

**TWO WEEKS OF
HAWAIIAN HISTORY: A
BRIEF SKETCH OF THE
REVOLUTION OF 1893**

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Two Weeks of Hawaiian History: A Brief Sketch of the Revolution of 1893 by Various

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VARIOUS

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LILIUOKALANI, EX-QUEEN OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

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OF

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A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE REVOLUTION
OF 1893.

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A BRIEF SKETCH
OF
THE HAWAIIAN REVOLUTION OF 1893

PREFATORY.

The course of Hawaii's political development has in general been peaceful. Under the reign of Kamehameha the 3rd, the fundamental changes in social organization, in the private rights of individuals, in the tenure of land, and in the constitution of government were effected without disturbance or bloodshed. The reign of the 3rd Kamehameha witnessed the beginning and the completion of the great series of changes which transformed Hawaii from a feudal and savage despotism into a free and civilized state. Without the cordial co-operation of an enlightened monarch, these reforms could not have been, as they were, speedily and peacefully effected.

With the failure of the Kamehameha line, a change came over the spirit of the monarchy, and the new dynasty refused to walk in the footsteps of the old. The sound sense which had tempered the despotic spirit of Kamehameha V. was wanting to Kalakaua, and his reign brought with it a long series of extravagances and abuses which finally exhausted the patience of the people. The uprising of 1887 resulted in the promulgation of a new and more liberal Constitution, but the patience and moderation of the people gave to royalty one last chance, and left the Monarchy standing.

Five years of bitter experience under the new regime have proved that the revolution of 1887 had one fatal fault. It did not go far enough. The Constitution which it secured was indeed liberal, its guarantees of political and private right appeared sufficient, it seemed to introduce a system of government, for and by the people, responsible to the people. Had the throne been filled by a ruler like Kamehameha the 3rd, the expectations founded upon the new instrument would not have been disappointed and Hawaii might perhaps have continued for a generation to enjoy the substantial blessings of prosperity and freedom under a monarchical form of government. The Constitution was however so drawn that a willful and stiff-necked sovereign might easily obstruct its workings. Immemorial usage had neither defined its intent nor fixed its meaning beyond the reach of quibbling subterfuge and cavil. White men were found to misinterpret its provisions, and pervert its plain meanings in the interest of absolutism. The closing years of Kalakaua were occupied with a stubborn resistance by the King to his Cabinet, and while the opening days of Liliuokalani gave birth to fairer hopes, it was soon obvious that the new Queen had all the despotic instincts of her brother, with far more than his tenacity of will. She was determined to govern by herself without consulting the will of the people, and had no idea of accepting the role of the constitutional head of a free state.

Such is a brief sketch of the events which serve as a prologue to the revolutionary drama which was soon to be enacted. This cannot be fully understood however without an account of the events, or rather, of the secret intrigues, which led to the downfall of the Wilcox Cabinet.

EVENTS IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING THE REVOLUTION.

The Wilcox Cabinet was appointed November 8, but it was not until about Christmas time that rumors commenced to cir-

culate in town, that the relations existing between the Queen and her Cabinet were not as smooth as they might be. She had attempted to dictate to them, an interference which they resented, and the first rumors were that she wanted to get rid of her Cabinet on the pretence that they were under the influence of the American and Annexation party, fearing that if they remained in power after the prorogation of the Legislature she would be sure to lose her throne. These fancies were found to have been instilled into her mind by the opium and spoils ring which had been making such a fight for existence during the term of the Legislative session. The leaders of this ring were clever enough to perceive that their influence with the Queen lay in using the Marshal as a cloak for their designs, and, making friends with him, they held the key to the situation. But they still lacked strength, and cast about for means to carry out their designs. Some self seekers joined their ranks, and the Queen now commenced to take an active part in affairs, and her minions, notably Capt. Nowlein of her guard, were in constant communication with the native members of the House.

The Queen's legal advisers were in constant consultation with her, and engaged in the preparation of a new constitution. At the same time the Lottery Bill was revived and used as a lever, and promises of money payments for the passage of the first, second and third reading, of appointments as agents in the several districts and of blocks of stock soon brought a change over the native members. The Queen was now engaged in making personal appeals to these members cases being reported of her fortifying her entreaties with tears. She sent for prominent white members whom she thought she could influence and asked outright for their support against her Ministers. Expostulations were in vain, and she showed her determination to brook no delay; still not much fear as to the stability of the Cabinet was felt, as without C. O. Berger's vote she could not secure the necessary twenty-five. It was clearly explained

to Mr. Berger what her actions meant, and he was told who would constitute a new Cabinet if she succeeded in getting the Wilcox one out, and he promised not to lend his assistance to such schemes. He was advised to consult his father-in-law (Mr. Widemann), and it is a notable fact that after doing so Mr. Berger went to the Palace, and to the consternation of the Ministerial supporters, appeared in the House, after swearing he would never go near it again during the session. The twenty-five votes necessary to pass a resolution of Want of Confidence were thus obtained, and on Thursday, January 12, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Wilcox Ministry was voted out of office.

The downfall of the Cabinet was received with universal disgust throughout the community, but when the following day the places of the ministers were supplied by the Parker—Peterson—Colburn—Cornwell Cabinet, the disgust was seasoned with indignation of the strongest kind. The universal feeling found, however, only peaceable expression, and none thought of anything but law-abiding acquiescence in the change, fraught with injury to the public interest though it was known to be.

THE FIRST DAY.

Saturday the 14th of January, 1893, dawned clear and beautiful, and no one dreamed that it was to be one of the eventful days of Hawaiian history. The prorogation of the Legislature was to take place at noon, and the members opposed to the new Cabinet, though they absented themselves from the ceremony, had no idea of attempting anything against the Ministry. It did not seem possible that the Queen, after having gained everything for which she had been striving, would imperil her gain, by violating the constitution. And yet she did.

THE RUMORS.

Saturday afternoon between 1 and 2 o'clock, the community was startled by the information that a coup d'etat was in

progress, and that the Queen was endeavoring to force her Cabinet to sign a new Constitution which she then proposed to promulgate immediately to the people. The information was at first disbelieved by some, but it was speedily confirmed.

The political changes of the past few days, the renewed vote of Want of Confidence, the secret attempt made by the Queen to secure the overthrow of her Ministers, her secret interviews with Noble Dreier and others, the signing of the Opium and Lottery bills, coupled with the rabid talk of certain native members in the House, had produced a feeling of great unrest in the community. The remarks of Kamauoha in the House were felt by some to give a hint as to what was to be looked for in the future, and many shared these forebodings. On Saturday morning rumor was busy, and it was freely stated that a new Constitution was to be promulgated in the afternoon. At a meeting of business men, held in the room of the Chamber of Commerce, reference was made to this possibility, but still it was not generally believed until in the afternoon the unexpected happened, and doubt was transformed into certainty.

THE HISTORY.

Three days before the coup d'etat was attempted, a gentleman who enjoys the confidence of the Queen, told one of the members of the newly appointed Cabinet (who was then in private station) that the blow was to be struck, and that the persons of the Ministers would be secured. In the anticipation that the new Cabinet would not make any resistance to the revolutionary blow, the precaution of arresting them was not taken. Saturday morning one of the Ministers received positive information that a blow was to be struck that afternoon. He immediately proceeded to consult two prominent citizens on the course to be taken. After a conference, the gentlemen referred to advised the Cabinet to refuse to sign a new Constitution and to decline to resign, if their resignations should be demanded. The