

Palace Portraits

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Half way around the world from their homes in Europe, the Captain and officers of the French naval vessel *Kerguelen* breakfasted one April morning with the King of the Sandwich Islands.¹ It was 1884, Iolani Palace in Honolulu was almost new, and King Kalakaua was entertaining in the lavish style for which he was becoming famous. For the French, the Hawaiian Palace certainly was different from their ship's wardroom or even the dining rooms of Paris and Marseilles, but the visitors found a few familiar objects about them as they enjoyed the hospitality of the Hawaiian King.

The table was set with French china from Haviland of Limoges and with French silver and on the wall of the state dining room hung a large portrait of their former Emperor, Napoleon III. That portrait was one of many oil paintings which adorned Iolani Palaces during the days of the Hawaiian monarchy, presents from the rulers of Europe to the Kings of the Sandwich Islands.

The earliest paintings to arrive were from Prussia, portraits of Frederick William III, King of Prussia and of his Field Marshal, Blücher, which reached Honolulu in 1831. Seventeen years later Kamehameha III received two more portraits: a huge likeness of Louis Philippe, King of France, and a more modest one of Frederick William IV of Prussia. In 1864, Alexander II, Tsar of all the Russias, added his portrait to the Palace collection, and two years later the painting of Louis Napoleon of France arrived for Kamehameha V.

There were other non-royal portraits from Europe in the Palace: an oil of the British Admiral Thomas, who restored independence to Hawaii in July of 1843, after a short period during which the British flag flew

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over the islands; lithographs of Disraeli and Gladstone which were sent to King Kalakaua by his agent in England with other works of art ordered for Iolani Palace at the time of the coronation in 1883; and two large engravings of Queen Victoria's jubilee. But the most interesting of these works of art are certainly those of Frederick William III and IV, Field Marshal Blücher, Alexander II, Louis Philippe, and Louis Napoleon, all of which are carefully stored today in Iolani Palace or at the Archives of Hawaii, and will once again adorn the walls of the Palace when restoration work is completed.

It is interesting to speculate on the connections between Europe and Hawaii that these royal portraits represent. Why, for example, did Frederick William III send a painting of himself to Kamehameha III? Certainly not just to cheer up later generations of breakfasting naval officers. The exchange of gifts between rulers was quite normal in the 19th century, as it is today, and the fact that European monarchs sent their portraits to the Kings of the Sandwich Islands indicates the consideration which the Foreign Offices of Europe gave to Hawaii in the distant Pacific Ocean.

The first interchange between the rulers of Prussia and Hawaii began in 1828, when Kamehameha III sent to Frederick William III a gift of some Hawaiian war cloaks. Two years later the Prussian Emperor reciprocated. On July 12, 1830, he wrote to Kamehameha III that he was sending him the ". . . uniform of my body guard regiment and my picture, also the picture of my Field-Marshal, Count Blücher, who served me in the war, and in accordance "with your wishes have caused to be sent to you a picture, showing the different bodies of my army and a map of my lands. . . ."2

Frederick William III was born in Potsdam on August 3, 1770. He was given a military education and saw active service during the campaigns of 1792-94 against the French. He succeeded his father, Frederick William II, on the throne of Prussia in 1797. Veit Valentin in *The German People* commented on the new King: "Since 1797 Prussia had been under the rule of King Frederick William III, a willing but uninspired and clumsy ruler who was markedly inferior to his warm-hearted, artistically gifted wife. Queen Louise took a lively interest in contemporary German literature and music, while the King's preoccupations were limited to the barracks and the ballet—including the ballerinas. Nothing good in the way of politics could be expected from this tiresome and suspicious monarch. Strong personalities upset him; quick decisions embarrassed him. Revolution struck him as a terrible punishment for bad rulers. Reforms of many sorts were started in Prussia, but nothing was carried more than half-way."3 Yet, despite his personal shortcomings, Frederick



Frederick William III

Courtesy of R. Bertram, Iolani Palace Restoration Project



Blücher (Bleucher), Field Marshall

Courtesy of R. Bertram, Iolani Palace Restoration Project



Frederick William IV, Prussia



Louis Philippe, Emperor of France

Courtesy of R. Bertram, Iolani Palace Restoration Project



Alexander II, Tsar of Russia

Courtesy of R. Bertram, Iolani Palace Restoration Project



Napoleon III

Courtesy of R. Bertram, Iolani Palace Restoration Project

William III ruled for forty-three years, from 1797 until 1840, leading his countrymen through the disasters of the Napoleonic Wars, the triumph of Waterloo, the negotiations of the Congress of Vienna, and the stirrings of liberalism in Europe of the 1830's.

Field Marshal Count Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher, whose portrait accompanied that of his King to Hawaii, was born in Rostock on December 16, 1742. At the age of fourteen he enlisted in the Swedish cavalry and fought his first battle against the Prussians and was captured by them. Later he joined the Prussian Army and served during the Seven Year's War with the Hussar regiment which had captured him. He rose to the rank of Major by the time of the 1793-94 campaign, in which Frederick William III also fought, to Major General during the Napoleonic wars, and to Field Marshal after his army defeated the French at Leipzig in 1813.

In intervals between wars Blücher retired to his farm in Silesia, and it was from his agricultural pursuits that, aged seventy-three, he was recalled once again by Frederick William III when Napoleon escaped from Elba. John Sutherland in *Men of Waterloo*, states that "The Duke, [of Wellington] of course, had formidable help at Waterloo. There was the Army of Marshal Blücher, the angry, old Prussian who had battled Napoleon before. He passionately hated Napoleon. . . . He fought viciously to accomplish his objective, charging boldly, brawling like a sergeant, riding with his dragoons like a corporal."⁴

But Sutherland credits Blücher's tenacity with a good portion of the success of the allied army at Waterloo, being of the opinion that "If the Prussian Army had been in the hands of a commander with less drive, the results of the battle could have been reversed."⁵

John Laffin, in *Jackboot, The Story of the German Soldier*, gives us a slightly different picture of Blücher when he commanded the Prussian Army at Jena in 1813. He states, ". . . he was a psychopath, an irresponsible talker and gambler. He suffered from fits of melancholia and he had crazy notions. Perhaps the oddest was that because of his sins he was pregnant with an elephant produced by a French soldier. (He told Wellington about this belief). . . . At least he looked the part [of a general] and, despite his age, he was energetic and could appear quite dashing."⁶

The portrait of himself which Frederick William III sent to Kamehameha III is approximately 27" x 36" in size and bears no visible artist's signature.

It may be a copy of a portrait which remained in Prussia, for the pose and the uniform are similar to two portraits of Frederick William III which have been reproduced in books, one of which is in the Hohenzollern

Museum;⁷ the other, a full-length portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, now hangs in the Waterloo Gallery at Windsor Castle.⁸

Following page 14 of Laffin's *Jackboot*, there is a reproduction of a painting of Blücher which is identical to the portrait sent out to the Hawaiian Islands in 1830, except that the portrait in the book, which is identified as being in the British Museum, has two medals on the Field Marshal's coat, while the painting in Hawaii has the Field Marshal wearing only one.⁹ An article on the general condition of the paintings in Iolani which appeared in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* of February 12, 1913, states that the artist who painted this portrait was Gibauer,¹⁰ but there is no signature visible on the 26" × 35" painting.

These two paintings reached Hawaii in June of 1831. Stephen Reynolds, an American merchant then living in Honolulu, wrote of their arrival in his *Journal*: "At 10 Capt. Wendt landed the presents sent by the King of Prussia to Keaukiolo [sic] . . ." among them ". . . Pictures of His Majesty of Prussia and Prince Blücher. . . . The King appeared much pleased with the things . . ." which had arrived aboard a German ship, the *Princess Louise*.¹¹

Although Reynolds also refers to a letter from Kamehameha III being delivered to Captain Wendt on this occasion, no such document is in the official files of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and it may be that for fifteen years the Prussian gift was not officially acknowledged.

In 1846, however, a letter in both English and Hawaiian was prepared for Kamehameha III by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Frederick William III had been succeeded by Frederick William IV in 1840, so Kamehameha III thanked the son for the father's gift of portraits ". . . which adorn my Palace." This letter was more than simply a "thank you" note; it was a diplomatic overture between rulers, for Kamehameha III, after expressing his appreciation of the previous gifts, stated, "It is my desire that friendly intercourse should increase between your Majesty's Dominions and our Islands. No foreigners within my jurisdiction are more orderly, industrious, and exemplary in their conduct than Your Majesty's subjects and other Germans."¹² At the time Kamehameha III sent this letter to the King of Prussia the Hawaiian Government was negotiating conventions or treaties with Great Britain, France and Denmark and actively seeking diplomatic ties with other European countries such as Prussia, in an effort to assure the continued independence of the Hawaiian Islands.

Frederick William IV's reply to Kamehameha III accompanied a gift of his own portrait. "I received with much interest the missive which you sent to me, under date of 24th June, and I have derived the most

lively pleasure from seeing that you had received the letter of 12th June 1830 accompanying the Portraits of his blessed Majesty my Father, now reposing in the bosom of God—also that of Field Marshal Prince Blücher, . . . I thus rejoice to know that you will receive my own Portrait which I now send you in testimony of my friendship and esteem.”¹³

The portrait of Frederick William IV arrived in Honolulu on June 14, 1848, aboard HBMS *Constance* and was presented to Kamehameha III by the British Captain Courtenay. As in the case of the two other portraits from Prussia, there is no signature visible on this painting, but it is identical to one reproduced in the *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* and attributed there to the artist Franz Kruger.¹⁴ All three of these paintings, those of Frederick William III and IV and of Blücher, hung in the dining room of Iolani Palace during the reign of King Kalakaua.¹⁵

The largest portrait in the Iolani Palace collection is that of Louis Philippe, King of France from 1830 to 1848, which used to hang in the Blue Room. It appears to be a copy of a painting done in 1839 by Winterhalter (a German portrait painter), which is identified in *Histoire de France Contemporaine depuis la Revolution jusqu'a la Paix de 1919*,¹⁶ as being in the Versailles Museum, and in *King of the French*, by Agnes de Stoeckl, as being in the Louvre.¹⁷ In the portrait Louis Philippe wears the uniform of a general, with a red, white and blue cockade in his hat and medal of the Legion of Honor on his chest. His left hand rests on the Charter of 1830, under which he came to the throne of France.

Louis Philippe was born on October 6, 1773, the son of the Duc d'Orleans although there is a persistent legend that he was really the son of a Tuscan jailor, exchanged at birth for a royal unwanted daughter. However, he was accepted by the French royal family, his godparents were Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, and he was always acknowledged by the senior branch of the family, the Bourbons, as a Prince of the Blood. During the French Revolution young Louis Philippe shared his father's radical ideas, became a member of the Jacobin Club, and attended meetings of the National Assembly. At eighteen he went off to join the army as a Lieutenant General and saw action at Valmy and Jemappes in 1792, against Frederick William III and Blücher. However, the following year he was implicated in a plot to overthrow the Republic and forced to flee to Switzerland, where he worked as a tutor.

Although he became the Duc d'Orleans when his father, “Egalite”, was executed by the Terror and thereafter was the focal point of Orleanist plots, he was unable to return to France until 1814. During this exile he spent some time in the United States and in England and, while in Sicily in 1809, he met and married Princess Marie Amelie, daughter of Ferdinand IV of Naples.

In May of 1814, he and his family returned to France after the first Bourbon restoration, although the whole royal household fled once again when Napoleon staged his dramatic return from Elba. After Waterloo the second Bourbon restoration allowed the Orleans family to settle down in their old home, the Palais Royal, in February of 1817. Louis Philippe continued to exhibit a sympathy for the liberal opposition to the reign of Louis XVIII and his successor, Charles X. The duke posed consistently as a protector of the middle-class, and even had his sons educated in an ordinary school. In July of 1830, Charles X promulgated three unwise and repressive royal ordinances which dissolved the recently-elected Chamber of Deputies, abolished freedom of the press, and reduced the voting privilege of the electorate. The people of Paris reacted violently. On July 30 Charles X was forced to leave Paris, and the following day Louis Philippe was proclaimed Lieutenant General of the Kingdom, after an emotional scene held on the balcony of the Hotel de Ville, during which the elderly General Lafayette embraced him. A few days later Louis Philippe accepted the crown of France as a Republican King.

During the next eighteen years Louis Philippe did much to restore the position of France in Europe, and to expand and strengthen her Empire in the Pacific. In the 18th century a number of French sailors had explored the Pacific, and in 1842-44 France extended a protectorate over the Society and the Marquesas Islands. In 1847 the Declaration of London expressed an understanding between France and Great Britain regarding their respective interests in the Pacific. However, in February of 1848, a new revolution broke out, and Louis Philippe fled France once again. It is ironic to note that only a week before his abdication in Paris, Louis Philippe's portrait arrived in Honolulu and was presented to Kamehameha III.

M. Dillon, the new French Consul to Hawaii, arrived in Honolulu on February 1, 1848, aboard the French corvette *La Sarcelle*,¹⁸ bearing the portrait with him. Laura Fish Judd, wife of the former missionary Gerrit P. Judd, who was serving Kamehameha III as Minister of Finance at the time, gives the following account of the presentation of the portrait at Iolani Palace on February 15:

The full-length portrait of Louis Philippe, the King of France, was presented to Kamehameha III, at the Palace. It required twelve men from the *Sarcelle* to carry it, and a body of marines to guard it, a band of music, and a salute of twenty-one guns! The picture, in a massive gilt frame, was wrapped in the national flag, and followed by the wife of the consul and others in carriages; Bishop Maigret and the Catholic clergy, all the French residents in procession, up one street and down another, to magnify the occasion.

On arriving at the palace gate, the Hawaiian guards extended on both sides of the avenue, from the gate to the palace steps. Another salute was fired from Punchbowl. The king, Queen, young chiefs from the royal school, Government officers, ladies and gentlemen, stood on the steps to receive the portrait. Paki, Lord Chamberlain, with a few men to assist, succeeded at last in getting it safely into the reception-room, where it is to remain.

The French consul made a fine speech, with the usual amount of compliments on such occasions, and His Hawaiian Majesty made a 'neat' reply, which he had in his pocket, written for him by the Minister of Foreign Relations. This is the custom in other countries, but our king's own speeches are a thousand times better than those prepared for him, because he does not blunder in reading them, and they are more natural and sincere.

The king opened the palace in the evening to receive calls and exhibit the portrait. It is certainly a very distinguished compliment to our little court and kingdom to receive such a princely gift.¹⁹

The next portrait from a European ruler to arrive in Honolulu was from Russia. The portrait of Alexander II, Tsar of all the Russias, signed by A. Febens and dated 1862, is identical to a portrait of Alexander II at the age of thirty, painted in 1848, which is included in E. M. Almedingen's book, *The Emperor Alexander II*.²⁰ The head pose is also similar, although there is a different arrangement of medals and hands, in a portrait of Alexander II in *A Picture History of Russia*.²¹

Alexander II (1818-1881) was known as the "Tsar Liberator" for his emancipation of the serfs, and Mosse, in *Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia*, states that his reign marked ". . . the transition in Russia from a semi-feudal to an early capitalist economy."²² Alexander II was the son of the reigning Tsar, and the grandson, through his mother, of Frederick William III of Prussia. Merder, his military tutor, reported of him that he ". . . had a natural inclination to what was good. He had, however, a disposition to vagueness and hesitation when faced with obstacles or difficulties."²³

In 1855, he succeeded his father, Nicholas I, and soon realized the necessity of bringing to a close the hopeless Crimean War. Some idea of what Russia was like in 1855 can be gained from a partial list of his reforms.

. . . Alexander withdrew the vexatious restrictions against religious sects . . . a more tolerant regime had been introduced for the Catholic Church in Poland. Restrictions on intellectual life were relaxed. Students were once more admitted to the universities without limitation; young scholars were again sent abroad at public expense; works prohibited by the censor could again appear in print. It was known, moreover, that the Tsar had ordered the complete overhaul of the censorship regulations.²⁴

For six years the young Tsar negotiated and threatened and pleaded with the Russian nobles and landowners until finally, in 1861, a statute emancipating the serfs was completed. This act, together with other reforms, opened the way to commercial and industrial development within Russia.

Russia had a definite interest in the Pacific area long before Alexander II began his reign. The Russian-American Fur Company was established in Alaska in 1799, and that part of the North American continent was not sold to the United States of America until 1867. During the early part of the 19th century a number of Russian explorers visited Hawaii as they criss-crossed the Pacific seeking a sea route to the Alaska fur trading and fishing ports that would be shorter and easier than the trek across Siberia. In 1816 Russians started to build a fort in Honolulu, and the following year they put up fortifications and raised their flag on Kauai. Each time they were driven off by Kamehameha.²⁵ However, Russian ships continued to roam the Pacific and, in 1863, a year before Alexander II's portrait reached Honolulu, the Tsar's fleet paid a formal call on the city of San Francisco.²⁶

Alexander II's portrait, sent to Kamehameha IV, was actually delivered to Kamehameha V on January 12, 1864, only a month and a half after his brother's death. On January 14, the Hawaiian Foreign Minister, R. C. Wyllie, wrote to the Russian Vice Consul at Honolulu, J. C. Pfluger, thanking him for the portrait and asserting for Kamehameha V that, ". . . as it was the policy of His Predecessor so it will be his to cultivate the most friendly relations with Russia, whose possessions are so contiguous to His own Kingdom."²⁷ A few days later Wyllie wrote to His Excellency M. Stoeckl, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias at Washington, advising of the death of Kamehameha IV and the accession of Kamehameha V, thanking him for forwarding to Hawaii the portrait of Alexander II, and stating, "It is now in the Palace and so long as the King lives to behold it, he will consider it a testimony of the Esteem and Sympathy towards Him and His People of His Majesty the Emperor Alexander II".²⁸

If French leaders are superstitious they might well avoid sending their portraits to Hawaii, for fear of dire consequences to themselves. As the portrait of Louis Philippe arrived in Honolulu only a week before his abdication, so the portrait of Napoleon III was presented to Kamehameha V on December 16, 1870, more than three months after the surrender of the French army at Sedan and the fall of the Empire, and while the Emperor was still in a German prison. The painting had been sent out from France on June 20, 1868, but it was lost enroute to Hawaii. The French Commissioner, M. Ballieu, was convinced that it had been sent

and as months and years went by he questioned his colleagues in the Pacific about the missing portrait. Finally, the painting was located in Tahiti, where it was being stored, as there were no directions as to its disposition on the box. It was promptly put on board an American ship, the *Eurania*, which arrived in Honolulu on October 24, 1870,²⁹ and on December 16th it was presented to Kamehameha in a ceremony at Iolani Palace which the *Hawaiian Gazette* described as being “. . . without formality, and the occasion was made one of social enjoyment by those in attendance.”³⁰

The portrait is 38" × 53" and the signature of the artist is not visible. The pose and uniform, however, are the same as those in a picture which appears in *The History of France*, by Thomas Wright,³¹ except that in the engraving (which was drawn by D. J. Pound for the book) the background is blank, while in the painting it is filled in. Both the picture in the book and the painting at Iolani Palace are probably copies, by different artists, of an original portrait.

Napoleon III, or Louis Napoleon as he was born in 1808, was the nephew of Napoleon I and the son of Louis Napoleon, King of Holland. He was brought up by his mother, mostly in exile in Switzerland, and given both a military education and liberal ideas. He participated in the revolt of the garrison of Strasbourg in 1836, and when it failed was exiled by Louis Philippe to America, where he stayed less than a year. A second conspiracy in 1840 earned him six years in prison, which ended when he escaped in 1846 to London, where he promptly resumed his plotting against the Bourbon regime.

After the revolution of 1848 and the exile of Louis Philippe, Louis Napoleon went to France, and on December 10 was elected President of the French Republic. Four years later he managed to have himself proclaimed Emperor.

During the next eighteen years he fostered foreign enterprises in the Pacific, in Mexico, and throughout Europe and at home trod an uneasy path among the liberal, Roman Catholic, Republican, and other factions. As years went by he grew less popular with the people of France, until his final miscalculation, war with Prussia, after which he found he had no supporters at all. Napoleon and his son rode out to inspire their troops only to be present at the complete surrender of the Army of France at Sedan on September 2, 1870. Two days later the Empire fell, and Napoleon III was imprisoned in Germany, where on March 1, 1871, he learned that his deposition as Emperor was confirmed by the Government of France. He was certainly a controversial figure, criticized by such giants as Victor Hugo and Karl Marx and apologized for or explained by numerous historians and writers.³²

From Prussia, France and Russia these portraits came to Hawaii, the gifts of the Kings and Emperors of Europe to the Kings of the Sandwich Islands. Hung on the walls of Iolani Palace, they were more than mere tokens of diplomatic ties between rulers; they were tangible evidence of the international rivalries which were played out in the Pacific Ocean and of the interest with which 19th century Europe viewed the Hawaiian Islands.

NOTES

- ¹ PCA, April 24, 1884.
- ² FO & EX, 1830, AH.
- ³ Veit Valentin, *The German People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 314.
- ⁴ John Sutherland, *Men of Waterloo* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1966), p. 9.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, following p. 176.
- ⁶ John Laffin, *Jackboot, The Story of the German Soldier* (London: Cassell, 1966), p. 57.
- ⁷ William Milligan Sloane, *Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York: The Century Co. Ltd., 1896), Vol. 3, p. 24.
- ⁸ Harold Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna* (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1947), opp. p. 20. Painted in London in 1814, finished at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818.
- ⁹ Laffin, op. cit., following p. 14.
- ¹⁰ PCA, Feb. 12, 1913.
- ¹¹ Stephen Reynolds, *Journal*, typescript at AH, p. 13.
- ¹² FO & EX, 1846, AH.
- ¹³ FO & EX, 1847, Oct. 26-30, AH.
- ¹⁴ *Brockhaus Enzyklopadie* (Wiesbaden: 1968) Vol. F-GER, p. 614.
- ¹⁵ Iolani Palace Inventory, March, 1893, AH.
- ¹⁶ Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France Contemporaine depuis la Revolution jusqu'a la Paix de 1919* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1921), Vol. 5, frontispiece.
- ¹⁷ Agnes de Stoeckl, *King of the French* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), opp. p. 116.
- ¹⁸ P, Feb. 5, 1848.
- ¹⁹ Laura Fish Judd, *Honolulu, Sketches of Life* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1880), p. 173.
- ²⁰ E. M. Almedingen, *The Emperor Alexander II* (London: The Bodley Head, 1962), opp. p. 97.
- ²¹ John S. Martin, Ed. *A Picture History of Russia* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1945), pp. 144.

- ²² W. E. Mosse, *Alexander II and the Modernization of Russia* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 9.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 30.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- ²⁵ Gerrit P. Judd, *Hawaii* (New York: Collier Books, 1967), p. 36.
- ²⁶ Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
- ²⁷ FO & EX, 1846, AH.
- ²⁸ FO & EX, Vol. 40, 1864, AH.
- ²⁹ FO & EX, 1870, AH.
- ³⁰ HG, Dec. 21, 1870.
- ³¹ Thomas Wright, *The History of France* (London: London Printing & Publishing Co., no date), Vol. III, after p. 734.
- ³² Victor Hugo, *Napoleon the Little* (New York: The Athenaeum Society, 1909); Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1926); G. P. Gooch, *The Second Empire* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1960); F. A. Simpson, *The Rise of Louis Napoleon* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925); Robert Sencourt, *Napoleon III: The Modern Emperor* (London: Ernest Berm Ltd., 1933).