

PRINCE LOT KAPUAIWA KAMEHAMEHA

THE FIRST FULL BLOODED HAWAIIAN FREEMASON

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Prince Lot Kamehameha was the grandson of Kamehameha the Great, who in 1810 completed the unification of the Hawaiian Islands and founded the Kingdom of Hawaii by a combination of conquest and a treaty, and became its first ruler. He is also known as Kamehameha I, and is sometimes described as "The Lonely One." He established the Kamehameha dynasty, which ended with the death of his grandson, Kamehameha V. The native Hawaiian people regard Kamehameha I, as one of their greatest heroes. The nation he created came to an abrupt end on January 17, 1893, when Queen Lili'uokalani was deposed, and along with her departure the Monarchy vanished. It was then that the Provisional Government became the ruling power of the Hawaiian Islands.

Kamehameha the Great was born between 1753 and 1760, at Kohala on the northern side of the big Island of Hawaii, and died on May 8 1819. Captain James Cook, the famous Pacific navigator and explorer, and the first Westerner to discover our Islands, saw Kamehameha as a young warrior, when along with his uncle Kalaniopuu the Ruling Chief of Kohala, they visited Cook's ships in November of 1788. On February 14, 1789, Kamehameha was wounded by gunfire in the fight at the beach when Cook was killed at Kealahou Bay on the Island of Hawaii.

Some accounts of Freemasonry in Hawaii have recorded that Captain James Cook considered by many to be the greatest Pacific explorer and navigator, and the first Westerner to discover the Hawaiian Islands was a Freemason. The exact date that the first Hawaiians discovered the Islands is unknown, but most archaeologists tend to agree that they have been here close to a millennium, give or take a few years. Cook is considered by most scholars to be the first Westerner to discover the Islands, and this he did on Sunday morning, January 18, 1778.

There are some individuals who claim that the Spanish navigator, Juan Gaetano discovered the Islands in 1555, but the event did not become well known, while on the other hand, Cook's exploits were widely publicized. In any case, virtually all historians credit Captain James Cook with being the first Westerner to discover our Islands. His expedition consisted of two converted colliers, the HMS Discovery, and the HMS Resolution, with a combined crew of 192 officers and men. The Sailing Master was William Bligh, who thirteen years later commanded the HMS Bounty which ended in the most widely known mutiny in maritime history.

Captain Cook named the Islands the "Sandwich Islands," in honor of his friend and patron, John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, and First Lord of the Admiralty, the name which the Islands were known by for many years.

In spite of the oft-told claim that Captain James Cook was a Freemason, this has never been confirmed. The United Grand Lodge of England has advised us that a thorough search of their Grand Lodge Register going back to the 18th Century, did not include his name, and that no evidence in their archives indicated that Cook was ever a Freemason.

Prince Lot Kapuaiwa Kamehameha was born on December 11, 1830. His mother was Kinau the daughter of Kamehameha the Great. She became the Kuhina nui, in 1832. His father was Mataio Kekuanaoa, a descendent of the Chiefs of the Island of Oahu. He had also been the governor of Oahu as well as a member of the House of Nobles and the privy council.

The Kuhina nui is commonly translated into English as a "prime minister" or "premier," but neither of these interpretations are correct, the office had no counterpart in any European or American government. The constitution of 1840 defined the role of the Kuhina nui as follows: All business connected with the special interests of the kingdom,

which the King wishes to transact, shall be done by the Kuhina nui under the authority of the King. All documents and business of the kingdom executed by the Kuhina nui, shall be considered as executed by the King's authority. The Kuhina nui shall be the King's special counselor in the great business of the kingdom. The King shall not act without the knowledge of the Kuhina nui, nor shall the Kuhina nui act without the knowledge of the King, and the veto of the King on the acts of the Kuhina nui shall arrest the business. All important business of the kingdom which the King chooses to transact in person, he may do it but not without the approbation of the Kuhina nui. It was a unique system of dual executive government, and it came about with the death of Kamehameha the Great. The Kuhina nui was the bane of the Kings that immediately followed Kamehameha the Great.

Prince Lot was an intelligent educated young man. At the age of eighteen he had traveled along with his brother Alexander Liholiho in the care of Dr. Garrit Parmele Judd, minister of finance, on a diplomatic mission to France, Great Britain, and the United States, where they traveled extensively in all three countries. Their voyage also included stops at Panama, Acapulco, Jamaica, and Havana. Lot and Alexander served as Judd's secretaries, and both kept diaries. They departed Honolulu on September 11, 1849, and returned on September 9, 1850. The young men met President Zachary Taylor of the United States, and French President Louis Napoleon who shortly after became Emperor Napoleon III. They also met Lord Palmerston, and Prince Albert in Great Britain. They did not see Queen Victoria, who was indisposed awaiting the birth of a child. In each of the three countries, they met a host of dignitaries. There is no doubt that the year of traveling in foreign countries, observing and mixing with people of totally different cultures than their own, and meeting with heads of state, greatly enhanced their education, and had a profound impact on how each governed Hawaii when he became its King.

It has been speculated that the experiences of Lot and Alexander on the trip greatly contributed to their anti-annexation attitude toward the United States, and reinforced their aristocratic tendencies. Prince Alexander was obviously very much impressed by the British, which was later reflected in many of his actions when he became King. His unfortunate experience as they were leaving Washington, D.C. by train, when a conductor tried to put him out of a car because of his color, certainly had a negative

impact on Alexander's attitude about the United States. When Lot became Kamehameha V, he abolished the Constitution of 1852, which contained numerous American political concepts.

A fundamental concern of both Prince Lot and Prince Alexander, was to keep their small Island Kingdom an independent nation, and to prevent it from being annexed by any foreign country, be it the United States, Great Britain, or France, who were the three great foreign maritime powers with interests in Hawaii. The anti-American attitude of each of the Princes had evolved mainly from the fact that the largest foreign population was American, and many of them made no secret of their desire to bring Hawaii into the American fold. This was based primarily on business and political considerations.

Kamehameha III, the uncle of Lot and Alexander, had earlier experienced the take-over of his Kingdom by the British under Lord George Paulet on February 25, 1843, for a five month period before it was terminated by the British Rear Admiral, Richard Thomas, on July 31, 1843. Due to recent French demands and unpleasant experiences with aggressive French military officers in the past, the King feared that France was strongly considering making Hawaii a French protectorate. Earlier, Captain Petit-Thouars of the French warship "Venus" who in a visit to the Islands in 1837, had appointed Jules Dudoit French consul in Hawaii, had taken over the Society and Marquesas Islands in 1844, as French protectorates.

As an interesting aside, it was in Jules Dudoit's store that Lodge le Progres de l'Océanie No.124. A.A.S.R. the oldest Lodge in Hawaii was founded on April 8, 1843.

Because of his personal experiences with the British and the French, Kamehameha III authorized Robert C. Wyllie, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was a Freemason, to start negotiations with David L. Gregg, the American Consul, who was also a Freemason, for the United States to take-over the Island Kingdom. The plan was immediately scrapped when Prince Alexander became King Kamehameha IV, after the death of his uncle.

Prince Lot, who had gained considerable experience in conducting the affairs of the kingdom during the reign of his brother Kamehameha IV, ascended the throne upon the death of his brother who had no heirs, on November 30, 1863. The

following proclamation was issued by Her Royal Highness, Princess Victoria Kamamalu, sister of Prince Lot:

*It has pleased Almighty God to close the earthly career of King Kamehameha IV, at a quarter past 9 o'clock this morning, I, as Kuhina Nui, by and with the advice of the Privy Council of State, hereby Proclaim, Prince Lot Kamehameha, King of the Hawaiian Islands, under the style and title of Kamehameha V. God Preserve the King!
Given at the Palace, this thirtieth day of November, 1863.
(Signed) Kaahumanu*

Note: It was quite common for the Kuhina Nui to take the name Kaahumanu, who was the original Kuhina Nui.

King Kamehameha V believed in a strong monarchy, and ruled his Kingdom with a firm hand. He did not believe that his people could at the time, manage a democracy. In his Constitution of 1864, which strengthened the monarchy, he also abolished the office of Kuhina nui. Because of Kamehameha V's inclination to rule the Kingdom in many ways that followed the pattern of his grandfather Kamehameha the Great, Lot was called "the last great chief of the olden type."

Mark Twain arrived in Honolulu on March 18, 1866, and remained in the Islands for four months. In describing King Kamehameha V, Twain wrote "There was no royal nonsense about him...he dressed plainly, poked about Honolulu, night or day on his old horse, unattended; he was popular, greatly respected, and even beloved." Mark Twain was a Freemason and visited Hawaiian Lodge No. 21 F.& A.M. during his sojourn in the Islands.

When Prince Lot at the age of 23, became interested in Freemasonry there were only two Masonic Lodges in Honolulu, Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No. 124, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the Supreme Council of France, and Hawaiian Lodge No. 21, Free & Accepted Masons under the Grand Lodge of California. These Lodges were in obedience to Grand Lodges halfway around the world from each other with the closest one over 2,00 miles East of Hawaii. The Lodges had been chartered during the reign of Kamehameha III, (Kauikeaouli), the uncle of Prince Lot.

Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No.124, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, (A.A.S.R.) was the first Masonic Lodge to be constituted in the Sandwich Islands. It was founded by Monsieur Joseph Marie Le Tellier, Captain of the French whaling barque "Ajax" on April 8, 1843, of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Supreme Council of France.

Hawaiian Lodge No.21, Free and Accepted Masons was Chartered by the Grand Lodge of California on May 5, 1852, and was the first American Lodge to be instituted in the Island Kingdom. Its Charter shows the location of the Lodge to be in the city of Honolulu, Island of Oahu, of the Sandwich Islands.

Young Prince Lot was the first member of the Royalty to show an interest in the Craft. On Friday evening, June 10, 1853, Secretary Joseph Irwin read the petition of Prince Lot Kamehameha for membership in Hawaiian Lodge No. 21, Free and Accepted Masons, which was just about one year after the Lodge had been Chartered. On June 13th the Prince was elected to receive the degrees of Freemasonry, and on Wednesday, June 15, 1853, Prince Lot was initiated an Entered Apprentice Mason. On Thursday, December 8, 1853, the Prince was passed to the degree of Fellow Craft Mason. The following year, on the evening of Monday, February 27, 1854, Prince Lot Kamehameha was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, and became the first full blood Hawaiian to become a Freemason.

On January 14, 1857, Prince Lot's Brother King Kamehameha IV (Alexander Liholiho) was initiated an Entered Apprentice, and passed to the degree of Fellow Craft, in Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No.124, A.A.S.R. Among the visiting brethren were: Prince Lot; His Excellency, Robert C. Wyllie, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Kingdom of Hawaii; the Honorable David L. Gregg, United States Consul; Dr. Thomas C.B. Rooke, Father-in-law of the King, and Joseph Irwin, both of Hawaiian Lodge. Robert G. Davis, who was a member of the Hawaiian legislature and a Justice of the Supreme Court, was the Worshipful Master of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie. After the work of the Lodge was completed, a banquet was held at the "Hotel de France" with the King as the principal guest. There were about twenty-five people present, including

Robert G. Davis the Master of the Lodge, and David L. Gregg the American Consul.

Some months before the conferral of the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft degrees on Kamehameha IV, The Grand Lodge of California, on May 12, 1856, had placed an interdiction on Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, forbidding the members of Hawaiian Lodge No.21, F. &A.M. from having any association or communication with Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No.124, A.A.S.R. This meant no inter-Lodge visitations. The events that led to the Interdiction are complex and beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is quite reasonable to assume that if the present state-of-the-art communications systems were available at the time, and had the brethren with a more understanding nature prevailed, the Grand Lodge of California would not have had cause to issue the interdiction notice. But that episode is a story in itself.

Prince Lot had apparently decided that since Alexander Liholiho who was indeed his "Blood Brother" and was also His Majesty, King Kamehameha IV, the reigning Monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom, he (Prince Lot) was going to be on hand to congratulate his brother on his entry into the Craft. Obviously young Prince Lot was greatly impressed by the Fraternity, and was happy that his brother was about to become a Freemason. So he along with two other members of Hawaiian Lodge, attended the conferral of the First and Second degrees on his brother King Kamehameha IV, despite the interdiction.

The joy of the occasion was short lived, for on Monday evening, February 2, 1857, Prince Lot Kamehameha along with the other two brethren was charged by Hawaiian Lodge for violating the interdiction. In the mean time, on February 8, 1857, King Kamehameha IV was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie. After the degree was conferred, the King invited the brethren to the Palace for refreshments.

On February 25, 1857, Prince Lot was tried and found guilty. However, "upon due consideration he was excused from punishment." Many years later a Lodge historian noted "This no doubt rankled the Royal personage because on March 2, 1857, a request for a dimit was received from him by Hawaiian Lodge and on motion, was granted." This assessment of Prince Lot's reaction to being tried

was undoubtedly pretty close to the mark. From that time on Prince Lot never affiliated with another Lodge, not even his brother's Lodge, and he remained an un-affiliated Mason for the rest of his life.

In 1857, Hawaiian Lodge had fifty-four members, plus four Entered Apprentices, but ten members had withdrawn; which included Prince Lot; Dr. T.C.B. Rooke, Jr. who had been Junior Warden and was the father-in-law of King Kamehameha IV; Henry A. Neilson, private secretary to King Kamehameha IV; and Henry Sea. As an interesting note, Sea served as the Secretary of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie for a few years. On December 28, 1857, Dr. Rooke joined Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, and on January 10, 1858, he became a Warden.

In retrospect it seems that the entire affair involving Prince Lot could have been managed more discretely, and handled in a far less conspicuous manner so that it would not have been offensive or embarrassing to the Prince. It more than likely would have resulted in his not getting a dimit. Naturally it is only proper that as a member of the Lodge, he would be expected to abide by its rules just like any other member. However, given the extraordinary circumstances of Prince Lot's situation as a Prince of the Realm by birth, a grandson of Kamehameha the Great, the heir apparent to the throne, and the first full blooded Hawaiian to become a Freemason, and whose only offense was to be present when his "blood" brother was initiated into the Masonic Fraternity, one cannot help question the necessity of Prince Lot being tried at all, the interdiction notwithstanding. There can be no denying that he had an extremely compelling reason to attend the ceremony. His doing so, obviously demonstrated the strong affection he had for his brother and the high esteem in which he held the Masonic Fraternity. It certainly was not a mischievous prank, nor was it an act that would discredit Freemasonry. Being tried was no doubt offensive to Prince Lot and probably caused him some humiliation. Ironically, the only reason that Freemasonry was allowed to operate and flourish freely and openly in the Island Kingdom in the first place, was because Prince Lot's uncle Kamehameha III, had granted members of the Craft permission to establish Hawaiian Lodge and Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie. The breach between the two Lodges was healed in 1859, during the reign of Kamehameha IV.

Other than receiving a dimit and remaining an un-affiliated Mason for the rest of his life, Prince Lot apparently took the entire incident in his stride, and neither said nor did anything more about it. Considering the patronage that his brother King Kamehameha IV, and later King David Kalakaua, extended to the Freemasons of Hawaii, along with their active participation in the Masonic activities of the times, there can be no doubt that the Craft sustained some loss of Royal patronage, but more importantly, was the loss of the contribution that he could have made to the Craft as Prince Lot, and later as King Kamehameha V.

As King Kamehameha V the un-affiliated Mason, Lot did not abandon Freemasonry entirely. When Aliiolani Hale, later the Judiciary Building, was to be erected, the King had his Minister of Finance send the following request to the Masonic Fraternity:

*Acting G.M. Cartwright, Dear Sir:
It is the desire of His Majesty, the King, that the Cornerstone of the new Government Building be laid with Masonic ceremonies. I therefore request the "Fraternity" through you as acting G.M. of Free and Accepted Masons in Honolulu, to take the Necessary measures to carry out that object.*

I propose Monday the 19 inst., at 11 A.M. as a convenient time for the ceremony.

Believe me with the highest respect,

Yours truly,

Fred W. Hutchinson

On Monday, February 19, 1872, the Cornerstone was laid in the Masonic tradition by the members of Hawaiian Lodge and Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie. The brethren formed in front of the Hall of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, and under the direction of the Marshal of the Kingdom, William C. Parke, a member of Hawaiian Lodge, the procession marched to the site. A viewing stand had been erected over a portion of the foundation of the building for the King, his staff, the ladies of the Court and high government officials. The working tools were presented to His Majesty the King, who, with the assistance of A.J. Cartwright, the Acting Grand Master, spread the cement beneath the Cornerstone, and the Band played "God Save the King."

Freemasonry and politics aside, one of the legacies of Kamehameha V in a lighter vein, was establishing

the Royal Hawaiian Military Band. The King arranged to bring Heinrich (later Henry) Berger, assistant bandmaster of an elite Prussian infantry regiment to Honolulu. Berger arrived on June 2, 1872, and immediately formed and directed what later became the world famous Royal Hawaiian Military Band, and also became one of the most cherished institutions in Hawaii. He held the position for forty-three years. It is now known as the Royal Hawaiian Band.

The perennial favorite "Aloha Oe" (I'll Wait for Thee), was written by Her Royal Highness Princess Lili'uokalani in 1878. It was introduced to the American public by the Royal Hawaiian Military Band under the direction of Henry Berger, in a competition at the Knights Templar Conclave in San Francisco in August 1883. The Band took the contest by storm with "Aloha Oe" and it became an instant success. Within a short time it became known the world over, and to this day it is synonymous with the Hawaiian Islands. The words to "Aloha Oe" are preserved on a bronze plaque inlaid in a lava boulder at Washington Place, which at one time was the home of Queen Lili'uokalani, and is presently the residence of the Governor of the State of Hawaii.

King Lot Kamehameha V, the first native Hawaiian to become a Freemason, and the last of the Kamehameha dynasty, died a bachelor on December 11, 1872, it was his forty-second birthday. Hawaiian Lodge prepared a resolution which was read to the brethren and placed in the minutes of the Lodge, and also sent a letter of condolence to his half-sister, Her Royal Highness, Princess Ruth Keelikolani. A Masonic funeral ceremony was conducted for Lot Kamehameha V, by Hawaiian Lodge and Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, at the Royal Mausoleum on January 7, 1873. The Masonic apron which he had received as an Entered Apprentice, was placed on the coffin.

EPILOGUE

In the 159 years since the first Masonic Lodge in Hawaii was founded in 1843, Freemasonry has seen five different governments rule the Islands. The monarchy was the first ruling power, which was followed by the Provisional Government in 1893. The PG as it was often referred to, was succeeded by the Republic of Hawaii in 1894. Hawaii was annexed by the United States on August 12, 1898, but the Territorial Government, was not established until June 14, 1900. This in turn led to Hawaii eventually becoming the 50th State in 1959.

Both Hawaiian Lodge and Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie are still functioning today. In 1905, Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie transferred its allegiance from the Supreme Council of France to the Grand Lodge of California. The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Hawaii was instituted in Honolulu on May 20, 1989, at which time both Lodges came under the newly formed Grand Lodge. Prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Hawaii, all Hawaii Lodges were under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California.

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Note No.1. The author is a Past Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Hawaii, and presently the Grand Historian of the GrandLodge of Hawaii. He is a member of Hawaiian Lodge, Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, and was a charter member of the King Kalakaua Daylight Lodge which turned in its charter in 1999, and is no longer a functioning lodge. The author is also a member of, and secretary for Hawaii of the Correspondence Circle of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076.

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