

Hawai'i: the Royal Isles

by Bobbie Jennings

Artifacts of Hawai'i's past, some of them priceless, have left their glass cases in Honolulu's Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum for the first time. For almost three years the 305 pieces—in an exhibit called Hawai'i: The Royal Isles—will be on display in museums throughout the United States Mainland.

When the Bishop Museum was founded in 1889, its charter prohibited the removal of any of the institution's historical treasures. In 1978, however, that ban was lifted by the Museum's board of trustees because modern shipping and packing methods have reduced the possibility of loss or damage sufficiently to make a traveling exhibit feasible.

The museum's staff anticipated that decision a full year in advance and mapped out plans for a traveling exhibit that would be to Hawaii what the King Tutankhamen traveling exhibit was to Egypt. Their goal was to assemble an exhibit that would explore the richness and scope of the Hawaiian culture by tracing its evolution from the chiefdoms through the European-inspired monarchy to Statehood. Such an exhibit also would dispel the myths and misconceptions created originally by Captain Cook and other explorers and, more recently, by radio, television and motion pictures.

The work began with the board's decision. It was in four stages. The first was to find the financing. Museum staffers calculated they would need over \$600,000. They ultimately received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, a process that took a year and a half. United Airlines provided additional funding since the grant did not cover all the expenses anticipated.

"We are very grateful to United," said Roger Rose, the Museum's curator of ethnology. "They are not only making a major financial contribution, they have been very helpful in transporting this exhibit—a tremendous responsibility.



Queen Kapiolani's Crown of Hawaii is now considered priceless. It was placed on her head by King Kalakaua in 1883 during a ceremony conducted in front of Iolani Palace.

It's particularly appropriate that United's first such exhibit is a Hawaiian exhibit because of their long-standing ties with our Islands." (United began service to Hawaii on May 1, 1947. Its president at that time was Waipahu-born Pat Patterson.)

The second stage was to organize the project and coordinate the activities of everyone involved. Mary Weaver was borrowed from the San Francisco museum system to assume the post of special exhibit coordinator. In addition to making detailed arrangements with each of the host museums, the insurance

companies, transportation executives and photographers, printers and a host of others, she also held the purse strings and was responsible for keeping all aspects of the project on schedule.

When the first Iolani Palace was built in 1844, King Kamehameha III realized that protocol befitting the dignity of his court called for a throne. The king commissioned a local German cabinetmaker to make a state chair of native koa wood. Total cost for Hawaii's first royal throne: \$138.



Stage number three was choosing the objects to be included in the traveling exhibit. The selections were made by curator Rose. He was guided by a phrase coined by the exhibit's co-director, Adrienne Kaeppler: "Persistence of tradition." He chose objects that showed that neither time nor the integration of new cultures has erased the unique traditions of early Hawaii.

The fourth and final stage was to pack and crate each piece to withstand 18,000 miles of travel and three years of repeated packing, shipping, unpacking and placing on display.

The design and construction problems were solved by the Pacific Regional Conservation Center, together with the Museum's cabinetmakers. They created two basic container designs. One is the cavity box, padded with styrofoam and felt. Each is a perfect mold of the piece it contains. The 130 cavity boxes hold such artifacts as bowls and jewelry—and one of the rarest pieces in the exhibit, the feather helmet once worn by King Kaumual'i.

The other type of container was designed to hold those pieces with fragile appendages or attachments. The design of these containers permits each item to be suspended by wires and braces so they float in space, supported only at their strong points. This kind of container was used for one of the items that required special care in packing, an eight-foot *kahili*, a rounded mass of feathers mounted on a pole. (This object was used as a signal to commoners that the *ali'i* (royalty) were approaching.) The difficulty in packing the *kahili* was in devising a method of supporting the feathered top without damaging the delicate feathers.

In time, this problem was solved, as were the others. However, it wasn't until midnight of the day before shipment that the lid on the last crate was secured.

Tales of mysterious happenings are common in Hawaii. One such happening occurred at the Bishop Museum as the exhibit was being prepared.

It was a rainy Saturday this past February. The Hawaiian Islands had seen no sun for two weeks. Will Phippen was in the conservation laboratory, repairing a loose piece on a small wooden figure which would travel with the exhibit. The figure was a rain god

named Kūkeaolewa. Glue was applied and the figure wrapped tightly in bandages to hold the part securely in place. It would remain thus for two days. As Phippen left the laboratory and stepped outside, he noticed that the rain had stopped.

Next day, the sun shone brightly all day on the grounds of the Museum where, coincidentally, the Bishop Museum annual open-air festival was being celebrated.

On Monday Phippen returned to his laboratory. As he carefully removed the bandages from Kūkeaolewa and returned it to its rightful place, the sun clouded over and the Hawaiian Islands were drenched in rain for another week.

The rain god is accompanied by several other wood and stone images of ancient Hawaii. The largest piece in the exhibit is a 10-foot post image. Utilitarian objects include *koa* bowls, calabashes, *poi* pounders and *kapa* cloth. Drums and other musical instruments also are included.

For the first time since King Kalakaua's coronation in 1883, the important ceremonial objects used on that occasion will be seen together. They are the crown, the sword of state, the ring of state and the royal sceptre.

Drawings, etchings and photographs of early Honolulu and Waikiki are included in the exhibit as are contemporary reflections on the past in the forms of sculptures and charcoal prints. The latter are the contributions of Hale Nauā III, a society of Hawaiians dedicated to perpetuating the culture of Hawaii.

Accompanying the exhibit is an orientation gallery—including an audio-visual presentation—which is designed both to create an atmosphere appropriate to the display and to provide further references on Hawaii. Supporting information includes records of Hawaiian chants, public lectures, a tape-recorded guide, posters and brochures. A catalog written by Roger Rose and Adrienne Kaeppler also is available.

Hawai'i: the Royal Isles will have its final showing in the Bishop Museum from December, 1982 to March, 1983. Although the exhibit includes some of Hawaii's most important artifacts, not all the treasures are on tour. The Bishop Museum's display cases still contain an unmatched collection of artifacts—such



Queen Kapiolani's Crown of Hawaii is now considered priceless. It was placed on her head by King Kalakaua in 1883 during a ceremony conducted in front of Iolani Palace, as King Kalakaua's crown and the feather cloak that belonged to King Kamehameha the Great. And, although several of the drawings by Captain Cook's artist, John Webber, are on tour, the most valuable remain on view in the Museum.

Hawaii not only is America's only island State, it also is the only State that was ruled by a resident monarch. There is no finer place to absorb Hawaii's exciting and colorful past than the Bishop Museum. It is at 1355 Kalihi Street and is open weekdays (except Christmas) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ☺



Seth Joel/Bernice P. Bishop Museum



Seth Joel/Bernice P. Bishop Museum

It is believed that this feather helmet was given to King Kaumuali'i of Kauai by King Kamehameha I in 1810 when the latter assumed sovereignty over Kauai and became the first monarch to rule all of the Hawaiian Islands.



Seth Joel/Bernice P. Bishop Museum

This massive Ring of State was worn by King Kalakaua at his coronation in 1883. Five years later he sealed it up with what he believed to be the bones of King Kamehameha I. It was retrieved 30 years later by Kalakaua's nephew, Prince Kuhio, who placed it in safekeeping.

Itinerary Hawai'i: the Royal Isles

The Art Institute of Chicago
September 6 to October 19, 1980

Denver Art Museum
December 3, 1980 to January 18, 1981

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County
February 20 to April 26, 1981

Seattle Art Museum
June 3 to July 26, 1981

Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco
M.H. de Young Memorial Museum
September 26 to December 6, 1981

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York City
March 9 to May 9, 1982

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
June 3 to August 8, 1982

**National Museum of Natural History/
National Museum of Man,
Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C.**
September 15 to November 1, 1982

Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu
December 19, 1982 to March 1, 1983



Courtesy, Bernice P. Bishop Museum

Hawaiian Hall, Bernice P. Bishop Museum.

This hook-shaped pendant of walrus tusk was worn by men and women with the rank of chief. It is the oldest piece in the traveling exhibit, dating from 800 to 1,000 A.D. Pendants such as this one are among the most treasured artifacts in the traveling exhibit.

Twenty years ago Bobbie Jennings wrote her first book based on her five-year solo trip around the world. She now owns her own public relations/advertising agency, The Bottom Line, and is an associate producer/writer for "Dialog"—produced by Honolulu's public broadcasting station, KHET-TV. She also is known as a promoter of Hawaii's sporting events—most prominently as "The voice of Transpac," the classic yacht race.



Seth Jee/Bernice P. Bishop Museum

In this issue of HYATT'S HAWAII, we explore some of the folkways, leisure activities and institutions that make Hawaii so uncommonly interesting.

Many of the artifacts of the Kingdom of Hawaii are on extended tour of the United States. They were assembled from the vast inventory of the Bishop Museum to offer Mainlanders a first-hand look at the richness of Hawaii's history. Putting over 300 delicate and irreplaceable relics together for an 18,000-mile journey lasting almost three years is not done overnight, as Bobbie Jennings explains in her story: *Hawai'i: the Royal Isles*.

Over 1,000 years ago, the first Polynesians stepped ashore in Hawaii. They had completed a remarkable voyage across the Pacific in fragile-looking sailing canoes without the aid of navigation instruments. Their history, myths and customs were verbally passed between the generations. Louise Rockett's story on *Na Mele O Maui* describes a festival in Lahaina that keeps Hawaiian traditions alive and adds another verse to the Hawaiian chant.

The Honolulu Aquarium is home to some pretty interesting creatures: a cephalopod mollusk that has survived 450 million years of evolution, a fish that sometimes tastes like mud, the humuhumu-nukunuku-a-pua'a, an ugly critter that looks like a rock and catches his dinner with a fishing pole—and Killer. Dan Myers also explains why Honolulu's trolley car company had the Aquarium built in the first place—76 years ago.

Our recipe for *Cha Kway Teow* is straight out of Hong Kong, brought to us by Hyatt Regency Waikiki's executive chef, Peter Gehrman. Also straight out of Hong Kong: *Cat Alley*. It's our newest theme party and it's complete with kung fu fighters, Suzy Wong lookalikes, knife dancers, mah-jongg players—and the most tempting array of authentic Chinese food you're likely to see this side of Hong Kong.

Seldom will you find learned scholars, diplomats, artists, educators, poets and journalists from many countries gathered for a common purpose as weighty as seeking solutions to today's knotty problems. At Honolulu's East-West Center, East and West are doing just that. Bob Dye takes us on a tour of this unique institution where many of today's best minds seek closer relations and better understanding between nations.

Would you believe a single fish once sold for \$133,000? Or that another was a quarter-century old when the Declaration of Independence was signed, and that it died just three years ago? Start believing, folks, because those fish were koi, specifically Nishikigoi. There's a good deal more to these brightly colored carp than meets the eye. Editor Gene Tinker's account begins at the Hyatt Regency Maui and ends in Japan, hundreds of years ago.

Polo has been a fixture in Hawaii for a long time. Since Christmas, 1886 to be precise. Since then, the game has blossomed under the Hawaiian sun and our players host visiting teams from several countries. Ken Hyry also tells us why the game attracts so many spectators—and tailgate parties. It's all in Polo on the North Shore.

Aloha,

Edward G. Sullivan
Regional Vice President
Hyatt Hotels Hawaii

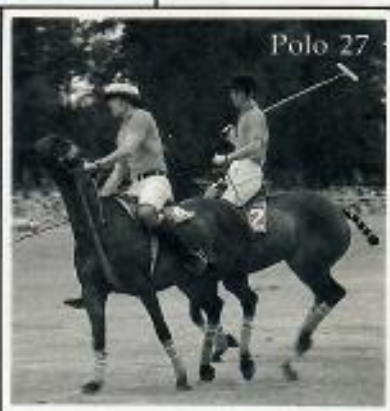


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contents



Hawai'i: The Royal Isles	4
Na Mele O Maui	9
A very fishy story	13
Cha Kway Teow	17
The twain have met	20
Nishikigoi—living jewels in backyard ponds	24
Polo on the North Shore	27
Calendar of events	32
Free and easy	34

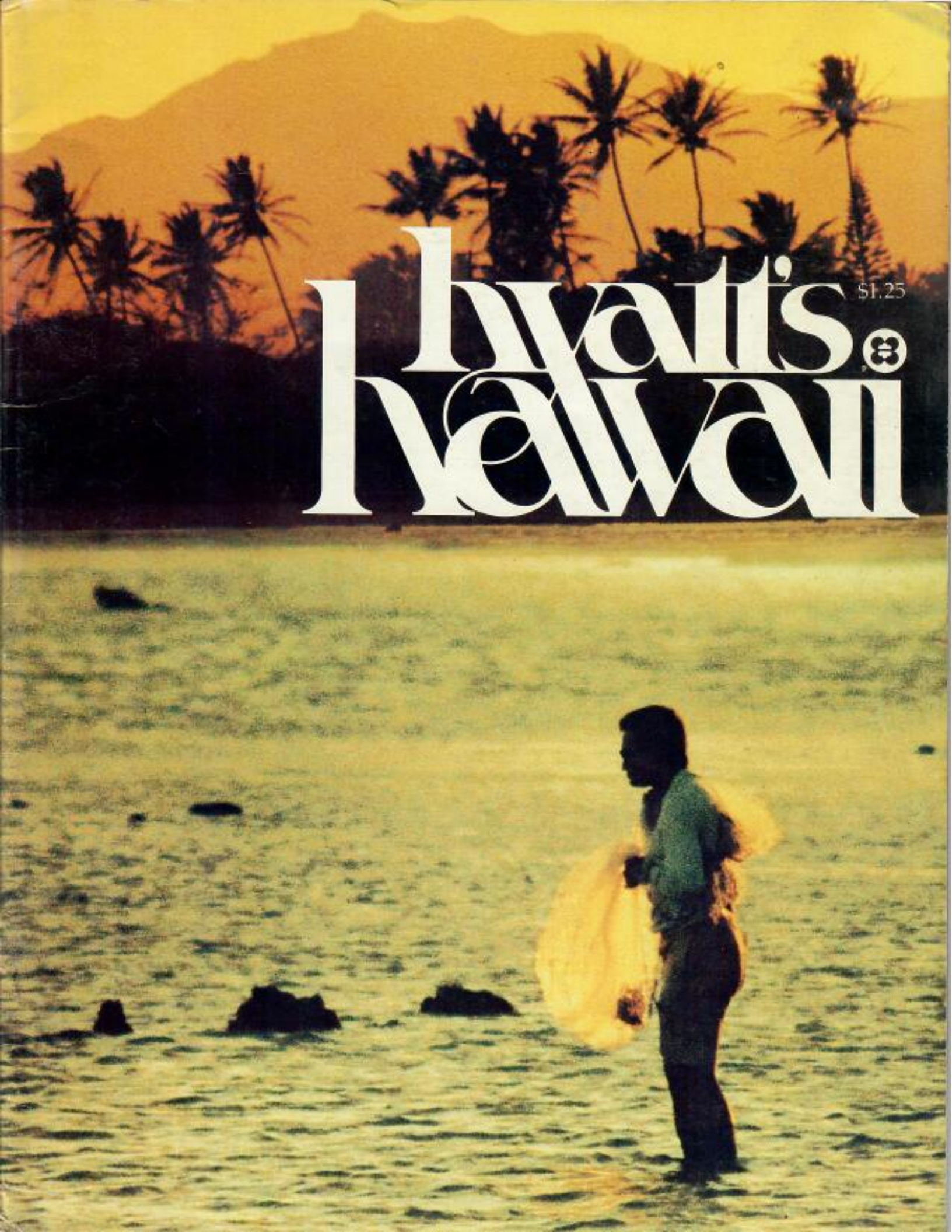
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