

HAWAIIAN ROYAL ORDERS
1865-1893

An award of merit was first suggested during the reign of Kamehameha III by Robert C. Wyllie, Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the Privy Council meeting of August 25, 1848, the ideas were discussed and a sketch made of the decoration. Although the award was instituted in July, 1848, Kamehameha III never promulgated it.

The 35th article of the Constitution of 1864 authorized the establishment of "...Titles of Honor, Orders, and other distinctions..." as emanating from the King. The first award of merit was the Royal Order of Kamehameha I established on April 11, 1865 by Kamehameha V.

Each award was divided into at least three degrees or classes and bestowed primarily on men (two orders had class designations for women--Royal Orders of the Star of Oceania and of Kapiolani). The sovereign was the Grand Master and he appointed the Chancellor, Secretary and Treasurer from members of the respective order. Each society held a general Grand Council business meeting at least once a year, which members residing in the kingdom were required to attend. And, with the exception of the Royal Order of Oceania, the ruling sovereign alone selected who would receive the decorations of merit.

Hawaiian subjects entering the order paid an admittance fee and were restricted in number in each class. This fee included the cost of the patent or diploma, a copy of the statutes and the insignia of the class conferred. Foreigners, however, did not pay an admittance fee nor were there any limitations to the number who could be appointed to receive any of the awards.

Less than half the decorations were bestowed to subjects of the kingdom. They were mostly conferred upon royalty, military, and government officials of countries friendly to the Hawaiian government.

Another royal order, originating in Polynesia, was the Order of Arossi created in 1859 by the Hawaiian Commissioner to Polynesia, Charles St. Julian. The Order was to be awarded to those who aided materially in the social and political advancement of any polynesian people or government. The name "Arossi" was probably taken from a native name for San Cristobal, an island St. Julian had hoped would be annexed to the Hawaiian Islands. In April, 1860, Kamehameha IV accepted sovereignty over the Order and approved its Constitution. The Order consisted of two Grand Commanders, one for Southern Polynesia and one for the Hawaiian Islands. Subordinate ranks were Commander, Officer, and Associate. The decoration consisted of a purple and gold ribbon, and a cross of enamel, gold, silver, or bronze, depending on rank.

Although Kamehameha IV expressed his willingness as Sovereign of the Order to do whatever necessary, St. Julian, discouraged by his failure to enlarge the Hawaiian kingdom through the annexation of several islands, never sent further recommendations for the decoration. St. Julian was among the very few who received this award.

Note: Information taken from Hawaiian Royal Orders by Gordon Medcalf and Primacy of the Pacific Under the Hawaiian Kingdom by Jason Horn.

The records of the Hawaiian Royal Orders consist of expenditure reports, lists of conferees, general correspondence, decrees, minutes of meetings, a newspaper clipping, and printed statutes of the royal orders.

Folders

Arossi, Royal Order of (Newspaper clipping, 1884?)
Crown of Hawaii, Royal Order of, 1883-1885, 1892-1893
Kalakaua, Royal Order of, 1875; 1884; 1892
Kamehameha I, Royal Order of, 1865; 1867; 1874; 1877; 1880
Kapiolani, Royal Order of, 1883-1884; 1892
Star of Oceania, Royal Order of, 1888
Accounts, 1871-1872; 1874; 1890-1893
All Orders, 1870; 1892
Statutes (Printed)

Box HRO-1

Single Sheets

Unissued decrees of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I emanating from Liliuokalani and Kalakaua (rolled)
Royal Order of Kamehameha I decreed to P. Nahaolelua, April 28, 1865

Box HRO-2A

2B

2C

2D

The bound volumes contain the minutes of each order's Grand Council meeting; rosters of conferees by order and class; listings for those receiving jewels and insignias; and general accounts.

Bound Volumes

HRO vol 1 Crown of Hawaii, Royal Order of, 1883-1885; 1889-1892
HRO vol 2 Kalakaua, Royal Order of, 1876-1892
HRO vol 3 Kamehameha I, Royal Order of, 1867; 1874-1886
HRO vol 4 & 5 Kapiolani, Royal Order of, 1883-1885; 1890; 1892 (2 vols.)
HRO vol 6 Star of Oceania, Royal Order of, 1889-1890
HRO vol 7 Royal Orders - Correspondence, 1892

SEE ALSO:

Government Publications: Session Laws
Records: Foreign Office and Executive
Subject Index: Royal Order
Name Index: Kamehameha I, Royal Order of
See individual names of those receiving royal orders

Note: Volumes 1, 4, 6 and 7 are in Box HRO-1

Volumes 2 - 2B

3 - 2C

5 - 2D