

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month History

The Last Queen of Hawaii: Liliuokalani



The Hawaiian Islands are one of the most revered and visited regions in the Pacific. It is home to the world's largest telescope, beautiful sand beaches in a rainbow of colors, and the most active volcano on our planet, busily creating new islands. What may remain unseen by visitors, however, is the rich history running beneath the surface.

Before American colonists arrived on the shores of the archipelago in 1820, the Hawaiian Islands were a Polynesian kingdom. The colonists began systematically undermining the monarchy's authority and by 1887 had forced the then-king to sign a new constitution. When the king passed and Queen Liliuokalani took the throne in 1891, efforts by wealthy land-owners to gain control of the islands continued to grow.

The story of the last Hawaiian ruler is also that of its first female monarch. Queen Liliuokalani was a fierce advocate, an [author](#), and prolific songwriter, producing the now world renowned song "[Aloha 'Oe.](#)"

Despite Liliuokalani's dedication to the Hawaiian people, a coup in 1893 forced the Queen out of government. She was later charged with treason and placed under house arrest. To spare the lives of her supporters and in an attempt to maintain Hawaiian independence, Liliuokalani officially abdicated her throne in 1895, although continued to appeal to President Grover Cleveland until the nation was eventually annexed by the U.S. in 1898.

Liliuokalani remained an advocate for her people up until she died at age 79. Forty years after her death in 1959, Hawai'i became the 50th state of the union.

Learn more about Hawaii's last queen [HERE](#)

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