



THE NSCG CAULDRON

Dedicated to the Enjoyment of the Spoon Collecting Hobby

Northeastern Spoon Collectors Guild

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RULERS OF THE WORLD –PART XIII HAWAII: PARADISE OF THE PACIFIC

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INTRODUCTION: The Hawaiian Islands are a chain of volcanic and coral islands in the North Central Pacific. They extend 1500 miles from Hawai'i out to Midway Island. There are 8 major and 114 minor islands. Mark Twain described Hawaii as “the loveliest fleet of islands that lies anchored in any ocean.” They were first reached by Polynesians in 500 AD. Captain Cook discovered them in 1778 and named them the Sandwich Islands. With his arrival Hawaii's long isolation ended at that moment. Initially the east-west fur trade and the Pacific whaling industries attracted investment along with non-Hawaiians. At its height 500 whaling ships wintered in Hawaiian ports. American whalers arrived during the early 19th c. In 1820 the first missionaries arrived. This first contingent of 7 came from Boston. By 1844 Hawaii was recognized as an independent kingdom by the United States, Great Britain, and France.

KAMEHAMEHA I (cir 1758-1819) (reigned 1782-1819): Called Kamehameha the Great because he is the ruler who united all the Hawaiian Islands. Due to his historical significance it is his representation that appears as the finial on a majority of enamel Hawaiian souvenir spoons. Fig. 1 depicts this common finial. His cloak and head-piece is usually gold-washed with his body being sterling silver. As usually seen, Kamehameha faces left. The bowl shown here is not typical because it is tea spoon shaped. Within the red enamel is the enameled Hawaiian Coat of Arms which dates from 1850. Fig. 2 shows the bon-bon round bowl which is the more common bowl found. The enamel here is dark blue. The enamel in bon-bon bowls, as well as the enamel in the tea-size bowls, comes in a variety of colors. I know of 8 different colors. White enamel is particularly difficult to come by for the average Hawaiian



Fig. #1

souvenir spoon collector. Those collectors who specialize in Hawaiian spoons typically have at least one of each existing color. Around the Coat of Arms in the bon-bon spoon is Hawaii's motto: “Ua maukaeaka aina I ka pono” (The Life of the land is perpetrated by righteousness.) Below the crest is Akahi Dala (One Dollar). This spoon is by Charles M. Robbins and dates cir. 1900. Also note that the finial showing Kamehameha faces front rather than facing left. This facing front feature is the less common representation.

Kamehameha's parents were a royal chief and chiefess. He was the great-great grandson of a ruler who held power over most of the island of Hawaii. Hawaiians called their royalty Alii. It seems that he was born in the Fall of 1758 after the appearance that year of Haley's Comet. This is significant because a Hawaiian legend stated that a “great king would one day unite the islands, and that the sign of his birth would be a comet.” Coincidence? His given name was Pai'ea meaning hard-shelled crab. The politics of the Hawaiian Islands at that time was that of rival chiefs conspiring against one another and by their often switching alliances. Not surprisingly, most of these rivals were related to one another. A common practice of the ruling family was Royal Incest. This was not only accepted but encouraged in Hawaii as an exclusive royal privilege. Royal Incest occurs in societies where rulers have great power and no peers – except the gods. Since gods and goddess marry each other, so should royals. Fig. 3 is a Gorham spoon depicting the mythical Pele on the finial. It comes in the tea and demi size. Eventually the serious collector will have one if not both sizes in his collection. Having the flames above her head and outstretched arms in red enamel is es-

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