

that Mexican peasants of the 1950s and 1960s sat idly by as government functionaries dictated their lives.

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*Hawai'i: Eight Hundred Years of Political and Economic Change*. By Sumner La Croix. (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2019. xiv + 394 pp.)

Sumner La Croix's *Hawai'i: Eight Hundred Years of Political and Economic Change* covers a remarkable span of time, from the first settlement of Hawai'i by Polynesians until the present. While analyzing the entire period of human habitation in the Islands, the volume specifically focuses on the intersection of economic and political history. Critical topics such as first settlement, unification, Western contact and its impact, the overthrow of the monarchy, the plantation economy, and statehood are all examined. However, *Hawai'i* is not a general history of the Hawaiian Islands. It is most useful for the reader who has a basic knowledge of historical developments in the Islands and is seeking to understand the continuity of economic and political patterns.

La Croix's work benefits from utilizing the latest scholarship in Hawaiian history and related fields. This scholarship includes in the first sections of the book new evidence placing the first human settlement in Hawai'i as late as the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, hundreds of years later than experts had previously believed. The author also addresses the development of agriculture, demographic change, and the formation of states in the pre-contact period. Covering the decades following the arrival of Westerners, La Croix considers the impact of trade with outsiders and the population decline caused by the introduction of foreign diseases. Also accompanying contact with the West came dramatic changes during the mid-nineteenth century in the system of land and property rights. The author examines both the winners and losers during this process. The overthrow of the monarchy and Hawai'i's takeover by the United States are critical issues in Hawaiian history. *Hawai'i*, however, does not focus on a narrative of these events, which are extensively covered in other scholarship. Rather, La Croix zeroes in on Hawai'i's commercial relationship with the United States, especially the 1875 reciprocity treaty between the two countries, as one important cause of the loss of Hawai'i's independence.

In analyzing the decades following the American takeover, La Croix notes the continuity of centralized government that began with the unification of

the Islands under Kamehameha I and continued into the twentieth century under new elites. Another key topic from the territorial period is the Hawaiian Homes Act of 1921, a federal program intended to provide Native Hawaiians with designated lands. Here, La Croix traces the program from its inception to the present, including the program's struggle to succeed. In discussing contemporary Hawai'i from statehood in 1959 onward, the author selects several key issues on which to concentrate. One is how Hawai'i achieved statehood and what a new, more democratic political order meant, especially for the economy of the Islands. La Croix also tackles the matter of land reform in Hawai'i that began with the Land Reform Act of 1967 and the subsequent collapse of the once-dominant residential leasehold system in the state. Another contemporary problem that La Croix examines is the high cost of housing in Hawai'i and the failure of land reform to address this challenge.

Although not intended as a comprehensive history, *Hawai'i: Eight Hundred Years of Political and Economic Change* is remarkable in its chronological scope. Incorporating the latest research in various fields, it is especially useful for those with an interest in the connections between economic and political developments in Hawaiian history.

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*The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai'i and the Early United States.* By Noelani Arista. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019. 300 pp.)

Noelani Arista brings fresh perspective to American merchant and missionary contacts with the Hawaiian Kingdom in the early nineteenth century. By centering her narrative around an 1825 chiefly *kapu* forbidding native women from boarding foreign ships, Arista expands our understanding of such taboos as “orally pronounced public decree” (p. 178) and demonstrates how foreign merchant and naval officers, including Americans, increasingly required the Hawaiian *ali'i* (chiefs) to publish written laws, in order to deal with the foreigners' repeated attempts to violate *kapu*. Most stunning are her descriptions of British and American captains bombarding the small kingdom with firepower, in order to protest new laws against prostitution, a reminder that initial Anglo-European imperialism was not always government directed.