

Kamehameha IV (Alexander Liholiho 'Iolani)



With the passing of Kamehameha III in 1854, the torch as ruler of the Hawaiian Kingdom was passed on to his *hānai* (adopted) son and heir Alexander Liholiho 'Iolani, the fourth ruling monarch. Born on February 9, 1834, Alexander Liholiho, grandson of Kamehameha I, lived a short but eventful life and left behind a legacy of accomplishments and, sadly, tragedy.

The young prince was educated by two American missionary teachers, Amos and Juliette Cooke, at the Chiefs' Children School in Honolulu, later to be known as the Royal School. The time he spent at the Chiefs' Children School gave young Alexander a good education both academically and religiously.

At the age of 14, he and his brother Lot, who later became Kamehameha V, left school to expand their education through world travel. Traveling on a diplomatic mission with Dr. Gerritt Judd, the young princes were able to see much of Europe and the United States. Before returning to Hawai'i, they traveled by train across America.

It was on this train trip that Alexander Liholiho experienced racial prejudice. While sitting on the train waiting for its departure, he was rudely told by the train conductor that he was in the wrong car and would need to move. When he asked why he had to change cars, someone came by and whispered in the ear of the conductor, who then told him that he did not have to change his seat. Visibly irritated by the incident, the prince wrote in his journal that perhaps he was mistaken for someone's servant because of his dark skin color. He also wrote, "I am disappointed by the Americans. They have no manners, no politeness, not even common civilities to a stranger."

At age twenty, Alexander Liholiho became Kamehameha IV. His first official act as king was to stop annexation negotiations with the United States that his uncle had begun during his reign. He felt that annexation would end the monarchy and the end of his people. Although Alexander Liholiho did not favor annexation, he was willing to negotiate for a reciprocity treaty that would allow sugar from Hawai'i to enter the United States duty free. However, sugar planters from the southern United States strongly opposed untaxed sugar from Hawai'i and applied political pressure on the US Congress to block passage of the treaty.

Although politics and business occupied most of his time, Kamehameha IV did find time to marry his schoolmate Emma Na'ea Rooke who came from a family of high-ranking chiefs. The couple had a son, Albert Edward Kauikeaouli Kaleiopapa, who died at age 4 after a short illness. The cause of death is not known although it was thought that he suffered from meningitis, an inflammation of the brain caused by a bacteria or virus. Others believed he died from appendicitis. The King believed that he was the cause for the death of his son. To stop the young prince from a temper tantrum, the King placed his son under a cold-water faucet. Soon, the child became sick with a high fever. Ten days later, the prince died. Overcome with grief and guilt, the King became a recluse and withdrew from public life.

During his reign the primary concern of the King was the health and welfare of the Hawaiian people. The increasing number of deaths and reduction in the number of births caused

the King and Queen Emma to focus their efforts to establishing a hospital and provide health care for Hawaiians. Through their fundraising efforts and support from the Legislature, Queen's Hospital opened its doors in 1860 in Honolulu. Today, the hospital remains one of the prominent hospitals in Hawai'i.

In addition to the hospital, Kamehameha IV turned his attention to the Church of England for guidance and strength since the death of his son. Desiring that a church be established in Hawai'i, the King asked Queen Victoria to send a bishop to assist with his efforts. The King provided the land and the church was eventually built by his brother, Prince Lot, who named the church St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Besides the hospital and church, Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma founded two schools; 'Iolani School, which began as St. Alban's School for boys. Later, St. Andrew's Priory for girls was founded. 'Iolani is now coeducational while St. Andrew's remains a school for girls. Both schools are located in Honolulu.

A year after the death of his son, Kamehameha IV died unexpectedly at the age of 29. Thousands lined Nu'uani Avenue to say farewell to the King as the procession made its way to Mauna 'Ala, the Royal Mausoleum, where the King was laid to rest next to his son.

Kamehameha IV would be proud to know that his legacy still exists in Hawai'i today.