

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HAWAII + THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

A timeline through the early 20th century

FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL UNTIL 1778

Ancient and pre-contact Native Hawaiian civilization develops and thrives in the Ko Hawai'i Pae 'Aina Hawaiian Archipelago.

1778

The English sailor Captain James Cook arrives on the islands off of Kaua'i, marking the violent beginning of western colonization on Hawaiian soil.

1787

A Kanaka Maoli woman named Waine'e is the first Hawaiian to go abroad on a western vessel. Chief Ka'iana tours the Pacific on another merchant ship shortly thereafter. Both make landings in the Pacific Northwest at Nootka Sound, British Columbia.

1805

The first recorded Japanese sailors arrive in Hawai'i.

1807

Henry 'Opūkaha'ia leaves Hawai'i for Connecticut, where he eventually inspires the first wave of missionaries sent to the Hawaiian Islands.

1811

John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company hires the first Kānaka laborers to work in Astoria, Oregon; Naukane (John Cox) arrives on the Northwest Coast.

1819

Young King Kamehameha (known as Liholiho) effectively abolishes the Hawaiian kapu system.

1820

The first American missionaries arrive in Hawai'i, sponsored by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

1820s

Large groups of contracted Kānaka workers are hired by the Hudson's Bay company, joining the North American west coast fur trade.

1825

Fort Vancouver along the Columbia River in Washington is established.

1826

Reverend Hiram Bingham leads the push to standardize the Hawaiian language with a Roman alphabet.

1827

Fort Langley on the Fraser River in British Columbia (BC) is established.

1830s

The Kānaka population at Fort Vancouver, WA reaches its height, with an estimated 300 to 400 Hawaiians living throughout the Columbia River area.

1833

Mexican vaqueros (cowboys) first arrive in Hawai'i and initiate the Hawaiian ranching paniolo culture.

1835

Successful large-scale sugar production begins in Hawai'i.

1840

The Constitution of 1840 establishes a new era of a constitutional monarchy for the Hawaiian Kingdom, reflective of foreign influence at this time.

1841

The first labor strike in Hawai'i is held by plantation workers fighting against dangerous working conditions and meager pay.

1845

William Kaulehelehe (known as Kanaka William) and his wife are sent to minister at Fort Vancouver; by this point there are over 200 Hawaiians working for the Hudson's Bay Company.

1846

The 49th parallel is established as the international border between the stolen lands of what is now called the United States (US) and Canada; the fur industry begins to decline as trade demands shift.

1848

The Māhele of 1848 restructures the stewardship of Hawaiian lands, and effectively opens the door to private, foreign land ownership and the loss of Kānaka land autonomy (80% of private lands become owned by foreigners within two generations).

Kānaka workers at Fort Vancouver and further north head southward for the California Gold Rush.

1850

The Hawaiian government works with foreign leaders in China and Japan to establish contracted labor for the plantation industry.

1852

The first large group of 175 contracted Chinese laborers arrive in Hawai'i.

1853

Kānaka are sent to work as shepherds on the San Juan Islands in the Puget Sound, paving the way for significant Native Hawaiian communities in so-called Canada.

1864

The Constitution of 1864 sets property and literacy requirements for Hawai'i's voters, stripping many Kānaka and plantation workers of suffrage rights.

1865

Thousands of Chinese immigrants migrate to the west coast to work as railroad laborers.

1868

The first large group of 153 contracted Japanese laborers, called Gannenmono, arrive in Hawai'i.

1872

The San Juan Islands are stolen in US interests, and most of its Kānaka residents relocate to British colonial land to escape the US government.

1875

The Reciprocity Treaty of 1875, a free-trade agreement between the US and Hawai'i, is signed into effect, granting further special privileges specifically to the US.

1878

The first plantation workers arrive in Hawai'i from Portugal, recruited from the Azores and Madeira regions.

late 1800s - early 1900s

Scottish, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian, German, and Austrian immigrants arrive in small numbers to work in the plantation industry.

1881

Spreckle's Oceanic Steamship Company opens a passenger steamship service between Honolulu and San Francisco with the SS Lurline.

1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits labor immigration to the US and Hawai'i, significantly impacting the plantation workforce and their families.

1885

Kanyaku Imin begins as a joint Hawaiian and Japanese government-sponsored program, bringing Japanese plantation workers to Hawai'i.

1885

St. Paul's Church on Salt Spring Island, BC is built, serving a majority Hawaiian congregation as Kānaka community grows.

1887

King Kalākaua is forced to sign a new constitution under threats by the Committee of Thirteen, effectively reducing him to a figurehead and granting more power to foreign interests. Also known as the Committee of Safety, this 13-member group lobbied for annexation with links to the sugar industry and missionary complex.

1890s

By this time there are at least 24 Hawaiian families living on Salt Spring Island, BC.

1891

King Kalākaua passes away while visiting San Francisco and the throne is succeeded by his sister, Lili'uokalani.

1893

Queen Lili'uokalani is illegally overthrown by a coup of businessman backed by the US government.

1894

Kanyaku Imin ends after bringing over 28,000 Japanese immigrants to Hawai'i; private contracted labor immigration continues.

1895

A counterrevolution led by Robert Wilcox fails to restore Queen Lili'uokalani to the throne. She is later wrongfully imprisoned in her own home at 'Iolani Palace on counts of treason.

1898

The US illegally annexes the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

1900

President McKinley establishes the "Territory of Hawai'i" on stolen Hawaiian lands.

The first Okinawan and Puerto Rican immigrants and workers arrive in Hawai'i; contracted labor is outlawed, opening the gate towards "free" immigration as the plantation industry rapidly grows.

A large amount of plantation workers begin to leave Hawai'i for Mexico and the American west coast to escape exploitative labor conditions.

1901

The early tourism industry experiences its first boom; the Moana Hotel opens as the first hotel in Waikiki.

1903

The first group of sixteen Korean plantation workers arrive in Hawai'i.

1906

The first group of plantation workers from the Philippines, called sakadas, arrive in Hawai'i.

1908

Immigration to the US is sharply curtailed, especially from Japan; family-only and "picture bride" immigration begins.

Research and text by 2020-2021 Guest Curator

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