

# **THE GLORY AND TRAVAIL OF A BYGONE ERA**

**By Herbert G. Gardiner, PGS**

Unlikely as it may seem, the first official social function to be held in the only royal palace that exists in the United States was a Grand Masonic Banquet. Before you challenge the author's credibility in making such a statement, permit me to explain that the event took place 122 years ago in the Kingdom of Hawaii, when it was known to the Western World as the Sandwich Islands.

James Cook of his Britanic Majesty's Royal Navy who accidentally discovered the Islands on January 18, 1778, named them the Sandwich Islands in honor of his good friend and patron the First Lord of the Admiralty, John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich.

The Grand Masonic Banquet took place sixteen years before the United States annexed the Republic of Hawaii, and fifty-nine years before the Empire of Japan attacked the U.S. Military Bases on the Island of Oahu of what was then the Territory of Hawaii, on Sunday morning December 7, 1941.

## **THE EARLY LODGES**

Our story begins in the days of the Hawaiian Monarchy during the reign of King Kamehameha III, (Kauikeaouli) the son of Kamehameha the Great who united all the Islands under one ruler and founded the Kamehameha Dynasty. Kamehameha III ruled the Island Kingdom from June 6, 1825, to December 15, 1854, the longest reign of any ruler of the Hawaiian Monarchy. During his reign Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No. 124 Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (A.A.S.R.) was constituted on April 8, 1843, under the Supreme Council of France, and Hawaiian Lodge No.21 Free and Accepted Masons was chartered on May 5, 1852, under the Grand Lodge of California. These were the first two Lodges to be warranted in Hawaii and with the founding of these Lodges, Freemasonry became firmly established in the Sandwich Islands. These two Lodges became the foundation of the Craft in Hawaii and both are presently on the register of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Hawaii.

## **THE ROYAL CONNECTION**

The association between Freemasonry and the Hawaiian Monarchy started with Prince Lot when he was raised in Hawaiian Lodge in 1854, and became the first Native Hawaiian to become a Freemason. He later became Kamehameha V, ruler of Hawaii. Prince Lot was followed into the fraternity by his younger brother Prince Alexander Liholiho, who later became Kamehameha IV, and was the Master of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie in 1859, 1861 and 1862. Next came John Owen Dominis, the Prince Consort of Lydia Kamakeaha, older sister of King David Kalakaua, and later known as Queen Lili'uokalani. Dominis was the Master of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie in 1863, 1864 and 1868. He was followed by his brother-in-law, Archibald Scott

Cleghorn, later Governor of the Island of Oahu, and husband of Princess Miriam Kapili Likelike, the younger sister of King Kalakaua. Cleghorn was raised in Hawaiian Lodge in 1873. Next came Prince William Pitt Kalahoolewa Leleiohoku, younger brother of King David Kalakaua who was raised in Hawaiian Lodge in 1874. The next member of Hawaiian royalty to join the Craft was David Kalakaua who was elected Master of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie for 1876, about a year and a-half after being elected King of Hawaii in 1874. Kalakaua was one of the most active members of the Craft in the Island Kingdom.

### **'IOLANI PALACE IS BUILT**

David Kalakaua had not been King very long when he made it known that he wanted a new palace. He considered that the one he was living in had been neglected and was dilapidated, and definitely unfit for a King. During the legislative session of 1878, funds were authorized for a new palace.

Wednesday, December 31, 1879, the forty-fifth birthday of his wife Queen Julia Kapiolani, was selected by King Kalakaua to lay the cornerstone of the new Royal residence, 'Iolani\* Palace. The brethren of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie No.124, and Hawaiian Lodge No.21, were invited by the King to conduct the ceremony.

The cornerstone laying ceremony of 'Iolani Palace was conducted in the Masonic tradition, and included the participation of His Majesty King Kalakaua, who descended from the dais and gave the cornerstone three sharp raps with a gavel. The Freemasons in attendance responded with Grand Public Honors. The working tools used in the ceremony were made of wrought silver expressly for King Kalakaua. At the completion of the ceremony, the King donated the silver working tools to his Lodge. Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie has maintained the tools in mint condition to this very day. One hundred and fifteen years later, on November 11, 1994, the same silver working tools were used by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Hawaii, in laying the Cornerstone of the Memorial Building of the Hawaii State Veteran's Cemetery at Kaneohe, on the Island of Oahu. The story of the Silver Working Tools is a chronicle in itself.

### **THE GRAND MASONIC BANQUET**

Even though the new palace was not completed, it did not discourage His Majesty King Kalakaua from honoring his Masonic brethren with a "Grand Masonic Banquet" at 'Iolani Palace. On Wednesday, December 27, 1882, the King hosted the first official social function held at the newly erected palace. In addition to a few sojourning brethren, King Kalakaua had the guest list made from the rosters of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie and Hawaiian Lodge, about 120 brethren attended.

The banquet was a tremendous success. The brethren of the two Lodges enjoyed themselves immensely in the ultimate expression of fellowship and camaraderie at this wonderful event sponsored by King Kalakaua, their brother, their patron, and their Sovereign. The mundane cares of the day were brushed aside, politics, business and even affairs of state were left outside with the dress swords. This was an evening for fellowship as it had never been experienced in the

Kingdom before, and it was a night that would live in the hearts of the brethren for the rest of their lives.

The music was provided by the Royal Hawaiian Military Band under the direction of its renowned conductor Heinrich Wilhelm Berger, better known as Henry Berger, or "Kapena Hanale Berger" as he was called by the Hawaiians. The band has continued to entertain the people of Hawaii through the years and currently plays at civic functions. It is now known as the Royal Hawaiian Band.

Brother David Dayton, Orator of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie called the brethren to order for the first toast of the evening. His toast was as follows: "Worshipful Masters, Wardens and Brethren---It being obligatory on members of Lodge le Progres to drink several toasts on this occasion, before doing so, I will inform you that the cornerstone of this edifice, the Palace, was laid by the Masonic fraternity on December 31,1879, by request of His Majesty Kalakaua, King of the Hawaiian Islands. And now, my brethren, His Majesty King of the Hawaiian Islands, and Past Master of Lodge le Progres de l'Oceanie, has become our host, honoring us with the first festival in this edifice. My brethren, I will invite you to charge your glasses and drink the first regular toast of the evening, "His Majesty the King and the Royal Family." This was followed by the first selection played that evening the national anthem, "Hawai'i Pono'i" (Hawaii's Own). King Kalakaua wrote the words and Henry Berger rearranged an anthem from his native Prussia, entitled "Hail to Thee in Your Wreath of Victory" (Heil Dir im Siegerkranz), which in turn was based on "God Save the Queen." "Hawai'i Pono'i" is still played at many State and civic functions throughout the State of Hawaii.

During the course of the festivities, the brethren toasted the Supreme Council and the Grand Lodge of France, and the Band struck up a rousing rendition of La Marseillaise. In a following toast to the Grand Lodge of California, the Band played The Star Spangled Banner. Shortly before midnight the last toast of the evening was concluded in part with the following: "...It is that portion of the charge wherein the novitiate is taught that Freemasonry is so esteemed as an honorable order that even monarchs have, at times, exchanged the scepter for the trowel to join in our mysteries and aid in our labors. To this fact is due in no small degree the prosperity in Hawaii of an order that bears upon its active roles the name of one whom we greet tonight as Sovereign, as host, and as brother." The brethren then joined hands and accompanied by the Royal Hawaiian Military Band, sang "Auld Lang Syne." And so the highly enjoyable Grand Masonic Banquet ended on a note of joy and good fellowship. It was the first and the last Masonic function to be held strictly for the Craft at 'Iolani Palace.

### **POMP AND SPLENDOR**

During the years that King Kalakaua was the reigning Monarch of Hawaii following the Grand Masonic Banquet, 'Iolani Palace was aglow with glittering festive State affairs, banquets, and balls, all in the finest royal tradition of the times. His court was the equal of any foreign court in pure pleasure and elegance. The Royal Hawaiian Military Band under the direction of its renowned director Henry Berger was always on hand to entertain the guests. During the reign of King Kalakaua, and with his encouragement, the Band became a Hawaiian cultural institution and famous world-wide. To top it off, the finest food was served at the banquets, and dining at

'Iolani Palace was always a special treat. Here in this tiny kingdom, located in the middle of the vast expanse of the North Pacific Ocean, dwelt a King whose royal court life was pure delight to his subjects and to his visitors alike, who had come from around the world. Except for its smaller size, King David Kalakaua had created a court that rivaled many European courts in splendor, entertainment, and sheer joy to behold. Many sojourning Freemasons enjoyed the hospitality of their brother, the King, at 'Iolani Palace.

### **THE MONARCHY TEETERS**

King Kalakaua's reign has often been referred to as the "Golden Age of the Hawaiian Monarchy." However, it was also a turbulent period. Although the great maritime powers like Great Britain, the United States, and France agreed, that Hawaii should remain an independent nation they did not hesitate to become involved in the internal affairs of the tiny Island Kingdom. Frequently their actions were dictated not so much by what transpired in Hawaii, but by events that occurred in other parts of the globe involving their respective national interests. King Kalakaua's entire reign was one continuous struggle to keep his little Island Kingdom free of foreign domination.

David Kalakaua was a man of two cultures which frequently clashed. To a large extent he believed in the basic Hawaiian culture of his birth which was gradually fading from the scene. He was also strongly attracted to much of the Western culture of the Anglo-Saxons. He often experienced serious political problems while trying to combine the two cultures as he viewed them. Being very extravagant Kalakaua seemed to frequently be in need of money and at times the manner in which he acquired it appeared to be questionable. Politics and the monarchy were always favorite subjects for discussion in Honolulu and both the competing Hawaiian and Anglo-Saxon cultures escorted Hawaii throughout the 19th century with the Anglo-Saxon becoming dominant.

Upon the death of King Kalakaua on January 20, 1891, seven days after he had been made a Noble of Islam Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in San Francisco, his sister, Princess Lydia Kamaka'ea (Mrs. John Dominis) ascended the throne of the Kingdom of Hawaii on January 29, 1891 as Queen Lili'uokalani. During her short reign the Court which had formerly been the scene of magnificent royal splendor, no longer had the brilliance and gaiety of the Kalakaua years. A somber mood seemed to permeate the Court atmosphere, almost like a portend of dark days ahead. Seven months after Lili'okalani became Queen, her husband John O. Dominis died. With his death, Lili'uokalani not only lost her husband, but Freemasonry lost one of its most active and dedicated members, and the Hawaiian Kingdom lost a confirmed royalist and a stabilizing influence on the Queen.

### **LILI-UKALANI PRECIPITATES THE OVERTHROW OF THE HAWAIIAN MONARCHY**

The political situation became very strained as the Queen tried to make drastic changes in the Constitution that would grant the ruling Monarch considerably more power than was provided under the existing Constitution. There were other actions on her part which also eroded support for the monarchy in general, and Lili-uokalani in particular. All of which further polarized the

two major political groups. One group being the Royalists who supported the Monarchy, and the other group being the Reform Party, also called the "Missionary Party" by the Royalists because some of them were descendants of the original missionaries who came to Hawaii from New England. The label was basically misleading. They were also known as the annexationists since many of them wanted Hawaii to be annexed by the United States. The Reform Party consisted primarily of business men, and planters who had developed a thriving economy for the Island Kingdom.

After participating in such a festive evening at 'Iolani Palace none of the brethren who attended the Grand Masonic Banquet could possibly visualize that within a decade, their King and brother Freemason would die in a hotel in San Francisco of Bright's disease, his sister Queen Lili'uokalani would be deposed, the Hawaiian Monarchy would vanish, and the Islands would be ruled by a Provisional Government, which would ultimately be followed by the formation of the Republic of Hawaii.

### **THE KINGDOM VANISHES**

In spite of the volatile politics of the times, it was simply not in the scheme of things for the men who dined at their King and brother's festive board, to suspect that any of them would ever take up arms against a brother Freemason to defend the Monarchy in Hawaii, or to support a Provisional Government, or even more remote, to create a Hawaii Republic. Yet, unbelievable as such scenarios may have been on the night of the Grand Masonic Banquet at 'Iolani Palace, these events did in fact subsequently take place.

Some historians tell us that there were individuals on both sides of the issue who were not beyond reconciliation, and had the more moderates in both camps prevailed, a compromise could have been reached that would have established a Constitutional Monarchy. But this was not to be, for certain elements on each side stood firm. Some men wanted to eliminate the Hawaiian Monarchy in any form, and have the United States annex Hawaii, while Queen Lili'uokalani adhered to her principle of "onipa'a" (remain steadfast). The Queen appeared to have no desire to reign as a Constitutional Monarch, she felt it was her destiny to rule. Lili'uokalani tried to establish an absolute monarchical form of government for Hawaii, which at the time was a concept of government that was eroding in some countries around the world. Queen Victoria reigned over the greatest empire the world had ever known...she reigned, but she did not rule England. Although having visited England, this concept seemed to have escaped Queen Lili'uokalani.

On January 17, 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani the eighth and last Monarch of the Hawaiian Kingdom, was deposed and the Provisional Government (PG) acquired the reins of power. The Reform Party which also included the Annexationists had taken over. The Kingdom of Hawaii was gone, it had vanished!

In signing the surrender document Lili'uokalani stated she was surrendering to the United States. This was not true because she actually surrendered to the Provisional Government not the United States. By allowing this false statement to go uncorrected, the PG officials ultimately contributed

to the issuance of a simple resolution of apology by former President Clinton in 1993, for the so-called complicity of the U.S. in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy.

It has been suggested that at the time of her surrender Lili-ukalani very likely recalled the take-over of the Island Kingdom in 1843, by Lord Paulet of HMS "Carysfort" which six months later was abrogated by the British Crown and the reigns of power returned to Kamehameha III. By surrendering to the United States rather than the Provisional Government, Lili-uokalani probably expected a similar action whereby the Hawaiian Monarchy would be restored by the United States and she would regain the Crown...but that did not happen.

### **THE TERRITORY OF HAWAII**

Later in the decade of the 1890s a major turn of events occurred, which totally eclipsed the Hawaiian Monarchy, the Provisional Government, and the Republic of Hawaii. On August 12, 1898, Hawaii officially became a part of the United States. However, the Republic of Hawaii continued to exist for another two years until the U.S. Congress provided Hawaii with a territorial government on June 14, 1900. Forty-six years after the issue of annexation was first raised in the U.S. Congress in 1852, Hawaii was annexed by the United States and became the Territory of Hawaii. The royalists were despondent and the annexationists were jubilant

Neither of the two Lodges nor the Scottish Rite Bodies were involved in the power politics of the period, and remained aloof from the political intrigues of the annexationists and the royalists. However, there were Freemasons who were active participants in one camp or the other. Some prominent Freemasons were confirmed royalists and fully supported the Hawaiian Monarchy, and other Freemasons were active reformists who felt that Hawaii's future was with the United States. The role of some of these brethren in the political and military events during the period beginning just prior to January 17, 1893, when Queen Lili'uokalani was deposed, and the annexation of Hawaii by the United States on August 12, 1898, is beyond the scope of our story.

### **THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR**

The year 1898, ushered in certain events which occurred thousands of miles away from Hawaii's shores, but nevertheless had a profound influence on the actions of the United States which in turn became a factor in the annexation of Hawaii. Trouble had been brewing between the United States and Spain over its harsh rule of Cuba. On February 15th the U.S.S. Maine was destroyed and sank in Havana harbor with the loss of 268 American lives. On April 22nd the U.S. North Atlantic Squadron blockaded Cuba, and a state of war existed between the United States and Spain. On May 1st the U.S. Asiatic Squadron under Commodore Dewey attacked and destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay, and blockaded Manila. On August 13th Commodore Dewey and General Merritt unaware of a peace protocol, attacked Manila and the Spanish forces surrendered the Philippines.

### **THE PHILIPPINE AMERICAN WAR**

On December 10th, the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Spanish American War. Spain reluctantly agreed to cede Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States and sold the Philippines to

the United States for \$20,000,000, while Cuba was granted independence. This angered the people of the Philippines, and on February 4, 1899 fighting erupted between the U.S. occupation forces and the Filipinos, and the war with the Philippines began. Many American Freemasons fought against Filipino Freemasons. A large number of Filipinos who fought in the uprising against Spain and later did battle with the United States, were Freemasons. Probably the most prominent was Emilio Aguinaldo.

When Hawaii was annexed by the United States, it was during an age that was swept by the tide of imperialism. France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Russia were all on the prowl and were assiduously establishing colonies or spheres of influence in the Pacific and in Asia. The Philippines had been under the firm rule of Spain and Catholic clerics for 300 years. A sizable German Naval Force was in Manila Bay when Commodore Dewey arrived. The United States did not seek to establish a colonial empire anything like that of the British, Dutch and the French, and later Germany and Japan.

A great many Americans strongly believed and with good reason, that unless the United States firmly established itself in the Pacific it would be overwhelmed economically and militarily by the major powers. Revisionist history aside, subsequent actions particularly by the Empire of Japan, and to a lesser extent by the major European powers, at one time or another attempted to restrict the economic activities and influence of the United States in the Pacific and Asia.

### **1898 AND BEYOND**

During the Spanish American war the United States began to awaken to the strategic and military value of Hawaii. In 1898, both Hawaii and the Philippines became part of the United States. In December of 1941, the Empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on Hawaii and the Philippines, and occupied the Philippine Islands until the American Armed Forces and Filipino guerrilla units recaptured the Islands in 1945. As promised by the United States, the Commonwealth of the Philippines became a free and independent country in 1946, and Hawaii was granted Statehood in 1959.

It is beyond the scope of this brief essay to explain all the causes of the downfall of the Hawaiian Monarchy, or why some Freemasons were strong royalists and others were avowed annexationists. In spite of the strong feelings of those troubled times, Freemasonry in Hawaii has prospered under five different forms of government. It began during the days of the Hawaiian Monarchy, followed by the Provisional Government, next came the Republic of Hawaii, which was followed by the Territory of Hawaii, and in our time the State of Hawaii.

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\*Vocabulary, 'Iolani. Royal Hawk, a symbol of royalty because of its high flight in the heavens. Name of the Palace.

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