***United States Becomes a World Power***

***The Annexation of Hawaii***

After a century of American rule, many native Hawaiians remain bitter about how the United States acquired the islands, located 2,500 miles from the West Coast.

In 1893, a small group of sugar and pineapple-growing businessmen, aided by the American minister to Hawaii and backed by heavily armed U.S. soldiers and marines, deposed Hawaii's queen. Subsequently, they imprisoned the queen and seized 1.75 million acres of crown land and conspired to annex the islands to the United States.

On January 17, 1893, the conspirators announced the overthrow of the queen's government. To avoid bloodshed, Queen Lydia Kamakaeha Liliuokalani yielded her sovereignty and called upon the U.S. government "to undo the actions of its representatives." The U.S. government refused to help her regain her throne. When she died in 1917, Hawaii was an American territory. In 1959, Hawaii became the 50th state after a plebiscite in which 90 percent of the islanders supported statehood.

The businessmen who conspired to overthrow the queen claimed that they were overthrowing a corrupt, dissolute regime in order of advance democratic principles. They also argued that a Western power was likely to acquire the islands. Hawaii had the finest harbor in the mid-Pacific and was viewed as a strategically valuable coaling station and naval base. In 1851, King Kamehameha III had secretly asked the United States to annex Hawaii, but Secretary of State Daniel Webster declined, saying "No power ought to take possession of the islands as a conquest...or colonization." But later monarchs wanted to maintain Hawaii's independence. The native population proved to be vulnerable to western diseases, including cholera, smallpox, and leprosy. By 1891, native Hawaii's were an ethnic minority on the islands.

After the bloodless 1893 revolution, the American businessmen lobbied President Benjamin Harrison and Congress to annex the Hawaiian Islands. In his last month in office, Harrison sent an annexation treaty to the Senate for confirmation, but the new president, Grover Cleveland, withdrew the treaty "for the purpose of re-examination." He also received Queen Liliuokalani and replaced the American stars and stripes in Honolulu with the Hawaiian flag.

Cleveland also ordered a study of the Hawaiian revolution. The inquiry concluded that the American minister to Hawaii had conspired with the businessmen to overthrow the queen, and that the coup would have failed "but for the landing of the United States forces upon false pretexts respecting the dangers to life and property." Looking back on the Hawaii takeover, President Cleveland later wrote that "the provisional government owes its existence to an armed invasion by the United States. By an act of war...a substantial wrong has been done."

President Cleveland's recommendation that the monarchy be restored was rejected by Congress. The House of Representatives voted to censure the U.S. minister to Hawaii and adopted a resolution opposing annexation. But Congress did not act to restore the monarchy. In 1894, Sanford Dole, who was beginning his pineapple business, declared himself president of the Republic of Hawaii without a popular vote. The new government found the queen guilty of treason and sentenced her to five years of hard labor and a $5,000 fine. While the sentence of hard labor was not carried out, the queen was placed under house arrest.

The Republican Party platform in the presidential election of 1896 called for the annexation of Hawaii. Petitions for a popular vote in Hawaii were ignored. Fearing that he lacked two-thirds support for annexation in the Senate, the new Republican president, William McKinley, called for a joint resolution of Congress (the same way that the United States had acquired Texas). With the country aroused by the Spanish American War and political leaders fearful that the islands might be annexed by Japan, the joint resolution easily passed Congress. Hawaii officially became a U.S. territory in 1900.

When Capt. James Cooke, the British explorer, arrived in Hawaii in 1778, there were about 300,000 Hawaiians on the islands; however, infectious diseases reduced the native population. Today, about 20 percent of Hawaii's people are of native Hawaiian ancestry, and only about 10,000 are of pure Hawaiian descent. Native Hawaiians were poorer, less healthy, and less educated than members of other major ethnic groups on the islands.

Sugar growers, who dominated the islands' economy, imported thousands of immigrant laborers first from China, then Japan, then Portuguese from Madeira and the Azores, followed by Puerto Ricans, Koreans, and most recently Filipinos. As a result, Hawaii has one of the world's most multicultural populations.

In 1993, a joined Congressional resolution, signed by President Bill Clinton, apologized for the U.S. role in the overthrow. The House approved the resolution by voice vote. The Senate passed it 65 to 34 votes.

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**Questions**

* ***Directions: On a separate sheet of paper answer the following questions in complete sentences.***

1. How did the United States first take control of Hawaii? Was this an official take over by the US?
2. What reasons did the American businessmen give to take over Hawaii? Do you agree or disagree with their reasons?
3. Why did President Cleveland order an investigation into the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands?
4. What were the findings of that investigation and what did President Cleveland recommend be done in Hawaii after reading the 2,000 page investigation?
5. What did Sanford Dole do after hearing the recommendation from President Cleveland?
6. Why was congress so eager to annex Hawaii in 1900?
7. What was the result of the United States annexing Hawaii and applying American methods to growing sugar?