

Subject: Rebellions Against Hawaiian Monarchs

(1) **The First Wilcox Rebellion: July 30, 1889.**

This is given brief treatment in Chapter 16 of Ralph Kuykendall, Volume 3 The Kalakaua Dynasty, pages 415 ff.

“The dissension between the king and the cabinet during these months gave rise to suggestion that King Kalakaua should abdicate in favor of his sister Princess Liliuokalani. On December 20, Minister Thurston, in conversation with American Minister Merrill, ‘hinted at a plan for a change of Sovereigns but avoided any statement of the manner in which the change was to be effected...’

...”Her answer...’Told him (Dowsett) if it was particularly necessary if the King abdicated I would--if (the King) was doing wrong--I would but not until then....’

“On January 16 she wrote in her diary, ‘W comes in to consult W on matter of importance--I advise them to use only respectful words and no threats but to explain the situation to him (the king) how everything & the state of the country might be changed should he abdicate if only for a year, then he should take the reigns again, and reign peaceably the rest of his life. W and W. went to the King and after explanations he told them he would think it over.’ January 17 ‘W told me the result of their proposition to the King--he said wait a while--I said, yes, then wait’ ”

Further information on this incident is found in records of the cabinet. On January 18 Thurston reported to his colleagues ‘information as to a native secret society organized with a view to removing the King & putting Mrs. Dominis (Liliuokalani) in his place’...they then having 300 men under arms in the barracks [i.e., Iolani Barracks, rkj]...

“Robert W. Wilcox appears to have been the principal leader of the agitation among the Hawaiians...arrived in Honolulu October 8, 1887... Wilcox stated ‘as the King had lost the confidence of the Natives, **and as he evidently cared nothing about them, and was ready to part with his Kingdom to the United States.** He should be called upon to abdicate in favor of His Sister the Princess Liliuokalani...

[January - July, 1889, six months later]

P. 424 **Insurrection of July 30, 1889**

“...As for Wilcox’s objectives, however, there can be no doubt that two of them were: (1) to replace the Constitution of 1887 with one similar to that of 1864; and (2) to get rid of the Reform cabinet. The uncertainties have to do with the relationship of King Kalakaua and his sister Liliuokalani to the movement.

“...As early as April 5, **1889**, Commissioner Wodehouse reported to his government that he had just heard of a league being formed for the purpose of deposing or inducing the king to abdicate in favor of his sister. ...Kalakaua did not appear to be alarmed. **In this conspiracy, if it really existed, Wilcox probably was not involved and nothing came of it’**

‘Wilcox returned from San Francisco on April 7. He had previously written to Princess Liliuokalani about his intention to do so. In an interview with a Bulletin reporter on July 31, 1889, the princess said that, in reply to Wilcox’s letter, ‘she wrote that if he had any designs he need not return, but if he only intended to come just before the election and run as representative that would be all right.’ Her Palama residence being unoccupied, the princess gave Wilcox permission to live there. He opened an office as a civil engineer and on **May 18 organized the Kamehameha Rifle Association** which received favorable mention in the Bulletin of May 20. Sometime in June, Wilcox held the first of a series of meetings that led up to the action of **July 30. At a house in Iwilei, he gathered a small group of men, all haoles (several Italians, one German, and a Belgian) or part-Hawaiians (Wilcox and his friend Robert N. Boyd).** At this meeting a secret society was formed, the “Liberal Patriotic Association”, of which Wilcox was president and the Belgian Albert Loomens was vice-president, its stated purpose being to restore the former system of government and the former rights of the king.’

“[Kuykendall] Six more meetings were held, the second being on top of Punchbowl and all the others in **Princess Liliuokalani’s house in Palama. In the later meetings, several Chinese were present**

and it is believed that the movement was largely financed by the. The fifth and sixth meetings were held on July 10 and 11. **In the fifth meeting, for the first time, native Hawaiians were admitted.** Wilcox managed everything--raising money, buying guns and ammunition, and recruiting them for the enterprise.

P 425- 426 “On July 15 and 16, American Minister Merrill and British Commissioner Wodehouse received confidential information which they considered reliable in regard to Wilcox’s meetings and his secret organization **whose object was said to be the overthrow of the existing administration and the deposition of the king in favor of his sister Liliuokalani.** Merrill consulted Minister of Foreign Affairs Austin, who had received similar information, and at the latter’s request it was arranged that the **U.S.S. Adams should remain in port until the return of HBM’s Espiegle,** then on cruise. Wodehouse talked with the king, who had also received **the same reports and who said that as he now had information that his sister was allowing her house ‘to be made a centre for treasonable projects,’** he had informed his ministers. Wodehouse added: ‘Meetings still continue to be held at the Princess’ residence by Mr. Wilcox, who is purchasing arms wherever he can get them. It is strange that he is not arrested.’

P. 425 “**In a meeting of the cabinet and the king on July 22,** ‘the alleged conspiracy of R. W. Wilcox and others to create a revolution in favor of placing H.R.H. Liliuokalani on the Throne was discussed, and measures of prevention considered’ ...

“ On the night of Monday, July 29, Wilcox and his party held their seventh and last meeting, and **at about three o’clock on the morning of July 30 they began their march to Iolani Palace.** There were about eighty men in the company, armed with thirty-five rifles and about the same number of rice-bird guns, and a few pistols. For this occasion Wilcox had put on his Italian military uniform and **he had in his pocket the new constitution which he expected the king to sign.** Later, he testified in court that he had received **a promise that the king would sign it.** From Palama, the company marched along King Street, Richards Street, and Palace Walk (now Hotel Street) to the mauka (Miller Street) gate of the palace yard. At that time the palace grounds were surrounded by a masonry wall eight

feet high, with a strong wooden gate on each side. Without difficulty Wilcox and his followers gained entrance to the grounds. The contingent of the King's Guard on duty there, under command of Lieutenant Robert Waipa Parker, withdrew into the palace. Parker excluded the insurgents from the palace itself, but they occupied the palace grounds and the government office buildings (Aliiolani Hale and Kapuawai Building) on the other side of King Street. **Four small cannons were brought out from storage and placed by the insurgents in position to command the four gates.**

“The king was not in the palace but at Honuakaha, the private residence of Queen Kapiolani near the corner of Queen and Punchbowl streets. To that place Wilcox sent the royal carriage with a message inviting the king to return to the palace. His Majesty gave an evasive reply and then, taking part of his staff and a dozen of the King's Guards, went down **to his boathouse on the edge of the harbor** where he stayed for the rest of the day. Wilcox fancied himself the Garibaldi of Hawaii. By two other messengers, he repeated his earlier invitation to the king, but the latter evidently thought it was best for him to rely on his ministers in this crisis.

“One explanation that has been given of the king's absence from the palace should be mentioned. It is that **Kalakaua knew of Wilcox's plan** to get a new constitution and to throw out the Reform cabinet, and that he was prepared to cooperate until he learned from native friends, **on the evening of July 29, that Wilcox also intended to depose him and put Liliuokalani on the throne.** With this knowledge the king went, late in the evening, from the palace to Honuakaha after giving Lt. Parker the instructions on which the latter acted the following morning. Sources of this explanation are British Commissioner Wodehouse, on what he considered good authority; L.A. Thurston, who mention Col. Curtis P. Laukea, a member of the king's staff, as his authority; and V.V. Ashford. The story is incompatible with other known facts except on the theory of a double cross by Wilcox or the king.

“As soon as the government authorities (cabinet, marshal, and commander of the volunteer battalions) learned of Wilcox's actions, they mobilized their forces, stationed sharpshooters in buildings

surrounding the palace yard, and placed a cordon of volunteers around the area. Before ordering an attack on the insurgents, the three cabinet ministers who were in Honolulu (Austin, Damon, C.W. Ashford) conferred with the king at his boathouse and informed the representatives of foreign governments of their intended course of action. At the suggestion of the foreign officials, Minister Damon attempted to get in touch with Wilcox; the latter refused to talk with him, and at that time (between ten and eleven o'clock) **a single shot' signaled the start of the fighting.** The insurgents made some use of their cannons but were soon driven from them by sharpshooters stationed in the Opera House across King Street. Soon after noon, the government forces reoccupied the government building. About thirty of Wilcox's men surrendered to Lt.

Parker and the rest were forced to seek cover in the bungalow which at that time stood in the northern corner of the palace yard. Late in the afternoon the Bungalow was subjected to concentrated rifle fire and at the same time crude bombs, formed by tying twenty-penny spikes to sticks of dynamite, were thrown onto the roof of the building by two local baseball players stationed behind the stone wall surrounding the palace yard. These bombs caused a terrific noise and much damage. Wilcox and his fellow insurgents (those who had not already escaped) very soon surrendered. There had been casualties: six insurgents were killed (another died of wounds later) and a dozen wounded."

"About six o'clock in the morning of this unhappy day, a message from King Kalakaua informed the American minister that insurgents had taken possession of the palace grounds," Merrill got in touch with Commander E.T. Woodward of the USS Adams and by arrangement a squad of marines was sent ashore to guard the American legation when the fighting started. During the day, the government obtained 10,000 rounds of rifle ammunition from the Adams. Late in the afternoon at Merrill's request and with the permission of the government, a larger force (about seventy men) was landed from the Adams to assist if needed in preserving order during the night. Complete quiet prevailed during the night, and all the men from the Adams returned to the ship in the morning.

"There was reported to be on July 30 a very general impression in the community that the king was in sympathy with the Wilcox insurrection.

In refutation, Kalakaua declared in a note to Minister SM Damon: ‘The feeling or rumor...that I am in league with the movement of Mr. Wilcox, I make this solemn declaration that these reports or rumors are not true...Other reports implicated Princess Liliuokalani in Wilcox’s conspiracy. In answer to a direct question, ‘The Princess replied that she knew nothing whatever of Wilcox’s intentions until the Ministers informed her...in June, that after being so informed she at once told Wilcox she did not approve of his designs...and told him that he should desist without further delay...’ But Wilcox continued to hold meetings in her Palama residence, and it is **scarcely credible that the princess remained ignorant of that fact.**

[more about what happened following indictments for treason, etc]

My grandfather’s account in Hawaiian has never been translated, so I’ve looked at his sentences for what he said about what happened to him on the palace grounds on the day of the insurrection:

[From the family genealogy mss. of Rev. Solomon Ka’ulili]:

(after he lost the ‘opihi he planned to sell in Honolulu, he decided to look for work on the palace grounds with his **uncle, Mr. Kaki Ku...**

“...’o ia o Mr. Kaki Ku, e noho ana ma ka hale ohua o ke ali’i Kalakaua, ma Kaimoeipo, he hale loihi ma ka aoao mauka o ke alanui Hotele a piliana i ka hale koa ia manawa a me ka hale lio a me ka’a o ke alii i ka hale ana a loa no hoi ua makuakane ohana nei o’u a me kana wahine, he makuahine ohana ho’i no’u ma ua makuakane ola ho’i o’u, a ‘o ke kino ho’i kona inoa, he Kilipaki, ua hoike akula i ka mana’o e noho me laua, a ua ae maila laua, a o ka noho ihola no ia, a’ole i liuliu iho ia noho ana, ua oili aela ma ke kahi kakahiaka ae ka lono o ke kipa ana ae o ke keiki Hawaii a Italia (Willicox) me kona puali koa no ka lawe ae ka hale alii a me ka hale koa ma lalo o kons malu..

“he, Mr. Kaki Ku, staying at the cottage (i.e., probably of the helpers at the palace grounds, the horse stables, carriage house, etc.) at Kaimoeipo, a long house on the mauka side of Hotel St. close to the barracks then and the horse stables and carriage of the king and at his house was my uncle of my family here and his wife, an aunt of mine and my uncle, they 2, agreed that I stay with them a while where they were staying, when appeared one morning the news of the visit of the Hawaiian son Italian(Wilcox) with his soldiers to take the palace and the barracks under his control (malu).

A ua la ala, he a maia ia kakahiaka a'u i komo aku ai iloko o ka pa 'lii, no ke ake e ike i keia kanaka a ke kaulana nui wale, a he mea oiai'o, ua ike io no hoi i ka helehelena o ua kanaka kaulana ala (Wilcox) a me na koa ona e aahu ana i ka palule ulaula me ka lole wawae eleele me ua pu kaupoohiwi, a laina mai ana, a e ku mai ana kekahi poe ma na puka pa o ka hale alii a e ku mai ana kahi poe ma na alapii o na aoao eha o ka hale alii me na pu kuniahi eha, a o na alakai o ua poe pu ala oia keia poe keonimana:

And that day, at morning light when I came into the palace yard, wanting to know this man just famous, and it was a fact, I saw the face of this famous person (Wilcox) and his warriors dressed in red shirts and black trouser and shouldering guns, and lining and standing some at the gates of the palace, some standing on the stairways on four sides of the palace with four cannons, and leaders of those riflemen of these gentlemen:

(1) Ma ke alapii ma ka aoao makai e nana ana i ke alanui Moi, o Mr. Robert boyd a me kona hoa.

By the stairway on the seaward side facing King St, Mr. Robert Boyd and his companions;

(2) Ma ke alapii e huli ala i ke alanui Hotele ma ka aoao mauka i Puoina.. Mr. Loika a me kona hoa.

By the stairway turning to Hotel St. on the mauka side toward Punchbowl, Mr. Loika and his companions;

(3) Ma ke alapii e huli ala i ke alanui Likeke ma Ewa 'o Mr. Poni a me kona hoa,

By the staircase turning to Richard St. toward Ewa, Mr. Poni and his companions,

A o ka nui ae o na kaa, aia lakou ma na wahi a pau o ka pa alii e hali ana i na noho laau e hoopuni ana i na kumu laau ohahi, a hoopili aku ma ka aoao maloko aku nei o ka pa lii e nana aku ana i ke alanui Moi, a oiai pela wale no e hiki ai ke aneane ae a hiki ke nana aku ma waho o ka pa alii, oiai ka pa'lii ku ana me kona ano o ka wa kahiko, ka hele a kiekie me ka launa ole, a ma ka hora e 8:00 a i ole ia, hora 9:00 paha oia kakahiaka nui, ua ike ia akula o Hon. Samuel Damon i ka hele ana mai ma ke ano he Elele Moi mai na Kuhina mai a

ke Aupuni...

The number of carriages, were in the places of the palace grounds, following the Plantings ()?) surrounding the ohahi trees, and close to the side within the palace grounds looking toward King St, while thus closer reaching to see outside the palace yard (fence) standing as in olden times, to go up high without meeting (anyone?) at 8:00 or 9:00 perhaps in the early morning, was then seen Hon. Samuel Damon coming in the nature of a messenger (of the king) from the ministry of the government...

e noi mai ana i ka aoao kipi, e haawi pio aku ia lakou, eia nae, ua hoole ia aku ia manao e ke alakai o ka aoao kipi, oia hoi ke kenelala Robert Wilcox, a ia Hon. Samiuel Damon no a uka ae a kaalo ma ka aoao mawaho o na puka pa e nana ala i ke alanui Moi, oia no ka manawa i poha mai ai ke kani ana o ka pu kuni ahi a hoohana ia ana e Robert boyd, e hoike ana i ke kukala kua mua loa e hooili ia ana ia manawa, a o ka manawa ihola no ia o ke kua ana o na aoao elua, e ki aku ana a e ki mai ana, oiai hoi ka aoao kipi e ku kohana aku ana i ke akea no ke kiki ia mai ao o ka aoao Aupuni e pee mai ana iloko o na kauhala e ku poaiapuni mai ana i ka hale alii, a maia ana i hoeha ia ai o Robert Boyd a me kona hoa, ma o ke ku ana i ka poka pu, ma kona poohiwi, a pela no hoi o Geo Madam (?) a me kona hoa, a o Loika a me Poni, ua make maoli laua, a nou hoi ua ku ia au ma ka aoao hema o ko'u papahale (?) ma ke ano pahia. Ua hoi au a me kahi poe lehulehu ma lalo o ka hale waho (?) poka o ka hale alii, oia ka hale malalo o ka malumalu o na kumulaau nunui e ulu ala no i keia manawa. Ua hoomau makou i ka noho ana ma laila me ka manao iloko o makou, ina a poeleele ia manawa makou e puka like ai a hoohana hou i na pu kuniahi ma ke ki ana, eia nae ma ka po ana iho, ua paa ihola makou i ka hopu ia e na koa o ke aupuna, a laweia akula makou no loko o ka hale paahao ma kuapapanui, me ka kou ia mai ano me ke kumu o ka pu.

asking the rebel side to give up (surrender to them), however, the thought of the leader of the rebel side refused, General Robert Wilcox, to Hon. Samuel Damon and passed by the side outside of the gates looking toward King St., when the bursting sounding of the guns used by Robert boyd revealing the announcement of war being then carried out, it was then the battle of the second side, shooting while the rebels side stood unprotect (kohana, ie., naked) in the wide (area) of the shooting of the Government side hiding in the shrubbery surrounding the palace grounds, from that was Robert Boyd and his companion standing in the explosion, hurt in his shoulder and thus also George Madam and his companions, Loika and

Poni, **they two died**, and as for me I was standing on the southern side of my the house platform (foundation?) slipping (i.e.unstable, ano pahia)...I went back with some people down (i.e., he was shoved down into the place where Wilcox's men were pushed) under the shade of tall trees growing there at this time. We continued to stay there with the thought that when it became dark then we could get out and at night (when the shooting would go on), and as night grew, then we would be grabbed and taken to prison, as though we were the source of the gun (i.e. the use of guns).

Ua ala mai na ho'omanao ana me ke aloha i ka ohana me he ala oia paa ana, ua make. I ko makou komo ana aku e paa mai ana o Robert Wilcox, J. M. Poepoe, Haole Pelikuua, a me na lehulehu he nui wale.

The thought awakens (us) with love for the family as though affirmed is death. As we come out (i.e., try to come out of it) Robert Wilcox, J. M. Poepoe, Haole Pelikuauu and a multitude are steadfast.

Ua hoopaa ia makou ma ke ano he poe kipi, hoohaunaele kipi a me ka ohumu kipi.

We are classifed (retained ? hoopaa'a) in the manner of rebellious people, troublemakers and grumblers.

He ho'okahi o makou pule o ka paa ana ma kuapapanui, alaila,. ma kekahi po, ua hoihoi ia makou ma kai o kawa, a malaila ou kahi i noho ai a pau na malama ekolu, a ma ka noho ana i ka aha a kapuni **ma ka hale aupuni ma Mililani**, i hookuuia mai ai au me ka pili ole o ka hewa kipi ia'u, a ua hoi aku la no au me kuu makuakane ohana (Mr. Kaki Ku) ma ka hale ohua o Ka Moi Kalakaua ma Haimoeipo, Honolulu, hooaumoe ihola ma ia po a ao aela, hiki ana 'o Mr. Charles Hairama kahu kaa nui o ka Moi Kalakaua a noi ana no iau i kahu kaa no ke alii wahine Poomaikalani (Kapo) o kuu ae akula no ia, a hoi akula au e hana, a ua noho ma ka hale lio he wahi lum i ma ka hale o lalo a malaila no au e noho ai ma na malama ekolu, a no ka maa ole i ke ea o kukae ame ka mimi o ka lio, ua lilo i mea hoonawaliwali i ke ola, no laila, ua hele aku a e noi i kuu Haku alii Poomaikalani e waiho ana au i kana hana, ua aua ikaika loa maila kela iau...

One of our prayers of peace, then, one night, we in the sea of the channel (i.e., passage through the reef, space), **there is my place where I lived for three months, at the government house in Mililani**, I was

released from the relationship with rebels, and I returned to my uncle's family at the cottage of the King Kalakaua at Haimoeipo Honolulu since that time, when Mr. Charles Hiram the keeper of the king's carriage asked me to take care of the Princess Poomaikelani's carriage, so I was released and went to work and stayed in the room of the house below for three months, and because I was not accustomed to the air of the horses' urine and waste matter, I became ill, so then I went to ask my chiefess Poomaikelani to leave my job, and she refused (me) strenuously..." [end of quote from manuscript].