

University of North Carolina at Asheville

“An Act of Wrong”
Opposition to the Annexation of Hawaii

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President Grover Cleveland gave a speech on December 18, 1893 to the Senate and House of Representatives concerning the issue of Hawaii. He began the speech by stating, “I suppose that right and justice should determine the path to be followed in treating this subject.”¹ The subject at hand was the fact that Queen Lilioukalani of Hawaii had been overthrown. The United States played a role in this overthrow. At this time, the United States was experiencing a second wave of great expansion, especially in the Pacific. The country was also gaining a reputation as a very powerful nation. Many people, in both Hawaii and the United States, assumed that the next move would be to annex Hawaii so that it could become a territory of the United States. During the years between 1893 and 1898, a great deal of opposition was seen from Hawaii, the United States, and other countries. In 1898, Hawaii was annexed by the United States after many years of debate and disagreement over advantages and disadvantages. The annexation of Hawaii was a major imperialistic move for the United States to make, and it came with many risks since so many involved were against the idea, from both the Hawaiian and the American sides. In the end, the annexationists won. But, the opposition concerning many factors, including right and justice, was a major influence throughout the debates.

There has been a good amount of secondary works on this subject, many of which detail why annexation happened and what the motives were from both sides. Several of the sources give a broad overview of the annexation, but a few really focus on one major aspect over another. Others present a wider view of the history of the period. One important source is *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, which was written by William A. Williams in 1959. This book gave an overview of how the United States came to be the nation it is. Williams says that by

¹ “President Grover Cleveland’s Message”, *Hawaiian Independence*, December 18, 1893, www.hawaii-nation.org/cleveland.html

1783, the United States was already a world power.² The country proved it was deserving of this title in the War of 1812. By the 1890s, the United States was facing a major crisis in that, many believed, the frontier was gone. There were economic issues during this time also, the most notable being the Panic of 1893. According to Williams, the 1890s served as a turning point, this is when the United States began to use new strategies and tactics that enabled them to become a very influential empire. The policymakers of this time began to believe that foreign policy could improve the economy. This belief grew even bigger to include expansion as a way to improve the economy. The feeling at the time was that expansion would stifle unrest, preserve democracy, and restore prosperity.³

In *The Gods Depart* by Kathleen Mellen, the author explains that her goal is present a Hawaiian point of view of their history. This book examines the monarchies leading up to annexation and their interaction with the United States. In 1853, the first move towards annexation was made. Some American merchants were in favor of it, but Hawaiians were strongly opposed. In 1854, these talks stopped when the next king inherited the throne. At the same time, there was already an increasing American and English presence in the country. Also, the sugar planters were becoming more anxious; they wanted a reciprocity treaty with the United States. A reciprocity treaty would give Hawaii free access to the United States market.⁴

Another historian also discusses the reciprocity treaties. *Hawaii: Reciprocity or Annexation* was written by Merze Tate. Tate begins by describing the reciprocity negotiations. Commercial trade was the main issue between these two countries, since Hawaii had a profitable fishing and whaling industry and later, sugar industry. Soon, missionaries became interested in

² William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1959), 19.

³ Williams, 22.

⁴ Kathleen Mellen, *The Gods Depart* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1956), 128.

the islands and helped set up the sugar plantations. 1848 marked the date of the first reciprocity proposal, but it was not successful initially. By 1867, the United States was becoming worried over the British presence in Hawaii and was also facing a depression after the end of the Civil War. The proposed treaty of 1867 was also rejected by the United States.⁵

The treaty was eventually passed in 1875 and gave the United States the power to extend their influence and secure better trade relations. The treaty seemed to be successful in Hawaii. Sugar production was up along with construction, merchandising, banking, and transportation. When it came to be time to renew the treaty in the 1880s both sides seemed to be in favor of renewal. There were a few sources of opposition. The South was one part of the United States that was against it, since Hawaii was beginning to compete with Louisiana's sugar profits. Some people believed that the treaty was too much of a loss for the United States. In 1887, the treaty was ratified once again, but this time the United States also gained control of Pearl Harbor. This led to more trouble for the United States. The South still did not support the treaty and many Hawaiians were becoming more opposed since they lost control of their port. By 1889, there was a push for modifications to be made to the treaty, but they never materialized. The move towards annexation took importance over reciprocity.⁶

Several of the secondary sources discuss race as a major factor in the annexation of Hawaii. One work is *Expansion and Imperialism*, which was edited by A.E. Campbell. This book contains different essays relating to imperialism. The essay that is most relevant is "The Local Stimulus- Hawaii" which was written in 1943 by William A. Russ, Jr. Russ states that the

⁵ Merze Tate, *Hawaii: Reciprocity or Annexation* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968), 20.

⁶ Tate, 117-191.

revolutionists in Hawaii were the ones who were most strongly in favor of annexation and that Americans were most interested in saving Hawaii for white civilization.⁷

The next source to focus mainly on a racial argument is *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism 1865-1900*, which was written by Eric T.L. Love. He discusses United States imperialism in several situations and spends two chapters on Hawaii. He says that throughout history, race has been a guide to action and that racism has been destructive towards innovation and progressive change. The first chapter to discuss Hawaii is entitled “The Policy of Last Resort”. Love describes the revolution of 1893, saying that it was attributed to the personality of Queen Lilioukalani and how she abused her power by attempting to put in to effect a new constitution that would only allow native Hawaiians to vote. He also discusses the makeup of the population, the reciprocity negotiations and treaty, and the move towards annexation.⁸

The next chapter is entitled “Hawaii Annexed”; Love begins by detailing reasons for annexation, saying that it was justified not for redemption of the natives, but for the nation’s whites. Next, he goes on to describe the actual debates over annexation, the processes and the different supporters and their opinions. Then, he gets back to the race issue and describes the rates of immigration and provides population statistics. The Japanese were migrating rapidly and whites were becoming the minority. Love points out that one of the biggest motivators for annexation was the fact that the United States did not want the Japanese to become so powerful that they could take Hawaii instead. He also puts the annexation in context with other important events of the period. The United States was involved in a war with Spain and voting against

⁷ William A. Russ Jr., “The Local Stimulus- Hawaii”, in *Expansion and Imperialism*, ed. A.E. Campbell (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 49.

⁸Eric T.L. Love, *Race Over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 134.

annexation during this time would have been seen as unpatriotic. This added more pressure to a problem that was still growing.⁹

The remainder of secondary sources have more of a broad focus, instead of only examining the influence of race. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* was written by Stephen Kinzer, who begins by stating that stronger nations have three goals, either to impose their ideology, increase their power, or gain control of valuable resources.¹⁰ The book focuses on how the United States arranged to depose foreign leaders, with Hawaii as the earliest example. The author points out that the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy was achieved by a few families who were able to gain control of the economy and government.¹¹

Kinzer next talks about the movement towards annexation and the leaders of it. One influential group was called the Committee of Safety, which was made up of thirteen people, nine of which were American by birth, none were native Hawaiians. Their goal was to convince the United States that Hawaii should become a state. They were in close contact with the minister to Hawaii, who made arrangements with the Secretary of State to set up the overthrow. The marines and soldiers landed, not to preserve peace, but to assure rebel victory.¹² The United States recognized the new regime that formed, with Sanford Dole as their president. The Queen did surrender, but did not abdicate initially. This overthrow took place with less than thirty men and would have been impossible without American assistance, according to Kinzer.¹³

⁹ Love, 149.

¹⁰ Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Times Books, 2006), 1.

¹¹ Kinzer, 9.

¹² Kinzer, 28.

¹³ Kinzer, 30.

Another book that discusses the annexation of Hawaii is *American Expansion in Hawaii: 1842-1898* by Sylvester K. Stevens, which was written in 1945. He focuses on the continuity of forces and events that surrounded this situation and states that this situation was the same as the other, typical frontier expansion and was not a sporadic imperialist adventure connected with the Spanish-American War.¹⁴ The economy and the prosperous businesses of Hawaii is what Stevens credits as to why the United States became interested in this kingdom. He also discusses the missionaries and their role in spreading the American influence. Throughout the 1850s, the United States was continuing to spread westward and there were annexation attempts made towards Hawaii during this time.¹⁵

Stevens looks at the Reciprocity Treaty as a major turning point, one that hastened the end of the monarchy.¹⁶ The treaty gave the United States more influence and created unrest among Hawaiians. By 1889, the Reform Party of Hawaii began to grow and became more well-known. In 1893, the rebels gained enough power to overthrow Queen Lilioukalani. Along with this came an even bigger push to become a territory of the United States by annexation. The treaty was written for annexation, but was withdrawn when Grover Cleveland took office.¹⁷ The republic continued to organize itself and by 1896, the interest in annexing was greatly increased within the United States. The annexation of Hawaii was passed in 1898 as the Newlands Resolution.¹⁸

The next two sources are both journal articles. The first one is entitled “The Political Instability of Reciprocal Trade and the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom,” which was written

¹⁴ Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii: 1842-1898* (New York: Archive Publishing Company of Pennsylvania, Inc., 1945), Preface.

¹⁵ Stevens, 72.

¹⁶ Stevens, 141.

¹⁷ Stevens, 245.

¹⁸ Stevens, 294.

by Sumner LaCroix and Christopher Grandy in 1997. This article discusses trade relationships between small and large countries and the influence these relationships play on internal politics. The authors point out that more money leads to more power. This was the key to the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. This article concludes by stating that the overthrow was a mix between United States strategic goals and Hawaii's internal political and economic goals.¹⁹

The next journal article discusses Hawaii's place in history. "Hawaii: The First and Last Far West?" was written in 1992 by John Whitehead. Whitehead mainly focuses on the boundaries that defined the West and how Alaska and Hawaii typically are not included in Western history, but usually fall to diplomatic history. He compares the territories that were acquired by the United States by saying that the two non-continental states are very different in climate, aridity, and agriculture. He says these two states were their own phenomenon and can not be classified by region.²⁰

Even with the extensive amount of secondary sources, none looked specifically at only opposition. The resistance from both sides was covered briefly in some sources, but very few mention a great deal about the opposition from the Hawaiian side. The fact that many Americans were opposed to annexation was often pushed to the side with only a short section in these sources. It is important to take into account the fact that most Hawaiians were not in favor of annexation and that many Americans also did not believe that it was the best move for the United States to make.

After the overthrow of Queen Lilioukalani took place in 1893, President Grover Cleveland began corresponding with W.Q. Gresham of the U.S. Department of State about the

¹⁹ Sumner LaCroix and Christopher Grandy, "The Political Instability of Reciprocal Trade and the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom" *The Journal of Economic History* 57, no. 1 (1997): 161.

²⁰ John Whitehead. "Hawaii: The First and Last Far West?". *The Western Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1992): 153.

events that took place and the possibility of annexation. Gresham wrote a letter to Cleveland that discussed the overthrow. He said that after Queen Lilioukalani announced that a new constitution would soon be passed, the Committee of Public Safety held a meeting. Later that day, the committee wrote a letter to John Stevens, who was the American minister at Honolulu. This letter claimed that lives and property were in peril and that the assistance of the United States was needed to keep conditions safe. Other than this committee, most of Hawaii was not aware that an overthrow was about to take place. Also in this letter, Gresham expressed concerns over the place of the United States in this affair. He was afraid that the United States may have abused their authority. He was also concerned over whether or not the legitimate government should be restored or if the provisional government should remain in power. As early as 1893, concerns over the role of the United States were beginning to form, along with opposition.²¹

In 1893, President Grover Cleveland was highly involved in the process of annexation and showed his concern even in this early stage. On December 18, 1893, he gave a speech to the Senate and House of Representatives concerning the issue of Hawaii. Cleveland was a Democrat and generally, Democrats opposed annexation. He discussed the events that were occurring in Hawaii at the time and spoke of petitions that were already written to protest annexation. But, he seemed to think this was not a problem since the Queen yielded her power to the provisional government. He also claimed that the overthrow was not promoted by the United States government, but that annexation was being promoted by the United States minister in Hawaii. Cleveland blamed the overthrow on the new constitution the Queen was attempting to pass, which would only allow native Hawaiians to vote. But, he also said that the territory did not

²¹ “Letter from W.Q. Gresham of the US Department of State to President Cleveland”, *Hawaiian Independence*, October 18, 1893, www.hawaii-nation.org/gresham.html

rightfully belong to the United States because it was taken by force. The United States did not have permission from the people of Hawaii, only from the American minister in Hawaii. With this speech, Cleveland commissioned the Blount Report, which would detail the conditions of the affairs in Hawaii. Once the report was written, it achieved Cleveland's goal. Over 1300 pages were written accounting for the current affairs in Hawaii. The President's point of view is an interesting one, he takes some responsibility for what happened in Hawaii and did not believe the United States was right in taking the actions it did. It is also important to note that even though the overthrow took place under Cleveland's administration, annexation did not actually occur until President William McKinley was in office.²²

Opposition to annexation was soon being seen from many people in Hawaii, from Queen Lilioukalani to the public. One account that shows what it was like for an American in Hawaii was written by Uldrick Thompson. Thompson was a teacher at the Kamehameha Schools during this period. He described the political activity that was occurring and also the actual annexation. One major event he described was the revolution in 1893.²³ Even though the revolution took place on January 17, 1893, the new republic was not declared until July 4, 1894, with Sanford Dole as president. During the time in between, Hawaii was still allowed to follow the same laws under the provisional government, until Dole came into office. At the end of 1894, attempts were already being made to restore Queen Lilioukalani to power. Thompson was conflicted and had a tough decision to make concerning what he should do next. He wanted to take part in the next revolution but knew his job would not allow him to do so, he said "If I take part in this matter, I must resign at once and go home. I cannot shoot Hawaiians and then return to teach

²² "President Grover Cleveland's Message"

²³ Uldrick Thompson, "Events Leading to the Annexation of 1898," *The Kamehameha Schools Archives*, <http://kapalama.ksbe.edu/archives/collections/thompson%20u/Political.php>

these boys. But if it comes to a choice between the whites and the Hawaiians, I must of course stand with my own race.”²⁴ During this time, all areas were heavily armed.

Those who were opposed to annexation began to lead a movement towards the restoration of Queen Lilioukalani. When the restoration was attempted in 1895, several events occurred on the campus Thompson taught at. The teachers were told to serve the school by keeping the boys safe. They did not have class as usual, but played sports instead. By January 1895, the restoration had failed. Thompson then moved on to describe the time when annexation actually took place. According to him, “annexation was only a dream till the Spanish-American War loomed; and troops began to pass through to Manila (Philippines). Then the value of these islands was plain to all.”²⁵ Shortly after Hawaii became involved in the war effort, the Newlands Joint Resolution was passed, which annexed Hawaii to the United States. Hawaii’s location was important in fighting the war against the Spanish. On August 12, 1898, the Hawaiian flag was lowered and the American flag was raised in its place.²⁶

As could be expected, many Hawaiian citizens were not in favor of annexation. This sentiment was expressed through petitions, newspaper articles, and other statements. In 1895, Queen Lilioukalani was put on trial for treason. The statement she made is very revealing. She began by stating that “the only real charge against me really was that of being a queen”.²⁷ She also discussed the changes she was attempting to make to the Hawaiian constitution, which was one factor the annexationists used against her when she was overthrown. The Queen also talked about the role the United States played in making this change, “A minority of the foreign population made my action and the pretext for overthrowing the monarchy, and, aided by the

²⁴ Thompson, “Events Leading to the Annexation of 1898”.

²⁵ Thompson, “Events Leading to the Annexation of 1898”.

²⁶ Thompson, “Events Leading to the Annexation of 1898”.

²⁷ Queen Lilioukalani. “Queen Lilioukalani’s Statement at Her Trial for Treason, 1895.” *Major Problems in the History of the American West*, edited by Clyde A. Milner II. et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 164.

United States naval forces and representatives, established a new government.”²⁸ This document’s date is important to note. It was written in 1895 because it is the date Queen Lilioukalani abdicated her throne, with a trial following after. During the two years in between her overthrow and abdication, a provisional government was in place, even though she still held the title of queen during these two years.

In this statement, the Queen’s opposition is made clear; she was not in favor of the overthrow or the quickly approaching annexation. She also stated that the requests of her people were not considered when this action was taken; “The wishes of my people were not considered as to this change of government, and only those who were in practical rebellion against the constitutional government were allowed to vote upon the question whether the monarchy should exist or not.”²⁹ The Queen was not shy about showing her opposition, others quickly followed her example.

Queen Lilioukalini made her opposition further known when she presented the Official Protest to the Treaty of Annexation in Washington D.C. on June 17, 1897. This was a short speech, only about two pages long. This speech was given a little over a year before the actual date of annexation. It seemed at the time the treaty would be passed sooner, because it was quickly gaining support in Washington, D.C. The Queen first told her reasons for coming to the United States capital, which was to make every attempt she could to keep annexation from occurring. The speech can be summed up with the following statement:

I declare such a treaty to be an act of wrong toward the native and part-native people of Hawaii, an invasion of the rights of the ruling chiefs, in violation of international rights both toward my people and toward friendly nations with whom they have made treaties,

²⁸ Queen Lilioukalani, 164.

²⁹ Queen Lilioukalani, 164.

the perpetuation of the fraud whereby the constitutional government was overthrown, and, finally, an act of gross injustice to me.³⁰

She then discussed why she signed her authority over to the United States and the provisional government by saying that it was done to avoid bloodshed. Next, the Queen says that the United States was investigating her long before she signed her government over because of the new constitution she was attempting to put into effect. They had very little authority in actually doing this, since they had never received any authority from the voters of Hawaii, only from the Committee of Safety.³¹ No Hawaiian citizens, which was about 40,000 people, were members of this Committee. There were about 3000 people, many of which were Americans, who lived in Hawaii that were not citizens. Queen Lilioukalani also made the point that other than civic rights, property rights had also been compromised.³² In Hawaii, some of the property, almost one million acres, was private hereditary property. This made up a fourth of the land the United States wanted to annex. The treaty proposed that this land also be confiscated. The Queen concluded her statement by saying that “I...do hereby call upon the President of that nation, to whom alone I yielded my property and my authority, to withdraw said treaty (ceding said Islands) from further consideration.”³³ This speech gives more information than her earlier statement and also includes how annexation could affect the citizens of her country.

More opposition from Hawaiian citizens was shown in a petition. This particular petition was brought together on September 11, 1897. This document is entitled “Petition Against Annexation”. Even though women had no voting rights, they were still allowed to form a petition. There are two separate petitions, one for men and one for women. Along with their

³⁰ Queen Lilioukalani, “Official Protest to the Treaty of Annexation”, *Hawaii: Independent and Sovereign*, <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/treatyprot.html>.

³¹ Queen Lilioukalani, “Official Protest to the Treaty of Annexation”.

³² Queen Lilioukalani, “Official Protest to the Treaty of Annexation”.

³³ Queen Lilioukalani, “Official Protest to the Treaty of Annexation”.

signatures, each signer's age was given. This was written to President McKinley and the purpose was to protest annexation to the United States, in any form.³⁴ The petition did not list any specific reasons for protesting annexation, but it did gain many signatures. This document was originally written in Hawaiian and was written in both the Hawaiian and English languages. It came from the Hawaiian Patriotic League. There are 44 signatures on the men's petition and 46 on the women's. The date of this document is also significant; it was written only ten months before annexation occurred on July 7, 1898. There may have been other petitions, but this is one that has survived through the years. It seems like there would have been more petitions earlier than 1897 and there most likely were. Even though the petition was unable to keep annexation from occurring, it is still important because it shows that there were people who were willing to sign their full names and give their ages to show that they were not in favor of annexation, or having a large country taking over their small island nation.

Among other documents that showed opposition to the annexation of Hawaii is a memorial that was written to the President, Congress, and the people of the United States. This was written by the Memorialists, who were the residents of Hawaii, on October 8, 1897. With this document, they declared that they did not acknowledge the provisional government, and then went on to explain the many flaws of this government.³⁵ They said that it was maintained solely by force of arms, which is against the rights of the population of the islands. Also, that "said Republic is not and never has been founded or conducted upon a basis of popular government or republican principles."³⁶ The constitution of the provisional government was adopted by a

³⁴ "Petition Against Annexation", *The National Archives*, <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hawaii-petition/images/hawaii-petition-01.jpg>.

³⁵ "Memorial: To the President, the Congress and the People of the United States of America.", *Hawaii: Independent and Sovereign*, <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/memorial.html>

³⁶ "Memorial: To the President, the Congress and the People of the United States of America."

convention and never submitted to a popular vote. The memorialists also acknowledged their disappointment over the annexation treaty that was being considered by the United States.³⁷

They also said that the treaty violated their political rights and that the Hawaiians' opinions have not been heard. The memorial was concluded by the group asking that the treaty be removed from consideration for ratification. At the end of the document, seven names were signed and the date was given as October 8, 1897. One name is James Keauliluna, who was the President of the Hawaiian Patriotic League. Another name is David Kalauokalani, who was the President of the Hawaiian Political Association. The five other names did not have titles along with them, but they must have either been influential or members of one or both of these organizations. This document also displays another look at what inspired Hawaiians were doing to attempt to prevent annexation, along with Queen Lilioukalani's efforts.³⁸

Along with Hawaiians, there were many Americans who were opposed to the annexation of Hawaii. There were articles every day in *The New York Times* about what was going on in the Senate concerning annexation. In one article, more information was given on President Dole, who presided over the provisional government in Hawaii. As late as February 1, 1898, only five months before annexation would be passed, Dole was still having a hard time convincing the Senate to pass the annexation treaty. The article was even entitled, "President Dole Making Friends, but Not Increasing Vote for Annexation." This article stated that even though Dole made a good impression and wanted the best for his republic, that there was "still a strong undercurrent against it."³⁹ The article continues, saying that the main concern within the Senate is still the fact that this treaty would support the "seizure of a people who have not consented to

³⁷ "Memorial: To the President, the Congress and the People of the United States of America."

³⁸ "Memorial: To the President, the Congress and the People of the United States of America."

³⁹ "President Dole Making Friends, but Not Increasing Vote for Annexation," *New York Times*, February 1, 1898.

be absorbed by another nation”.⁴⁰ Even though President Dole was welcomed and made an agreeable impression, the United States Senate was not yet unable to ignore the same protests those in Hawaii were making.

Many Americans felt that the annexation of Hawaii was morally wrong, or that it was simply not the best choice for the United States to make at the time. The article “The Question of Annexation” was published on January 29, 1893 in *The New York Times*, just after the revolution. At this time, it was assumed that the next move would be to annex as quickly as possible, but there were some who were opposed even this early into the issue. Senator John Morgan from Alabama presented the opposition. One problem was the debt of Hawaii, which stood at about three million dollars.⁴¹ The United States would have to assume this debt if Hawaii was to be annexed. Another reason to oppose annexation was an agreement that was made earlier in history. Back when Pearl Harbor was secured by the United States in the 1880s, an agreement was made between England, Germany, and the United States to keep their hands off Hawaii and allow the country to run its own affairs.⁴² This could have opened up a great deal of problems between the United States and these other countries, if the move to annex was made. The article also claimed that, for the most part, Democrats opposed annexation, while Republicans were in favor of it. This was due to the split in party ideology among imperialists and anti-imperialists. These types of debates continued for years, until a decision about annexation was finally made.⁴³

A couple of weeks later, another article was published in *The New York Times* that discussed the debate that was taking place in Hawaii between those who wanted annexation to

⁴⁰ “President Dole Making Friends, but Not Increasing Vote for Annexation”

⁴¹ “The Question of Annexation,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1893.

⁴² “The Question of Annexation”

⁴³ “The Question of Annexation”

occur and those who did not. Entitled “Secretary Foster Approves His Course in Hawaii”, this article discusses the provisional government that was being formed in the country. At this time, arrangements were not only being made for the government, but also for annexation. This article claims that annexation would most likely receive strong favor, as it did fifty years earlier.⁴⁴ It also says that a Hawaiian newspaper was in favor of annexation. The problem with this statement is that fact that the newspaper in favor was *The Liberal*, which was an annexationist newspaper.⁴⁵ The article concludes with a quote that cites Charles M. Cooke, who was the Supplementary Annexationist Commissioner, “he and his associates are actuated by no other motive than to secure a good and stable government.”⁴⁶ Even though this article does not directly discuss opposition, it does show why many Hawaiians were opposed to it. Newspaper writers in the United States were aware of the fact that the Hawaiian newspapers that said annexation was favorable had an agenda and a specific goal to achieve.

Debates on annexation were occurring in many organizations. The Goldey Society held a debate in May 1893 in New York. This was a literary society. At the end of the debate, those present decided against annexation for many reasons. One of the participants, Matthew Ryan was in favor of annexation. He argued that the situation in Hawaii was no different from that of Alaska, Louisiana, or Texas. He claimed that if Hawaii was not annexed, the white population of the country would have to leave to avoid anarchy. Ryan also said that monopolists were opposed to annexation because it would deprive them of contract labor. Ryan concluded his argument by stating that Honolulu already was an American city and that annexation would be worth the cost because of the control that could be gained over Pearl Harbor.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ “Secretary Foster Approves His Course in Hawaii,” *New York Times*, February 14, 1893.

⁴⁵ “Secretary Foster Approves His Course in Hawaii”

⁴⁶ “Secretary Foster Approves His Course in Hawaii”

⁴⁷ “Against Annexing Hawaii- Goldey Society Debate”, *New York Times*, May 20, 1898.

The next two men disagreed with Ryan and gave their opinion on why Hawaii should not be annexed. One of the speakers, A.J. Ernst, said that the only annexationists in Hawaii are members of the Annexation Club. All of the members of the club were not citizens of Hawaii. Ernst also believed that the United States violated national law when they placed their flag on Hawaiian land. The last speaker in the debate, Lewis Bates, was also against annexation. He argued that the United States would gain nothing but trouble by annexing Hawaii. He also claimed that the people of Hawaii, mainly the Chinese and Japanese laborers would never be able to assimilate with the citizens of the United States. Judging by this debate, most people saw many reasons why Hawaii should not be annexed as part of the United States.⁴⁸

The political climate of the 1890s was affected by the ongoing debate between imperialists and anti-imperialists. Hawaii was a major source of conflict between the two sides. In many cases, anti-imperialist leagues were formed and speeches were given or statements were published concerning their opinions on various imperialistic adventures. One example of this was the Anti-Imperialist League, which was in existence from 1898-1905. George S. Boutwell was its first president and the league ceased to exist after his death. He gave a speech concerning the annexation of Hawaii on December 22, 1897. The speech was given at a debate of four people and the debate had a two hour time limit. He discussed past opportunities to annex the islands, examples other imperialist countries have set, the losses and gains that could be made, and also treaties that have been made.⁴⁹

In his speech, he made two propositions concerning his opposition to the acquisition of territories. The first was the fact that the acquisition of territories increased the chance of war, and second, the territory would also change the way war was conducted. He also briefly

⁴⁸ "Against Annexing Hawaii"

⁴⁹ George S. Boutwell, "Hawaiian Annexation", *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, www.historyillustrated.com/ai/ailtexts/gsb_hawaii.html

discussed the British Empire and said that their example should not be followed by the United States. Even though it is an attractive model to copy, the United States already had a vast amount of territory, according to Boutwell. He also argued that annexation was not necessary because of the reciprocity treaties. Annexation was not needed since the United States already controlled their trade and no other country could try to annex Hawaii because of this treaty.⁵⁰

In the 1890s, many anti-imperialism speeches were given and a great deal of these made reference to the pending annexation of Hawaii. The Anti-Imperialist Committee of Correspondence held a conference on July 29, 1898 at the Massachusetts Club. This particular speech was given by republican Senator George F. Hoar. He was afraid of the United States straying from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution by subjecting their rule over others. Hoar discussed the role of the United States, by stating that “The power of the United States is to be exerted through example and influence, not by force.” Overall, Hoar was mainly concerned with the United States abandoning its fundamental beliefs just to gain more land. He also believed the United States should not follow the example of England’s colonial empire, because it could fail just the same as Spain’s did.⁵¹

Many other organizations felt it necessary to present their view on imperialism and their opposition to the annexation of Hawaii. Samuel Gompers was the President of the American Federation of Labor at the time of annexation. He also gave a speech on his view of imperialism. This speech was given at the Chicago Peace Jubilee on October 18, 1898. In this speech, he mainly focused on the events that were occurring in the Philippines, but it is still important because that situation had similarities to what was occurring in Hawaii. Gompers was mainly concerned with the labor issues associated with gaining territory. He believed that annexation

⁵⁰ Boutwell, “Hawaiian Annexation”.

⁵¹ George F. Hoar, “The Opinion of Massachusetts on ‘Imperialism’”, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, www.historyillustrated.com/ai/ailtexts/hoar980729.html

would lead to an increase in immigration, since both Hawaii and the Philippines relied largely on Chinese laborers. His main point was that annexation would lead to more workers, which would lead to lower wages for those who already hold jobs in the United States. More immigration would result in people who would work for cheaper wages. Gompers was against imperialism because it would decrease the value of the American worker and he did not want to see this happen.⁵²

Influential figures were not shy about voicing their opinions on imperialism and the annexation of Hawaii. Andrew Carnegie, the successful founder of Carnegie Steel Company, wrote *The Gospel of Wealth* in 1901. Earlier in 1898, he published an article in the *North American Review* entitled “Distant Possessions: The Parting of the Ways”, which would later be incorporated in *The Gospel of Wealth*. He began by discussing imperialism in general, but also voiced his opinion on the events occurring in Hawaii. Carnegie gave a different point of view, he claimed to be against imperialism, but at the same time was in favor of annexing Hawaii because it could become a valuable asset. He even financially supported the Anti-Imperialist League. But, in this article, he argued that Hawaii was a unique situation. Carnegie said that Hawaii is different because it was not being conquered, the people had a chance to vote. It was also necessary to annex because of the coaling station Hawaii possessed. He believed that Hawaii should be the last far-outlying possession acquired. For Carnegie, imperialism was not right, for many reasons. But, he did believe that Hawaii was a special case.⁵³

While group leaders and influential members of society were formulating their opinions on annexation, the issue was being debated in the Senate. One Senator, Richard Pettigrew of

⁵² Samuel Gompers, “Imperialism- Its Dangers and Wrongs”, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, www.historyillustrated.com/ai/ailtexts/gompers.html

⁵³ Andrew Carnegie, “Distant Possessions: The Parting of the Ways”, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, www.historyillustrated.com/ai/ailtexts/carn0898.html

South Dakota, was strongly opposed to annexation. He was elected to the Senate in 1889, before this he had served in the House of Representatives, even serving on a territorial committee in the 1870s.⁵⁴ On July 2, 1898, Pettigrew began by attacking the idea that Hawaii was needed because of its coaling station, as Carnegie discussed in his article. Pettigrew argued against it by claiming that there were other superb harbors that could serve as coaling stations for the Pacific. Pettigrew also said he would be more supportive of utilizing the harbor in Manila, Philippines rather than the one in Hawaii. Pettigrew also gave other reasons why he opposed annexation. He said that the people of Hawaii were against annexation and that it would not be democratic for the United States to annex against their will. He also claimed that the revolution in Hawaii was an American conspiracy. Pettigrew was not necessarily against imperialism, but he was against the annexation of Hawaii.⁵⁵

Another reason Pettigrew opposed annexation was because of the impact Japanese laborers in Hawaii would have on the United States economy. Since the Japanese workers were willing to work for lower wages, they would cause a great deal of competition for the prosperous New England manufacturers. Pettigrew believed that this competition could eventually put Americans out of work. This has many common factors with the speech Samuel Gompers made since both men feared that annexation would harm the lives of the average workers. Pettigrew also opposed annexation because the sugar trust was in favor of it. He pointed out the fact that if the sugar trust gained control of the raw sugar of Hawaii, it would become impossible for competition to develop. After the discussion of labor problems ended, Pettigrew's speech came

⁵⁴ "Richard Pettigrew", <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=P000271>

⁵⁵ "The Opposition to Hawaii; Senator Pettigrew Continues to Hold the Floor and Argues Against Annexation", *New York Times*, July 2, 1898.

to a close and routine business was resumed. Pettigrew made a strong speech against annexation by coming up with many valid points.⁵⁶

Several other countries disapproved of annexation. For example, Russia was opposed to the annexation of Hawaii. Even though Russia had no real relationship with the islands, the American author of an editorial entitled “Russia and Hawaii” still had reason to believe that Russia was overly concerned with the business of the United States. At this time, Russia’s relationship with China was not secure, so the country was worried about the effect annexing Hawaii may have on ocean affairs. The writer of this editorial believed that Russia would be better off concealing their opposition because it could lead to Americans becoming more in favor of annexation since they would resent Russia’s interference. The author also pointed out that Russia was paying a great deal of attention to the affairs of the United States, because their newspapers were publishing articles on what might happen if Hawaii was annexed. One Russian paper claimed that annexing Hawaii would lead to the annexation of Cuba also. This same paper also urged Europe to oppose New World power and strength and to support Spain in their war with the United States. Russia’s opposition demonstrates how widespread the issue of annexation had become.⁵⁷

Japan also opposed the annexation of Hawaii. Japan did not believe that Hawaii should be annexed because it would interfere with a treaty that the Japanese government made with the Hawaiian government in 1886. This treaty was effective until the United States became more involved in Hawaiian affairs and pushed for certain restrictions to be removed. Once the restrictions were removed, cheaper labor was available. This opened up room for more

⁵⁶ “The Opposition to Hawaii; Senator Pettigrew Continues to Hold the Floor and Argues Against Annexation”

⁵⁷ “Russia and Hawaii”, *New York Times*, June 26, 1897.

immigration, but once the United States got closer to annexation, this policy changed and immigration was limited more.⁵⁸

Later, in 1898, more opposition was presented by the Japanese. In a Senate debate, a statement citing Japan's opposition to annexation was read by Senator Stephen White from California, who was a Democrat. This statement heavily cited the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine was written in 1823 and stated that the United States would not interfere in European affairs. The Japanese felt that the United States should still observe this policy by not interfering in the affairs of Hawaii. They were more interested in protecting the lives of their citizens, but they also were concerned about the violation of various treaties. They were also troubled by the fact that the United States may soon be controlling a piece of land that is very close to their own.⁵⁹

Another country that opposed the annexation of Hawaii was Great Britain. The Anglican Bishop of Honolulu discussed his opposition to it with the English when he traveled to London in 1897. The Bishop held that annexation was unjust, mainly because the natives of Hawaii are against it. He also said that he believed it would be within the best interests of Great Britain to oppose annexation. The reason behind this was mainly economical. The Bishop said that annexation would hurt British commerce because tariffs would be raised. It is important to note the opinions of outside countries, since they had many of the same concerns as those in Hawaii and the United States.⁶⁰

Even with the strong amount of opposition from both Hawaiian and Americans, Hawaii was eventually annexed to the United States. On September 9, 1897, a resolution was passed by the Senate of Hawaii ratifying the Treaty of Annexation. This resolution contained seven articles

⁵⁸ "The Position of Japan", *New York Times*, June 28, 1897.

⁵⁹ "Objections to Hawaii", *New York Times*, June 22, 1898.

⁶⁰ "Bishop of Honolulu's View", *New York Times*, July 24, 1897.

and outlined the various powers that Hawaii was ceding to the United States. First of all, the resolution stated that the Republic of Hawaii was annexed to the United States and would now be called the Territory of Hawaii. By annexing, Hawaii expected the United States to assume control of all land, public debt, immigration control, and foreign relations. When the Newlands Resolution was passed the next year, it honored these requests.⁶¹

On July 7, 1898, the Newlands Resolution was passed. With annexation, many aspects of Hawaiian government saw a great deal of change very quickly. First, the country became a sovereign territory of the United States. Second, the President of the United States gained the power to remove officers and fill vacancies from the government that existed in Hawaii. Also, existing treaties Hawaii made with other countries ceased and their public debt was transferred to the United States. Another touchy issue was resolved in this document. No further Chinese immigration was to be allowed without following the laws of the United States. Last, the Newlands Resolution provided for one hundred thousand dollars to go to the discretion of President McKinley in order to carry out this joint resolution.⁶²

The annexation of Hawaii was a very long process that took several decades to fulfill. It took intelligent planning and strategy to make it happen. A great deal of opposition was encountered, from Hawaiians, Americans, and others in many forms. Speeches were given, debates were held, articles were written, and petitions were signed so that people could show their opposition. This greatly slowed down the process of annexation since there were so many against it. Everyone had an opinion on what should be done with the islands and every opinion was based on a different experience or reason.

⁶¹ “Resolution of the Senate of Hawaii Ratifying the Treaty of Annexation”, *Hawaiian Independence*, September 9, 1897, www.hawaii-nation.org/consent.html

⁶² “Newlands Resolution”, *Hawaiian Independence*, July 7, 1898, www.hawaii-nation.org/annexation.html

Bibliography

Primary

Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935, www.historyillustrated.com/ai/aitexts.html

This website contains many useful primary documents. These documents examine the various opinions on imperialism from 1898 to 1935.

“Legal Foundation for Hawaiian Independence.” <http://www.hawaii-nation.org/legal.html>

This website has a bias to it, but contains a useful collection of primary sources. There are treaties, presidential messages, acts, constitutions, and other policies available.

“Petition Against Annexation”, *The National Archives*,

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/hawaii-petition/images/hawaii-petition-01.jpg>.

This website has the petition against the annexation of Hawaii, which was written in 1897, one year before annexation was passed. There is a men’s and a women’s petition.

Queen Lilioukalani. “Queen Lilioukalani’s Statement at Her Trial for Treason, 1895.” *Major*

Problems in the History of the American West, edited by Clyde A. Milner II. et al.

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997, 164-166.

This source book has many useful documents concerning this time period. The one most suited for this paper is a primary source, which is a statement from Queen Lilioukalani.

New York Times, 1893-1898.

This website contains many useful newspaper articles. These articles show many viewpoints and opposition from the United States as well as other countries.

Thompson, Uldrick. "Events Leading to the Annexation of 1898," *The Kamehameha Schools Archives*, <http://kapalama.ksbe.edu/archives/collections/thompson%20u/Political.php>

This website has a very good archives collection. It contains a variety of primary sources, such as letters, pictures, newspaper articles, and oral histories. A great deal of these documents apply to the period of annexation.

Secondary

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: 1774-Present.

<http://bioguide.congress.gov>

This website contains biographies of congressional members. This is useful because it demonstrates the history of various Senators and Representatives; it makes it easier to understand their position on certain issues.

Campbell, A.E. *Expansion and Imperialism*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970.

This book contained different essays relating to imperialism. These essays examined motives, people, policies, and other aspects of imperialism and expansion. Some of them related to the topic of Hawaii, but most of them did not. The one that was most helpful and relevant was "The Local Stimulus- Hawaii" which was written in 1943 by William A. Russ Jr.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Times Books, 2006.

This author begins by stating that stronger nations have three goals, either to impose their ideology, increase their power, or gain control of valuable resources. The book focuses on how the United States arranged to depose foreign leaders, with Hawaii as the earliest example. The book is divided into three different stages of overthrow: the imperial era, covert action, and invasions. Kinzer points out that the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy was achieved by a few families who controlled the economy and government.

La Croix, Summer and Christopher Grandy. "The Political Instability of Reciprocal Trade and the Overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom". *The Journal of Economic History* 57, no. 1 (1997): 161-189.

This article discusses trade relationships between small and large countries and the influence these relationships play on internal politics. With more money, more power usually comes along with it. The authors point to this fact as a key to the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. The reciprocity treaty also helped America create a presence that other countries were not able to duplicate. This article concludes by stating that the overthrow was a mix between United States strategic goals and Hawaii's internal political economy.

Love, Eric T. *Race Over Empire: Racism and Imperialism 1865-1900*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

This author discusses United States imperialism in several situations and spends two chapters on Hawaii. In the preface, he discusses how the United States sees other countries to be inferior.

He says throughout history, race has been a guide to action and that racism has been destructive towards innovation and progressive change. Love states that race has played two roles in imperialism, that whites avoid areas occupied by too many 'aliens' or that are too hot and tropical.

Mellen, Kathleen D. *The Gods Depart*. New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1956.

This author begins by stating states that her goal is to tell Hawaii's side of the story. This book mainly examines the monarchies leading up to annexation and their interaction with the United States. She gives a lot of background on Hawaii's economy and laws that were highly debated.

Stevens, Sylvester K. *American Expansion in Hawaii: 1842-1898*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1945.

Stevens focuses on the continuity of forces and events that surrounded this situation and states that this situation was the same as the other, typical frontier expansion and was not a sporadic imperialist adventure connected with the Spanish-American War. A lot of background information is given about the economy and the prosperous businesses of Hawaii, which is what Stevens credits as to why the United States became interested in this kingdom.

Tate, Merze. *Hawaii: Reciprocity or Annexation*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1968.

Overall, this book examines various interactions between the United States and Hawaii prior to annexation. Tate begins by describing the reciprocity negotiations. Some background information on American interest is given to start off with. Commercial trade was the main issue

between these two countries, since Hawaii had a profitable fishing and whaling industry and later, sugar industry.

Whitehead, John. "Hawaii: The First and Last Far West?". *The Western Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (1992): 153-177.

Whitehead mainly focuses on the boundaries that defined the West and how Alaska and Hawaii typically are not included in Western history, but usually fall to diplomatic history. He compares the territories that were acquired by the United States; the two non-continental states are very different in climate, aridity, and agriculture. He says these two states were their own phenomenon and can not be classified by region.

Williams, William A. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1959.

This book gave a good overview of how the United States came to be the nation it is. Williams says that by 1783, the United States was already a world power. The country proved it was deserving of this title in the War of 1812. By the 1890s, the United States was facing a major crisis in that, many believed, the frontier was gone.