

**Alliance or Cession?  
Missing Letter from Kamehameha I to King George III  
of England Casts Light on 1794 Agreement**

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What were the intentions of the men who signed the Hawaiian-British agreement at Kealakekua Bay on 25 February 1794? Did Kamehameha I really mean to cede the Island of Hawai'i to the King of England, or did he simply recognize the British as the strongest naval power in the Pacific at the time and prudently strive to secure an alliance which would guarantee British protection for his people from other foreign powers? Did Captain George Vancouver, R.N., seriously contemplate making the Sandwich Islands a British colony? Was the agreement an alliance or a cession?

These questions have puzzled historians for generations. The available documents did not settle the controversy, and two letters which, it was thought, might be vital to our understanding of the agreement were missing from the Archives of Hawai'i—one from Captain Vancouver to the Admiralty, presumably written in the fall of 1794, and the other from King Kamehameha I to King George III of England, dated 3 March 1810. This spring one of the missing letters was found (figs. 1 and 2), together with a clue as to where the other may be.

The 3 March 1810 letter from Kamehameha I to George III was discovered by chance in the Royal Archives in England. I had written to the Registrar of the Archives inquiring about several letters concerning Hawai'i, but was particularly interested in seeing the original of a letter from Kamehameha I to King George dated 6 August 1810. There were several copies of this letter in the Archives of Hawai'i, each containing minor differences in wording, and it seemed worthwhile to look at the original to determine which was the true copy.

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This was a fishing expedition. I did not know that the 6 August letter was in the Royal Archives, but I had searched for it and the other letters in the vast holdings of the British Public Record Office at Kew without success. In mid May an electrifying reply came back from the Deputy Registrar of the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle: "We do not have the originals of the three letters you list, but we do have a letter dated 3 March 1810 from King Kamehameha I to King George III."<sup>1</sup>

I immediately telephoned the Registrar for an appointment and within a week was at Windsor Castle. During a long morning at the Royal Archives I was helped to locate correspondence between the members of the British and Hawaiian royal families and shown several photographs which had not previously been known to scholars in Hawai'i.

And, certainly, examining the first letter from Kamehameha I of Hawai'i to King George III of England was a historian's dream come true. How did this letter fit into the early history of Hawaiian-British relations? Did it clarify the intentions of Kamehameha I regarding the so-called "deed of cession"?

Our story goes back to the year 1792, when the second most important British Pacific explorer, George Vancouver, arrived in Hawai'i. He had been a junior officer with Captain James Cook's exploring expedition in 1778-1779, and he returned to the Pacific in 1792 with a good deal of knowledge about the Sandwich Islands and their people. His orders from the Admiralty, dated 8 March 1791, made it clear that his main objective was to survey the northwest coast of America and to settle the land dispute between the Spanish authorities and British settlers in the Nootka Sound area. During the winter months he was instructed "to repair . . . to the Sandwich islands; and, during your stay there, you are to endeavour to complete any part which may be unfinished of your examination of those islands."<sup>2</sup>

Vancouver visited the Hawaiian Islands three times, in 1792, 1793, and 1794. On his second visit he recorded in his journal for 21 February 1793:

About noon I was honored with the presence of *Tamaahmaah*, the king of Owhyhee, [Kamehameha . . . of Hawai'i] whose approach had been announced sometime before his arrival.

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FIGS. 1 and 2. Kamehameha I's letter to King George III, in the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, England, by the gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

King Sandwich Islands

14996

Island Ootahoo March 3<sup>d</sup> 1818

To His Majesty King George

in

Having had no good opportunity of Writing to you since Capt<sup>o</sup> Vancouver left here has been the means of my Silence. Capt<sup>o</sup> Vancouver Inform me you would send me a small vessel am sorry to say I have not yet received one.

Am sorry to hear your being at War with so many powers and I so far off cannot assist you. I should any of the powers which you are at War with molest me I shall expect of your protection. and beg you will order your Ships of War & Privateers not to Capture any vessel whilst laying at Anchor in our Harbours, as I would thank you to make our a neutral port as I have not the means of Defense.

I am in particular need of some Bunting having no English Colours also some brass Gun to defend the Islands in case of Attack from your Enemies. I have built a few small vessels with an intent to trade on the North West of America with Taro root the produce of these Islands for few Skins but am told by the White men here I cannot send them to

I am without a Register In consequence of which  
I beg you will send me a form of a Register & seal  
with my Name on it. being very poor at this  
Islands any thing which you may think proper  
to me I beg you will send by the Earliest Opportunity  
My best respects to you & your Queen & all your Family  
wishing you Health Happiness & a long pro-  
sperous Reign

And am Sir  
Your Majesty's

Most devoted Friend & Servant

T A M A A H M A A H

King of the Sandwich Islands

P.S. My Removal from Owyhee to this Island was  
in consequence of their having just to Death Mr  
& Mr Gordon, Masters, (of the Jackall & Prince is too  
two of your Merchant Vessels) I have sent by Mr  
Spence Commander of the Ship Duke of Portland  
a feather'd Cloak & beg your acceptance.

Not only from Captain King's [of the Cook expedition] description, but also from my own memory, as far as it would serve me, I expected to have recognized my former acquaintance by the most savage countenance we had hitherto seen amongst these people; but I was agreeably surprized in finding that his riper years had softened that stern ferocity which his younger days had exhibited, and had changed his general deportment to an address characteristic of an open, cheerful, and sensible mind; combined with great generosity, and goodness of disposition. . . .

*Tamaahmaah* came on board in a very large canoe, accompanied by John Young, an English seaman, who appeared to be not only a great favourite, but to possess no small degree of influence with this great chief. . . .

After the usual ceremonies and assurances of friendship had passed between *Tamaahmaah* and myself, he said that his queen [Ka'ahumanu] with several of his friends and relations were in the canoe alongside, and requested they might be admitted on board. This was instantly granted, and I was introduced to her majesty. . . . She appeared to be about sixteen, and undoubtedly did credit to the choice and taste of *Tamaahmaah*, being one of the finest women we had yet seen on any of the islands. It was pleasing to observe the kindness and fond attention, with which on all occasions they seemed to regard each other. . . .

I was much pleased with the decorum and general conduct of this royal party. Though it consisted of many, yet not one solicited even the most inconsiderable article; nor did they appear to have any expectation of receiving presents. They seemed to be particularly cautious to avoid giving the least cause for offence; but no one more so than the king himself, who was so scrupulous, as to enquire when and where it was proper for him to be seated. The inhabitants, who had assembled round the ships, were by this time very numerous; on being denied their requests to be admitted on board, which was observed towards all but the principal chiefs, they remained perfectly quiet in their canoes, and in the most orderly manner carried on an honest and friendly intercourse.<sup>3</sup>

Vancouver was obviously very much impressed with Kamehameha. He later met the chiefs of all the islands: Ka'eo, who governed Maui, Lāna'i, and Moloka'i for his half-brother Kahekili; Kalanikupule, who administered O'ahu; and Kaumual'i on Kaua'i. Vancouver concluded that Kamehameha was not only the ruler of the island of Hawai'i but also the most responsible of all the chiefs of the Sandwich Islands. He decided "to pay my principal court to *Tamaahmaah*, as the king of the whole island, and to treat the other chiefs with a due degree of respect and attention."<sup>4</sup>

Kamehameha and Vancouver discussed rules and regulations for foreign visitors in an effort to avoid misunderstandings between the Hawaiians and British and other foreign seamen:

To this end he [Kamehameha] made the following requests; that I would give the most positive orders that none of our people, on any account whatsoever, should be suffered to enter their morai's, or consecrated places, or be permitted to infringe on their rights or sacred privileges; that no person should be allowed to stray about the country; and that I would scrupulously adhere to my practice of admitting none but the principal chiefs into the vessels; and that in the day time he should be frequently on board. This, he said, would deter the lawless from any improper conduct, whilst in their canoes about the vessels for the purpose of trading. . . .

For his part, Kamehameha offered to extend to the British his protection during their stay on Hawai'i and assistance in making excursions into the surrounding countryside.<sup>5</sup> Vancouver apprised his officers and men of the regulations proposed by Kamehameha and issued strict orders of his own which he hoped would ensure harmonious relations between the British and Hawaiians.

Vancouver made his last visit to the Sandwich Islands in January of 1794, and this time he took upon himself the task of forging a lasting bond between Hawai'i and Great Britain:

... the cession of Owhyhee to His Britannic Majesty became now an object of his [Kamehameha's] serious concern. On my former visit it had been frequently mentioned, but was at that time disapproved of by some of the leading chiefs, who contended, that they ought not voluntarily to surrender themselves, or acknowledge their subjection, to the government of a superior foreign power, without being completely convinced that such power would protect them against the ambitious views of remote or neighboring enemies. During our absence this subject had been most seriously discussed by the chiefs in the island, and the result of their deliberations was, an unanimous opinion, that, in order to obtain the protection required, it was important that *Tamaahmaah* should make the surrender in question, formally to me, on the part of His Majesty; that he should acknowledge himself and people as subjects of the British crown; and that they should supplicate that power to guard them against any future molestation.

Vancouver knew that many merchant-captains carried on their trade in a "fraudulent and deceitful manner." He deprecated their conduct and conceived of the proposed agreement as a measure of protection for the Hawaiians and a guarantee of fair trade and safety for honest foreigners.

Under a conviction of the importance of these islands to Great Britain, in the event of an extension of her commerce over the Pacific Ocean, and in return for the essential services we had derived from the excellent productions of the country, and the ready assistance of its inhabitants, I lost no opportunity for encouraging their friendly dispositions towards us; notwithstanding the disappointments they had met with from the traders, for whose conduct I could invent no apology; endeavouring to impress them with the idea, that, on submitting to the authority and protection of a superior power, they might reasonably expect they would in future be less liable to such abuses.<sup>6</sup>

On the morning of 25 February 1794, Kamehameha and a group of chiefs of the island of Hawai'i went aboard the *Discovery*. There they were met by Captain Vancouver, Lieutenant Peter Puget of the *Chatham*, and all the other British officers, for a formal ceremony:

*Tamaahmaah* opened the business in a speech, which he delivered with great moderation and equal firmness. He explained the reasons (already stated) that had induced him to offer the island to the protection of Great Britain; and recounted the numerous advantages that himself, the chiefs, and the people, were likely to derive by the surrender they were about to make. He enumerated the several nations that since Captain Cook's discovery

of these islands had occasionally resorted hither, each of which was too powerful for them to resist; and as these visitors had come more frequently to their shores, and their numbers seemed to increase, he considered that the inhabitants would be liable to more ill treatment, and still greater impositions than they had yet endured, unless they could be protected against such wrongs by some one of the civilized powers with whose people they had become acquainted; that at present they were completely independent, under no sort of engagement whatever, and were free to make choice of that state which in their opinion was most likely by its attention to their security and interests, to answer the purpose for which the proposed surrender was intended. For his own part he did not hesitate to declare the preference he entertained for the king of Great Britain, to whom he was ready to acknowledge his submission; and demanded to know who had any objection to follow his example.<sup>7</sup>

Several chiefs spoke up, one expressing the hope that Great Britain would assist the people of the island of Hawai'i in conquering Maui, another anticipating a future peace between Hawai'i and Maui, and yet another demanding that one or more British vessels be stationed at the island of Hawai'i for defense, and that several British subjects should live on the island permanently to assist the Hawaiians in differentiating between the English and other foreigners. Vancouver continues:

These were the prominent features in the several speeches made on the occasion; in every one of which their religion, government, and domestic economy was noticed; and it was clearly understood, that no interference was to take place in either; that *Tamaahmaah*, the chiefs and priests, were to continue as usual to officiate with the same authority as before in their respective stations, and that no alteration in those particulars was in any degree thought of or intended.

These preliminaries being fully discussed, and thoroughly understood on both sides, the king repeated his former proposition, which was now unanimously approved of, and the whole party declared their consent by saying, that they were no longer *Tanata no Owhyhee*, (i.e.) the people of Owhyhee; but *Tanata no Tritannee*, (i.e.) the people of Britain. This was instantly made known to the surrounding crowd in their numerous canoes about the vessels, and the same expressions were cheerfully repeated throughout the attending multitude.

Several officers then went ashore, raised the British flag, and, according to Vancouver's account, took possession of the island of Hawai'i in the name of King George III. A salute was fired aboard both naval vessels, and two copper plates were prepared with the following inscription:

'On the 25th of February, 1794, *Tamaahmaah* king of Owhyhee, in council with the principal chiefs of the island, assembled on board His Britannic Majesty's sloop *Discovery* in Karakakooa bay, and in the presence of George Vancouver, commander of the said sloop; Lieutenant Peter Puget, commander of his said Majesty's armed tender the *Chatham*; and the other officers of the *Discovery*; after due consideration, unanimously ceded the said island of Owhyhee to His Britannic Majesty, and acknowledged themselves to be subjects of Great Britain.'<sup>8</sup>

The above excerpts from Vancouver's account of his voyage seem to make clear that Kamehameha and his chiefs had control only of the island of Hawai'i and that they were asking the King of Great Britain for protection from foreigners visiting the shores of that island, although they hoped to receive some assistance in carrying out their ambition to conquer all the islands of the archipelago. The inscriptions on copper left with Kamehameha by the British, as recorded by Captain Vancouver, do make a flat affirmation of cession which goes beyond the previously recorded intent of the Hawaiian chiefs. It is the wording of these inscriptions which has led historians to question the motives of Vancouver and Kamehameha.

Vancouver also left a letter in Hawai'i to be given to commanders of vessels who visited the Islands after him, testifying to the hospitality shown him by Kamehameha and the inhabitants of the island of Hawai'i and recommending that the Hawaiians be treated with justice and kindness:

I also beg leave to inform all visitors [sic] that on the 25th of February, in a grand council of the principal chiefs of this Island, assembled on board His Britannic Majesty's Vessel under my command Tamaah Maah made the most solemn cession possible, of the Island of Owhyhee to his Britannic Majesty, his heirs, etc. and himself with the attending chiefs unanimously acknowledged themselves subject to the British crown.<sup>9</sup>

This letter, together with the copper inscriptions, suggests that in the mind of Captain Vancouver the compact between Kamehameha and himself was more than an agreement by the British to protect the people of the island of Hawai'i from foreigners. It appears that Vancouver believed he had concluded an act of cession, not of alliance.

The last letter written by Vancouver to the Admiralty from Hawai'i was dated 8 February 1794, prior to the formal ceremony of signing the agreement.<sup>10</sup> Vancouver's next report to the Admiralty was from Nootka Sound on 8 September 1794 and refers mostly to surveys. In that letter, however, Vancouver states that Brigadier General Don Jose Manuel de Alava, the newly appointed Spanish Governor of Nootka Sound, had offered to forward his dispatches to London and that he expected to be able at a future date to send to the Admiralty through the same channels "a copy of our surveys and an account of our proceedings since my last letter dated Karakakaoa Bay, Owhyhee, Feb. 8th, 1794."<sup>11</sup> The letter of 8 September 1794 was received in the Admiralty on 24 April 1795, but neither a subsequent letter containing an account of events between 8 February and 8 September of 1794 nor the original of the February 25 agreement between



Kamehameha and Vancouver has yet been found in the official British records. Can it be filed away in the Spanish Archives?

So far the record contains only Vancouver's interpretation of events at Kealakekua Bay. What results did Kamehameha and the chiefs expect from their agreement with Vancouver? There is no written clue until 1810. In the years following Vancouver's departure, Kamehameha extended his control from Hawai'i to the other islands. He swept through Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i and O'ahu. By 1810 he was master of all the islands except Kaua'i.

Kamehameha's first letter to King George III of England was dated 3 March 1810. It has long been known to exist, for George III's Foreign Secretary replied to it, and the earlier letter was referred to in a second letter from Kamehameha to King George written on 6 August 1810. The original of the 3 March 1810 letter, however, was not to be found in the Archives of Hawai'i nor in the British Public Record Office, and until this spring, when it was discovered in the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, it seemed probable that it had not survived.

Island Woahoo March 3rd. 1810

To His Majesty King George

Sir

Having had no good opportunity of writing to you since Capt. Vancouver left here has been the means of my Silence. Capt. Vancouver Informed me you would send me a small vessel am sorry to say I have not yet received one.

Am sorry to hear your being at War with so many powers and I so far off cannot assist you. Should any of the powers which you are at War with molest me I shall expect your protection, and beg you will order your Ships of War & Privateers not to Capture any vessel whilst laying at Anchor in our Harbours, as I would thank you to make ours a neutral port as I have not the means of defence.

I am in particular need of some Bunting having no English Colours also some brass Guns to defend the Islands in case of Attack from your Enemies. I have built a few small vessels with an Intent to trade on the North West of America with Tarro root the produce of these Islands for fur skins but am told by the White men here I cannot send them to sea without a Register. In consequence of which beg you will send me a form of a Register & seal with my Name on it. Being very poor at these Islands any thing which you may think useful to me I beg you will send by the earliest opportunity. My best respects to you & your Queen & all your family wishing you Health Happiness & a long prosperous Reign.

And am Sir  
Your Majesty's  
most devoted Friend & Servant

TAMAAHMAAH  
King of the Sandwich Islands

PS. My removal from Owyhee to this Island was in consequence of their having put to death Mr. Brown & Mr. Gordon, Masters, (of the Jackall & Prince Le Boo, two of you [sic] merchant vessels.) I have sent by Mr. Jno. Cl\_\_\_\_ Spence Commander of the Ship Duke of Portland, a feather'd cloak & beg your acceptance.<sup>12</sup>

There is certainly no hint of subservience in this letter. It is a letter from one ruler to another. Kamehameha requests that the neutrality of his ports be assured and seeks assistance in conforming to accepted maritime regulation.

The letter is dated the day before the *Duke of Portland* sailed from O'ahu, and was probably written for Kamehameha by Captain Spence of that vessel, for according to Archibald Campbell, a British seaman who returned home to Britain aboard the *Duke of Portland* after a year in the Hawaiian Islands, Kamehameha dictated to Captain Spence a letter for King George. In it Kamehameha reminded the English ruler "of Captain Vancouver's promise, that a man of war, armed with brass guns, and loaded with European articles, should be sent to him; and added, that he was sorry he was so far away that he could not help him in his wars; and concluded, by requesting his acceptance of the cloak as a proof of his regard."<sup>13</sup>

The incident, referred to in the postscript of the 3 March 1810 letter, occurred on New Year's Day 1795. Kalanikupule, then chief of O'ahu, had just defeated Ka'eokulani, a rival chief from Kaua'i, with the help of two British merchant captains, William Brown of the *Jackall* and Gordon of the *Prince Lee Boo*. While the crews of the two ships were ashore celebrating, Kalanikupule, flushed with victory and aware of the military value of possessing western vessels, led a boarding party of Hawaiian warriors in an assault on the two British ships. They overwhelmed the few seamen left aboard the vessels and killed the two captains. The Hawaiians then forced the crew to take the ships out of Honolulu harbor and around to Waikiki.

Meanwhile, the sailors left ashore organized a counterattack. That night they retook the vessels, put Kalanikupule and his men into canoes or allowed them to swim ashore, and sailed away to Hawai'i to protest the outrage to Kamehameha.

When he heard the news Kamehameha and his followers moved across the channels between the islands, landed on Waikiki, marched against the retreating forces of Kalanikupule, and, in the famous battle of Nu'uau Valley, defeated the men of O'ahu. By the spring of 1796 Kamehameha was ruler of all the major islands of the Hawaiian chain except Kaua'i.

For the next 14 years, 1796 to 1810, Kamehameha endeavored to

subjugate Kaua'i without success. Twice he was thwarted, first by a severe storm which caught his fleet at sea and wrecked havoc with the canoes, and then, some years later, by disease which swept through the encampments of his fleet on the shores of O'ahu and made it impossible for his men to mount an attack on Kaua'i.

Between invasion attempts Kamehameha made his headquarters on the island of Hawai'i and at Waikiki on O'ahu. The period of 1796 to 1810 was one of comparative peace during which foreigners flocked to the Islands and trade burgeoned. Campbell recounts that in 1809 there were about 60 white men on the island of O'ahu alone.<sup>14</sup>

Kamehameha controlled trade, as he did most aspects of life in the Islands. The Hawaiians offered sandalwood, supplies of food, water, and fuel for ships in exchange for a variety of western goods. The ruler built a warehouse on O'ahu and employed foreigners as intermediaries with the visiting merchant-captains and as harbor pilots. His knowledge of the world and its people expanded as did his understanding of national loyalties and cultural and political differences.

It was with the assistance of an American trader, Captain Nathan Winship, that, in 1810, Kaumuali'i, King of Kaua'i, was persuaded to go to O'ahu for a conference with Kamehameha. There they agreed that Kaua'i would be united with the other islands under Kamehameha but that Kaumuali'i would continue to govern Kaua'i. This is the event which precipitated the following letter from Kamehameha to King George of England:

Brother,

We, Kamaahamaah King of the Sandwich Islands wishing to render every assistance to the ships of His Most Sacred Majesty's subjects who visit these seas, have sent a letter by Captain Spence, ship Duke of Portland, to His Majesty, since which Timoree King of Atooi, has delivered his island up, and we are now in possession of the whole of the Sandwich Islands. We, as subject to His Most Gracious Majesty, wish to have a seal and arms sent from Britain, so as there may be no molestation of our ships or vessels in these seas, or any hindrance whatsoever.

Wishing Your Majesty a long, prosperous and happy reign, I am Brother

KAMAAH AMAAH

Oahoo, August 6th 1810<sup>15</sup>

In this second letter Kamehameha refers to himself as "subject to His Most Gracious Majesty," but from the context it is clear that he turned to the King of England for assistance only in relations with foreigners. The seal Kamehameha requested was to facilitate his

foreign trade, and the arms were to defend Hawaiian ships against the enemies of King George III.

The original of this letter is also missing from the British and Hawaiian Archives, but in the latter depository there are two copies, both in the same handwriting and identified as letters of King Kamehameha I then in the possession of Robert C. Wyllie.<sup>16</sup> Curiously, one copy is addressed to "His Most Sacred Majesty George III of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland . . .," while the other is to "His Most Sacred Majesty George III of the United Kingdoms of Great Britain and the Sandwich Islands. . . ." Which salutation was actually used on the letter to King George? We will find out only when the original is discovered.

When the 6 August 1810 letter was printed with others in the *Polynesian* for 27 February 1841, however, it bore the first address above and the notation that it and other documents in a collection of official papers of the Hawaiian Kingdom were allegedly copies of originals mysteriously referred to by the editor as in the possession of "a gentlemen of this town."<sup>17</sup> The British Foreign Office, in 1810, had not yet received the original Kamehameha-Vancouver agreement. It only had the version of the 1794 events at Kealakekua Bay which appeared in the official account of Vancouver's voyage. The Earl of Liverpool, in 1812 the Foreign Secretary in the British government, replied to the 3 March 1810 letter from Kamehameha to King George III on 30 April 1812. Due to illness, the King of England had not been able to receive Kamehameha's letter nor the feather cloak, but they had been presented to his son, who had been appointed Regent. Liverpool's letter reads in part:

His Royal Highness Commands Me to assure you that He shall feel at all times most desirous to promote the Welfare of the Sandwich Islands, and that He will give positive Orders to the Commanders of His Ships to treat with proper respect, all Trading Vessels belonging to You, or to Your Subjects.

His Royal Highness is confident that the complete Success which He has gained over His Enemies in every Quarter of the Globe, will have the Effect of securing Your Dominions from any Attack, or Molestation on their part.

You cannot give a better proof in return of Your Friendship and goodwill towards Great Britain, than by relieving the wants of such British Subjects as may arrive at the Islands over which You Govern and may stand in need of Your assistance. . . .<sup>18</sup>

With this letter the Regent sent a number of presents to Kamehameha, including a gold-laced cocked hat and feathers, a new red coat and uniform, two ornamented brass speaking trumpets, and a quantity of nails, brads, hand saws, hammers, hatchets, gimlets, and augers. No arms or seals were included.<sup>19</sup>

From the above exchange of letters in 1810–1812 between Kamehameha and the Earl of Liverpool for the King of England, it seems evident that neither ruler considered the Sandwich Islands to be a British possession. Whatever Kamehameha may have had in mind when he agreed to a “cession” in 1794, by 1810 he considered himself an ally of Great Britain; whatever Captain George Vancouver may have had in mind when he devised the “cession,” by 1812 the British government considered Hawai‘i an independent kingdom friendly to Great Britain.

Whether or not the British navy would have come to the rescue of Kamehameha if some foreign power had threatened his expanding kingdom was a question never answered, but contemporary accounts suggest that all foreigners trading in Hawaiian ports were aware of a special relationship existing between Hawai‘i and Great Britain, the strongest naval power in the world at that time. By virtue of the Kamehameha-Vancouver agreement, the Hawaiian kingdom was protected from foreign incursions from 1794 until the mid 1820s, the critical decades of its transition from relative isolation to constant contact with foreigners from all parts of the world.

Careful study of these letters leads to the conclusion that the compact which Kamehameha and Vancouver made aboard HMS Sloop *Discovery* in Kealakekua Bay on 25 February 1794 was not a cession; it was an alliance.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Elizabeth H. Cuthbert, Deputy Registrar, Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, England, letter to the author, 15 May 1985.
- <sup>2</sup> George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round The World; . . . performed in the years 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, and 1795, in the Discovery Sloop of War, and Armed Tender Chatham, under the command of Captain George Vancouver*, 3 vols. (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1798) vol. 1: xxi.
- <sup>3</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 1: 121–123.
- <sup>4</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 1: 129.
- <sup>5</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 1: 132–133.
- <sup>6</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 3: 29–31.
- <sup>7</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 3: 54.
- <sup>8</sup> Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, vol. 3: 56–57; George Vancouver, *Voyage of Discovery*, ed. W. Kaye Lamb, 4 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1984) vol. 1: 153–154. One copper plate was erected in a conspicuous place at Kealakekua Bay and the second at Hilo. Neither appears to have survived.
- <sup>9</sup> George Vancouver, letter [to commanders of vessels visiting the Island of Hawai‘i], 2 March 1794, in FO & EX 1810, AH.
- <sup>10</sup> Public Record Office, Kew, England, Admiralty 1–2629.

- <sup>11</sup> Public Record Office, Kew, England, Admiralty 1-2629.
- <sup>12</sup> Tamaahmaah, letter to King George III of England, 3 March 1810, Royal Archives Windsor Castle, England (RA 14996) by the gracious permission of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- <sup>13</sup> Archibald Campbell, *A Voyage Round the World from 1806 to 1812 . . .* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1967) 106-107.
- <sup>14</sup> Campbell, *Voyage Round the World . . .* 118.
- <sup>15</sup> Kamaah Amaah, letter to King George III of England, 6 August 1810, copies in FO & EX 1810, AH.
- <sup>16</sup> Robert C. Wyllie arrived in Hawai'i in 1843. He served with the British Consulate General and collected information on Hawai'i. He was Minister of Foreign Relations for the Hawaiian Government in 1845. Wyllie died in 1865.
- <sup>17</sup> *P*, 27 Feb. 1841: 150.
- <sup>18</sup> Earl of Liverpool, letter to Tamaahmah, The King of the Sandwich Islands, 30 April 1812, copy in FO & EX 1819, AH.
- <sup>19</sup> Earl of Liverpool, letter to Tamaahmah, 30 April 1812.