PHOTOGRAPHIC MASTERPIECES ON POSTCARDS

Headhunters and Hula Girls

By: Sally A. Fall

PHOTOGRAPHY IN HAWAII

I've chosen the title, "Headhunters and Hula Girls," as one that might have appeared on a travel book, brochure or motion picture film up until the mid-20th century. It's sexy, it's exotic! Such a title would have entered the public public to purchase a book or pay a fee to view a film about the South Seas. For the adventurer who had both the will and the means to travel, "Headhunters and Hula Girls" would have provided an irresistible reason to explore the beaches and jungles of our tropical Pacific isles.

The three men who are featured in this article were all born in the latter half of the 19th century. The earliest of the three, James J. Williams (1853-1926), was concerned principally with the commercial use and value of photography as it pertained to portraiture and tourism in the Hawaiian Islands. Ray Jerome Baker (1885-1972) recognized the quickly spreading westernization of the Islands and, as a result, devoted himself to documenting the native Hawaiian people and their vanishing way of life. James Francis "Frank" Baker (1885-1962), best known for his numerous Antarctic explorations, documented on glass plate and on film the little-known tribul life of Papau New Guinea.

In addition to the commercial success of the sugar industry in the 19th century, there was a growing interest in promoting Hawaii as a tourist destination. James J. Williams was one of the first photographers to realize the potential value of photography to the promotion of tourism. He opened a studio portraitist and a tourism promoter. His first visit to the Australasian territory of Papua had taken place in 1913, between two Antarctic journeys. In 1914, as an officer of the Endurance crew, Baker met photographer Henry Cave in 1905. His first visit to the Antarctic was with Dr. Douglas Mawson in 1911 and with Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated "Endurance" expedition, 1914-1916. What many people don't realize is that as a young adult, Hurley joined forces with photographer Henry Cave who had a successful postcard business in Australia. Prior to his polar years, Hurley made his living taking pictures for postcards!

During the 1920s and 30s, Baker continued to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as travel the Pacific islands and rim countries. In 1938, Edith suffered a stroke, and he returned permanently to Cali- fornia in 1940 to be cared for by a relative. Baker remained in Hawaii, and during World War II, he made portraits of military service- men stationed in the Islands. Following the war, Baker travelled ever more widely, especially to the Orient, and completed his last great series of Hawaiian photographs in 1960. He died in 1972 at the age of 91, having outlived his wife and son, James Jerome Baker bequeathed his beloved visions of "Old Hawaii" to the Bernice P. Bishop Mu- seum in Honolulu.

James Francis "Frank" Hurley

Born in 1885, Frank Hurley was a native Aus- tralian and life-long photographer. He is best remembered for his Antarctic expeditions with Dr. Douglas Mawson in 1911 and with Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated "Endurance" expedition, 1914-1916. What many people don't realize is that as a young adult, Hurley joined forces with photographer Henry Cave who had a successful postcard business in Australia. Prior to his polar years, Hurley made his living taking pictures for postcards!

Hurley had always possessed a wandering streak, having left home at age 13 to make his own way in the world. He remained in touch and good steed with his family, who thought of him as their father who helped to set him up in business with Cave in 1905.

Beginning with Mawson's Expedition in 1911, Hurley's feet were rarely on Australian soil for very long. His first expedition, as a law clerk, married a young French opera singer in Egypt in 1918, but he spent most of his life estranged from his wife and children. His first visit in Papua New Guinea in 1921, his third daugh- ter was born in Sydney, but his first glimpse of her was at age five months.

His two major expeditions to Papua New Guinea took place in 1920/21 (Ill 5, 6) and 1922/23 (Ill 7, 8). His first visit to the Australian territory of Papua had taken place in 1913, between two Antarctic journeys. In 1916, as a portion of the Endurance crew arrived rescued from Elephant's Island in the Antarctic, it was of home and sunnier climes that they dreamed: "Our thoughts centered of which I was one, vowed that should we ever escape from our frigid imprisonment, we would return to the Earls and Savages, 1924 (ill 5, 6)". His first visit to the Antartic was with Dr. Douglas Mawson in 1911, and with Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated "Endurance" expedition, 1914-1916. What many people don't realize is that as a young adult, Hurley joined forces with photographer Henry Cave who had a successful postcard business in Australia. Prior to his polar years, Hurley made his living taking pictures for postcards!

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Photography in Hawaii

Photography (p.4/5) first appeared in Hawaii in 1845 with the introduction of daguerreotype equipment. Initially, photographers clustered in and around Honolulu, Hawaii's main commercial center. A few of the more adventurous ones made pre-announced photographic forays to the outlying islands. There they took portraits of Hawaiian natives as well as pictures of European and Asian laborers who were working on the sugar cane plantations. These distant laborers, often away for a year at a time, wanted to send portraits home to family members.

Nineteenth century photographers of Hawaii included daguerrean artist Hugo Stamen-vold, studio portrait photographer Joseph W. King, Henry L. Chase of cartes-de-visite fame, and Charles Leander Weed, best known for his numerous lantern slides by 1885-1962, best known for his numerous Antarctic explorations, documented on glass plate and on film the little-known tribal life of Papas New Guinea.

James J. Williams

In addition to the commercial success of the sugar industry in the 19th century, there was a growing interest in promoting Hawaii as a tourist destination. James J. Williams, who had purchased the photography business of Charles Leander Weed, his first visit to the Australasian photograph business of Charles Leander Weed. His first visit to the Australasian photograph business of Charles Leander Weed, his second visit, in 1885, was both a studio portraitist and a tourism promoter.

Ray Jerome Baker

Ray Jerome Baker and his wife, Edith, first visited Hawaii in 1908, and they were to remain close friends until Williams' death in 1926. Baker often worked for him, and the two met with an aesthetic eye focused on the native Hawaiians and their idyllic environment. Baker helped to bring about the commercialization and partial destruction of native Hawaiian culture with his work with Williams and other tourism promoters. With time, Baker came to realize that the Islands were losing their charm, and that photographic documentation of "old Hawaii" was becoming increasingly important for its historic value.

James Francis "Frank" Hurley

Born in 1885, Frank Hurley was a native Australian and lifelong photographer. He is best remembered for his Antarctic expeditions with Dr. Douglas Mawson in 1911 and with Sir Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated "Endurance" expedition, 1914-1916. What many people don't realize is that as a young adult, Hurley joined forces with photographer Henry C. K. Amaya, who had a successful postcard business in Australia. Prior to his polar years, Hurley had made his living taking pictures for postcards. Hurley had always possessed a wandering streak, having left home at age 13 to make his own way in the world. He remained in touch and good Spanish and French, which was his father who helped to set him up in business with C. H. L. Weir.

Beginning with Mawson's Expedition in 1911, Hurley's feet were rarely on Australian soil for very long. He worked aboard the Eureka and the Aurora as a still and motion picture photographer. During the 1920s and 30s, Baker continued to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as traveled the Pacific islands and their idyllic environment to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as traveled the Pacific islands and their idyllic environment to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as traveled the Pacific islands and their idyllic environment to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as traveled the Pacific islands and their idyllic environment to photographically record important events in Hawaii, as well as traveled the Pacific islands and their idyllic environment. His first visit to the Australasian photograph business of Charles Leander Weed, his second visit, in 1885, was both a studio portraitist and a tourism promoter.

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In 1910, Baker took film/motion picture lessons from Thomas Edison. His hand-colored motion picture of the eruption of Kiluaea Volcano is legendary, as are his unique motion picture motion images of the burials of Queen Liliuokalani in 1917 and Prince Kuhio in 1927. He also produced lantern slides by rephotographing black and white stills, which he then took to both Hawaii and Australia as well as aboard the Oceanic Steamship Company liners which crossed the Pacific between the mainland and the Islands.

James J. Williams

Throughout his life's career, Hurley was both a still and motion picture photographer. His Endurance photographs and film have been exceptionally popular in books and at museums with the recent revival in polar (cont).
exploration. He published books and presented lectures in an effort to support his family and photographic obsessions. Film and book titles included "Peals and Savages", "The Lost Tribe", "Sieve of the South", "Symphony in Steel" and "A Nation is Built".

During both wars, Captain Frank Hurley served as an official war correspondent with a special emphasis on photography and film. His composite printing of several photographic negatives in order to create a "better picture" was somewhat controversial during World War I. This practice was a hangover from his picture postcard days. Hurley's photographs of Ypres, Passchendaele, Hill 60 and Hellfire Corner are timeless. His World War II films and photos of the desert war with Rommel and the siege of Tobruk are classic as well.

Hurley returned home after World War II to find his children married and that his financially strapped wife had moved into a small, drab, semi-detached cottage. He rebuilt his life, but the marriage remained a shell. He spent his last years creating a pictorial record of Australia. Captain Frank Hurley died in 1962, surrounded by the family which he had ignored for so many years.

Research Materials

Hawaii, Williams and Baked:

Frank Hurley:

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Hurley returned to Papua in 1922/23 to explore the Western Division, the art of arrow-making" were probably taken in January 1923. He published books and presented lectures in an effort to support his family and photographic obsessions. Film and book titles included "Peals and Savages", "The Lost Tribe", "Sieve of the South", "Symphony in Steel" and "A Nation is Built".

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Hurley returned to Papua in 1922/23 to explore the Western Division, some of which had never been photographed before. These two cards "Man of Goaribari" and "A lesson in the art of arrow-making" were probably taken in January 1923.