Introduction: The Death of Liliʻuokalani

On November 11, 1917, Liliʻuokalani, the last monarch of Hawaiʻi, died at her residence, Washington Place, in Honolulu at the age of 79. The queen’s death and burial were covered extensively by the press in Hawaiʻi, reflecting the enormous impact she had on the people of the territory. On the front page of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on the day following her death was a declaration from the territorial governor, Lucius Pinkham. In his statement Governor Pinkham attested to Liliʻuokalani’s strong character, “I have found her tender and kind to her own race, thoughtful and helpful to others and a valued and appreciative friend.”1 Pinkham also ordered the flags of the United States and Hawaiʻi to be lowered to half-staff in honor of the queen.

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Government agencies demonstrated their respect for the queen in various ways, reflecting her great stature. Territorial courts were adjourned, ‘Iolani Palace was draped in black, and the House of Representatives chamber, formerly the palace’s throne room, hosted her funeral. The City and County of Honolulu closed its offices to mourn. Schools, both public and private, honored the queen by preparing special programs and flying their flags at half-staff. Public schools were given a half-day holiday in order for students to pay their respects to the queen, whose body rested in state at Kawaiaha’o Church for several days prior to her funeral. Indeed, students from over half a dozen public schools marched in procession from Thomas Square to the church on November 16. From just one of those schools, St. Louis College in Honolulu, today St. Louis School, 900 students paid their respects to the former monarch. The Advertiser reported that in the course of just one day approximately 15,000 people passed through the church.\(^2\)

The American military paid tribute to Lili‘uokalani as well. Soldiers from Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter took part in the queen’s funeral as did other officials from the army, navy, and national guard companies from all of the major Hawaiian islands. The soldiers’ duties included not only marching in the funeral procession, but providing a twenty-one gun salute for the queen.\(^3\)

Numerous local organizations also paid tribute to the former sovereign through official resolutions. These included the Honolulu Chamber of Commerce, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, and the Honolulu Board of Supervisors. Indeed, members of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, the Japanese Association of Hawai‘i, and the United Chinese Society marched in the funeral procession.\(^4\)

The queen’s honorary pall bearers included the governor of Hawai‘i, chief justice of the territory, the president of the Hawai‘i senate, the speaker of the territorial house of representatives, officials of the American army and navy, a United States senator, and a member of the United States House of Representatives. Also in the funeral procession were other members of Congress, including senators and representatives from Montana, Utah, Kansas, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, West Virginia, Minnesota, and Maine. Local representatives included members of the territorial legislature, the Hawai‘i Supreme Court, the mayor of Honolulu, and members of the Honolulu and Hawai‘i county boards of supervisors.\(^5\)
There was even an international component to the events surrounding the queen’s death. For example, on November 15, while the body of the queen rested in state at Kawaiahā’o Church, Viscount Kikujiro Ishii, a special representative of the emperor of Japan who was traveling through Hawai‘i, visited the church and paid his official respects. Moreover, a contingent of several hundred Japanese sailors from the imperial navy participated in the queen’s funeral procession. In particular, a Japanese naval officer carried Lili‘uokalani’s Order of the Precious Crown of Japan, an award that was presented to the queen during her reign by the Japanese emperor. Also participating in the funeral were consuls representing Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Panama, Mexico, China, Portugal, Spain, Great Britain, Russia, Brazil, Peru, Chile, Norway, the Netherlands, and France.⁶

Lili‘uokalani’s funeral procession from ‘Iolani Palace to the Royal Mausoleum in Nu‘uanu marked the culmination of the period of mourning following her death. Approximately 40,000 citizens gathered along the route of the procession, representing an estimated sixteen percent of the entire population of the territory and almost half of the population of Honolulu. Many came to O‘ahu from the other Hawaiian islands to be present at the funeral as well. Thousands of people participated in the procession itself, including numerous government officials, more than 1,500 members of Native Hawaiian organizations, many military personnel, and numerous school children.⁷

The death of Lili‘uokalani did not go unreported in the American press. Indeed, it was covered by papers across the United States from large urban periodicals like the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Boston Daily Globe, the Washington Post, and the Chicago Daily Tribune to smaller papers in locales such as Mt. Sterling, Kentucky; Ardmore, Oklahoma; Franklinton, Louisiana; and Logan, Utah.

This article seeks to examine two elements of the press coverage of the death of Lili‘uokalani. The first is the reporting by the Pacific Commercial Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, the two most significant papers in Hawai‘i controlled by the white establishment during the early territorial period. The second is coverage by American newspapers, large and small, outside of Hawai‘i. Specifically, this article will demonstrate how the press remembered Hawai‘i’s last queen as both an individual and a public figure.
Figure 1. Lili‘uokalani in old age, No Date. Courtesy Hawai‘i State Archives.

Figure 2. Throne Room of ‘Iolani Palace with Lili‘uokalani lying in state, 1917, Library of Congress.
In 1917, almost sixty different newspapers were published in Hawai‘i. Papers were published in a wide variety of languages, including several that were bilingual. The largest number were printed in English, slightly over one third. This was followed by Japanese periodicals, which represented approximately one quarter of the press. Hawaiian language papers accounted for almost 20 percent of the total. A smaller number of papers were printed in Chinese, Korean, and Portuguese.

The political and social views of the press in 1917 were also varied. Several papers represented the interests of different religious groups.
Some of the Asian-language press was especially concerned with developments in their native countries. Hawaiian language papers advocated for the concerns of the Native Hawaiian people, expressing both pro- and anti-establishment opinions.\textsuperscript{10}

Based on the catalogue of individual newspapers assembled by Helen Chapin in \textit{Guide to Newspapers of Hawai‘i: 1834-2000}, slightly more than one quarter of the press in Hawai‘i in 1917 represented the views of the white establishment. While this does not necessarily indicate that the entire remainder of the press was explicitly anti-establishment, clearly the majority of periodicals in Hawai‘i in 1917 were not focused on propagating the opinions of the white oligarchy.\textsuperscript{11} Indeed, whites were a very small portion of the population in Hawai‘i at the time of the queen’s death. As late as 1920, non-Hispanic white residents in the territory accounted for less than eight percent of the total population.\textsuperscript{12}

Nevertheless, although small in number, the white oligarchy was politically and economically dominant in 1917, and its views formed an important segment of the press in Hawai‘i. These interests are reflected in both the \textit{Pacific Commercial Advertiser} and \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin}. The \textit{Pacific Commercial Advertiser} was founded in 1856 and was renamed the \textit{Honolulu Advertiser} in 1921, a name it retained until 2010, when the paper merged with the \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin}. For most of its existence the \textit{Pacific Commercial Advertiser} was run by descendents of the American missionaries who arrived in Hawai‘i in 1820.\textsuperscript{13}

The \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} was formed in 1912 when the \textit{Evening Bulletin} and the \textit{Hawaiian Star} merged. The Star was founded in 1893, two months after the overthrow of the monarchy, as the official mouthpiece of the Provisional Government that had deposed the queen. The \textit{Evening Bulletin} also reflected the interests of the oligarchy following its establishment in 1895 during the Republic of Hawai‘i. The paper had been previously titled the \textit{Daily Bulletin}, a journal established in 1882 that had favored the overthrow of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{Respected by All of the People of Hawai‘i and Beyond}

The \textit{Advertiser} eulogized Lili‘uokalani as a figure who died “respected by all within her former Kingdom, Hawaiian and haole alike.” The headlines on the front page of the special edition of the \textit{Advertiser} on
November 12, 1917 highlighted this sentiment. They read, “HAWAII MOURNS FOR QUEEN,” “REIGN AS RULING QUEEN SHORT BUT IN HEARTS OF HER PEOPLE WAS LONG,” and “As Private Citizen, Clashes long since forgotten, She held esteem of All.” On the fourth page of the special edition the headline proclaimed, “All Races Share in Sorrow of Islanders in Loss.”

Similarly, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin announced that Lili’uokalani had “received her full measure of respect and was treated by residents and strangers alike not merely with sympathy but with deference and ceremonial courtesy.”

The day before the queen’s funeral the Advertiser noted that numerous wreaths were laid on her casket as she lay in state at Kawaiaha’o Church. Many of the wreaths were placed by young people in a “beautiful tribute paid by the school children of Hawaii, for all nationalities which compose the population of the schools were there.”

On the day of the funeral itself, the Advertiser included a poem to the queen in its coverage of the event. The last stanza read:

Prophet, friend and teacher to thy loving people,
Speaking from thine inmost heart for righteousness alone,
Steadfastly thou gavest precept and example,
Ruling by devotion in a land without a throne.

Two days following her death, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin also published a poem about Lili’uokalani. Like the poem that appeared in the Advertiser, many of the verses celebrated the queen’s popularity.

Thy life has passed, and yet, oh thou gentle queen
Art living now within thy people’s hearts keen
For thou has lived, and proved their friend most true.
A comrade kind, a mother queen were you.

The claims that Lili’uokalani was much loved by the people of Hawai‘i, regardless of race, were confirmed by the enormous crowds who lined her funeral route from ‘Iolani Palace to the Royal Mausoleum. On the day following the queen’s funeral the Advertiser reported that “thousands upon tens of thousands participated in the last rites of the last queen of Hawaii, Liliuokalani.” Anticipating large crowds,
bleachers were assembled for spectators in front of the Palace, and many mourners arrived several hours early to secure a good location to view the funeral procession. People of many ethnicities were present. In fact, “it seemed as though every person in Honolulu, from the youngest to the oldest, was on the streets. Such a heterogeneous mass . . . has, perhaps, never before been seen in the city streets, or in any other community.” Sidewalks were full to capacity, and spectators took to windows and roof tops. Racial boundaries were lowered and “convention was thrown to the winds and all nationalities—Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiians, Portuguese, Filipinos, Americans, Europeans, and the dozens of other races represented in Honolulu, mingled together and elbowed one another as freely as if they were one big family.”

The multi-ethnic character of those who mourned was confirmed by the coverage of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* which reported that “Japanese women in kimonos, Chinese women in trousers, Filipino women in big, bouffant sleeves, and Korean women in the white, slim costume of their lost land” all went to pay their respects to Liliʻuokalani as she lay in state at Kawaiahaʻo Church.

According to the *Advertiser*, not only was Liliʻuokalani cherished by the people of Hawaiʻi, she was esteemed by Americans everywhere. Indeed, the paper reported that the queen “for the American people as a whole throughout the United States was generally acknowledged to be a remarkable woman.”

On the day after her funeral the *Advertiser* proclaimed, “Nor was she honored in her death by the people of Hawaii, her former subjects, only. A world joined hands to pay her final honor, not only as a former Queen, but as a Woman who, deprived of crown and scepter, reigned still for more than a score of years in the hearts of her people.” The paper went on to describe how, in particular, the United States government paid its respects to Liliʻuokalani by providing a military escort at her funeral and having Congressional representatives present for the official events following her death. It was also mentioned that the American president, Woodrow Wilson, had sent a wreath that was placed on the queen’s casket.

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* argued in its coverage of the queen’s death that even her former enemies had come to respect her. The paper reported that in the years after her overthrow, “there has disap-
peared entirely the oppositions which sprang up so thickly during her active career.” The daily went on to point out that the passage of time from the coup that deposed the queen in 1893 to her death in 1917 allowed her “innate kindness, her broad sympathy, her attainments and her force of character” to come to the fore.24 Indeed, two days before her death the Honolulu Star-Bulletin asserted that the “declining years of life had revealed a gentleness and sweetness of character which endeared her to many that in earlier times had been her political opponents.”25

**Regal Bearing and Strength of Character**

On the day the queen died, the Advertiser reported that despite the fact that Liliʻuokalani was unconscious and near death, her doctor asserted that “the strong will, which had been a foremost characteristic of her life, combined with her royal manner to command[,] even with the shadow of death fast hovering over, expressed itself automatically.”26 On the previous day the paper maintained that the queen was “making a brave fight against death, as for long years she had made a brave fight for the things she believed right.”27

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin reiterated this belief stating that Liliʻuokalani’s royal motto ‘Onipa’a, or Be Steadfast, exemplified her struggle for life in her final days. The following day the Honolulu Star-Bulletin published that Liliʻuokalani’s “quiet dignity and courtesy were unfail- ing, commanding respect quite as sincere as if she had been upon a throne.” The paper concluded, “We can see today how her figure has emerged from the storm of animosities and become surrounded with deference and affection.”28

**Heir to the Throne and Reign as Queen**

The Advertiser characterized Liliʻuokalani’s brother and predecessor on the Hawaiian throne, King Kalākaua, as a despot who sought to rule as an absolute monarch, rather than a sovereign willing to follow what the paper argued were the norms of constitutional government. The special edition following the queen’s death pointed to Kalākaua’s frequent changes of cabinet and alleged manipulation of elections as signs that during his reign “constitutional government was rapidly
becoming a mere name and autocracy held full sway.” The king’s detractors were labeled as progressives whose goal was constitutional government in Hawai‘i. Their victory against Kalākaua was the constitution of 1887, known by its opponents as the Bayonet Constitution, which significantly reduced the monarchy’s power.29

In her role as heir to the throne, Lili‘uokalani was painted in the same light as her brother by the Advertiser. The paper accused her of attempting to subvert the 1887 constitution even before she became queen. This effort, it was argued, would continue following her accession, and “in the final struggle for the life or death of constitutionalism in Hawaii was written Liliuokalani’s downfall as a monarch.”30

The portrayals by both papers of the events of 1887 as the victory of constitutional government over absolutism were not only misleading, but inaccurate. However, these deceptive interpretations benefited the political interests of the white elite, which dominated Hawai‘i’s political landscape from the Bayonet Constitution well into the twentieth century. For example, although the 1887 constitution drastically limited the power of the monarchy, it replaced the king’s rule with the dominance of a small minority. Through voting restrictions and other constitutional provisions, the political influence of the Native Hawaiian population was dramatically reduced, and power was concentrated in the hands of the white establishment. Through the threat of the use of force by the supporters of the business oligarchy, the king was forced to accept a hostile cabinet and sign the Bayonet Constitution against his will, hardly a victory for constitutionalism.

While the Advertiser was quick to attack Lili‘uokalani as a political figure, it refrained from dehumanizing her as an individual even during her turbulent reign. For example, the paper noted her sadness following the death of her husband, Prince Consort John Dominis, in August 1891 shortly after her accession to the throne, and quoted from the queen’s memoirs concerning the tragic event. The daily also brought up Lili‘uokalani’s visit as queen to the leprosy settlement on Moloka‘i and her subsequent tour of the kingdom. Indeed, it was perhaps with a bit of nostalgia that the Advertiser remembered that “on the anniversary of her accession, January 29, 1892, the first and only anniversary she was to celebrate as queen, her majesty held a grand reception in Iolani Palace.”31 In addition, the paper observed
that as queen, Lili‘uokalani had taken an interest in the education of children. On the day before the queen’s funeral the *Advertiser* even referred to the day that the monarchy was overthrown as “memorable and tragic.”

The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* was more sympathetic in its treatment of the queen’s life as a princess and later a sovereign than the *Advertiser*. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* noted that prior to her accession to the throne Lili‘uokalani was “possessed of a grace of disposition which in combination with a manner exceedingly unassuming made her intensely popular.” The daily also pointed out that she was helpful to the press and provided information for journalists to publish.

In order to provide the queen’s understanding of the events of her reign, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* quoted a number of times from Lili‘uokalani’s autobiography, *Hawai‘i’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*, in its front-page biographical coverage on the afternoon following her death. While not endorsing Lili‘uokalani’s analysis, the paper did not discredit her reflections either.

**Overthrow of the Monarchy**

The *Advertiser* attributed Lili‘uokalani’s downfall to her attempt to promulgate a new constitution in January 1893. The daily erroneously labeled this proposed document as a series of “direct blows to the heart of constitutional government and the rights of non-Hawaiian residents of the Islands.” This claim was certainly misleading as the “constitutional government” imposed in 1887 had been brought about by the thoroughly unconstitutional means of a coup led by a small minority.

In particular, the issue of non-citizen voting was identified by the *Advertiser*. The 1887 constitution had allowed certain white residents of the kingdom who were not citizens to vote. The queen’s proposed constitution removed this privilege, which had benefited the small white elite at the expense of the Native Hawaiian population. The *Advertiser* used dramatic and inaccurate language to call Lili‘uokalani’s proposal “an open attempt to eliminate from any voice in public affairs the so called foreigners or haoles.” According to the paper, the Hawaiian monarchy had to be overthrown in order to end the “never ceasing attempts of the royal family to acquire power at
the expense of popular rights.” The Advertiser even asserted that had the queen not attempted to replace the constitution she “might have remained Queen to the day of her death.”36 Despite these accusations, the queen’s proposed constitution did not call for the elimination of a voice for “so called foreigners or haoles,” but rather the end of the special voting privileges and undue influence of non-citizens on the kingdom’s electoral process.

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin took the same position as the Advertiser with respect to what it believed to be Lili‘uokalani’s despotic tendencies. On the day after the queen died, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin wrote that the monarch’s “moves towards absolutism in government threatened the constitutional rights of the people.” However, the paper softened the blow of its criticism by contending that “long after her much discussed and much opposed policies will have been forgiven as mistakes, her admirable traits will be remembered.”37

In addition, although the Honolulu Star-Bulletin agreed with the Advertiser that Lili‘uokalani’s decision to implement a new constitution led to her downfall, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin suggested that the queen was pressured into supporting a new constitution by reckless advisors against the wishes of her more moderate associates. This was a position that the paper argued was not well acknowledged.

It is not generally known, yet vouched for on the best authority, that for a time Lili‘uokalani was disposed against the thing which was perhaps the largest factor in her undoing—her reported decision to promulgate a new constitution . . . . [Her] moderate counsel . . . might have dissipated the gathering clouds of opposition. But, after a period of some weeks the queen seems to have been won over by the radicals.

The daily concluded that her advisors were just as much responsible for the end of the monarchy as the queen herself.38

This theme is taken up in another Honolulu Star-Bulletin article on November 12 describing the events leading to Lili‘uokalani’s overthrow. The author depicts the proposed constitution of 1893 as absolutist in its tendencies but dissociates the document with the queen until the final moments before the monarchy’s overthrow. Indeed, the article claims that Lili‘uokalani was initially persuaded by a group the author labeled “moderate counselors” not to attempt to implement a new constitution. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin called this inter-
pretation of events “hitherto unwritten history.” However, the paper continued, the queen was later persuaded by “the importunity of her radical friends” to support the proposed new constitution.39

In the same article, the author described two other controversies that helped to prompt the monarchy’s overthrow, the queen’s signing into law bills that created a national lottery and allowed for the sale of opium. The Honolulu Star-Bulletin argued that criticism by her opponents of these steps taken by Lili‘uokalani were not entirely fair. For example, the author revealed that many of those who participated in the queen’s overthrow had, in fact, supported the lottery bill.40

Compared to the Advertiser, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin mitigated its criticism of Lili‘uokalani’s actions in the last days of the monarchy. Nevertheless, both papers had the same fundamental interpretations of the queen’s reign. Although inaccurate, misleading, and exaggerated, these arguments provided a cloak of legitimacy for the oligarchy’s seizure of power.

Royalist Revolt and the Republic of Hawai‘i

Although the royalist attempt to overthrow the Republic of Hawai‘i in January 1895 and the queen’s subsequent arrest, trial, and imprisonment by the Republic for allegedly having knowledge of the plot was described by the Advertiser following her death, the paper did little to condemn Lili‘uokalani over these events. It was reported that the queen was arrested after the uprising with “certain evidence having been found in her home.” The Advertiser noted, however, that the “arrest was made quietly and she submitted gracefully.”41

Following her arrest, Lili‘uokalani formally abdicated the throne, asking the Republic of Hawai‘i to grant clemency to the leaders of the royalist revolt. In her abdication, the queen promised to refrain from participating in public affairs, which the Advertiser stated was a pledge “she religiously lived up to.” The paper praised her for not becoming associated with any subsequent political movement or making divisive statements.42

Although Lili‘uokalani did not work to dislodge forcibly the government of the Republic or the subsequent Territory of Hawai‘i following her abdication, the queen did travel to the United States on various occasions to demand compensation for former crown lands,
which had been seized by the Republic and were then transferred to the United States in 1898. While the queen never recovered these lands, her travels to the United States were covered extensively in the American press with the *Advertiser* claiming she was “known almost as much in Washington as Honolulu” and was held in high regard.\(^43\)

**End of the Era of Royalty**

According to the *Advertiser*, although Liliʻuokalani was overthrown almost 25 years before she died, the Hawaiian monarchy lived on in her person even after 1893. However, with her death, the era of royalty in Hawaiʻi, already shorn of its political power, came to an end. The queen’s death, therefore, was “the end of all dynasties in fair Hawaii, the closing chapter of the strange, almost unexampled system of rule of wonderful kings of the past.”\(^44\) The day before Liliʻuokalani’s funeral the *Advertiser* reported, “the stage is all set and ready for the raising of the curtain for the final act of the history of the Hawaiian monarchy and the finale will be the lowering of the curtain as the body of late Queen Liliuokalani is lowered into the crypt of the Royal Mausoleum.”\(^45\) Indeed, on the day after the queen’s funeral, the *Advertiser* published a timeline of major events in Hawaiian history. It labeled 1917, “End of monarchy by funeral of Liliʻuokalani, November 18, 1917.”\(^46\)

The views of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* echoed those of the *Advertiser* in understanding the death of the queen as the final end of the Hawaiian monarchy. On the day following Liliʻuokalani’s death, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* announced that her passing “snaps the last strong link between the monarchy and the territory of Hawaii.”\(^47\)

**Nostalgia for the Monarchy**

Despite the *Advertiser*’s characterization of the queen as a tyrant during her rule, at her death, the paper expressed a curious nostalgia for the monarchy. On the day of her death, the paper described the Hawaiian kingdom as ruled by a “line of stalwart kings and queens, sovereigns supreme over a progressive empire which had its origin in the dim and misty age of myth.”\(^48\) The following day, the court life of the last two monarchs of the kingdom was characterized as “scintil-
lating splendor.” Similarly, the *Advertiser* wrote, “With the passing of the queen is severed the last link which bound Hawaii of today with that Hawaii of romance, when a royal court held forth beneath swaying palms.”

Details of the queen’s funeral preparations and the funeral itself gave the *Advertiser* various opportunities to display a nostalgia for Hawai‘i’s monarchical past. For instance, in describing the manner in which Lili‘uokalani would be presented for her lying in state, the paper wrote, “Upon her breast will lie the glittering order of the Grand Cross and Cordon of the Order of Kalakaua, with its broad blue ribbon. Nearby will be the pillow upon which will rest the decorations and other insignia of her rank.” The daily even referred to the queen as “Her Majesty,” an appellation Lili‘uokalani had not possessed officially since she was deposed in 1893.

On the last night that Lili‘uokalani’s body rested in state at Kawaiaha‘o Church a steady rain fell in downtown Honolulu. The *Advertiser* reported that the rain signified in Native Hawaiian culture “the final journey of royal dead to the grave.” It was an occasion to remember Hawai‘i’s monarchical past, as “the rain descended while the meles relating to former golden days of Hawaii nei were being sung beside the late ruler’s body, lying upon its bier within the church, kahilis ceaselessly waving above the feather draped casket.”

On November 17, the queen’s remains were moved from Kawaiaha‘o Church to the former throne room of Iolani Palace where the monarch’s funeral was scheduled to take place. In describing the events, the *Advertiser* reminisced that the casket would be “placed in state upon a bier in the Throne Room where, during her two years’ reign, she sat upon her throne of state, wore her crown, and was ruler of all Hawaii.”

The funeral of the queen was held on November 18. The *Advertiser* reported that Princess Abigail Kawananakoa, the widow of Prince David Kawananakoa, a prince of the Kalākaua dynasty, was unable to attend the ceremony because she had been in Washington at the time of Lili‘uokalani’s death. Nevertheless, Princess Kawananakoa had asked that her three children be represented in the funeral procession. The *Advertiser* referred to the children as “the Prince Kalakaua and the Princesses Kapiolani and Liliuokalani.” The use of formal royal titles had a nostalgic ring as all of the children were born after
the end of the monarchy and were not normally referred to with titles in the press.\textsuperscript{55} Also in the funeral procession were government officials and courtiers of the monarchy period. The \textit{Advertiser} referred to these individuals as people “who made the courts of Kalakaua and Lili'uokalani brilliant.”\textsuperscript{56}

Like the \textit{Advertiser}, the \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} also expressed a certain nostalgia for the monarchy in its coverage of the queen’s death and funeral. For example, in covering Lili'uokalani’s funeral in the former throne room of ‘Iolani Palace, the \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} explained that the appearance of the room was changed for the service. In the territorial period, the room had been refitted to serve as the chamber of the House of Representatives. However, in order to honor the queen, the legislative fixtures were “replaced by emblems of glory in [the] monarchical regime.” These included \textit{kāhili}, feather standards that were ancient symbols of Hawaiian royalty, along with Western elements such as the queen’s royal orders. These displays were a reminder that “Lili'uokalani would be loved and honored so long as a single Hawaiian was left to recall the glories of her vanished kingdom.”\textsuperscript{57}

A nostalgic tone was also found in the \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin’s} reporting of the queen’s funeral procession from ‘Iolani Palace to the Royal Mausoleum in Nu‘uanu. For instance, in reference to one of the many Hawaiian organizations that participated in the march, the paper remarked that “a brilliant bit of old Hawaii, as it was in the days of the Alii, was portrayed by the Sons and Daughters of Warriors, whose contribution to the great funeral procession was spectacular and impressive.”\textsuperscript{58}

The day following the queen’s death, the \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} even published a brief article explaining who would have succeeded to the Hawaiian throne following the death of Lili'uokalani were the monarchy still in existence.\textsuperscript{59} The same day the \textit{Advertiser} published a similar article.\textsuperscript{60}

On November 16, five days after the queen died and the eighty-first anniversary of the birth of her brother and predecessor, Kalākaua, the \textit{Advertiser}, despite its criticism of the king as an purported absolutist, looked back fondly on his reign declaring that the king “gave his energies and help toward the passage of the reciprocity treaty, which, more than any other factor of legislation, brought an era of prosperity to the Islands which has never waned.” The article
went on to note that Kalākaua was also the first monarch to make an appearance in Congress during his 1874 trip to Washington to promote the treaty.⁶¹

**Writer and Composer**

The *Advertiser* remembered the queen as a gifted composer and writer who was well versed in both Hawaiian and English. With respect to music, the paper asserted that Liliʻuokalani was “the composer of some of the best of Hawaiian musical works” and pointed out that she had written the Hawaiian national anthem during the reign of Kamehameha V.⁶² As a writer, the *Advertiser* drew attention to the queen’s books, *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen and Hawaii’s Music.*

Four days after Liliʻuokalani died the *Advertiser* reported that her composition *Aloha ʻOe* was being sung at the changing of the watches over her body as it lay in state at Kawaiahaʻo Church. The paper praised the song as “the composition that is known throughout the civilized world and accredited to the musical genius of the Queen.” *Aloha ʻOe* was also “said to be the sweetest [song] in any land.”⁶³ From Kawaiahaʻo Church Liliʻuokalani’s remains were brought to ʻIolani Palace for the queen’s state funeral. At the conclusion of the service *Aloha ʻOe* was again sung as the mourners prepared to march in procession to the Royal Mausoleum. The *Advertiser* called the melody “the song that has endeared itself to the millions of brother Americans of Hawaiians upon the mainland.”⁶⁴

Like the *Advertiser*, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* noted the queen’s musical talent and remarked that she had been asked to write the Hawaiian national anthem by Kamehameha V. However, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* mistakenly labeled this anthem *Hawaiʻi Ponoʻī*, which was the subsequent national song whose words were composed by Kalākaua in 1874. The paper also mentioned that Liliʻuokalani had composed hundreds of other songs including *Aloha ʻOe*, which the author labeled a “world classic.”⁶⁵

**The American Press**

The press in Hawaiʻi was aware of the interest in Liliʻuokalani throughout the United States. Two days before the queen died the *Honolulu
*Star-Bulletin* reported, “that even a world at war is interested in Queen Liliuokalani is indicated by the fact that the great news agencies of the United States have instructed their correspondents here to keep closely in touch with developments and telegraph such developments instantly to the mainland.” On the day after the queen died, the paper relayed that news of the death “was flashed by wireless and cable to the mainland, where great news agencies took it up and flung it far and wide. Thousands of newspapers today all over the world have told their readers of the passing of Liliuokalani, last queen of Hawaii.”

The *Advertiser* echoed the sentiments of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and reported on the day before the queen died that “a world at war [World War I] bombarded Honolulu with anxious inquiries concerning the condition of Liliuokalani, last queen of Hawaii.”

Reflecting the interest that Americans had in the queen were the films that were made of the funeral. The day following Lili‘uokalani’s burial the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* informed its readers that four camera men had filmed the events from outside of ‘Iolani Palace where the queen’s funeral was conducted. “These camera men will ship the films of the funeral cortege to the mainland, where they will be released throughout the United States.”

In many instances, but certainly not all, much of the coverage by the American press concerning the death of the queen came from the *Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. Consequently, many of the views and biases of the establishment in Hawai‘i were reflected in American papers across the country.

**Beloved by Her People**

The *Atlanta Constitution* noted that upon the queen’s death, the Native Hawaiian people immediately went into mourning. The *Boston Daily Globe* reported that Lili‘uokalani was “venerated by the native Hawaiians as though she still sat upon the throne.” The *Washington Post* quoted an American observer who recorded that the queen even some twenty years following the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy still held weekly audiences at her residence where “her faithful subjects paid her homage.” Similarly, the *Los Angeles Times* affirmed that Lili‘uokalani never “lost the affection of her former subjects.” In the same article the *Times* concluded that Lili‘uokalani “had ceased
to reign as a sovereign monarch, but she still reigned as queen in the hearts of her people, the native Hawaiians.”

The Christian Science Monitor concluded its article on the queen’s death by declaring that “she was greatly loved by her own people always.” But, in the same sentence added the unsubstantiated caveat, “even if the majority of them thought her best fitted for private life.” This perhaps encapsulates the American press’ view of the queen at her death. She was portrayed, as in the establishment press in Hawai‘i, as a respected woman of strong character, but an inept ruler.

The Chicago Daily Tribune included two headlines concerning the queen’s death, both asserting her popularity. One affirmed that Lili‘uokalani was a “Beloved Citizen,” and the other read, “QUEEN “LIL” IS DEAD; “ALOHA” FOR LAST RULER.” The Broad Ax of Chicago even reported that Lili‘uokalani was not only respected by the people of Hawai‘i but was “held in the highest esteem by the citizens of the United States.”

As Lili‘uokalani’s medical condition deteriorated, the Daily Ardmoreite of Ardmore, Oklahoma reported in August 1917 that the queen had received members of the territorial senate in what was predicted to be possibly Lili‘uokalani’s last public event. The correspondent for the paper commented that “it is interesting and somewhat touching to note the loyalty and love shown to the aged ex-queen; almost, one could imagine, as if she were still their reigning sovereign.”

Heir to the Throne and Reign as Queen

Lili‘uokalani’s time as heir to the throne under her brother Kalākaua and her own subsequent reign as queen were highlighted in the American press following her death. However, like the Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin, American papers, while universally acknowledging the enormous respect with which the queen was held at her death, were far less sympathetic to her as a political figure.

The Atlanta Constitution was cautious not to support the queen’s interpretation of the events of the last years of the monarchy. For example, in describing Lili‘uokalani’s assertion that the descendants of American missionaries to Hawai‘i were responsible for undermining her brother and predecessor Kalākaua, the Constitution used the word “alleged.” The term “alleged” is used again to describe the
queen’s claim that the missionary descendants were responsible for attempting to weaken her following her succession to the throne in 1891. The biases of Hawai‘i’s white elite are clearly reflected in the paper’s analysis. While certainly not all opponents of the monarchy and the queen were descendants of American missionaries, many of the key players in the creation of the 1887 constitution and the overthrow of the monarchy, such as Lorrin Thurston and Sanford Dole, were, in fact, descendants of the missionary elite.

In describing the last years of Kalākaua’s reign, the Boston Daily Globe and the Los Angeles Times characterized Lili‘uokalani’s predecessor as “extremely reactionary.” In addition, the Globe described the white business elite that forced the king to accept the constitution of 1887 that vastly reduced his power as a “league to restore and maintain constitutional government.” The characterization of the business oligarchy as “constitutionalists” opposed to the “absolutism” of the Hawaiian monarchy was also supported by the Los Angeles Times. Likewise, the Chicago Daily Tribune called the Bayonet Constitution “the liberal constitution of 1887.” A similar assessment was made by the Christian Science Monitor. The paper asserted that the Bayonet Constitution’s purpose was “to put an end to personal government and to provide a Cabinet responsible only to the Legislature.” In contrast, Lili‘uokalani was labeled “at heart a dynast and a sympathizer with the old regime and with an autocracy.” None of the papers made mention of the fact that the 1887 constitution was implemented by a small minority through the threat of the use of force and did not truly create popular democracy. Rather, the new charter centered political power in the hands of the kingdom’s tiny business elite to the exclusion of the vast majority of the population.

The Boston Daily Globe painted Lili‘uokalani in the same fashion as it described her brother. “Liliuokalani began her reign with renewed determination to abolish restrictions on the power of the crown.” The Los Angeles Times labeled the queen as “inclined towards absolutism” and contended that she abused the monarch’s power to make appointments following her assumption of the throne. Here again, the American press, influenced by the reporting of the Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin, accused the queen of the very abuses that were practiced by the proponents of the 1887 constitution, namely autocratic government.
The Overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy

At her death, the American press reflected on the events that would eventually result in Hawai‘i becoming an American territory. For example, the Christian Science Monitor attributed the queen’s overthrow to what it described as her despotic tendencies, arguing that she might have reigned until her death “if she had not got the autocratic idea into her consciousness, or, if she had only driven it out when it first got in.”

While the Monitor accused Lili‘uokalani of tyrannical tendencies, the paper understood the difficulty she found herself in when she ascended the throne. The journal acknowledge that the Caucasian business elite in the kingdom had largely assumed control of Hawai‘i by the end of Kalākaua’s reign. Lili‘uokalani was left essentially powerless. However, the queen’s response was to try to institute what the Monitor termed an absolute monarchy by decreeing a new constitution for the kingdom. According to the paper, the queen’s constitution would have given her “a degree of authority which the most powerful among absolutists of the earth might well have envied.” It was thus Lili‘uokalani’s attempt to implement a new constitution, the Monitor concluded, that led to her overthrow. Indeed, the effort to bring about constitutional reform in 1893 certainly did prompt the queen to be deposed. However, while Lili‘uokalani’s proposed constitution would have strengthened the monarchy, the exaggerated and inaccurate claim that the document would have given the queen “a degree of authority which the most powerful among absolutists of the earth might well have envied” reflects the biases of the writer.

The Boston Daily Globe also attributed the queen’s downfall to her proposed new constitution. The Globe characterized the planned constitution as an autocratic document designed to remove restraints on royal power, subvert the independence of the judiciary and only allow “native Hawaiian subjects” to vote. The periodical’s use of the term “native Hawaiian subjects” was misleading. Lili‘uokalani’s proposed constitution did not discriminate based on ethnic background. However, it limited voters to citizens of the kingdom. This was in contrast to the discriminatory 1887 constitution that allowed non-citizen foreigners of only American or European, but not Asian, descent living in Hawai‘i to vote if they met certain requirements. The queen’s pro-
posed constitution certainly did not restrict whites from voting as long as they were citizens of the kingdom.

The *Los Angeles Times* reitered the views that were seen in other American papers concerning the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. The queen was accused of attempting to institute a royal dictatorship, especially with the introduction of a new fundamental law to replace the Bayonet Constitution. The *Times* summarized its interpretation of the events leading to the coup against Liliʻuokalani: “The queen’s bold attempt to deprive the white residents of any voice in the affairs of government led to prompt retaliatory measures.”

This assertion of the *Times* was completely inaccurate as the queen’s constitutional reforms would not have taken away the rights of the kingdom’s white citizens. However, the proposed constitution would have broken the political dominance that the white establishment had carved out for itself through the system of electoral manipulation established in the 1887 constitution.

Similarly, the *New York Times* asserted that Liliʻuokalani precipitated her own overthrow by endeavoring to promulgate an authoritarian constitution, which the paper called “hopelessly reactionary in its nature.” The *Times* charged that the constitution would lead to the “disfranchisement” of foreigners in Hawaiʻi and put American-Hawaiian relations in jeopardy.

In an effort to discredit the monarchy, the *Christian Science Monitor* described the overthrow of the queen in exaggerated terms calling it a “popular uprising,” despite the fact that it was in reality a coup led by a very small segment of the population of the kingdom, representing the narrow interests of the white establishment. Similarly, the *Ogden Standard* of Ogden, Utah made exaggerated claims and asserted that Liliʻuokalani’s proposed constitution was a “bold attempt to deprive the white residents of any voice in the affairs of government.” As noted, in reality, while the document did increase the power of the monarchy, it did not include provisions to deprive the white population of its basic rights.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* took a slightly different approach to the overthrow of the monarchy than other American periodicals. While the paper described laws implemented by the queen during her reign as irresponsible and reactionary, it diverted blame from the queen to some extent by claiming Liliʻuokalani was “influenced by the advice
of irresponsible counselors.” This was similar to the tact used by the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Nevertheless, the Tribune agreed with its counterparts in the American press by connecting the overthrow of the monarchy to the queen’s attempt to institute a new constitution. However, the paper, like so many others, inaccurately characterized the constitution as a “radically pro-native one which would have disfranchised the white residents of the islands.”

A Woman of Strong Character

Despite being unwilling to side with the queen on the issue of the overthrow of the monarchy, the American press was unanimous in extolling Lili‘uokalani as a woman of virtue and strong character. For instance, the Atlanta Constitution concluded the day after the queen died, “Her remarkable intellect was displayed in her grasp of international relationships, and she was successful as the author of a book telling ‘Hawaii’s Story.’”

The following day the Constitution published an article entitled “Macon Citizens Who Knew Liliuokalani, Ex-queen of Hawaii.” The dateline of the story was Macon, Georgia, where James Blount had resided before his death in 1903. Blount was the investigator sent to Hawai‘i by President Cleveland of the United States to scrutinize the events surrounding the overthrow of Lili‘uokalani and was well-known in Georgia which he represented in Congress for twenty years. Also from the Macon area was Major R. W. Bliss, an American army officer who had been stationed in Honolulu and knew the queen. The Constitution reported that Bliss said of Lili‘uokalani, “Her subjects never deserted her and twice each year she gave a reception, one of these occasions always being her birthday.”

The same day the Christian Science Monitor referred to the queen as graceful and gracious and called her a woman of “excellent traits.”

Lili‘uokalani was also portrayed as possessing a royal dignity even after her reign came to an end. Two days after the queen’s death, the Washington Post published a brief article entitled, “Liliuokalani Queen to the Last.” The paper quoted John C. Stewart, an American citizen who had spent a number of months in Hawai‘i and had met with Lili‘uokalani in her later years. Stewart noted that the queen still
had a regal presence more than twenty years following the end of the monarchy. He also extolled Liliʻuokalani’s charity. Indeed, Stewart said of the Queen, “The most striking trait about Liliuokalani, whom I came to know well, was her generosity.” He pointed to the queen giving away most of her wealth and the financial support she provided to many Native Hawaiians. Stewart concluded that Liliʻuokalani was “one of nature’s noble women, and she had a native talent that will keep her alive in the literature of her country for many years.” The Los Angeles Times echoed these sentiments by asserting that “Queen Liliuokalani never abandoned her regal pose.”

**Accomplished Composer and Writer**

Liliʻuokalani’s legacy as a prolific composer was also pointed out by American papers. The Atlanta Constitution wrote, “She was a composer of hundreds of Hawaiian songs, some of which became popular in the United States.” This fact was also mentioned by the Boston Daily Globe, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times. The Washington Herald of the District of Columbia added that much of the Hawaiian music that was familiar to Americans was composed by the queen. The New York Times reported that Liliʻuokalani was not only a prolific composer but a writer who had penned “‘Hawaii’s Story,’ a book in which she told the island’s [sic] history with marked literary ability.”

As the queen’s health deteriorated, in April 1917, the Oklahoma City Times praised Liliʻuokalani’s musical abilities and even claimed that “she has given the world what musicians say is one of the finest and most beautiful love songs that was even written, ‘Aloha [Oe].’”

**Conclusion**

The death and funeral of Queen Liliʻuokalani in November 1917 marked an important milestone in the history of Hawai‘i. Thousands paid their respects to the former sovereign as she lay in state at Kawaiahaʻo Church, and some 40,000 people viewed her funeral procession from Iolani Palace to the Royal Mausoleum. The queen’s death provided an opportunity for the press, both in Hawai‘i and throughout the United States, to reflect on the life and significance of Hawai‘i’s last monarch.
This article has examined the coverage of the queen’s death and funeral by the Pacific Commercial Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, the two most prominent newspapers in Hawai‘i that represented the views of the white oligarchy that had deposed the queen in 1893, and various journals, both large and small, across the United States. The viewpoints of both groups of papers were in many respects similar, and the opinions of the Advertiser and Honolulu Star-Bulletin influenced press coverage of the queen’s death throughout the United States.

There was universal agreement that Lili‘uokalani was immensely popular and well-respected among residents of all backgrounds in Hawai‘i. She was also praised as a woman of strong character and determination. Even the papers of the white oligarchy that had opposed the queen during her reign were effusive in their praise of Lili‘uokalani at her death.

Politically, in Hawai‘i, nevertheless, the Advertiser, in particular, interpreted the events of the last period of the Hawaiian monarchy in the same manner as those who had deposed the queen a quarter of a century earlier. In other words, it was Lili‘uokalani’s alleged absolutist tendencies, especially in attempting to establish a new constitution to replace the Bayonet Constitution, that brought her downfall in January 1893. While the Honolulu Star-Bulletin did not doubt that the queen’s proposed constitution was autocratic, the paper suggested that Lili‘uokalani’s support for the new fundamental law was influenced by imprudent advisors. The American press echoed the view that the queen precipitated her own fall by her purported despotism.

The American media’s attempts to justify the Bayonet Constitution and the overthrow of the monarchy resulted in an inaccurate portrayal of the political landscape created by the 1887 charter and the misrepresentation of the queen’s proposed constitution. These distortions served the interest of the white establishment in Hawai‘i, whose political power derived from these events. Consequently, even thirty years after the coup that resulted in the Bayonet Constitution, the pro-oligarchy press was unwilling to represent the events of 1887 and 1893 accurately.

On the other hand, the passage of time had result in a softening of hostility by the establishment press, and in 1917 the virtues of the queen were emphasized and extolled by both the Advertiser and Honolulu...
*lulu Star-Bulletin* as well as periodicals across the United States. The oligarchy was firmly entrenched in Hawai‘i, and the queen was no longer a threat. Indeed, despite the republicanism of the white elite, curiously the *Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*’s coverage of Lili‘uokalani’s death and funeral reflected a certain nostalgia for the monarchy. As the possibility of a restoration of the kingdom by 1917 was negligible, perhaps the establishment press could reflect more fondly on the time when kings and queens ruled Hawai‘i.

Notes

1. *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
3. *PCA*, November 15, 1917; *HSB*, November 12, 19, 1917.
5. *PCA*, November 18, 19, 1917; A congressional delegation was visiting Hawai‘i at the time of the queen’s death and honored her by attending the funeral.
6. *PCA*, November 16, 18, 19, 1917; *HSB*, November 19, 1917. It should be noted that a few of the consuls represented more than one nation.
7. *HSB*, November 18, 19, 1917.
12. *HAA*, 1922: 18. These figures are based on United States Census data.
21. *HSB*, November 14, 1917; Korea had lost its independence in 1910 when it was seized by Japan.
28 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
29 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
30 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
31 *PCA*, November 17, 1917.
32 *PCA*, November 18, 1917.
33 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
34 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
35 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
36 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
37 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
38 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
39 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
40 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
41 *PCA*, November 11, 1917.
42 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
43 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
44 *PCA*, November 15, 1917.
45 *PCA*, November 12, 1917; Similar sentiments were expressed in an editorial on November 14.
46 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
47 *PCA*, November 11, 1917.
48 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
49 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
50 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
51 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
52 *PCA*, November 17, 1917.
53 *PCA*, November 15, 1917.
54 *PCA*, November 15, 1917.
55 See, for instance, the *Hawaiian Star*, March 18, 1907, and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, July 8, 1915. The titles “prince” and “princess” for the children of Prince David Kawananakoa were also used by the *Star-Bulletin* following the death of the queen. See, for example, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, November 16, 1917.
56 *PCA*, November 17, 1917.
57 *HSB*, November 19, 1917.
58 *HSB*, November 19, 1917.
59 *HSB*, November 12, 1917.
60 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
61 *PCA*, November 16, 1917; The Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 allowed Hawaiian sugar to enter the United States without taxes or tariffs. It brought great economic prosperity to the kingdom.
62 *PCA*, November 12, 1917; Lili‘uokalani’s national anthem, “He Mele Lāhui Hawai‘i” was replaced by “Hawai‘i Pono‘i” during the reign of Kalākaua.
63 *PCA*, November 12, 1917.
PCA, November 19, 1917.

HSB, November 12, 1917.

HSB, November 9, 1917.

HSB, November 12, 1917.

PCA, November 10, 1917.

HSB, November 19, 1917.

Boston Daily Globe, November 12, 1917.

Washington Post, November 13, 1917.

Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.

Christian Science Monitor (Boston), November 13, 1917.

Chicago Daily Tribune, November 12, 1917.

Broad Ax (Chicago), November 17, 1917.

Daily Ardmoreite (Ardmore, Oklahoma), August 4, 1917, pg. 6.

Daily Globe, November 12, 1917; Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.

Daily Globe, November 12, 1917.

Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.

Daily Tribune, November 12, 1917.

Monitor, November 12, 1917.

Daily Globe, November 12, 1917.

Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.

Monitor, November 13, 1917.

Monitor, November 13, 1917.

Daily Globe, November 12, 1917.

Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.


Ogden Standard (Ogden, Utah), November 13, 1917.

Chicago, Daily Tribune, November 12, 1917.

Chicago Daily Tribune, November 12, 1917.

Atlanta Constitution, November 12, 1917.

Constitution, November 13, 1917.

Monitor, November 13, 1917.

Post, November 13, 1917.

Post, November 13, 1917.

Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.

Constitution, November 12, 1917.

Daily Globe, November 12, 1917; Los Angeles Times, November 12, 1917.


Oklahoma City Times, April 21, 1917.