



The life in Hawaii was relaxed and casual.

THE 180° MERIDIAN

From Hawaii, we ventured West, to and across the 180th Meridian. This is the International Date line of ancient nautical fame. We haven't space here to explain how it works, nor exactly why this unmarked imaginary line in the middle of the ocean causes so much furor, but it does.

Any one aboard having been across before is known as a shellback; any who has not is a pollywog, until invited into the realm of the Golden Dragon by a shellback. This, of course, entails an initiation. A trial, a vertlet (usually guilty), a penalty, and a swearing in, all take place before vertlet (usually guilty), a penalty, and a swearing in, all take place before the ship's company becomes shellbacks. With everyone running around in "undressed whites" it was quite a day of celebration.



The reigning king and queen of the day, and the sea baby



It took more than a few showers to rid ourselves of the smell of whatever was in that pit.



Saltwater baptism no longer means over the side, but some of us (still blindfolded) weren't really sure.