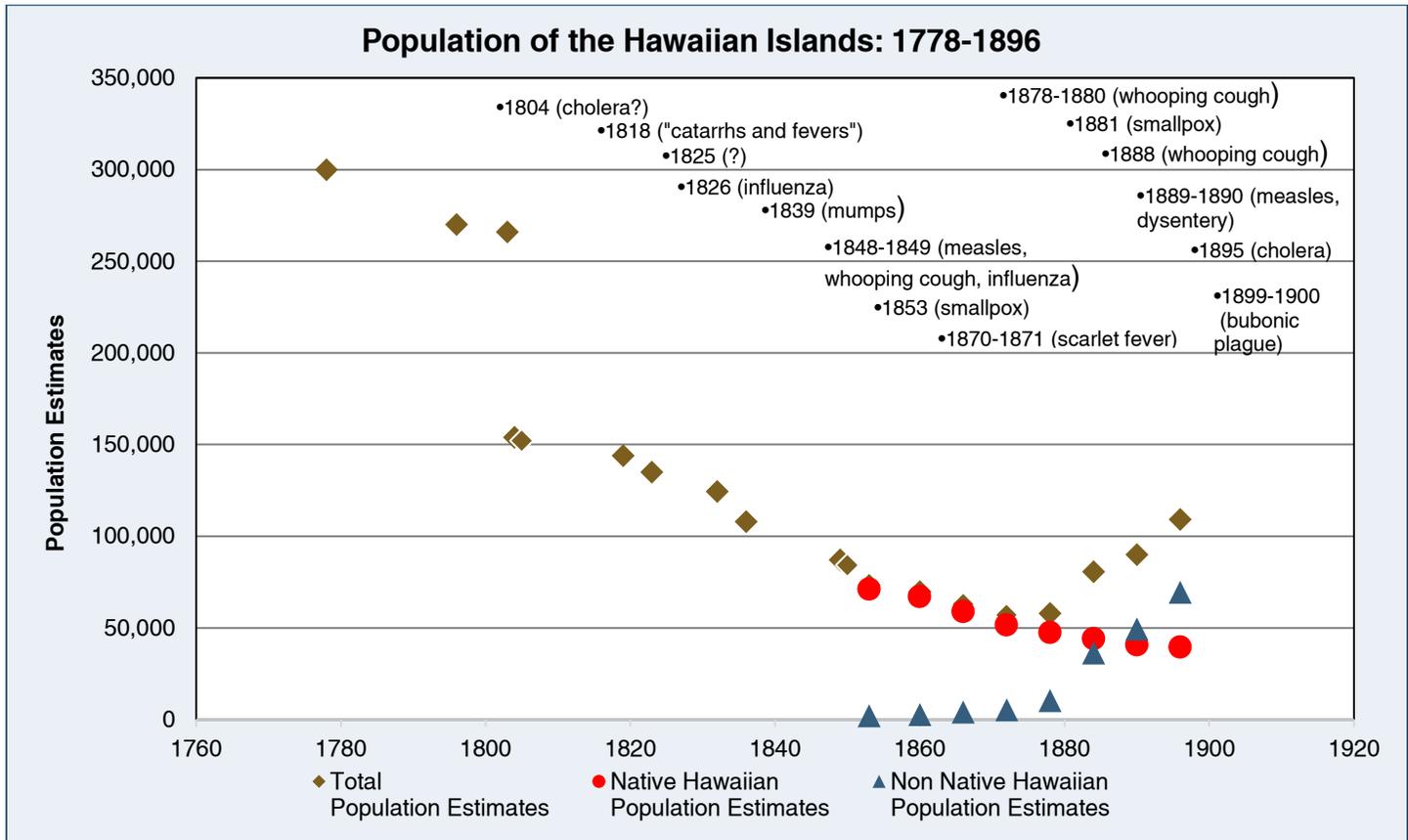


## Estimated Population of the Hawaiian Islands: 1778-1896



**Source:** Robert C. Schmitt. *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778-1965*. (Honolulu, 1968). Robert C. Schmitt. *Historical Statistics of Hawaii*. (Honolulu, 1977).

It is not known when the first people arrived on the islands, one theory states that the first Polynesians arrived in Hawai'i sometime during the 4th century. What is known is that human habitation of what would one day be known as the Hawaiian Islands began with a small group of people who sailed there from the South Pacific. Over time the population increased as other Polynesians left their home islands and migrated north. They not only brought with them the necessities for survival, but the skills, the abilities, the culture, and the heritage to build the foundation of a society.

How many people inhabited the islands at the time of European contact is also not known. What is known is that the Native Hawaiian people have endured numerous devastating hardships and catastrophic events that have shaped and reshaped Native Hawaiian society and culture.

The earliest account of a large-scale statistical census conducted in the islands comes from a *mo'olelo* (historical legend). According to accounts, it occurred, circa 1500, on the "Plain of Numbering", located in the Kona area on the western coast of the island of Hawai'i. In one version of the narrative, *ali'i* (chief) 'Umi-a-Liloa had each person from the districts he conquered deposited a stone (the size and weight determined by the person's carrying capacity). While the one-stone-one-person methodology does not conform to

contemporary statistical design, modeling and analysis methods utilized by the US Census Bureau, it was a beginning. The first US Census would not occur until 1790, though the US Census Bureau would not be created until 1902.

Year	Total Population Estimates	Native Hawaiian Population Estimates	Non-Native Hawaiian Population Estimates
1778	300,000		
1796	270,000		
1803	266,000		
1804	154,000		
1805	152,000		
1819	144,000		
1823	134,925		
1832	124,449		
1836	107,954		
1849	87,063		
1850	84,165		
1853	73,138	71,019	2,119
1860	69,800	66,984	2,816
1866	62,959	58,765	4,194
1872	56,897	51,531	5,366
1878	57,985	47,508	10,477
1884	80,578	44,232	36,346
1890	89,990	40,622	49,368
1896	109,020	39,504	69,516

**Source:** Robert C. Schmitt. *Demographic Statistics of Hawaii: 1778-1965*. (Honolulu, 1968).  
 Robert C. Schmitt. *Historical Statistics of Hawaii*. (Honolulu, 1977).

With the arrival of missionaries from New England in the 1820s, came a series of enumerations, collectively known as the “Missionary census.” The missionaries had a need to count the population, in order to, measure the scope of the work that would be required to persuade or convert the “natives” to their faith.

By the late 1800s, Hawai‘i had a western-style government addressing the problems of the day in a western-style manner. To that end they required data on their population, hence a census. As in contemporary times, a census is a procedure that acquires information about people in a given population, and the data collected is used to impact the design and implementation of policies and laws in governmental sectors including education, housing, economics and health.

With the overthrow of the Native Hawaiian Government in 1893, a new western style and controlled government, the Republic of Hawai‘i, emerged and continued in the enumeration of the people. In 1898, the islands were incorporated into the United States as the Territory of Hawai‘i. Two years later, Hawai‘i became a participant in the US Census.

Despite its limitations, the past censuses of Hawai‘i’s population show that the population in Hawai‘i was steadily decreasing. The population increase during the end of the 1800s was largely due to the increasing non-Hawaiian population. During the same time, the Native Hawaiian population continued to decrease.

The increasing western influence in the Hawaiian Islands had a devastating effect on the Native Hawaiian population. The introduction of Western diseases directly decimated the local population. There were waves of epidemics of Western diseases. Those who survived had to face the other impacts of westernization.

Era	Census	Total	Island							
			Hawai'i	Kaho'olawe	Maui	Lāna'i	Moloka'i	O'ahu	Kaua'i	Ni'ihau
Kingdom of Hawai'i	1823	142,050	85,000	50	20,000	2,500	3,500	20,000	10,000	1,000
	1832	130,313	45,792	80	35,062	1,600	6,000	29,755	10,977	1,047
	1836	108,579	39,364	80	24,199	1,200	6,000	27,809	8,934	993
	1853	73,138	24,450	—	17,574	600	3,607	19,126	6,991	790
	1860	69,800	21,481	—	16,400	646	2,864	21,275	6,487	647
	1866	62,959	19,808	—	14,035	394	2,299	19,799	6,299	325
	1872	56,897	16,001	—	12,334	348	2,349	20,671	4,961	233
	1878	57,985	17,034	—	12,109	214	2,581	20,236	5,634	177
	1884	80,578	24,991	—	15,970	2,614		28,068	8,935	—
	1890	89,990	26,754	—	17,357	174	2,652	31,194	11,643	216
Republic of Hawai'i	1896	109,020	33,285	—	17,726	105	2,307	40,205	15,228	164

Source: Thrum's Hawaiian Almanac and Annual.

With a growing western-style economy, a rapidly developing western-style education system, and the adaptation of a western system of government, Native Hawaiians quickly lost the ability to continue their traditional practice of sustainability. As Native Hawaiians were drawn into a western lifestyle, survival destined them to adapting the new western practices. Employment and housing have taken over as two of the major issues concerning economic self-sufficiency and well-being of contemporary Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i.

Nationality	Kingdom of Hawai'i						Republic of Hawai'i
	1853	1866	1872	1878	1884	1890	1896
Natives (Hawaiians)	70,036	57,125	49,044	44,088	40,014	34,436	31,019
Half-Castes (Part-Hawaiian)	983	1,640	2,487	3,420	4,218	6,186	8,485
Chinese	364	1,206	1,938	5,916	17,939	15,301	13,733
Americans	692	2,988	889	1,276	2,066	1,928	2,266
Hawaiian born of foreign parents	309		849	947	2,040	7,495	1,538
Britons (British)	435		619	883	1,282	1,344	912
Portuguese	86		395	436	9,377	8,602	75
Germans	81		224	272	1,600	1,034	8,232
French	60		88	81	192	70	216
Japanese	—		—	—	116	12,360	19,382
Norwegian	8		—	—	362	227	22,329
Other Foreigners	80		364	666	416	419	409
Polynesian	4		—	—	956	588	424
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,138</b>	<b>62,959</b>	<b>56,897</b>	<b>57,985</b>	<b>80,578</b>	<b>89,990</b>	<b>109,020</b>

Source: Thrum's Hawaiian Almanac and Annual.

The growth in the number and quantity of the various racial populations in the islands is largely related to the economic growth of the islands. A major mechanism for growth were the increasing sugar plantation in number and size. There was an increasing demand for laborers to work them. The first large wave of immigrant laborers came from China starting in the 1850s, Portuguese contract laborers in the 1870s, Japanese immigrant laborers in the 1880s. Smaller groups came from Norway and Germany in the 1880s. When Hawai'i became a US Territory, Hawai'i became subject to US immigration laws which restricted Asian entry. Immigration from that point shifts to laborers from US territories and possessions as Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

The "Hawaiian" population steadily decreases, but the Part-Hawaiian increases as the Hawaiian population inter-marry with members of the new immigrant populations. This Part-Hawaiian population share multiple cultures and lifestyles which many see as a positive aspect, however it comes at the expense of the traditional lifestyle.

The loss of traditional diet, lifestyle, and health care put Native Hawaiians at greater risk. This risk stems from high economic and cultural stress, lifestyle and risk behaviors, and late or lack of access to health care. Accordingly, Native Hawaiians have a high incidence of diseases and ailments, early disability, and premature death.

**Office of Hawaiian Affairs**

Email: [demography@oha.org](mailto:demography@oha.org)

For additional information visit the Native Hawaiian Data Book: [www.ohadatabook.com](http://www.ohadatabook.com)

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Trends-Rpt-01 (4/22)

