

This Day in History... December 11, 1830

Birth of King Kamehameha V

Hawaii's King Kamehameha V was born on December 11, 1830, in Honolulu, Oahu. He was the last ruler to use the name Kamehameha and focused his time on the prosperity of his people and returning to traditional values.

Kamehameha V's full name was Lota Kapuāiwa Kalanimakua Ali'īōlani Kalanikupuapa'īkalaninui, which means sacred one protected by supernatural powers. As was the tradition in Hawaii at the time, he was adopted and raised by another family: his grandmother and step-grandfather. Because he felt mistreated, he tried to do away with the tradition as an adult.

Being part of the royal line, Lota was educated by American missionaries at the Royal School established for Hawaiian nobility. After graduation, he traveled the world with his younger brother Alexander Liholiho. They visited the US, the Caribbean, and Europe. Along the way, they met with US President Zachary Taylor, Britain's Prince Albert, and France's President Napoleon.

When they returned to Hawaii, Alexander was chosen to be King Kamehameha IV in 1854. Lota served in government as a member of the Privy Council, in the House of Nobles, as minister of the Interior, and then chief justice of the Supreme Court. In 1862, Lota was added to the noble line of succession. This meant he would be king if his brother died without any heirs.

The ruling proved to be timely, when Alexander died the next year without any children. Lota came to power on November 30, 1863. Because of his previous government service, he was better prepared to rule than any of the kings before him. The new king began the process of changing the constitution to give him more power. It was completed in 1864, and King Kamehameha V signed it in August.

During his reign, Kamehameha V brought back traditional practices after they had fallen out of favor when western ways were introduced. He repealed laws against "kahunaism," the use of medicine men to treat medical conditions. To protect his people, the king refused to sign a bill allowing the sale of liquor. He said, "I will never sign the death warrant of my people."

Kamehameha V has been described as the last great traditional chief. He also promoted several building projects, including a post office, palace, prison, Royal Mausoleum, schools, warehouses, and other government buildings.

In addition to returning to traditional practices and protecting the islanders, the king also encouraged trade and tourism. England and Germany both sent representatives to Hawaii. American author Mark Twain visited for four months. He was impressed with King Kamehameha V, calling him "a wise sovereign" and noted "he was popular, greatly respected and even beloved" by the people.

The king never married, so his sister was in line for the throne. She died in 1866, and Kamehameha V did not name a new successor. In December 1872, his health was failing. On the 11th, his birthday, he asked his cousin Bernice Pauahi Bishop to rule after him, but she refused. An hour later, he died. Before his death, Kamehameha V said, "The throne belongs to Lunalilo; I will not appoint him, because I consider him unworthy of the position. The constitution, in case I make no nomination, provides for the election of the next King; let it be so."

As the king had stated, without a named heir, an election by the legislature would be held to choose the next monarch from the remaining royals. Lunalilo was a grandnephew of King Kamehameha I, and the most popular royal left, with Bishop refusing the throne. He became Hawaii's first elected monarch.



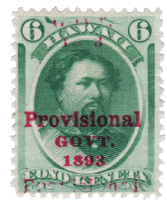
The 6¢ stamp picturing Kamehameha V went through six printings.



Only 16,150 of these stamps remain.



When Hawaii's monarchy was overthrown in 1893, existing stamps were overprinted for the provisional government.



Scarce double overprint – created when initial printings were weakly inked, and stamps were fed through the press a second time.



This 5¢ stamp covered the rate for mail between the US and Hawaii, with 2¢ paying for ship transport and 3¢ going to the Hawaiian post office.



It's estimated there are only about 46,350 of these stamps in existence today.



Due to the overprinting process, many varieties occurred, such as this double overprint.



Eono Keneta means "six cents."

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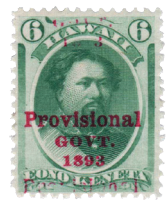
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