



Mauna Loke (Rose Mount)

John Adams Kuakini Cummins

Called the "Prince of Entertainers" and the "Entertainer of Princes," John Cummins was a prosperous businessman known for his generous and lavish hospitality to royalty and commoner alike and for his knowledge and love of Hawaiian traditions.

John Adams Kuakini Cummins was born on O'ahu on March 17, 1835, the son of High Chiefess Kaumakaokane Papali'ai'aina and Thomas Jefferson Cummins (1802-1885). Thomas Jefferson Cummins was born in Lincoln, England, raised in Massachusetts and came to the Hawaiian Islands in 1828. High Chiefess Kaumakaokane Papali'ai'aina was a descendent of the Lonoikahapu'u line and was a cousin of King Kamehameha.

Cummins married Rebecca Kahalewai (1830–1902) in 1861, also considered a high chiefess, and had six children: Matilda Kaumakaokane, Jane Pi'ikea, Kaimilani, 'Imilani, Thomas Puali'i and May Ka'aolani. When she died, her pallbearers included Princes David Kawānanakoa and Jonah Kalaniana'ole. In 1903, he married his son-in-law's sister, High Chiefess Elizabeth Kapeka Merseberg.

Cummins was a staunch monarchist, who, in his later years, was arrested, tried, imprisoned and heavily fined by the new Republic of Hawai'i.

Thomas Cummins purchased or leased lands later known as the Waimanalo Sugar Plantation; the first record of this was March 27, 1842, when High Chief Pākī leased Cummins a parcel of land on which to build a house. This residence was later named Mauna Loke, or Rose Mont. (He had another home, Ahipu'u, named after the hill and caves behind the house. Today it is the site of the O'ahu Country Club.)

However, it was Mauna Loke, the family home in Waimānalo that was the scene of lavish Hawaiian-style living and entertaining that was synonymous with Cummins's name. It was said that the food served there excelled that of the best in San Francisco, and the wines were of the choicest vintage. Although always offering plenty to drink, Cummins himself never touched a drop. His guests included royalty, starting with Kamehameha V, as well as foreign visitors. This included German Princes and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1869. "Cavalcades of horsemen and horsewomen braved the dangers of the steep pali and

the rocky trail in order that they might reach the fertile valley and beach where John Cummins kept open house for all who came his way.” (Hawaiian Gazette, March 21, 1913)

Cummins was elected for his Ko’olau district to the House of Representatives in the legislature of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1873 and assisted in the election of King Lunalilo that same year. The following year, after King Lunalilo’s sudden death, he aided in the election of King Kalākaua. Shortly after coming to the throne King Kalākaua appointed him then to the Privy Council on June 18, 1874 and he eventually served as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Cummins was instrumental in helping King Kalākaua effect a reciprocity treaty with the United States in 1875, after which the sugar industry prospered and the value of the Waimānalo Plantation was greatly enhanced. The sugar industry became a huge success and gave way to other innovations in the area. For instance, the use of railway tracks and locomotive were due to the boom of the sugar business. Cummins left the sugar business to William G Irwin, agent of Claus Spreckles, and developed a commercial building called the Cummins Block at Fort and Merchant streets in Downtown Honolulu.

Although many ancient Hawaiian customs had faded (due to influence of conservative Christian missionaries, for example), Cummins staged great revivals of ceremonies such as traditional hula performance.

King Kalākaua often enjoyed Cummins's hospitality at the spacious home. There were several grass houses scattered throughout the grounds, one for the exclusive use of Kalākaua and one exclusively for Princess Ka’iulani. As a child, Ka’iulani helped "Uncle John" erect a flagpole nearby, then she raised the Hawaiian flag and christened it with a bottle of champagne. Reluctant to go over the difficult Pali trail, the king purchased a small steamboat in which to ride around the island from town and had a short railway line installed from the boat landing to the house.

Even though Cummins voted against former Queen Emma in the election, she asked him to manage a trek for her around the islands in November 1875. He had staged a similar grand tour the year before for Kalākaua. Emma was not disappointed. A huge celebration took place at Mauna Loke at the first stop of a two-week "Grand Tour of O'ahu" by Queen Emma. The queen stayed three days, by which time the number present - both invited and uninvited - was in the hundreds. Guests brought food by the wagon load: hogs, bullocks, ducks, turkeys and poi. Three hundred torches burned throughout the night of the lū’au. (By the way, Pukui notes, “lū’au” is not an ancient name, but goes back at least to 1856, when so used by the Pacific Commercial Advertiser; formerly a feast was called pā’ina or ‘aha’aina.) There were fireworks, bonfires, swimming, surfing, stream fishing, lei making, horse racing, rifle shooting and hula troupes performing one after another until daylight the next day. Cummins then escorted Emma on the rest of the tour around the island.

In 1889, Cummins represented Hawai’i at the Paris exposition known as Exposition Universelle. On June 17, 1890 Cummins became Minister of Foreign Affairs in Kalākaua's cabinet and thus was in the House of Nobles of the legislature for the 1890 session.

When Kalākaua died and Queen Lili’uokalani came to the throne in early 1891, she replaced all her ministers. Cummins resigned February 25, 1891. He was replaced by Samuel Parker who was another part-Hawaiian.

Cummins was elected to the 1892 session of the House of Nobles, on the Hawaiian National Reform Party ticket. He also organized a group called the Native Sons of Hawaii which supported the monarchy.

After the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i in early 1893, Lili'uokalani asked Cummins to travel to the continent to lobby for its help in restoration of the monarchy. The task, which included Parker and Hermann A Widemann, ended in failure. However, on the voyage to the west coast, William T Seward, a former Major in the American Civil War who worked for Cummins and lived in one of his homes, smuggled guns and ammunition for the failed 1895 counter-revolution. Thomas Beresford Walker, Cummins' son-in-law (married to his eldest daughter Matilda,) was also implicated in the plot. Cummins was arrested, charged with treason and convicted. He was sentenced to prison, but released after paying a fine and agreeing to testify against the ones actively involved in the arms trading. ". The territorial legislature had tried several times to refund his fine, but it was never approved by the governor.

He died on March 21, 1913 from influenza after a series of strokes and was buried in O'ahu Cemetery. His obituary read, in part, *"Being one of the last of the high chiefs, whose youth was spent in associating with the kings and princes of the realm, if he had no love for the Hawaiian flag and of the traditions of his country, then no one had. He had been dandled on the knee of Kauhikaouli, Kamehameha III."* Well liked, even his political opponents called him "the playmate of princes and the companion and entertainer of kings

His funeral was a mix of mostly traditional symbols of the Hawaiian religion, with a Christian service in the Hawaiian language, attended by both royalists and planners of the overthrow.

Cummin's great-grandson (through his daughter Jane Piikea Merseberg) was Mayor Neal Blaisdell.

In addition, I have included other related images in a folder of like name in the Photos section on my Facebook and Google+ pages.

Summarized from postings by [Peter T Young on Facebook](#) , [Google November 2012](#)

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