



Queen Lili`uokalani's Cuff Buttons Found in New Jersey

A pair of cuff buttons or cuff links, once in the collection of Queen Lili`uokalani, was recently donated to The Friends of `Iolani Palace by Jean Starks of New Jersey. These cuff buttons were acquired over eight decades ago by her father, W. Mack Angas. He bought them at an auction of the queen's personal belongings here in Honolulu.

When Queen Lili`uokalani died in 1917, it was her wish that her personal property be sold. The proceeds from the sale were to be added to a trust fund for the establishment and maintenance of an orphanage. An inventory was taken of her personal property deposited in the vault of Bishop Trust Company. Along with the diamond brooches, tiger claw jewelry, silverware, and rare Hawaiian feather lei, the inventory listed "1 Pair Cuff Buttons set with Woman's Face." The value noted was \$2.00.



Each of the cuff buttons is fashioned in 10 karat gold and decorated with the enameled portrait of an Etruscan-type woman. The headpiece of the woman, on each of the cuff buttons, is adorned with three rose cut diamonds weighing approximately .02 carat.

In fulfillment of the queen's wishes, the cuff buttons and other items were removed from the vault at Bishop Trust Company and put up for public auction in 1924. Potential buyers previewed the goods at the firm of Wall & Dougherty on Bishop Street. Actual bidding took place in the ballroom of the Alexander Young Hotel.

One of the persons attending the auction was Lieutenant W. Mack Angas (CEC) of the U.S. Navy. He was on his second tour of duty in the islands, and was assigned to the Public Works Department at the Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. His daughter Jean Starks related how the cuff buttons came into her father's possession: "My father went to the auction in the morning and everything was too expensive for a lieutenant in the navy with three children. He just dropped by in the afternoon on a hunch something might come up that he could afford. And there were the cuff links which he thought were more attractive than some of the more expensive items sold in the morning. So he bought them."

Mrs. Starks mentioned that her father had the cuff buttons monogrammed with the initial "A" for "Angas" before presenting them to her mother as a gift. They remained one of her mother's treasured possessions as the family moved to different naval bases in California, Florida, New York, Massachusetts, and South Carolina. The family eventually settled in New Jersey. After retiring with the rank of vice admiral, W. Mack Angas became Chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering at Princeton University. The department's most prestigious award, given to the top graduating student, is named in his honor.

Upon the death of her mother, Mrs. Starks was given the cuff buttons by her father because she was born in Hawai'i. After enjoying them for many years, Mrs. Starks felt it was time to return these cuff buttons to Hawai'i. In returning them, Mrs. Starks remarked: "You can see that they have been treasured. Neither my mother nor I ever forgot where they came from."