

## Baptism and Confirmation of Lydia Lili‘uokalani Kamaka‘eha Dominis



On May 18, 1896, at 6:30 a.m. in a private ceremony at the Cathedral of St. Andrew’s, Lydia Lili‘uokalani Kamaka‘eha Dominis, the last ruler of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, was baptized and confirmed by the Right Reverend Alfred Willis, the Second Bishop of the Anglican Church in Hawai‘i. Not many historical accounts are available of the actual baptism and confirmation, except that Queen Kapi‘olani, David Kawānanakoa, Willis’s wife, and the Sisters of St. Andrew’s Priory served as witnesses to the ceremony. According to newspaper accounts of the day, the “font was beautifully decorated with masses of white flowers.”

Born on September 2, 1838, to High Chief Kapa‘akea and High Chiefess Keohokālolo, Lili‘uokalani was adopted at birth by Abner Paki and his wife, Laura Konia (a granddaughter of King Kamehameha I) in accordance with Hawaiian custom and tradition.

Lili‘uokalani’s childhood years were spent studying and playing with Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Paki and Konia’s natural daughter. Starting at the age of 4, Lili‘uokalani was educated, along with other ali‘i, at the Chiefs’ Children’s School in Honolulu. The school, operated by the American missionaries Amos and Juliette Cooke, was unique in that it provided ali‘i children with an education that instilled in them common principles, attitudes, and values as well as a shared vision. Also part of their education was training in music.

Young Lili‘uokalani enjoyed horseback riding, tea parties, and singing and song writing. She was part of the court of Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma, and for a time was engaged to future King Lunalilo. Eventually she married John Dominis, the son of an American sea captain.

Lili‘uokalani is one of several ali‘i not forgotten in the minds of many Hawaiians today. As a Christian and a progressive thinker, her goals were to bring the Hawaiian people firmly into the burgeoning world economy and help them adapt to the realities of the modern world. As a native politician, Lili‘uokalani was deeply concerned with the common good. She spent much of her life setting up charitable organizations devoted to public education, health, and welfare. As queen of the Hawaiian kingdom, Lili‘uokalani was forced to give up her throne in 1893. But her love for the Hawaiian people is evident in her attempt to restore the monarchy.

A Congregationalist since birth and active member of Kawaiaha‘o Church, Lili‘u converted to the Anglican faith less than a year after she was discharged from prison in September of 1895 because she was disappointed with her treatment by the Reverend Henry Parker, the minister of Kawaiaha‘o, who never once called on her during her imprisonment at ‘Iolani Palace, or her subsequent house arrest at Washington Place. As Lili‘u recalled years later in her memoirs, Bishop Willis brought her the Book of Common Prayer while she was imprisoned, and the Sisters “offered little acts of tenderness and kindness which brought anew to my mind that passage in Scripture, ‘I was in prison and ye visited me.’” Forever loyal to the monarchy, Bishop Willis and Sisters Beatrice and Albertina of St. Andrew’s attempted to regularly minister to the Queen’s needs, not because of a desire to convert Lili‘u, but in response to the need for pastoral care, respect, consul, and as equally important, justice and righteousness.

In 1917 Lili'uokalani had a stroke and died in Honolulu at the age of 79. Today she is remembered as a noted composer of over 100 songs, including the famous "Aloha 'Oe" and "Ke Aloha o Ka Haku," commonly known as "The Queen's Prayer." There is a statue of the queen, sculpted by Marianne Pineda, at the State Capitol in Honolulu.

As we celebrate the baptism and confirmation of Queen Lili'uokalani, let us not forget her love for her people and her struggle to keep the Hawaiian kingdom an independent nation. Let us remind ourselves that the stalwart queen did what she thought was right but was forced to give up the throne for what others thought was wrong.