

HISTORY OF  
THE



Royal Order  
of  
Jesters

National Court

FORMED JUNE 25, 1917

INCORPORATED APRIL 17, 1919

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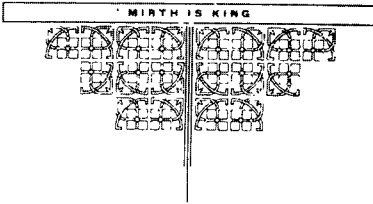
**Incidents, Happenings and Friendships**

*on the*

**Second Decennial Pilgrimage**

*of the*

**Imperial Potentate, A. A. O. N. M. S.**



TO

*Aloha Temple, Honolulu*  
ISLAND OF OAHU

<sup>A</sup> <sub>N</sub> <sup>D</sup> *The Volcano of Kilauea*  
ISLAND OF HAWAII

February 15th to March 7th, 1911

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY A. M. ALLISON, ISLAM TEMPLE, SAN FRANCISCO  
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NATIONAL COURT OF THE  
ROYAL ORDER OF JESTERS

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## PREFACE TO THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL ORDER OF JESTERS

At the Mid-Year Meeting of the Officers of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters held in September of 1978, the following Royal Officers were in attendance, Loren Willhoft, Kenneth W. Bumgarner, David C. Underwood, Ray Nyemaster, Dewey E S Kuhns, Phillip E Svce, Palmer D. Burde, Farrell G. Huber, Jr., Hugh L Libby, Thomas S Perry, Robert J. Tolonen, Willard H Erwin, Jr, and Cecil Walrath P.R.D.

It was decided that the History of the Royal Order of Jesters should be brought up to date and Past Royal Director Willard J Classen was delegated to undertake the task. He was fortunate to have at his disposal early historical data from the Proceedings of each Annual Meeting of the National Court since its formation in 1917, and the Histories of the Order, prepared by George Filmer, John Boyle and E. A. Fletcher in 1920, Royal Impresario Fred E. Pierce in 1935, and W Howard Millington, the Royal Impresario in 1967. Other valuable source material included San Francisco newspapers and *Pilgrimage to Hawaii, Incidents, Happenings and Friendships on the Second Decennial Pilgrimage of the Imperial Potentate Fred A Hines, to Aloha Temple A.A.O.N.M.S., Honolulu, Island of Oahu and the Volcano of Kilauea, Island of Hawaii, February 15 to March 7, 1911*, written and compiled by Alexander Marshall Allison, Islam Temple, San Francisco, California, Historian

### Earlier Histories of the Order

At the adjourned First Annual Meeting of the National Court, held at French Lick, Indiana, September 3rd. and 4th., 1918, Frederick R. Smith, Royal Tragedian, from Rochester Court No 3, was appointed, upon a motion by Lou B. Winsor, seconded by R. J. Shand, to write the history of the Order to date, to be presented at the next Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, Dr. Frederick R. Smith died on March 24, 1919. As a result a new committee was appointed by the Royal Director to complete the work. This committee consisted of George Filmer, John Boyle and E. A. Fletcher. At the third Annual Meeting of the National Court, held June 20, 1920, in Portland, Oregon, George Filmer read the History of the Royal Order of Jesters, compiled by the committee. This was followed by a report on the Later History of the Royal Order of Jesters, by Royal Tragedian Esten A. Fletcher, bringing the history to 1920.

At the twelfth Annual Meeting of the National Court held in Los Angeles, California, a resolution was adopted providing that a History of the Order be printed in small brochure form for distribution to the membership. Royal Director Lou B. Winsor delegated the task of gathering together and arranging the available facts pertaining to the History of the Royal Order of Jesters up to 1935 to Royal Impresario Fred E. Pierce. This "Pinkie" Pierce did and had the same printed, including a copy in the Annual Proceedings sent to each member.

At the mid-year meeting of the National Court in April of 1967, Royal Impresario W. Howard Millington was assigned the task of bringing the History of the Royal Order of Jesters up to date to September 1, 1967. This resulted in the published History of the Royal Order of Jesters, National Court, dated January 1, 1968.

## *"Mirth is King"*

*Royal Director William S. Brown stated the following at the First Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters*

The motto of our Order "Mirth is King" explains to the world in a large measure the purpose of our existence. There has always been plenty of heartache and misery in the world, and we know that the best philosophy is not to brood over sorrows, but to forget them as far as possible. It is the duty of every Jester to promote cheer and happiness, not only among members, but everywhere he can carry his sunshine, and it is just to this extent that the Jester organization must be taken seriously. We can do a lot of good in this old world, if we make but a slight effort and always remember that good cheer and laughter are unfailing as antidotes.

## HISTORY OF THE ROYAL ORDER OF JESTERS

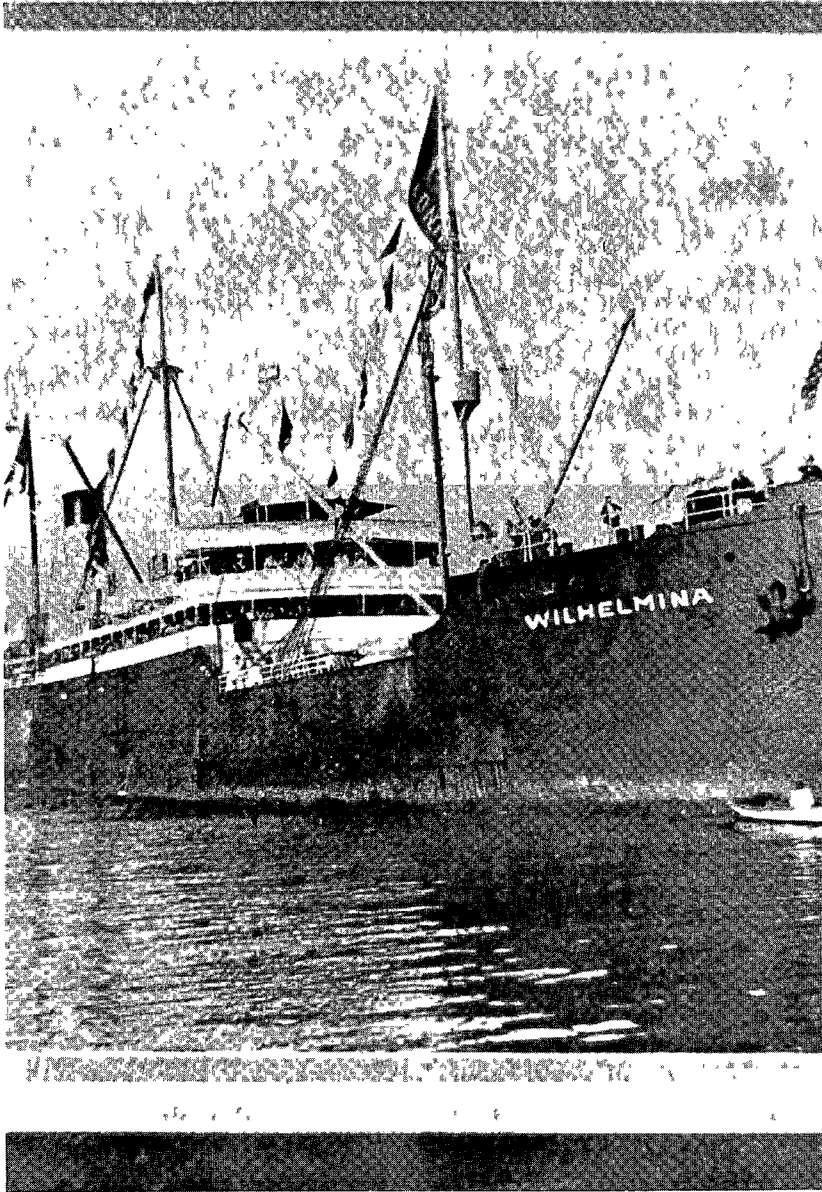
Shortly after Imperial Potentate Fred A Hines was elected in New Orleans, April 13, 1910, and until August of the same year, Noble James S. McCandless, Chief Rabban of Aloha Temple, Honolulu, continued to urge him by letter, telegram, and in person to fix a definite date for a visitation of the Imperial Council to Aloha Temple and the Hawaiian Islands. Consequently in August, 1910, Noble McCandless with Past Illustrious Potentate George Filmer of Islam Temple, San Francisco met with the Imperial Potentate at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco and decided upon the period of February 15 to March 7, 1911 as the time of the Imperial Visitation to Aloha Temple. Noble Filmer agreed to act for the Imperial Potentate and was designated by Aloha Temple to act for them in all matters pertaining to the pilgrimage.

At the personal solicitation of Noble James S McCandless, the new and palatial steamer "Wilhelmina" of the Matson Navigation Company was chartered for the trip with Noble Peter Johnson of Aloha Temple as her commander. Noble A M Allison of Islam Temple, San Francisco, was appointed historian of the pilgrimage. The "Wilhelmina" sailed from Pier 38 in San Francisco on February 15, 1911, with Captain Johnson and 127 persons. 69 Shriners, including Imperial Sir Fred A Hines, Frederick R Smith, Imperial Oriental Guide, William S. Brown, Imperial Treasurer, Past Imperial Potentate George H Green, and Past Imperial Potentate Lou B. Winsor, wives, children, and relatives.

On the voyage over, George Filmer and a number of Nobles, together with Captain Johnson, arranged many games and sports to while away the hours. Historian Allison provides the following information

"On the third day out of San Francisco (Feb. 18), there were some who danced the evening through, others at the bridge and whist tables, but not until midnight did the meeting of the Jesters take place in the smoker, which lasted until 3 a.m. Noble Peter Johnson, skipper being proclaimed a Royal Jester, toyed with Dr. Frederick Smith, D. E. Perkins, J. B. Leggat, William M Beamish, and A. M. Allison. At the close of the meeting Chief Jester Johnson donated the fees received to the games committee."

We know the idea occurred to Historian A. M Allison to start a new order to be known as the "Royal Order of Jesters," and this was suggested to Noble George Filmer, who enthusiastically approved of the idea. Noble Allison personally prepared the Ritual or Book of the Play, and arranged all details of the first initiations.



*S.S. Wilhelmina 1911*

Passenger  
Steamers Flying  
between  
**SAN FRANCISCO**  
and  
**HAWAIIAN ISLANDS**  
Passenger & Freight  
Office at  
268 Market St.  
San Francisco  
Castle & Coose Ltd. Agents  
Honolulu, Oahu, T.H.



When the King sails Fun we I see  
T'ere the King's Shiret we in e

**PILGRIMAGE OF THE**

**IMPERIAL BOULEVARD FRED A. BONES**  
TO  
**ALOHA SERVICE**  
Honolulu, Hawaii

**INTERNATIONAL BANQUET**

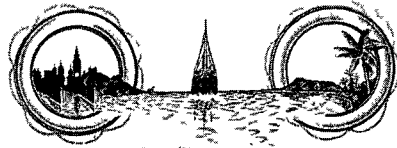
TO THE  
**IMPERIAL OFFICERS, NOBLES & LADIES**

Given by  
**CAPTAIN & OFFICERS**  
OF THE

**S.S. WILHELMINA**

Pete Johnson	Commander
Axel R. Gehling	Chief Officer
Joseph Barker	Chief Engineer
Charles A. Draw	First Officer
Dr. Harvey L. Ross	Surgeon
George Paston	Chief Steward

We have been in the world for 100 years  
We have known you & your people  
For you our hearts will ever be  
As your love & comfort we will



★ **Menu** ★



**MASSON NAVIGATION Co**

We try to do what is best for you  
But when we meet you we can't be without dining

S.S. Wilhelmine P. Johnson, Commander

**Dinner**

**HORS D'OEUVRES**  
Eastern Oysters on half-shell  
Pate de foie Gras Queen Olives  
Caviar en Blanc Pickled Walnuts  
Radicchio Sautéed Almonds

**SOUP**  
Consomme Printaniere Royale Potage Mouch Turcia

**FISH**  
Filet of Sole a la Rothschild Duchesse Potatoes

**ENTREES**  
Lamb Chops a la Maitre d'Hotel Ox Tail a la Milanese  
Goose Liver Patties Omelettes au Rhum

**BOILED**  
Smoked Ox Tongue & Spinach

**ROASTS**  
Prime Ribs of Beef au Jus & Mashed Potatoes  
Saddle of Mutton Parsienne Potatoes  
Westphalia Ham & Champagne Sauce  
Stuffed Turkey & Cranberry Sauce  
Crab

**SALAD**  
VEGETABLES  
Artichokes Asparagus au Bourree  
Butter & Mashed Potatoes

**ENTREMETS**  
Peach Souffle  
Coconut Cream Pie Mince Pie  
Assorted Small Pastry  
Macadams of Fruit Jelly Strawberry Ice Cream  
Assorted Nuts Figs Layer Raisins  
Pears Sliced Pineapple  
French Candies Mandarin Apples  
Bon Bons After Dinner Mint  
Chateau - California Rognon Swiss

**Cafe Noir**  
February 20th, 1911

Upon the evening of February 20, 1911, following a Testimonial Banquet given by the Captain and Officers of the S.S. Wilhelmina to the Imperial Officers, Nobles, and ladies, Noble Allison called a number of Nobles together in the Captain's office. They went over the tentative program of founding and arranging for the "Royal Order of Jesters", establishing its name and birthplace as within the jurisdiction of Aloha Court, Honolulu, the Mother Court of the Realm. Those present at this preliminary meeting and the parts which later were allocated to them in the Original Cast, as reported, were

- |                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| George Filmer       | Royal Director              |
| James S. McCandless | Royal Heavy Man             |
| William M. Beamish  | Royal Serio Comic           |
| J. Benton Leggat    | Royal Tragedian             |
| A. M. Allison       | Royal Impresario            |
| D. E. Perkins       | Royal Light Comedian        |
| Frederick R. Smith  | Royal Leading Lady          |
| William S. Brown    | Royal Soubrette             |
| A. C. Brode         | Royal Property Man          |
| George H. Green     | Royal Constable             |
| Peter Johnson       | Royal Master Transportation |
| Fred A. Hines       | Royal Censor                |
| Lou B. Winsor       | Royal Censor                |

There was no real initiation, except the reading of excerpts from the Ritual which afterwards were embodied in the Book of the Play, and the banding together of the above Nobles as the nucleus of the Royal Order of Jesters.

On page 15 of the Proceedings of the fifth Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters in San Francisco, Jester James S. McCandless, of Honolulu, said. "As you know they usually get up some little organization or some stunt to have a little amusement and they conceived the idea of the Royal Order of Jesters. Billy Brown always enters into the spirit of anything that is good, and when they arrived in Honolulu they had already committed the ritual of the Jesters. Hawaii at that time being under royalty, of course it had to be the Royal Jesters. Don't forget that, boys, you belong to the royal family. So when they got down there they initiated quite a number of us in the islands, among them myself." He makes no specific mention as to who or how many were initiated.

The Hawaiian Order of the Royal Jesters, Aloha Court, Book of the Play, carries a statement of "Method of Procedures to Establish Courts", in the back of the book. It states, "Aloha Court, of the Hawaiian Order of the Royal Jesters, will remain the Mother Court of the Realm,

*The Night The Jesters Were Born*

and her cast may only be added to from among the original Jesters proven on the Shrine Pilgrimage to Honolulu, T.H., February 15 to March 7, 1911, or from among such Nobles of the Mystic Shrine who may hereafter visit the Crater of Kilauea."

The first interpretation of the "Book of the Play" of the Royal Order of Jesters was given on board the S.S. *Wilhelmina* in the Captain's office during the return trip from Honolulu to San Francisco on Thursday, March 2, 1911. The interpretation was given by the original Royal Cast, under the name and style of "Aloha Court, the Mother Court of the Realm", with a completed ritual, or Book of the Play, containing the obligation and six acts fully worked out with their lines and histrionic business, lessons, axioms, and symbols. The first Royal Cast to put on the Book of the Play on the return voyage consisted of.

George Filmer	Royal Director
Captain Peter Johnson	Royal Heavy Man
William Beamish	Royal Serio Comic
A. M. (Bill) Allison	Royal Tragedian
J. Benton Leggat	Royal Impresario
D. Ervin Perkins	Royal Light Comedian
Dr Frederick R. Smith	Royal Leading Lady
William S. Brown	Royal Soubrette
George H. Green	Royal Constable
A. C. Brode	Royal Property Man
Fred A. Hines	Royal Censor
Lou B. Winsor	Royal Censor

comprising the original troupe and called Aloha Court No. 1. The only changes from those on the list named enroute to Hawaii were Peter Johnson for James S. McCandless as Royal Heavy Man and A. M. Allison as Tragedian instead of Impresario and J. Benton Leggat as Impresario instead of Tragedian. Everything being now complete and the stage set, the Acts were played out before two Nobles, Nelson Lewis of Nile Temple, Seattle, Washington, and James A. Sorenson of Islam Temple, San Francisco, who fully appreciated the performance, criticized at will, caught their cues, sang the roles in fairly good style, and learned the lines well. The fun was genteel, excruciating, and enjoyed by the candidates as much as by the Court itself.

As the play of the Royal Order of Jesters had been well accepted and interest in the secret performance aboard ship was becoming so general, another performance was called for midnight of the same day in the Social Hall of the *Wilhelmina*. Promptly at midnight the follow-

ing nine Nobles were inducted into the mysteries. Each learned his lines and cues and played well his part.

August F. Schleicher	Islam Temple	San Francisco, Ca.
Esten A. Fletcher	Damascus	Rochester, N. Y.
H. S. Patterson	Islam	San Francisco
R. O. Kimbrough	Islam	San Francisco
William E. Bush	Al Malaikah	Los Angeles, Ca
Anton F. Korbel	Islam	San Francisco
Samuel W. Burtschaell	Aahmes	Oakland, Ca.
Eugene Korn	Islam	San Francisco
John Boyle	Ziyara	Utica, N. Y.

The fun was immense, the comedy good, and the laughter awakened sleepers in nearby staterooms and aroused the interest of many of the nobility aboard. Promptly at midnight, on March 3, 1911, another class of nine amateurs who thought they could act, presented themselves at the Stage Door and applied for admission to the Royal Order of Jesters. They were

Alexander Gilliland	Syria	Pittsburgh, Pa.
Walter G. McCarty	Al Malaikah	Los Angeles, Ca.
Frank W. Bilger	Aahmes	Oakland, Ca.
George L. Wells	El Katif	Spokane, Wash.
Edward V. Pasquale	Islam	San Francisco
Richard D. Bronson	Al Malaikah	Los Angeles
Walter R. Coombs	Aloha	Honolulu, T.H.
S. H. Susskind	Islam	San Francisco
Philip D. Gordon	Karnak	Montreal, Que, Canada

At this performance the two original Honorary Members, Imperial Potentate Fred A. Hines and Past Imperial Potentate Lou B. Winsor were present and enjoyed the Play to their full satisfaction. The performance ran smoothly and harmoniously and was very entertaining.

It was not considered fair to those who had witnessed the Play that so few had been honored by participation in the performances of the Royal Order of Jesters. Thus it was decided on the last night of the Pilgrimage at sea, March 6, 1911, to admit one last class of amateurs. At midnight the stage was set and the Play produced and the following twenty Nobles were rehearsed in the Book of the Play.

Clarence W. Purington	Islam	San Francisco
Herman S. McKeen	Aahmes	Oakland
George E. Bennett	Islam	San Francisco
Karl Kurtz, M.D	Al Malaikah	Los Angeles
Louis Blaylock	Hella	Dallas, Texas



William Crocker	Islam	San Francisco
Azro N. Lewis	Islam	San Francisco
Adolph Meyer	Islam	San Francisco
George A. Montell	Islam	San Francisco
George K. McDonald	Islam	San Francisco
Otto Grundel	Islam	San Francisco
Sherman Holladay	Aahmes	Oakland
Chris Schmid	Islam	San Francisco
Philip Zimmerman	Islam	San Francisco
A. J. Zobel, M.D.	Islam	San Francisco
George F. Trott	El Jebel	Denver, Colorado
G. A. Arnold	Islam	San Francisco
G. P. Akerley	Islam	San Francisco
A. W. Thornton	Afifi	Tacoma, Wash.
Charles G. Gebhardt	Islam	San Francisco

This last performance was as successful and smooth as the ones previous with the Pilgrimage ending the next day, and the party disbanding in San Francisco. The Mother Court adjourned March 7, 1911, to meet in Rochester, New York, the following July 14 at midnight.



*George Filmer and Captain Peter Johnson—1911.*

*Captain Peter Johnson, S.S. Wilhelmina, Aloha Temple.*

*George Filmer, Organizer, Aloha Pilgrimage, Islam Temple.*

Under the Ritual or Book of the Play, any two original members of the Mother Court could form a subsidiary Court in any city where a Temple of A.A.O.N.M.S. existed. Under this authority, Royal Director

George Filmer and Royal Impresario A. M. Allison of Islam, San Francisco convened a meeting of the Originals holding membership in Islam Temple at the Union League Club on May 4, 1911. After a banquet, San Francisco Court No. 2, Royal Order of Jesters was instituted upon performance of the Book of the Play. Eighteen Nobles participated in the First Performance as follows:

Francis V. Keesling, Harry Maundrell, W. H. Hendricks, C. J. Wood, John A. Ulrich, James R. Davidson, M.D., James A. Hawkins, Frank J. Klimm, Jesse B. Cook, Adolph Huber, George A. Zimmerman, T. W. B. Leland, M.D., Theodore Walters, Gus A. Lenoir, William P. Filmer, Joseph A. Bush, L. B. McMurtry, Frank P. Sherman.

This class, with the Original Jester members of Islam, gave to San Francisco Court No. 2 a membership of 41 Royal Jesters.

Oakland Court gave their original performance at the Oakland Hotel on June 6, 1911, as Oakland Court No. 2½, with the following cast: Frank W. Bilger, Samuel W. Burtshaell, George Merritt, Fred Reed, Heiman McKeen, Otto Rheil, D. E. Perkins, S. E. Holladay, Herman Seiler, and F. I. Matthews.\*

Butte, Montana Court was instituted on May 10, 1911 with Alexander Currie, Stephen P. Wright, Norman W. Hicks, and George A. Meyers, O. L. Dillenbeck, John Bacchus, John L. Carroll, Charles E. Beebe, Charles Austin, Benjamin E. Calkins, Nesbit Rochester, and Stockton Veasy, as Charter Members.

Helena, Montana Court was instituted on May 15, 1911, with O. L. Lanstrum, E. C. Day, T. B. Miller, H. R. Cunningham, John D. Waite, A. W. McMahon, C. H. Bray, Joseph J. Hindson, John T. Hall, and H. R. Rainsford as Charter Members.

Seattle, Washington Court was instituted on June 29, 1911, with Nelson Lewis, J. L. McLean, C. V. White, Donald B. Olson, Ralph Stacy, John Rex Thompson, D. H. Moss, J. A. Swalwell, Frank B. Lazier, D. B. Trefethan, and J. Bruce Bown as Charter Members.

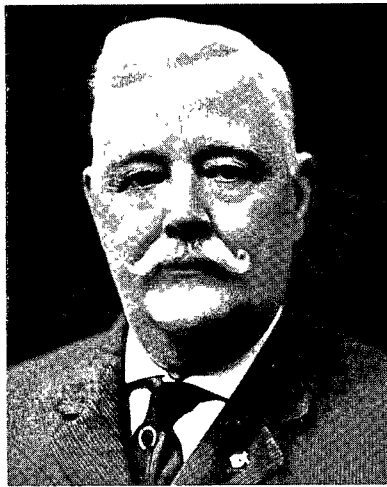
Rochester Court was instituted previous to the July 14, 1911 meeting of the Imperial Council, but no list of charter members was ever furnished the Royal Director or Royal Impresario.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Court No. 13, was granted Rituals, Book of the Play, and Application Blanks, and was instituted on October 4, 1911, with the following charter members: William S. Brown, George McCandless, Charles E. Dinkey, E. J. Hamilton, J. H. Letsche, T. W. Siemon, A. B. Berger, George W. Gosser, Alexander Gilliland, and A. E. P. Kerr.

\*The numbers of the early subordinate courts prior to the year 1917 were different, as you will note in the record for the year 1918

Aloha Court, the Mother Court of the Realm, of Honolulu, T. H., held its first regular performance of the Book of the Play on the mainland in San Francisco on June 17, 1912, in the parlors of the Hotel Stewart, with the following Nobles of Aloha Temple playing the parts: C. G. Bockus, Guy H. Buttolph, Harry N. Denison, James D. Dougherty, Harry S. Gray, Dr. M. E. Brossman, Captain Peter Johnson, Robert Lewers, James S. McCandless, S. S. Paxson, R. W. Perkins, Lester Petrie, Thomas E. Wall, Dr. Alford C. Wall, Dr. C. B. Wood, and George H. Angus.

It appears that this was the information available prior to the formation of the National Court in 1917.



WILLIAM S. BROWN  
*Royal Director 1911-1928*

On June 25, 1917, the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters was formed at a meeting of the eight subordinate courts, held in St. Paul, Minn. Original membership totaled 500, with the following elected as the first officers:

William S. Brown	Royal Director
Pittsburgh Court No. 13 (Now No. 2)	
Dr. Frederick R. Smith	Royal Tragedian
Rochester Court No. 3	
Lou B. Winsor	Royal Property Man
Grand Rapids Court No. 12 (Now No. 11)	
W. O. Washburn	Royal Impresario
St. Paul Court No. 23 (Now No. 9)	
W. E. Joseph	Royal Treasurer
Columbus Court No. 13 7/8 (Now No. 8)	
W. W. Burdetts	Royal Soubrette
Wheeling Court No. 31 7/8 (Now No. 13)	
Shirley Christy	Royal Light Comedian
Varullo Court No. 29 (Now No. 17)	
F. B. Silverwood	Royal Serio Comic
Honolulu Court No. 1 (Now Aloha No. 1)	
Edward S. Keefer	Royal Heavy Man
Cincinnati Court No. 13 1/2 (Now No. 7)	
Preston Belvin	Royal Leading Lady
Virginia Court No. 41 (Now No. 16)	
Richard J. Shand	Royal Judge
D.D. & B.B.B. Court No. 1323 (Now No. 20)	
R. E. Wihe	Royal High Constable
Little Rock Court No. 43 (Now No. 12)	
F. F. Whitcomb	Royal Stage Manager
Omaha Court No. 53 (Now No. 19)	

Following an elaborate banquet at which the Jester idea was exemplified to the fullest and at which a large number of Jesters were the guests of St. Paul Court, a full ceremonial was presented, the work being done by Pittsburgh Court No. 2 under the supervision of National Royal Director William S. Brown.

The first annual meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters was held at Atlantic City, New Jersey, on June 4, 1918. The meeting convened in room 517, Hotel Traymore at 9.33 p.m. After roll call of the delegates and the reading of the Royal Impresario's report and the Royal Treasurer's report, a motion was made by Jester W. J. Parker of Rochester, New York, that all Courts that have not submitted

a full list of their members be requested to do so, and that a date be established for regular annual meetings of the National Court. A motion by Jester Jas E Chandler carried that regular annual meetings of the National Court, R O J be held in the same city as the Imperial Council and on the Monday preceding.

Upon a motion by Jester Lou B Winsor, the Royal Director was authorized to appoint Committees to effect the work of the National Court These Committees were to meet at French Lick Springs Hotel, French Lick, Ind. September 3, 4, 5, 1918, when the First Annual Meeting of the National Court reconvenes Royal Director Brown appointed the various committees and the meeting adjourned.

The first annual meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters reconvened in the auditorium of the French Lick Springs Hotel, French Lick, Ind. at 10 30 a.m. September 3, 1918. The committees appointed by Royal Director Brown gave their reports as follows Regalia Committee stated all Courts should procure their jewels through the Royal Impresario, and that the National Officers' jewels should be gold of the design adopted by the Regalia committee and should be provided and paid for by the National Court, Jurisprudence and Laws Committee presented the revised Constitution and Bylaws of the National Court which were adopted

Following a resolution made by Lou B Winsor, seconded by G. C. Myers, the Royal Director and Impresario were directed and authorized to incorporate the Royal Order of Jesters The meeting adjourned at 5 15 p.m. and met again at 8 00 p.m. Motions were offered and carried that a nominating committee be appointed for the election of National Officers, that two officers could not be elected from the same Court, and that the Royal Director be authorized to make General John J. Pershing a Royal Jester at sight At the close of the first annual meeting there were 16 Courts with a membership of 749 Jesters

The second annual meeting of the National Court, R.O.J., convened in Murat Temple, Indianapolis, Ind., June 8, 1919 at 2.00 p.m. The Royal Impresario reported that the Royal Order of Jesters had been incorporated, same having become a Corporation at 4.00 pm., April 17, 1919, under the laws of the State of Minnesota, with the papers in the Royal Impresario's office At this time there were 24 Courts with a membership of 796 Jesters A resolution was adopted that all Jesters at large and of record not now affiliated with a subsidiary Court be notified that such affiliation must take place before the close of 1919, or they will be dropped from the records, that there be no charge for such affiliation except the payment of the 1919 dues. It was offered as

a resolution and carried that membership in subsidiary Courts of the Royal Order of Jesters be established by invitation only and not by application.

A resolution was offered by Lou Winsor and seconded by W. O. Washburn that no member of the Royal Order of Jesters may be elected to the Royal Court unless he is at the time a representative or delegate It shall not, however, be necessary for him to be returned as a representative or delegate by the subsidiary Court for his succeeding election in the Royal line of offices

Election of new officers was conducted at which time all incumbent officers were reelected with the following exception Lou B. Winsor Royal Tragedian, Esten A Fletcher Royal Property Man, and George Filmer Royal High Constable

Aloha Court No 1 was granted its Charter on April 7, 1919, with the following charter members James S McCandless, George H. Angus, Guy C Buttolf, James D. Dougherty, Arthur F. Wall, Alford C Wall, R. W. Perkins, H S Gray, Thomas E Wall, C G Bockus and Lester Petrie.

The third annual meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters convened in the Scottish Rite Cathedral, Portland, Oregon, on Sunday, June 20, 1920, at 2 00 p.m. Jester Shirley Christy offered a motion that all the Royal Jesters who are, or were members of the Original Court founded on the Pilgrimage to Honolulu, February 15 to March 7, 1911, be declared life members of the National Court with all rights and privileges as delegates It was put to vote and carried

The Jurisprudence and Laws Committee brought in their report and moved that old section 3 of article 5 be stricken and in place thereof insert the following: Section 3 The method of choosing the thirteen initiates a year shall be left to each subordinate Court It was moved and seconded and carried. Section 5 of Article IX of our present By-Laws retains this basic principle. There were 43 Courts with a membership of 957 Jesters by 1920.

To quote from the Preface to the history by W Howard Millington "It may be interesting to note that the early meetings of the National Court quite often took the entire day and part of the night. William S. Brown was Royal Director the first ten years, a man of great ability, Imperial Treasurer A A O. N. M. S. for thirty-five years A great amount of credit for the success of the National Court is given to William O Washburn, Royal Impresario, St. Paul Court No. 9. It was he that set up the first organization plans for the National Court, saw it successfully functioning until his resignation after five very hard years and an exacting labor of love."

*"By wise men long since turned to dust"*

At the first annual meeting, adjourned to French Lick Springs, the Royal Impresario found himself confronted with numerous chartered Courts with all sorts of Court numbers. They were: San Francisco Court No. 2 (4), Oakland Court No. 2½ (6), Helena Court No. 5, Pittsburgh Court No. 13 (2), Rochester Court No. 3, Cleveland Court No. 11-15-16 (14), Cincinnati Court No. 13½ (7), Indianapolis Court No. 4, 11, 44 (15), Omaha Court No. 53 (19), Panama Canal Court No. 7-11 (18), Varullo Court No. 29 (Phoenix No. 17), Virginia Court No. 41 (16), D.D. and B.B.B. Court No. 1323 (Springfield, Ill. No. 20), Buffalo Court No. 8 (22), Little Rock Court No. 43, (12), Wheeling Court No. 31 (13), Grand Rapids Court No. 12 (11), Columbus Court No. 13 7/8 (8), Dayton Court No. 33 (10) and St. Paul Court No. 22 (9). Upon a motion by Lou Winsor, seconded by Preston Belvin, it was recommended that the numbers of the Courts be changed to the order in which they were originally recognized as subsidiary Courts. Honolulu No. 1, Pittsburgh No. 2, Rochester No. 3, San Francisco No. 4, Helena No. 5, Oakland No. 6, Cincinnati No. 7, and Columbus No. 8, and the rest of the Courts consecutively according to the date of Charter.

At the fourth annual meeting held in Des Moines, Iowa, June 21, 1921, the Royal Director appointed 15 state organizers. At this time there were 51 Courts and 1,329 Jesters. The eighth annual meeting of the National Court, R.O.J., was held in Los Angeles, June 1, 1925. This was the first Jester banquet to require formal dress, and the banquet for the Jesters and their ladies was held in the ballroom of the Biltmore Hotel. The banquet and entertainment was paid for by the National Court.

The tenth annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Chelsea Hotel, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on June 13, 1927, with the banquet in the Ambassador Hotel, for Jesters only. It is also interesting to know, according to W. Howard Millington's history that "During the early years, up to and including 1925, the wives of the Jesters attended the Annual Banquets and the dinner and entertainment was furnished by the host court. One other year, 1931, the host court furnished the entertainment and banquet for all Jesters and their ladies." At the eleventh annual meeting of the National Court held in the American Legion Hall in Miami, Florida, April 30, 1928, it was voted that the Proceedings of the annual meeting be sent to each Jester. The thirteenth annual meeting of the National Court was held in the concert hall of the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Canada, June 9, 1930. At this

meeting the suggestion was made that the National Court adopt a cap or headgear. The fourteenth annual meeting of the National Court was held in Cleveland, Ohio, July 13, 1931. The Nominating Committee held a meeting for the first time to hear from Jesters aspiring to the Royal Line. For the second time in the history of the National Court the ladies were present at the Jester banquet.

At the sixteenth annual meeting of the National Court held in the Chelsea Hotel, in Atlantic City, New Jersey, July 10, 1933, laws creating Emeriti Membership in the National Court and creating Life Membership in a subordinate Court after twenty-five years, were enacted. An informal stag banquet was held with each Jester paying to attend.

The Hawaiian King Koko Degree was instituted by Aloha Court No. 1 in 1935 as a colorful ceremony to recognize distinguished Jesters as a special honor. Each honoree must be voted upon by Aloha Court. The creators of the degree were probably Charles McWayne and C. R. (Bob) Welsh. Robert P. Smith, a Jester of Capital Court No. 50 and Potentate of Almas Temple in Washington, D. C. became King Koko No. 1 on August 20, 1935. The Twenty First Annual Meeting of the National Court was held in the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, California, on June 6, 1938. Dr. O. W. Burdats was elected Royal Director and announced that there were 8808 Jesters.

The Royal Officers of the National Court were elected to a specific office in the annual elections. William S. Brown served as Royal Director from September 3, 1918 to September 8, 1928. Lou B. Winsor from September 18, 1928 to November 8, 1936 as Royal Director. Esten A. Fletcher as Royal Director from November 16, 1936 to June 6, 1938 and Dr. O. W. Burdats from June 6, 1938 to June 10th, 1940. The National Court Officers became progressive, the Royal Director serving a one year term. George Filmer was the first, serving from June 10, 1940 to June 9, 1941. Esten A. Fletcher became the first Past Royal Director.

### *“Another Phase of Royal Jester Career”*

At the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the National Court held in Chicago, Illinois on July 5, 1943, the following motions were made and carried:

Balloting on proposals changed to no more than two adverse ballots to elect

Immediate Past Royal Director be made an ex-officio member of the Royal Line.

Past Royal Directors shall be representatives to the National Court Ad Vitam.

At the Jester banquet the Imperial Divan and Past Imperial Potentates were escorted to the head table and were guests of the National Court.

The twenty-seventh annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Schroeder Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisc. on July 4, 1944. A motion was made, and carried that the Nominating Committee make the nomination for Royal Property Man.

The thirty-third annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles, Cal on June 19, 1950. At this meeting it was decided that beginning with the year 1951, the Recorders would meet on Monday, the Jesters would have Tuesday, and the Imperial Council would start on Wednesday.

Henry L. Oppenborn was elected Royal Director at the thirty-seventh annual meeting held in the “22 Club” room of the Ambassador Hotel in Atlantic City, New Jersey on June 29, 1954. He held the first Mid-year Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters National Court in Miami, Florida at the Saxony Hotel, March 1, 2, 3, 1955.

At the thirty-eighth annual meeting of the National Court held in Chicago, Illinois, July 12, 1955, the revised Constitution and By-laws for the National Court were presented and approved.

At the opening of the thirty-ninth annual meeting of the National Court held in Detroit, Michigan, July 9, 1956, Royal Director Smith read a telegram from William A. Hoefgen, unable to attend because of a serious illness. The telegram explained he was resigning, as he would be unable to serve as Royal Director. By resolution accepting the resignation, it was moved and carried that William A. Hoefgen be made a Past Royal Director.

The forty-first annual meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters was held in the Eighth Street Theatre, Conrad Hilton Hotel, in Chicago, Illinois, on July 14th, 1958. Royal Director Charles H. Lembke had made arrangements for the Book of the Play to be presented in the Eighth Street Theatre, following the annual meeting at 2:13 P.M. It was presented by Chicago Court No. 48, Hilding Johnson Director and Peter Young Cast Director. This is the first and only time that the record shows that the Book of the Play was presented at an annual meeting of the National Court.

The forty-fifth annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, Canada, July 2, 1962. At this meeting, Jester “Boots” Adams extended an invitation to come to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, May 10, and 11, 1963, for a Jester Party honoring Royal Director Arthur O. Olson. The Mid-Year Meeting was held in Tulsa, Okla. on May 9, and 10, 1963. At this time Jester Adams was host to some 2,800 Jesters from every part of the realm, with a wonderful party at Woolaroc Ranch.

The forty-eighth annual meeting of the National Court was held in Washington, D. C. on July 12, 1965. The main items of business were amending the By-laws and election of a Royal Property Man. By-laws were amended to

- a. To permit four adverse ballots when voting on proposals in subordinate Courts
- b. Increase the fee for a new charter to \$133.13
- c. Set the final date for filing Annual Reports by subordinate Courts to be February 15th of each year

## *"The Worldly Hopes Men Set Their Hearts Upon"*

The fiftieth, Golden Anniversary annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Washington-Hilton Hotel, in Washington, D. C. on July 10, 1967. Section 5 of Article IV of the National Court By-laws was amended to fifteen years attendance by an elected representative to the National Court to become an Emeritus Representative of the National Court. On October 20, 1967, Royal Director Rohland Thomssen, and six other Royal Officers, instituted Pennyville Court No. 171, and presented the Book of the Play. This was the first time, since the founding Book of the Royal Order of Jesters that the Book of the Play was presented by Officers of the National Court. George P. Akerly, a Life Member of the National Court and a member of Court No. 4, the last surviving member of the original Jester Class of 1911, died at the age of 90 in Vacaville, California, on December 12, 1969.

At the fifty-third annual meeting of the National Court held in Indianapolis, Ind., July 13, 1970, the Regalia Committee suggested that Royal Officers and Past Royal Directors wear a distinctive beret with insignia denoting their office, of a style and kind to be selected by the Officers of the National Court. (They were worn for the first time at the 54th annual meeting.) The Ritual Committee suggested that only the regular cast be used in presenting the Book of the Play and that promiscuous taking of pictures of the cast and candidates may be authorized only by the Director of the Subordinate Court.

"Pier 66 Jester Regatta", celebrating Tulsa Court's 47 Golden Anniversary will go down in history as the greatest Jester gathering. June 10, and 11, 1971, Jesters John Houchin, William Keeler, and "Boots" Adams were host to 163 Jester Courts and some 5,200 Jesters. As in 1963, Bartlesville and Woolaroc Ranch were taken over by Jesters.

The fifty-fifth annual meeting of the National Court was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Statler Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas, July 17, 1972. Section 1 of Article IV of the Constitution and By-laws of the National Court was amended to provide that each subordinate Court shall be entitled to two representatives to the National Court and two alternate representatives, however, any subordinate Court having a membership of over one hundred on the previous January first, shall be entitled to three representatives and three alternate representatives, and any subordinate Court having a membership of more than two hundred members on the previous January first, shall be entitled to four representatives and four alternate representatives, such representatives to be elected by said Court at its annual meeting. A motion was made and carried that the financial year of the Royal Order of Jesters

shall be from August 1st to July 31st. Sections 16, 17, and 18 of Article VII, of the By-laws, were approved regarding the formation and operation and fees for associations of Jester Courts.

Section 13 (d) of Article VII was amended to read "any Subordinate Court which (a) fails to comply with the provisions of the constitution and by-laws of the National Court; (b) fails to obey the orders and edicts of the National Court, (c) sponsors any program or entertainment or affair unbecoming a Jester, or (d) permits pictures to be taken during a Ceremonial, shall be subject to discipline by the Royal Director and may have its Charter arrested by the Royal Director of the National Court. Such action shall be subject to review and final determination at the next meeting of the National Court."

At the 55th Annual Meeting there was considerable discussion about Article IX Section 5, dealing with the method of selecting the thirteen proposals for membership. It was proposed that Article IX be amended as follows: "The method of selecting thirteen proposals for membership each year shall be left to each Subordinate Court." It was severally seconded and unanimously adopted.

The 56th Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Marriott Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 2, 1973. At this meeting an amendment was offered in relation to Article IX Section 5, to put back the Section as it was in 1972. The amendment read: "The method of selecting the thirteen (13) proposals for membership each year shall be left to each Subordinate Court, provided, however, the election of the proposed nominees shall be by unanimous secret ballot of those present after notice, unless the by-laws of the Subordinate Court shall provide for the election of new nominees if not more than four (4) adverse ballots appear upon a secret ballot." The amendment was put to a vote and duly adopted.

At the fifty-eighth annual meeting of the National Court held in Toronto, Canada, June 30, 1975, W. Howard Millington retired as Royal Impresario and Arthur H. Wilhelm retired as Royal Treasurer. Both Royal Officers were made Emeritus members for life. The matter of Courts having adequate insurance was discussed and the National Court was to secure the necessary coverage for the subordinate Courts. The motion was made and carried. It was also moved and carried that when the Imperial Council issued a dispensation for a new Temple A.A.O.N.M.S. upon application of the required number of Nobles and approved by the Royal Director and Royal Impresario, the Royal Impresario issue a dispensation for a subordinate Court of the Royal Order of Jesters.

The 59th Annual Meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order

of Jesters was held in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 5, 1976. At this meeting the Regalia Committee recommended the adoption of a new form of membership jewel, that all jewels of officers and members be suspended with a purple ribbon, that the purple beret be the official headgear of all National Court officers and Past Royal Directors of the Royal Order of Jesters. It was also recommended that each of the officers of the National Court shall have the insignia of three gold Billikens, the Royal Director five gold Billikens, Emeritus officers four silver Billikens, and for Past Royal Directors five Billikens the middle three of gold and the outside two of silver. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried.

There was also submitted by the Jurisprudence and Laws Committee five proposals. These all dealt with changes in costs of membership cards, certificates, and increasing the per capita dues paid to the National Court from \$3.33 to \$5.13 for each member of a subordinate Court, increasing the initiation fee to be paid to the National Court for each newly created Jester from \$20.13 to \$25.13, increasing the minimum amount of initiation fee which any subordinate Court may charge from \$53.13 to \$75.13. They were all put to vote and carried.

At the 61st Annual Meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters held in Detroit, Michigan, on July 9, and 11, 1978, an amendment to the Constitution and By-laws of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters was presented for adoption:

Article III, 1. By adding to Section 1 thereof a new sentence as follows:

*"If the day for or place of any Annual Meeting has not been chosen and voted by the Representatives of the National Court in a meeting thereof duly assembled and acting, then the day for and place of such Annual Meeting may be fixed by the affirmative vote of not less than two thirds of the elected and acting Officers of the National Court."*

Article III, 2. By striking out the provisions of Section 4 and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

*At least thirty (30) days prior to the date of each meeting of the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters, the Royal Impresario shall mail written notice of the day, time, and place of such meeting to each Emeritus Member of the National Court and to the Director and Impresario of each subordinate Court and to each Representative to the National Court whose name is on file in the office of the Royal Impresario at the time of such mailing. Such notice shall be sufficient if mailed by regular first class mail to the address of each such person on file in the office of the Royal Impresario at the time of such mailing."*

It was moved and seconded, put to vote and carried unanimously.

*"The actors are at hand and by their show"*

### BOOK OF THE PLAY

The original Ritual, or Book of the Play, was written by A. M. (Bill) Allison aboard the S.S. *Wilhelmina*, enroute to the Hawaiian Islands. At the First Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters, adjourned to French Lick Springs, Indiana, September 3, 1918, the Ritual committee requested that the subject be opened up for general discussion by the representatives and members present. It was the recommendation of the Ritual Committee that they be given further time to consider it and that a competent Jester be secured to formulate a Ritual to be presented at the next annual meeting. At the Second Annual Meeting of the National Court held in Indianapolis on June 8, 1919, the Ritual Committee reported that while progress had been made in revising the Ritual, it was still not in such shape to present to the meeting. When completed it would be submitted to the Royal Impresario who would submit copies to each subordinate Court for review. It would then be presented at the 1920 annual meeting.

At the Third Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters, held in Portland, Oregon on June 20, 1920, Jester George Filmer stated that the committee went over the proposed Ritual and were unanimous in suggesting it be adopted. They desired that the Creed of a Jester, written by William S. Brown, be included. After the Royal Director had called for comments and objections, and hearing none, Jester E. A. Fletcher moved the adoption of the report which was seconded by Jester James C. McCandless and carried. The revision and rewriting of the Ritual was done by Jester Eugene L. Connelly, of Pittsburgh Court No. 2.

At the Fourth Annual Meeting, held in Des Moines, Iowa, June 12, 1921, the Ritual Committee reported that changes and new parts had been submitted to the committee for inclusion in the Ritual. The committee was most appreciative. It was then proposed to adopt them as a part of the perfected ritual. The Book of the Play had been revised from the original at the second, third, tenth, and eleventh annual meetings. The present Book of the Play was rewritten and adopted at the eleventh annual meeting in Miami in 1928. It has a new lineup of officers and cast more in conformity with the theatrical profession whose titles we assumed.

William S. Brown is given credit for the "Creed of a Jester" and the "Toast to Goodfellowship." "The Fool's Prayer" was written by Edward Royland Sill, as "The Soul of a Royal Jester". At the close of the Third Annual Meeting Jester J. L. Pease of Oakland suggested to Royal Director Brown that Sill's poem be given at the close of the meeting. At the conclusion of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Royal Order of Jesters, Royal Director William Brown read the Fool's Prayer. For several years the reading of the Fool's Prayer was given at the close of the Annual Meeting.

## *"No Union can claim me Sire"*

### **JEWELS**

At the First Annual Council Meeting, National Court, Royal Order of Jesters, Will O. Washburn, Royal Impresario, submitted a number of designs for Jewels, which were numbered "one" and up. After a discussion of the appropriateness of the suggested designs, the entire matter was referred back to the Committee on Regalia. They went into executive session and submitted the following report

Your Committee on Regalia recommend the use of the present Jewel made doubleface for membership, No 2 for Constitutional Officers, recommend the holder as shown in Cut No 1 with jewel suspended therefrom as shown in No 3, for National Officers. Nat'l. Court Officers jewels shall be of gold

At the Second Annual Meeting, held in Indianapolis, the Royal Impresario stated that there has been "nothing but disappointment in regard to the jewels." The contract for the jewels was given to the Robbins Company of Chicago, but none of their jewels were approved. At the Fifth Annual Meeting in San Francisco the Regalia Committee stated that a change had been made in factories turning out the jewels from the Robbins Company to the C. D. Lyons Company of Attleboro, Mass.

Royal Impresario Washburn announced at the Third Annual Meeting, held in Portland, that he had brought with him the National Court Officers jewels and that he had received a set of the Constitutional Officers jewels. Commenting on the general membership jewels, he reported the first shipment had been received in April, 1920, but due to the poor quality of the black ribbon used he had sent them back, requesting that they furnish them with purple ribbons of the same quality as used on the National Court jewels. Had the black ribbon been of acceptable quality one must assume that today general membership jewels would be suspended by a black ribbon.

Royal Director Brown commented on the general membership jewel as follows:

"The badge (jewel) is an interrogation mark, which means that probably some of you have not practiced and carried out. When asked the meaning of the little emblem he carries, it is an interrogation. The answer should be given in all Courts with simply your fingers, and the lips in silence. That is your answer. What does the badge mean? An interrogation mark, as you will probably notice on the badge."

The jewels remained the same until the 59th Annual Meeting held in Kansas City on July 5, 1976. At this time the Regalia Committee submitted the following report

Your Regalia Committee is pleased to report the following. This is in five parts.

1. That there has been submitted to the Committee recommendations for the approval and adoption of a new form of membership jewel. The center portion of the same design, proportion, symbols and colors as the membership jewel heretofore approved and in general use
2. That the Committee recommends that the only approved form of suspension for all jewels of members and officers of the order shall be the purple ribbon
3. That the Committee recommends that there be no adornment suspended or worn with the member or officer's jewel of the order other than the appropriate bars designating the office held or an office which had been held in the past or the designation of the number of years of membership of the member or an appropriate bar indicating that the wearer is an Emeritus member of the National Court.
4. The Committee recommends that the purple beret be recognized as the official headgear of all Officers of the National Court and Past Royal Directors of the Royal Order of Jesters.
5. That the Committee recommends that, in addition to the jewels of their respective officers, the following insignia be recognized and approved:
  - A. for each of the officers of the National Court other than the Royal Director, three gold Billikens,
  - B. For the Royal Director, five gold Billikens,
  - C. For an Emeritus Officer of the National Court, four silver Billikens; and
  - D. For the Past Royal Directors five Billikens, the middle three to be of gold and the outside two to be of silver.

The motion drew discussion, with the re-reading of item two, suspension of all jewels with a purple ribbon. The motion was then severally seconded, voted upon, and unanimously carried, and the report and recommendations of the Committee and the new form of membership jewel were declared approved and adopted.



## JESTER COAT OF ARMS

For hundreds of years royalty and noblemen were identified by their own individual "Coat of Arms". One was designed and executed by William C. Etzel, Impresario of Cleveland Court No. 14, for the exclusive use by the Royal Order of Jesters and the members of all subordinate Courts. It was accepted by the National Court as the official "Coat of Arms" and a copyright was obtained from the United States Copyright Office for its protection. This copyright is now owned by the National Court.



## *"What the Hell's a Royal Jester?"*

### THE ROYAL ORDER OF JESTERS

From Medieval times until the seventeenth century licensed fools, or jesters, were commonly kept at court and frequently in the retinue of wealthy nobles. They played an important part in the spread of literature and education. Some of the most celebrated English Court Jesters were Archie Armstrong in the court of James I, Patch, the court jester of Elizabeth, wife of Henry VII, and Will Sommers, Henry VIII's jester.

The French court also had its jesters, Triboulet was the jester of Louis XII and Francis I, 1487-1536. There apparently was some sort of a Jester order among the Monks, for Jester George F. Foye, of Oakland Court No. 6, while travelling in the Far East obtained a bejeweled dagger inscribed "Royal Jesters". The monk from whom he obtained it stated it was of ancient origin and very valuable. Jester Foye presented it to Royal Director Brown.

A Royal Officer has given us a photograph of a poster dated February 11, 1870. It is in the form of a Proclamation by the "King of Jesters" and orders "all long faces, never smiles, and various other maladies, all of which are curable by the application of our Sovereign Balsam, Good Humor, to appear in the Court of Momus, to be holden in our Palace of Mirth, at the Prince of Wales Music Hall." At least we are a perpetuation of that Order in spirit, standing for Fun, Laughter and Mirth.

The name Royal Order of Jesters is obviously not original with us. Our interest is how and why it was chosen. The Hawaiian Islands had long been under a monarchy. The last king was David Kalakaua Rex, crowned king on February 12, 1883. He was a Noble of Islam Temple and died in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco on January 20, 1891. In 1891 on January 29, his sister, Queen Liliuokalani was proclaimed Queen. In 1895 she formally abdicated renouncing all claims to the throne. On June 16, 1897 Hawaii was annexed to the United States and became the Territory of Hawaii. On a Monday afternoon, February 27, 1911 members of the Shrine Pilgrimage were given a reception by ex-Queen Liliuokalani at her residence.

It is my belief that the name of our order, Royal Order of Jesters, originates with the 1911 visitation to the Hawaiian Islands, long ruled by kings and queens. Jester James McCandless, of Aloha Court No. 1, appears to confirm this by the following statement made at the fifth Annual Meeting.

"They conceived the idea of the Royal Jesters Hawaii at that time being under royalty, of course it had to be the Royal Order of Jesters. Don't forget that, boys, you belong to the royal family."

*"He is King Momus, the King of Mirth"*

### THE ORIGIN OF THE BILLIKEN

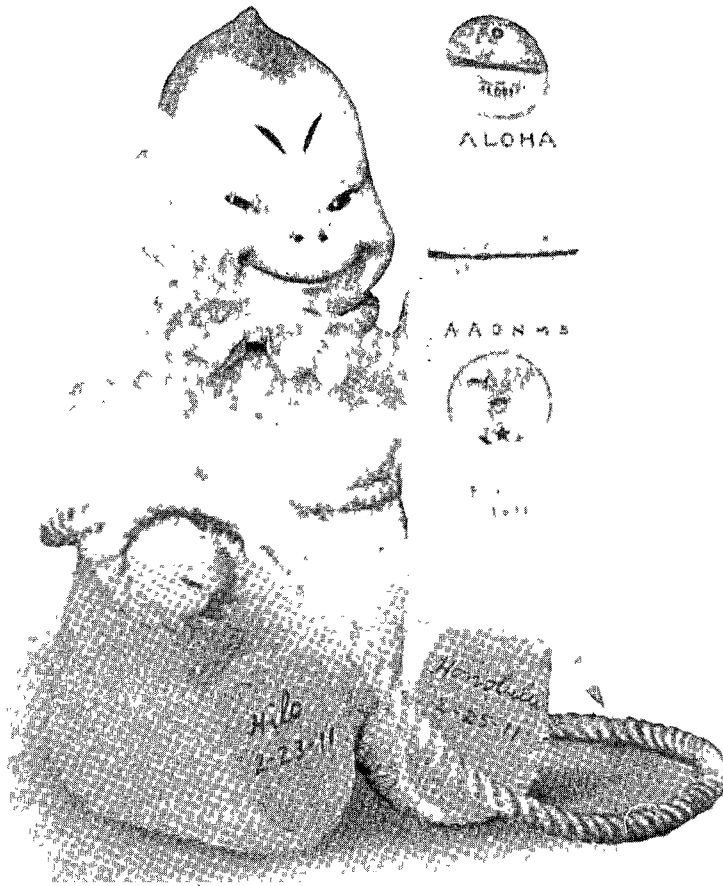
The Billiken is the emblem of the Royal Order of Jesters. The Billiken was patented October 6, 1908, by Florence Pretz, of Kansas City, Missouri, as a new "Design Image", Patent No. D 39, 603 called "A Billiken." It was manufactured as an iron coin bank, a statuette, and a doll, and it was pictured on postcards, mugs, plates, and spoons. The American Doll and Toy Company is said to have produced over 200,000 Billiken dolls which were the rage for six or seven months.

James Unicume, P.D. of Aloha Court No 1, in an article on the Billiken in 1966 states. Miss Pretz placed on the base of the statuette the slogan, "The God of Things as they ought to Be", a paraphrase of Kipling's famous words from "L'envoi". "Shall draw the things as he sees it for the God of Things as they are". The post cards carried the verse:

I am the God of Happiness  
I simply make you smile  
I prove that life's worth living  
And that everything's worth while,  
I force the failure to his feet  
And make the growler grin,  
I am the God of Happiness  
My name is Billiken.

The Billiken grew to be regarded as an emblem, or symbol, of good luck. It was chosen as the mascot, or good luck symbol for the Imperial Pilgrimage to Honolulu, in 1911, aboard the SS *Wilhelmina*. Historian Allison, writing of the Pilgrimage states "Then it was reported that the Billiken had been studiously pouring over a list of names during the afternoon and Captain Johnson commanded him to come forth and read what was written there". It turned out to be nicknames and puns for the Nobility assembled.

Historian Allison also notes that on the occasion of the official banquet given to Imperial Sir Hines, on the last evening in Honolulu, before sailing back to San Francisco "Upon the walls were draped Shrine banners and a grinning Billiken, the mascot of the pilgrimage, beamed upon all comers before the central mirror." It is no wonder that Noble Allison adopted the Billiken for the Royal Order of Jesters, it being regarded as a symbol of happiness, joy, and good luck.



OUR MASCOT THINGS AS THEY REALLY ARE

*The Billiken—Our Mascot*

To Jester Carme Gencraux, of Los Angeles Court No. 84, goes the credit of solving the mysteries of the Billiken. A magazine article published in the September, 1966 issue of the Alaska Sportsman, by Dorothy Jean Ray unraveled more about the Billiken. On a visit to Seattle's Ye Old Curiosity Shop she discovered a big gray cast iron Billiken coin bank, on the back of which was the patent number D-39603. Previous thinking was that the Billiken originated with the Alaska Eskimos, as they had been carving them prior to 1913. However the Billiken was introduced into Alaska by a storekeeper on Diomere Island. He gave a statuette to an Eskimo, Angokwaghuk, nicknamed "Happy Jack", one of the most famous Eskimo ivory carvers. He carved Billikens and they became very popular with the natives, as well as others, as good luck charms.

The Billiken, with a crown is copyrighted by the National Court of the Royal Order of Jesters.



*Alexander Marshall Allison*

## **Alexander Marshall Allison**

**(1870-1933)**

Alexander Marshall Allison was born on July 7, 1870 in Imperial, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. He was raised to the degree of Master Mason on June 10, 1897, in New Jerusalem Lodge No. 9, Dist. of Columbia. He was a member of Washington Commandery No. 1, Knights Templar, Dist. of Columbia. On November 30, 1898, he became the 988th member of Almas Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S., Washington, D. C. He demitted from Almas Temple July 15, 1907. On September 11, 1907 he affiliated with Islam Temple A.A.O.N.M.S. in San Francisco, No. 3625.

At the time he petitioned Almas Temple he was employed in the United States Government Printing Office, in Washington, D. C., as a compositor, and resided at 307 C Street, N.W. In 1903 he was in Manila, P.I., working for the United States Government as Coast District Inspector of Customs, San Fernando Union. An old photograph shows him in his home in Manila. On the back he had written, "My home and my friends on my birthday morning. All these are government officials. On the wall, the left group picture is my old athletic team, the one on the right is my Hajj Group of Shriners in New York City."

Early in 1903 Shriners residing in the Manila area of the Philippine Islands decided to band together and form a Shrine Club in Manila. One of the most active Shriners was Noble Allison. He was elected the first Scribe upon the formation of Bamboo Oasis Shrine Club. The meeting was held June 20, 1903 in Manila with thirty Shriners becoming members including Captain John J. Pershing of Sesostri Temple.

The "Scroll" of the Bamboo Oasis Shrine Club states "WE THE UNDERSIGNED, being members of the A.A.O.N.M.S. and those hereafter uniting with us, do hereby associate ourselves together under the name and style of Bamboo Oasis of Manila, P.I., and hereby adopt the following Scroll of Laws for the government thereof."

Then follows a list of purposes, duties of officers, meetings, dues, and regulations. The office of the Scribe states "A Scribe, who shall be the keeper of the Scroll and the Parchments, record the good and worthy doings of the Oasis, despatch messengers to the faithful, and disseminate the word and mouthings of the Sheriff, in this, and other strange and diverse Oases."

Allison had a book published in 1903, the preface stating.

DIVAN OF BAMBOO OASIS A A O.N.M.S.

by

A. M. Allison

Almas Temple, Wash , D C.

Manila, P.I.

Press of E. C. McCullough & Co Inc.

1903

The book contains photographs of the various Nobles belonging to the Oasis, Scroll of Laws and a page of signatures of Nobles organizing the Oasis. There is also included a month's calendar on a page, surrounded by local scenes. The book ends with poems about the area, using Kipling's verse.

The next information on Noble Allison comes to light in San Francisco when he affiliated with Islam Temple. He now lists his occupation as mining. The date was September 11, 1907. He was selected by Imperial Potentate Fred A. Hines to be the historian on his visit to Aloha Temple in 1911. He compiled and copyrighted a book with text and pictures, published in a limited edition of 500 copies in 1911.

On the visit to the island of Hawaii, he assisted Mrs. Hines in the initiation and organization of the ladies who visited the crater of Kilauea. Under the authority of James S. McCandless, he desired that the ladies of the visiting Shriners should have a fraternal society to perpetuate the friendships formed and enjoyed on the pilgrimage. It was to be known as the sisterhood of the Daughters of Pele. On Monday, February 27th, the members of the pilgrimage were given a reception by ex-Queen Liliuokalani at her residence, and she presented the Daughters of Pele with a royal charter, signed by the ex-Queen and bearing her seal.

History credits A. M. "Bill" Allison with the idea to start a new order to be known as the Royal Order of Jesters, and to personally prepare the ritual or Book of the Play. He also arranged all of the details for the initiations that took place on the return voyage of the Wilhelmina to San Francisco. With Royal Director George Filmer, Royal Impresario Bill Allison convened a meeting of the Originals holding membership in Islam Temple, San Francisco, at the Union League Club on May 4, 1911. After a very fine banquet, a performance of the Book of the Play was given with 18 Nobles of Islam Temple presenting themselves at the stage door and San Francisco Court No. 2 was instituted (now Court No. 4).

Jester Allison attended the Third Annual Meeting of the National Court in Portland, Oregon in 1920 and the Fifth Annual Meeting of the National Court in San Francisco in 1922. He was Impresario of San Francisco Court No. 4 from 1911 through 1918. He died in San Francisco on February 10, 1933.

**George Filmer**  
**(1869-1957)**

George Filmer was born in San Francisco, California, on February 4, 1869. He grew up in San Francisco and at the age of 14 completed his collegiate course and graduated from a leading military academy.

At the beginning of the big strike in Sacramento, Calif. in 1894, the Governor of California commissioned him a Captain of Company B, First California Regiment of Infantry of the National Guard. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American war he was commissioned a Major and took part in the war and in the Philippine Insurrection. He went on inactive duty with the rank of Colonel.

George Filmer was a member of King Solomon's Lodge No. 260, F. & A.M., San Francisco Consistory No. 1 A & A.S. Rite, Yerba Buena



GEORGE FILMER

Lodge of Perfection No. 1 A & A S Yerba Buena Chapter Rose Croix No 1 A & A S Rite, Godfrey de St. Omar Council of Kadosh A & A.S. Rite, California Chapter No 5 Royal Arch Masons, California Council No. 2 R.A.M., Golden Gate Commandery No. 15 Knights Templar, Islam Temple A.A.O.N.M.S., and Royal Order of Jesters.

His business was Filmer Brothers, Electrotpe, located at 1642 Howard Street, San Francisco. His brother William F. Filmer was Grand Master of Masons of the State of California in 1912, and was probably the most influential Mason in California at that time.

George Filmer was a very active Shriner. He was a member of the Arab Patrol of Islam Temple and served as Captain in 1902-1903. He also served Islam as Oriental Guide. In December of 1903, he defeated R. P. Hurlbut to become the youngest Potentate of Islam Temple. He served Islam Temple as Potentate in 1904, 1907, 1914 and 1915. He was Grand Marshal of the Night Parade of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Imperial Council in Los Angeles, May 7, 1907.

A picture of a group of Nobles in the mining town of Sonora, California, dated February 24, 1906, includes George Filmer, with the caption "Royal Jokers, (Monarchs whose humor was more strenuous than refined)".

His connection with the Imperial Cruise and Pilgrimage to Hawaii is well documented. He was the Director of Court No. 2 (now Court 4) of the Royal Order of Jesters from 1911 through 1920. He was elected Royal High Constable of the National Court at the Second Annual Meeting, held in Murat Temple, Indianapolis, Ind., July 8, 1919. At the Annual Meeting of the National Court in Des Moines, Iowa, June 12, 1921, he was appointed State Organizer for California of the Royal Order of Jesters, of which there were 15. He became Royal Director at the 23rd Annual Meeting in the Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tenn., on June 10, 1940. He remained active in Islam Temple and died June 30, 1957, in San Francisco.

