

# Pearl harbor



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During the early 19th century, Pearl Harbor was not used for large ships due to its shallow entrance. The interest of United States in the Hawaiian Islands followed its whaling and trading ships in the Pacific. As early as 1820, an "Agent of the United States for Commerce and Seamen" was appointed to look after American business in the Port of Honolulu. These commercial ties to the American continent were accompanied by the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. American missionaries and their families became an integral part of the Hawaiian political body.

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, many American warships visited Honolulu. In most cases, the commanding officers carried letters from the U. S. Government giving advice on governmental affairs and of the relations of the island nation with foreign powers. In 1841, the newspaper *Polynesian*, printed in Honolulu, advocated that the U. S. establish a naval base in Hawaii for protection of American citizens engaged in the whaling industry. The British Hawaiian Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Crichton Wyllie, remarked in 1840 that "... my opinion is that the tide of events rushes on to annexation to the United States.

With the conclusion of the Civil War, the purchase of Alaska, the increased importance of the Pacific states, the projected trade with the Orient and the desire for a duty free market for Hawaiian staples, Hawaiian trade expanded. In 1865, the North Pacific Squadron was formed to embrace the western coast and Hawaii. Lackawanna in the following year was assigned to cruise among the islands, " a locality of great and increasing interest and importance. " This vessel surveyed the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands toward Japan. As a result the United States claimed Midway Island.

The Secretary of the Navy was able to write in his annual report of 1868, that in November 1867, 42 American flags flew over whaleships and merchant vessels in Honolulu to only six of other nations. This increased activity caused the permanent assignment of at least one warship to Hawaiian waters. It also praised Midway Island as possessing a harbor surpassing Honolulu's. In the following year, Congress approved an appropriation of \$50,000 on March 1, 1869, to deepen the approaches to this harbor. Astronaut photograph of Pearl Harbor from October 2009

After 1868, when the Commander of the Pacific Fleet visited the islands to look after American interests, naval officers played an important role in internal affairs. They served as arbitrators in business disputes, negotiators of trade agreements and defenders of law and order. Periodic voyages among the islands and to the mainland aboard U. S. warships were arranged for members of the Hawaiian royal family and important island government officials. When King Lunalilo died in 1873, negotiations were underway for the cessation of Pearl Harbor as a port for the duty-free export of sugar to the U. S. citation needed]

With the election of King Kalakaua in March 1874, riots prompted landing of sailors from USS Tuscorora and Portsmouth. The British warship, HMS Tenedos, also landed a token force. During the reign of King Kalakaua the United States was granted exclusive rights to enter Pearl Harbor and to establish " a coaling and repair station. " Although this treaty continued in force until August 1898, the U. S. did not fortify Pearl Harbor as a naval base. The shallow entrance constituted a formidable barrier against the use of the deep protected waters of the inner harbor as it had for 60 years.

The United States and the Hawaiian Kingdom signed the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 as supplemented by Convention on December 6, 1884, the Reciprocity Treaty was made by James Carter and ratified it in 1887. On January 20, 1887, the United States Senate allowed the Navy to exclusive right to maintain a coaling and repair station at Pearl Harbor. (The US took possession on November 9 that year). The Spanish-American War of 1898 and the desire for the United States to have a permanent presence in the Pacific both contributed to the decision.