

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1936

PRINCESS THERESA REVIVES THE DAYS OF HAWAIIAN ROYALTY

By Louise Hallingsworth Today you may see her, ample figure, fanning her broad features as she sways in a rocking chair at a lei stand on Merchant St.

She wears a sombre black haku. Her furrowed face is framed by a black hat trimmed with a lei of parrot feathers. Princess Theresa Owana Kaohelani, direct descendant of Keoua, father of Hawaiian kings and of the Kamehameha line, is visiting with her friends the lei makers who are busy stringing ropes of gold and brown ilima.

Two faint spots of rouge mark her brown cheeks. Between them a pair of intense black shadowed eyes light faintly with a smile of greeting as an old friend passes, to recede into brooding darkness.

Tomorrow the costume may have changed entirely. A bright holoku and a scarlet modern hat signify that Princess Theresa is in a gypsy mood. Her hair is adorned with a Spanish comb of tortoise shell. She has a necklace of blue and scarlet beads around her throat. The color comes on her cheeks about 11 in the morning and gradually faded away at about 11 at night.

"My father was Prince Gideon Kapiipaliki Laanui. I was born May 1, 1860, the only child of their union. I was born at the family home opposite what is now the Alexander Young hotel and adjoining the Brewer & Co. warehouse on Hotel St. My mother died when I was 5 years old and my father when I was 8.

"My father's father was High Chief Gideon Laanui, a cousin of Princess Victoria Kamaomalu, who gave most of her lands to him. The Moanala gardens of today was the site of one of his homes. He had another home at Waiialua where the Haleiwa hotel now stands. His home in town was where the public library is now situated. On this island he had a beautiful grass house at Waimea beach.

"My grandfather was married to the high chiefs Theresa K. Owana Kaohelani. They had two children; the high chiefs Elizabeth Kekaanuihaukapuakalani and my father. Grandfather was fond of boxing and rooster fights.

"In my childhood, King Kamehameha V was on the throne. My grandfather, who adopted me, was the king's chamberlain.

"When I was a child I used to go to the palace and call out at the gate. But the sentry would not let me in because I did not know the password. Then I would cry and make threats and when the

Hawaii. Children, dreams and memories are her wealth.

Princess Theresa's memories are her own. What she discloses in the following narrative is written as it came from her own lips.

Here is her story: "I am a direct descendant of Keoua, father of Hawaiian kings and of the Kamehameha line.

"My great, great grandfather was Mons. Jean Dassit Lafayette Rivers, who was instrumental in bringing the first Catholic missionaries to Hawaii.

"My mother was Princess Kamakapaolaweikaukalanui. She was a granddaughter of Kuineheua and Keokakolale; her mother was Lauahaka and her father Kaohakea, a high chief of Puna.

"Mother was a beautiful woman. Her hair was black, thick and long. It hung down to her ankles. She had red cheeks like the chias. The color came on her cheeks about 11 in the morning and gradually faded away at about 11 at night.

"My father was Prince Gideon Kapiipaliki Laanui. I was born May 1, 1860, the only child of their union. I was born at the family home opposite what is now the Alexander Young hotel and adjoining the Brewer & Co. warehouse on Hotel St. My mother died when I was 5 years old and my father when I was 8.

"My father's father was High Chief Gideon Laanui, a cousin of Princess Victoria Kamaomalu, who gave most of her lands to him. The Moanala gardens of today was the site of one of his homes. He had another home at Waiialua where the Haleiwa hotel now stands. His home in town was where the public library is now situated. On this island he had a beautiful grass house at Waimea beach.

"My grandfather was married to the high chiefs Theresa K. Owana Kaohelani. They had two children; the high chiefs Elizabeth Kekaanuihaukapuakalani and my father. Grandfather was fond of boxing and rooster fights.

"In my childhood, King Kamehameha V was on the throne. My grandfather, who adopted me, was the king's chamberlain.

"When I was a child I used to go to the palace and call out at the gate. But the sentry would not let me in because I did not know the password. Then I would cry and make threats and when the

death, were gala years for Princess Theresa. They were undoubtedly the most significant years of her existence as she had in her mate a partner whose personality was as dynamic as her own; a man who just before their marriage had taken leading part in Hawaiian politics and whose activities precipitated an occasional revolution born of his own fervent patriotism.

Robert Wilcox, as a youth was sent to Italy to be educated. There he met the Italian patriot Garibaldi who from then on, he worshipped as a hero. Just before his return to Hawaii, he met and married Baroness Gina Sobrero, an Italian noblewoman. Upon his return to Hawaii

in 1887, Mr. Wilcox was implicated in political intrigue and thereafter went with his bride to San Francisco where he worked as a surveyor.

His return was marked in 1889 by an uprising in which he took the leading part in an attempt to seize the palace. Mr. Wilcox was arrested and tried for high treason. The first trial resulted in a mistrial and in the second he was acquitted.

Robert Wilcox, as a youth was sent to Italy to be educated. There he met the Italian patriot Garibaldi who from then on, he worshipped as a hero. Just before his return to Hawaii, he met and married Baroness Gina Sobrero, an Italian noblewoman. Upon his return to Hawaii

in 1887, Mr. Wilcox was implicated in political intrigue and thereafter went with his bride to San Francisco where he worked as a surveyor.

His return was marked in 1889 by an uprising in which he took the leading part in an attempt to seize the palace. Mr. Wilcox was arrested and tried for high treason. The first trial resulted in a mistrial and in the second he was acquitted.

Robert Wilcox, as a youth was sent to Italy to be educated. There he met the Italian patriot Garibaldi who from then on, he worshipped as a hero. Just before his return to Hawaii, he met and married Baroness Gina Sobrero, an Italian noblewoman. Upon his return to Hawaii

in 1887, Mr. Wilcox was implicated in political intrigue and thereafter went with his bride to San Francisco where he worked as a surveyor.

His return was marked in 1889 by an uprising in which he took the leading part in an attempt to seize the palace. Mr. Wilcox was arrested and tried for high treason. The first trial resulted in a mistrial and in the second he was acquitted.

Robert Wilcox, as a youth was sent to Italy to be educated. There he met the Italian patriot Garibaldi who from then on, he worshipped as a hero. Just before his return to Hawaii, he met and married Baroness Gina Sobrero, an Italian noblewoman. Upon his return to Hawaii

in 1887, Mr. Wilcox was implicated in political intrigue and thereafter went with his bride to San Francisco where he worked as a surveyor.



Princess Theresa Owana Kaohelani, descendant of the Kamehameha line, who at 76 years is still in vigorous health. The photograph shows her as she is today at her home in Kaimuki.

sentry saw who it was he let me in. "First I would pick flowers from the garden and sit down and make leis. When I had three or four ready, I crawled up on the verandah and there usually found the king fast asleep.

"I would put the leis around his neck and pull the jeweled rings from his fingers. Nobody could tell me not to take the king's rings off because I was a spoiled child. I would still have the rings when I got back home and my poor grandmother would have to take the rings back to the king with all kinds of excuses.

The king let me do anything I wanted to do and when my grandmother took the rings back he only laughed.

"As I grew older, the king suffered continually from pains as he was so fat. I remember that the day before the king died he summoned my aunt, the high chiefess Elizabeth Pratt, to his bedside and asked her to be queen if he died. My aunt thanked him but declined and suggested Queen Emma. But that did not seem suitable and my aunt asked the king to marry her relative Nancy Summer, so she could be queen if anything happened to him. I heard my aunt ask the king to marry her, but he thought he was too old. The king died before anything came of it.

"At that time I attended St. Andrew's primary. One of my teachers was Sister Beatrice. We were taught housekeeping, dressmaking, how to make hats. After that I went to private school on Nuuanu St.

"I also attended the Fort St. school and Punahou last of all.

"By that time I have a great many beaux. When I was 17 I married Alexander Cartwright. We had two children, daughters who are still living. They are Daisy Emmaloni Cartwright Nelson, who was named after Queen Emma and Eva Cartwright Styne. We were divorced after a few years.

Then I married Robert W. Wilcox.

They were married in 1896 and the next seven years, up to the time of Mr. Wilcox's

death, were gala years for Princess Theresa. They were undoubtedly the most significant years of her existence as she had in her mate a partner whose personality was as dynamic as her own; a man who just before their marriage had taken leading part in Hawaiian politics and whose activities precipitated an occasional revolution born of his own fervent patriotism.

Robert Wilcox, as a youth was sent to Italy to be educated. There he met the Italian patriot Garibaldi who from then on, he worshipped as a hero. Just before his return to Hawaii, he met and married Baroness Gina Sobrero, an Italian noblewoman. Upon his return to Hawaii

in 1887, Mr. Wilcox was implicated in political intrigue and thereafter went with his bride to San Francisco where he worked as a surveyor.

years and a fine of \$10,000. He was pardoned in 1898 and elected as Hawaii's first delegate to congress after annexation.

Princess Theresa's memories of strenuous political times immediately preceding her marriage in 1896 to the "Hawaiian Garibaldi" are rather vague. More vivid are her recollections of the gay times that followed when she went to Washington in the first years of this century.

She tells of her trip: "My husband, my two children and I boarded the Rio Janeiro at half past seven in the morning. We had with us David Kalauakalani, the delegate's secretary, and his wife. We certainly enjoyed the boat trip and when we landed in San Francisco we went straight to the Occidental hotel where everyone from Hawaii went in those days.

"We had not been there an hour before John D. Spreckles called on us and took us to his mansion overlooking the bay.

"When we arrived in Washington I got ready to call on President McKinley. When we called on him he was very nice to me and asked me where I was living. I told him we were at the Normandy hotel. The president told me that we should get a home as it would be cheaper. I told him we were paying \$300 a week.

"So Mr. Wilcox rented a home on R St. for \$80 a month, furnished except for a sewing machine and a piano. We hired a French cook, and two acton girls to do the housework. We had a man in livery to drive our carriage. We paid only \$40 for the carriage; \$30 for the horses and \$5 for the harness. I thought I was in dreamland as everything was so cheap.

Then there was the occasion of Princess Theresa's first White House ball. In anticipation of many good things to eat she went on a voluntary hunger strike.

"You must eat before you go," my husband said when I refused dinner that night," Princess Theresa recollected. "This is not going to be like a luau at home. You won't get anything to eat," he said.

"Don't be foolish, I told him! There surely will be roast turkey and I'm not going to eat anything until I eat turkey."

"So we went to the ball, I was ravenously hungry. I looked around for turkey. There was nothing in sight but silver bowls of punch and sherbet. There will be turkey," I said, "I was so hungry I was sick, maybe as much from disappointment as anything else. I think I must have been crying when a gentleman asked me what the trouble was, if I was ill."

"I broke down and confessed. 'I'm just plain hungry,' I told him. I thought there was going to be turkey," he said. "Go and get your wrap and we will go out!" We left in a carriage and went to a restaurant where I had a large dinner. When I went back to the ball again my husband was looking all over for me. "Where have you been?" he asked. "Out eating turkey with a gentleman," I told him. The gentleman was Vice President Theodore Roosevelt."

Another highlight of Princess Theresa's career in Washington was when, invited to a riding party, she appeared in the traditional riding costume of Hawaii—a brilliantly colored pa-u. That day she amazed Washington society by galloping along the bridge paths, her brilliant draperies flying in the breeze.

"The princess is one of the most interesting women in Washington," read a notice in Town Talk on February 11, 1901. "She is a direct descendant of Keoua, father of Kamehameha the Great. She is a mother of two children, Robert Keoua and Virginia. The daughter, the newspaper noted, was the last child of royalty born under the monarchy."

In 1903, Princess Theresa was left a widow, Mr. Wilcox died of a stomach affliction aggravated by his refusing to leave activities in the political field in order to regain his health. He died in Honolulu, his wife and children at his bedside.

Princess Theresa's memories of her later marriages, first to Louis T. Bellevue, about 1914, and from whom she was divorced in 1921, and later to John G. Kelly in 1922, are somewhat casual.

She lived for a number of years with Bellevue in the brick house which she built on the "Gore lot," now the site of the Hawaiian Electric Co. building. From this abode, Princess Theresa and her spouse were evicted by court order in June, 1918, after she had failed to establish ownership to the property, claimed to have been inherited through relationship to Jose Nasal who was married to one of her aunts.

Dark days descended. Some time before, Princess Theresa was charged with conspiracy to commit forgery in connection with the will of Queen Liliuokalani. The will in question was presented while funeral arrangements for the queen were still pending in November, 1917. As one of the chief concerns of the will was the priority of mourners and retainers at the funeral, the situation caused considerable complications in funeral arrangements.

Princess Theresa was convicted in 1918 and spent two years in Oahu prison for her offense. She insisted then, as she does today, that the charges were a "frame up" against her by enemies. But she accepted the situation without rancour apparently, as a newspaper account of her release in 1920, quoted her as saying, "I just had to leave."

"Everyone was so nice to me," she said later. "The boys" gave her a guitar as a farewell gift and she missed the daily games of croquet. She married Kelly the following year, and divorced him in 1927.

In telling of her marriages, Princess Theresa had some difficulty in recalling the name of her last husband.

"Oh, yes, Kelly," she said. "I had to divorce him. He was too smart." In the same moment she recalled a family of old friends now living in San Francisco.

"These kids are just like children to me," she said. "But what gets into people these days? The other day I heard that one of the boys had gone to Reno to get another divorce. I can't understand these modern kids. It's too bad."

In recent years, Princess Theresa has been a familiar figure in courtrooms where she has attempted in vain to establish her claim to various holdings of the Bishop estate, asserting that certain crown lands are hers by right of inheritance.

"My lawyer in Washington is going to petition congress for the restoration of my lands," the princess said recently.

"Kamehameha III divided the islands into three sections," she explained. "There were the government lands for the use of the government; portions of the land were set aside for the people and in the

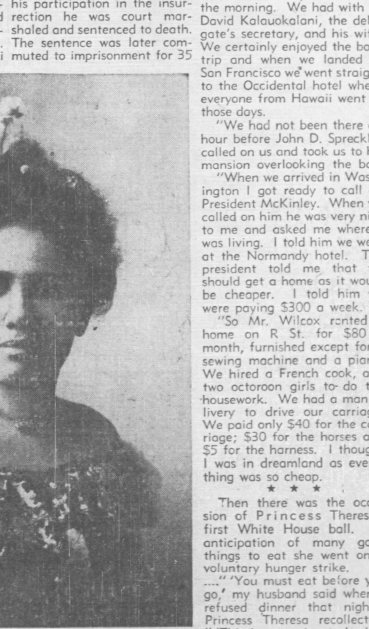
(Continued on Page 7)



A portrait of Princess Theresa in the "Gay Nineties" when she was one of the belles of Honolulu



As a young woman, Princess Theresa was prominent in Washington society. At the time of this picture she was the wife of Robert W. Wilcox, Hawaii's first delegate to congress.



Vivacious Helen is one of Princess Theresa's six adopted grandchildren who make their home with her.