
Kou nani, ko'u ko'o your glory my support

3. Mai nānā 'ino'ino Behold not with malevolence
Nā hewa o kānaka the sins of man
Akā e huikala but forgive
A ma'ema'e nō. and forgive.

4. No laila e ka Haku and so, O Lord
Ma lalo o kou 'eheu Beneath your wings
Ko mākou maluhia Be our peace
A mau loa aku no forever more.

Interestingly, the second verse of the hymn relating to her imprisonment was not published in *Nā Himeni* until 1999, because of its controversial political undertones. As one noted musician has stated, the meaning of the second verse is a plea by the Queen that we should “forgive those men [that overthrew her government] for their sins, and acknowledge to God that we are all sinners and let us be at peace forevermore.”¹²

When the Republic of Hawai'i released her from imprisonment on September 6, 1895, she returned to her private residence, Washington Place. There, she endured another five months under house arrest. Her decision to convert to the Anglican Church was finally made when threats were made against her life while she was under house arrest, and out of fear for her safety, she sought sanctuary with Bishop Willis and the Sisters of the Cathedral Church of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. As recalled by Lydia Aholo, the hānai daughter of Lili'u in the biography “*The Betrayal of Lili'uokalani*”

“That night was one of terror for Queen Lili'uokalani. The “confidential statement” had already reached the newspapers, and at home and abroad was the news that the “savage queen planned to behead all the whites.” The civilized whites then took up arms to “shoot the queen on sight.” J.O. Carter warned her of the danger, pointing out that there were men stationed on Kawaiaha'o Church's roof with guns aimed on Washington Place. *It was at this time Lili'uokalani*

¹² Pers. Comm with Nalani Olds.

began turning from the church she had attended and loved from childhood, to the Episcopal Church, bordering her property. With the aid of James Robertson, E.C. MacFarlane, and the bishop of the Episcopal Church, Lili‘uokalani made her escape. Dressed in the habit of a nun she walked with two nuns through her gate into the Episcopal Church and entered a carriage driven by Robertson and accompanied by MacFarlane (Emphasis added).”¹³

At risk for harboring a “fugitive from justice,” Bishop Willis hid the Queen from her captors in the sanctuary of St. Andrew’s. As related by Mrs. Bernice Pi‘ilani Irwin (nka Cooke), who was a young teacher at the Priory in January of 1895, there was a small infirmary on the church grounds which the Sisters warned all faculty not to have the Priory girls go near the infirmary. Cooke wrote that:

“[The] feeling was very tense at the school. We knew someone was in that room and suspected it was the Queen. The back of her property adjoined the playground, with a high board fence separating the two. By pulling off one or two boards it would have been made easy for her to come to the Priory without being seen by anyone outside.

At noon Sister Albertina went to the infirmary with a well provisioned tray. This convinced us that someone was there and we were convinced that this someone was the Queen. Years later, when the Queen and I were chatting one morning, she spoke of having taken refuge at the Priory, and of the kindness the good Sisters had shown her.”

On February 6, 1896, after all restrictions on her movements were finally lifted, she made several trips to the United States unsuccessfully seeking redress for the loss of her kingdom.

On May 18, 1896, the Queen was baptized and confirmed as a member of the Anglican Church. Strangely, there has been very little information documented about this important event in her life. According to newspaper accounts at the time, the baptism/confirmation was performed by Bishop Willis at a private ceremony at St. Andrew’s cathedral at 6:30 in the morning. Queen Kapi‘olani, David Kawānanakoa, Mrs. Willis, and the Sisters served as witnesses, and the “font was beautifully decorated with masses of white flowers.” Indeed, her “baptism” was “hypothetical” because the Queen had been previously baptized – thus, for all practical purposes, the ceremony performed was more aligned with ceremonies to confirm a previously baptized member from another church into the Church.

Perhaps the Queen’s greatest and most enduring legacy is the establishment of the Lili‘uokalani Children’s Trust. While she was living, the Queen had her attorneys draw up a Deed of Trust on December 2, 1909, which was later amended in 1911. This document provided

¹³ P.308

for the future care of orphan and destitute children, with preference given to children of Native Hawaiian ancestry. The Trust was initially financed with proceeds derived from the 1924 public auction and sale of the Queen's valuable jewelry, rare lei hulu, and other personal effects. Other lands held privately by the Queen were also placed into her trust and rental income from those lands make up the primary source of income for the Trust.

Queen Lili'uokalani is one of several *ali'i* not forgotten in the minds of many Hawaiians today. As a Christian and a progressive thinker, her goals were to bring the Hawaiian people firmly into the burgeoning world economy and help them adapt to the realities of the modern world. As a native politician, Lili'uokalani was deeply concerned with the common good. She spent much of her life setting up charitable organizations devoted to public education, health, and welfare. As queen of the Hawaiian kingdom, Lili'uokalani was forced to give up her throne in 1893. Nonetheless, she practiced heroism, compassion and bravery when she surrendered, not to the rebels, but to the U.S. forces so that a civil war would be avoided. She spent the rest of her life appealing to the U.S. government to do what was only right and justice – the restoration of her government. But it fell upon deaf ears as those other emotions wielded their ugly heads, particularly in this case: greed called “manifest destiny.” The Episcopal Church in Hawai'i (TECH) commemorates her as one of its saints because throughout all of her ordeals, she practiced suffering and carrying her own cross as a Christian.

When one asks the question: “What kind of woman was Queen Liliuokalani?,” one observation comes from Cooke's book, which was published under that title. She wrote

“Liliuokalani was not a saint, but one is inclined to place her among the saints when one considers all the suffering she underwent and her remarkable reactions. I do not claim that the Queen was perfect. Who among us can make such a claim? No doubt Her Majesty was greatly aroused and angered when she found herself helpless to carry out the requests of her people in giving them a constitution which would reinstate them in their dignity as voters in the land of their ancestors. Such an attitude could well be called righteous anger.

It has been said that Queen Liliuokalani was stubborn and had a violent temper. In all the thirty years of my acquaintance with her, I saw her angry once. Stubborn? Yes, she was stubborn, if to have an overwhelming desire to gain back the vote for her people of Hawaiian blood and to preserve Hawaii's independence is so-called!

Her true character shone forth in her magnificent gesture of forgiveness to those who had dethroned and humiliated her, and in her final voluntary recognition of the American flag which had taken the place of her own beloved emblem. Where in history can one find an equal abnegation?

The spirit of hospitality is too strongly implanted in the Hawaiian breast to be destroyed by the cruel behavior of others toward them. Her Majesty exemplified this spirit to the last, in spite of the fact that hospitality had been the undoing of the Hawaiian people.”

Queen Lili‘uokalani died peacefully at the age of 79 at her beloved home of Washington Place on November 11, 1917. There is a statue of the queen, sculpted by Marianne Pineda, at the State Capitol in Honolulu.

Approved Collect for Lili‘uokalani’s Birthday:

<p>E ke Akua Mana loa, e ho‘onani i kou Inoa no ka Mō‘īwahine ‘o Lili‘uokalani, nāna e noho ma waena o ka ‘ino i ‘onipa‘a mau ai i kona ho‘ohiki ‘ana i ka maluhia, i ke kalahala a me ka lawehana nou. E ‘āpono, e pule mākou, i ko mākou ho‘omaika‘i ‘ana no kona ho‘omau ‘ana, i kāna makana o nā mele, a me kona aloha no kona lāhui. E nonoi mākou i kēia mau mea ma ka inoa o kāu Keiki, ‘o Iesū Kristo; e noho a noho ali‘i me ‘oe a me ka ‘Uhane Hemolele, ho‘okahi Akua, a mau loa aku. <i>‘Āmene.</i></p>	<p>Almighty God, we praise your Name for Queen Lili‘uokalani, who in the midst of great adversity remained steadfast in her commitment to peace, forgiveness and of service to you. Accept, we pray, our gratitude for her perseverance, her gift of song, and her love for her people. All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. Amen.</p>
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