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Grog Shops and Hotels: Bending the Elbow in Old Honolulu

As the ship neared shore, all passengers crowded to the rail to drink in the romantic beauty of the isle. Their minds’ eyes visualized the scenic wonders soon to unfold before their enchanted gaze.

Sorry, wrong ship. As the sea-weary tub neared shore, its raunchy crew pursued its tasks. Their minds’ eyes beheld the outline of a bottle imposed on the image of an island belle. Venus and John Barleycorn seem ill-matched, but they often keep company and get along surprisingly well. “Lips That Touch Liquor Shall Never Touch Mine” is not in their repertoire.

Our crew’s devotion to this couple made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in nobility. When fading light brought release, jaded sailors, reenergized, piled into boats and made for the Honolulu waterfront. Here waited a feast of compliant feminine pulchritude spread for their enjoyment. For a time we leave them to it.

John is the object of our attention. We will track him through his customary and easily identified haunts. Tracing Venusian rambles is something else. As J. C. Furnas wrote of Miss Sadie Thompson, “like its heroine, the story could have been laid practically anywhere.”

“Hell of the Pacific” was an award bestowed on this or that port to recognize current shenanigans. Whether Honolulu ever qualified is an open question, but without doubt the town gave considerable lati-

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tude to visitors and locals alike. The starting gun in Hawai‘i’s race to overindulgence cracked aboard Captain Cook’s ships. In January 1778 at Kaua‘i David Samwell saw grog served. This potion was

Any liquor, but especially rum, that’s been diluted with water. Grog was named after Admiral Edward Vernon (whom the sailors called ‘Old Grog’ because he always wore a grogram coat), who gave the order that the daily rations of rum aboard Her Majesty’s ships be diluted. Pretty soon, taverns catering to sailors had taken up the practice, and grog became what was settled for when one couldn’t afford a stiffer dose.  

In 1791 or shortly before, Captain Maxwell, then at Kailua, treated Kamehameha to his first sip of rum in the company of John Young and Isaac Davis. When Kalanimōkū got the news, he bought some of the stuff too. Kamehameha was strong enough to resist alcohol’s slurred call, but many of his countrymen were not. Temptation persisted. In July 1807 the Maryland found the king at Waikiki. During the ship’s stay he moved to Honolulu. In less than three weeks visitors emptied more than 500 big bottles of gin, most of it drunk by thirsty whites.

By 1802 or thereabout local distillers were concocting a satisfyingly stuporific whatsit. Botany Bay escapees got land for services rendered Kamehameha. Here they labored to create a drinkable something from sugar cane. Success blessed their efforts, and the result bombed people out of their minds then and for decades thereafter. Oliver Holmes cut himself into the action with a distillery at Kewalo in 1809. Francisco de Paula Marin made beer in February 1812 and wine in July 1815. The 1820s saw several small distilleries operating.

‘Okolehao (“iron bottom,” from the vessels first used to distill it) still caresses island palates after nearly two hundred years of open or clandestine production. It proceeded from the root of the ti plant via William Stevenson (or Stephenson), the generally recognized originator, though others aspired to the honor. Archibald Campbell thought him respectable and industrious—qualities that gained prominence after the king confiscated Stevenson’s still.

Campbell, in Hawai‘i in 1809–10, traced the evolution of ‘okolehao from root to toot:
[the root] is put into a pit, amongst heated stones, and covered with plantain and taro leaves; through these a small hole is made, and water poured in; after which the whole is closed up again, and allowed to remain twenty-four hours. When the root has undergone this process, the juice tastes as sweet as molasses. It is then taken out, bruised, and put into a canoe to ferment; and in five or six days is ready for distillation.

Their stills are formed out of iron pots, which they procure from American ships, and which they enlarge to any size, by fixing several tier of calabashes above them, with their bottoms sawed off, and the joints well luted. From the uppermost, a wooden tube connects with a copper cone, round the inside of which is a ring with a pipe to carry off the spirit. The cone is fixed into a hole in the bottom of a tub filled with water, which serves as a condenser.

By this simple apparatus a spirit is produced, called lumi, or rum, and which is by no means harsh or unpalatable. Both whites and natives are unfortunately too much addicted to it. Almost every one of the chiefs has his own still.5

The results were horrid. Campbell again:

The king has a considerable number [of white men] in his service, chiefly carpenters, joiners, masons, blacksmiths, and bricklayers; these he rewards liberally with grants of land. Some of these people are sober and industrious; but this is far from being their general character; on the contrary, many of them are idle and dissolute, getting drunk whenever opportunity presents itself. They have introduced distillation into the island; and the evil consequences, both to the natives and whites, are incalculable. It is no uncommon sight to see a party of them broach a small cask of spirits, and sit drinking for days until they see it out.6

This was going on at a time when Kamehameha, by report a former heavy drinker, was said to limit himself to half a glass of rum after dinner.

Old-timers praise 'okolehao as smooth and seemingly mild—the kind of drink that sneaks up behind one with a sledgehammer. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennet, who in 1822 described in detail a big 'okolehao distillery, denounced the product as "a bad but very potent spirit, something like rum in flavor."7 Today's 'okolehao has been "reformulated" and is more like whisky.
In May 1819 Kamehameha was dead, but John Barleycorn hadn't missed a hiccup. In April 1822, Tyerman and Bennet noted several “dram shops” selling ‘okolehao to sailors and to Hawaiians who could pay, and by November foreigners ran seventeen grog-shops in Honolulu. Tippling was part of daily life in the “village.” At this early date Honolulu shared features common to all Pacific “beach communities” Caroline Ralston analyzed: a high incidence of drinking; liquor available to all who wanted it—foreigners, islanders, and partislanders; and patronizing of grog-shops by men of all social and economic levels. A tragic fact: more than one traveler saw drunken children in Hawai‘i. Just before Christmas in 1823 Ke‘eaumoku and Kalanimōkū, mightily displeased, tabooed getting drunk. They also encouraged the islanders to remember the Sabbath and keep it wholly, though the American mission didn’t become a major influence in government until December 1825, when most of the important chiefs joined the church.8

Kamehameha II’s short reign and the early years of Kamehameha III saw drunkenness soar. Ralston detected sinister manipulation of Their Majesties: “Kamehameha II and III . . . were encouraged to indulge their partiality for liquor by the foreign residents, who found it greatly to their advantage to have the chiefs under the influence.” A sweeping indictment indeed. Stephen Reynolds, no prude, felt the situation merited comment early in February 1827: Kaomi, the head missionary teacher named “joint king” by Kamehameha III, was on a “glorious drunk”—ditto most of the chiefs in “the village.” A majority of citizens were “corned” (to use a term then current), and the king was whooping it up with women and wine.9

Boki, the governor of O‘ahu, and his wife Liliha (Kuimi) were all in favor of jolly good fun. Liliha herself owned two stills at Wai‘anae. Ulumaheihie Hoapili, the marshal named to stop liquor drinking and distilling, smashed them eventually. Other chiefs ran stills in the same district and also in ‘Ewa, Ko‘olau, and Kona, O‘ahu. In 1827 Boki opened a saloon on lower Nu‘uanu Street. He operated a sizable sugar cane distillery described in some detail by Bingham. Neither Boki nor his souse tried to enforce a new law against selling rum. Worse, they granted licenses to sell in defiance of legal mandate. After Boki disappeared in December 1829, Liliha carried on the family tradition until Ka‘ahumanu cut short her career on April 1, 1831.10
As townspeople sloshed through streets figuratively awash in the hard stuff, many described a not unusual progression: the "liquor situation" with its vague intellectual overtones became the "liquor problem" of polarizing power.

Honolulu’s booze battles started early and lasted long. Champions of alcohol might not have agreed with the late Errol Flynn that "Work is the ruin of the drinking class," but they saw the right to quaff as part of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The opposition had several facets. It included the American mission and the seamen’s chaplain, of course, but it also enlisted the press (or some of it), people not motivated by religious considerations, and a significant number of ship captains. The latter based their convictions on principle or on experiences in trying to sober up drunken crews so they could put to sea. The campaign of the “antis” was a two-pronged effort—a temperance movement and regulatory laws.

Here we must clarify missionary involvement in temperance. A man-on-the-street impression is that the first company hopped off the boat in 1820 and was promoted on the spot to ss1 (navy jargon for still smasher first class). Not so. There was a time “before the Temperance Movement engaged the loyalties of the missionaries in the Pacific.” As late as 1827 the Honolulu contingent ran in effect a liquor store for its members. From May 15, 1826, to May 2, 1827, Hiram Bingham bought on his personal account 7½ gal. of wine, 6¾ gal., 1 pt. and a bottle of rum, 4 gal. of brandy, 1 doz. bottles of porter, and 4 bottles of port. Elisha Loomis bought 8 gal., 1 pt. of wine, 1 gal. of rum, and 1½ gal. of brandy. Abraham Blatchley bought 4 gal. of brandy, 2 gal. of rum, and 2 gal. of gin. Joseph Goodrich bought 2½ gal. of wine and 1 qt. of rum. Samuel Ruggles bought 1½ gal. of brandy and 2½ gal. of wine. Levi Chamberlain bought 3 qts. of wine and 2 qts. of brandy. The Medical Department drew 4 gal. of rum. After May 1827, recorded purchases dwindled to a stop.¹¹

The drive to lower Honolulu’s humidity revved up in the 1820s and moved ahead full steam in following decades. “Full steam” failed to total the liquor juggernaut, but it did manage some fender-benders. At the end of March 1824, a “respectable number” of whaleship masters then at Honolulu drew up a publication calling for “the suppression of intemperance.” Ten years later Capt. George S. Brewster did his bit at Lahaina. There on April 14, 1834, he and other cap-
tains and ships’ officers made “The Marine Association for the Suppression of Intemperance at the Sandwich Islands.” One thing was sure: Anyone who could pronounce TMAFTSOIATSI was sober. In June 1842 the South Pacific Washingtonian Total Abstinence Society appeared; the Oahu Mechanics’ and Workingmen’s Washingtonian Total Abstinence Society followed in October 1847, when twenty-eight took the pledge. In 1848 His Majesty had been a member of “the Temperance Society” for several years. Officially he was dry, and he “proved” it by serving cake and lemonade at palace levees. In truth, however, Kamehameha III never conquered “Demon Rum.” A drinking episode certainly hastened if it did not directly cause his death in 1854.12

“Temperance houses” gave board and room to sailors repelled by the boozy milieu of the common inns. These businesses, like the temperance societies, came and went despite the enthusiastic support of the dry press. In 1843, the seamen’s chaplain, Samuel C. Damon, started The Temperance Advocate and Seamen’s Friend—a title soon cut to The Friend. The Temperance Advocate bit just might have propelled some copies into the nearest wastebasket. The Sandwich Island Gazette, no friend of the American mission, nevertheless ran long temperance articles.13

Part of the liquor problem was how to get it, but a more visible part was how to keep others from getting it. The latter effort fell to law. Supposedly Kamehameha I laid a strict taboo on strong drink in 1818. We do know that on February 6 of that year Kalanimōkū fined Honolulu pilot Alexander Adams for drunkenness—a repeated breach of decorum that drew many reprimands. Kamehameha did what he could to clog the firewater pipelines serving Honolulu, apparently with minimal effect. But he died in 1819, and there followed a rerun of “After me the deluge”—not dammed by the previously cited edict of 1823.

In early December 1827, the chiefs agreed on rules against murder, theft, rum-selling, gambling, and prostitution. These would have engineered major changes in island lifestyles. A broadside was printed and dated December 8. But at promulgation time the code shrank to murder, theft, and adultery.14

On October 7, 1829, Kamehameha III proclaimed laws; one forbad “retailing ardent spirits at houses for selling spirits.” It was a
moot point, since Boki and Liliha navigated the ship of state. In 1829 Boki “seemed on the point of attempting to overthrow Kaahumanu,” but instead he sailed into a December sunset and oblivion. Liliha, now in charge of O‘ahu, continued Boki’s course, as we know. When Ka‘ahumanu stripped Liliha of power on April 1, 1831, she appointed in Kuini’s stead her own brother, Kuakini (a.k.a. John Adams Kuakini). Hawaiians held him in great respect. Kuakini tried to launch a puritanical regime, a sort of “grim Golden Age” (Furnas’s phrase) of improved morality. On the day he took over, he held forth at an assemblage in the king’s house. There would be no more liquor licenses or gambling hangouts. For the first offense, property seized; for the second, the house torn down. Observers had a chance to gauge the limitations of sumptuary laws and the tendency of every system to breed a counter-system. Armed guards walked the streets and liquor licensing stopped. But booze still flowed. One who fared well was Alexander Smith. In a sort of “seeds of its own destruction” scenario, he had come to Hawai‘i on the same ship that brought the first company of American missionaries in 1820. Patriotically he flew his country’s flag over his grog-shop—a habit that served him in the summer of 1832. Just after Ka‘ahumanu’s death, the u.s.s. Potomac visited Honolulu. The crew thereof skipped so many coins into Smith’s establishment that in one of his ruminations Hiram Bingham recalled that the tavern-keeper cleared some $900—nearly two years’ pay for a mission family. At Hallowe’en time in the same year, G. P. Judd unmasked the ugly truth: Kuakini had checked the liquor trade for a while, “but they have got going again in a rather underhanded way, without licenses, and sell almost as much as heretofore.” Boki had championed something impossible to destroy, and Kuakini something impossible to sustain.15

Two years to the day after Kuakini’s ban, licensed liquor-selling was legal again. On March 25, 1833, John Lewis, inspector of public houses, issued rules effective April 1. Among them: licenses for six months would cost $40; closing time was 11 P.M.; no disorder; no music or dancing on Sunday; no harboring of deserters or enticing to desert.16

The king was no enemy of booze. In that month of March 1833, he abolished all laws excepting those against theft and murder. Thus encouraged, a large segment of the populace floated out of control
on a sea of alcohol. The king joined them in a big way when he and his young cronies emptied thirty-two barrels of hooch in a week. Riotous indulgence ruled day and night until the king’s attempted suicide in June 1834. After that, the environment quieted down somewhat. The growing temperance movement got results when in January 1835 a law proscribed drunkenness. The penalty was $6 or one of these: twenty-four lashes, a month at labor, or a month in jail.

But out in the boondocks evil strode the land, and its breath reeked of strong drink. Farmers turned potatoes, melons, sugar cane, other foodstuffs, and whatever into booze. Then, lying drunk, they turned their gardens into weed patches. Faced with chronic shortages, the government turned its wrath into a “Law Prohibiting the Manufacture and Use of Intoxicating Drinks.” This was on October 1, 1840. Years before, British Consul Richard Charlton had commented on the alleged fruitfulness of O’ahu: “In 1827 and 1828, upwards of one hundred sail of ships were supplied with provisions from Oahu, in the Spring of 1832, there could not be a sufficient quantity provided for six vessels, and a merchant residing here was obliged to keep a little vessel running to the other islands for supplies.”

Meanwhile, back in town, temperance forces had scored another victory, and it looked as though John Barleycorn might go down for the count. For one thing, the king had problems. His taste for liquor led Kinau to send a crier through the streets in February 1837 with this warning: any chief or common Hawaiian giving or offering Kamehameha booze would be stripped of all he had—and no Hawaiian could use alcohol. But foreign merchants were not controlled, and from them the king continued to buy:

Bill to His Maj. fr. Joseph Booth, Dec. 17, 1837: 6 bottles wine, $6; 3 bottles gin × $1.50 per bottle; 3 bottles brandy × $1.50 per bottle; 6 bottles wine, $9.

Kamehameha probably had a minor stroke in 1838. An early August letter from Lahaina told that “his head is almost crooked on the right side and rather paralyzed on the right arm.” But the bills continued. Edward Espener’s statement of May 31, 1839:
2 bottles champagne, $5; 1 bottle wine, $1.50; private account, bowling alley, $52.50; billiard room account, $32.50; bowling alley, $25; 2 doz. champagne, $60; 1 doz. wine, $12; cigars, $1.50; breakage, $16.25; 1 doz. champagne, $36; 1 doz. wine, $12.

Bill of George H. Bush to Kamehameha III, November 4, 1839: 50 bottles of wine, $53.50; 1 cask of wine (33 gal.), $99; billiard table cloth, $85.

The king also got gifts of liquor from local merchants. One must not believe that the king himself downed all this. He led a numerous entourage (Reynolds always called such hangers-on a "gang" or "mob") and was expected to entertain generously.¹⁸

On March 13, 1838, Kamehameha issued from Lahaina a notice that only two grog-shops would be allowed on O'ahu at the end of the current six-months' licensing period. These would be the houses with billiard tables, thus enabling those who could fake relative sobriety to play "with a twisted cue, on a cloth untrue, and elliptical billiard balls." This rule, applying to places of entertainment for seamen, vaporized some ten or twelve saloons. It also dematerialized the economic underpinnings of that "no unconsiderable portion" of O'ahu's foreign residents interested in the success of public houses. "Bingham has triumphed. The king has proved himself a great tyrant," snarled Stephen Reynolds. There should have been six months' notice; some tavern-keepers had laid out large sums on premises and stock. Reynolds predicted that the value of foreign residents' property would fall by more than half. Business would suffer, he thought, since the grog-shops did much trade with Honolulu storekeepers. Was this really a matter of principle? No: two bars with their satellite billiard rooms would be licensed.

Just a week later Kamehameha III signed a "Law Regulating the Sale of Ardent Spirits." This forbade selling without a license, under penalty of a $50 fine (with an additional $50 for each succeeding offense). Exempted were those selling by the barrel or large cask. Licensed houses could sell by the glass, but not in any larger quantity. Ten P.M. Monday through Saturday was closing time, and there could be no Sunday opening. Should anyone get drunk in a saloon, its
owner would pay $10 for the first offense, $20 for the second, and so on to the zillionth power. Violators would forfeit their licenses. Traditionally grog-shops opened at daybreak. Anyone with enough cash and stamina could spend many hours surveying his surroundings through the bottom of a glass.19

The new law took effect on All Fools’ Day, and Hawaiian “spies” assumed their duties in the licensed houses. By Reynolds’s account, on Sunday, April 15, “the kanakas were out smelling people’s breath to make disturbance.” By this time there was no lack of that commodity; the law had kindled a number of “ardent spirits” in the foreign community. On April 5 the sithetical British Consul Richard Charlton forwarded a petition of Her Majesty’s subjects who, he said, had been led to believe that licenses would be granted as usual and had therefore stocked up for the approaching whaling-ship season. The petitioners were victualers and saloon-keepers; most had Hawaiian wives and hapa-haole children. The “privilege” of selling by the barrel really meant prohibition; few sailors could be expected to absorb that much. Signers of the fruitless petition were Robert Lawrence, H. S. Swinton, James Vowels, William Mowle, John Cretendon, John Hobbs, Thomas Aylett, Henry Zupplien, Joseph Booth, and John Mitchener. The last-named and Alex. Smith went to Maui to exert leverage on the king. They came back without licenses, but with permission to sell wine, beer, and cider. Mitchener, incidentally, ran one of Waikiki’s earliest hotels. Many were the oxen gored; even those favored with licenses under the law of March 20 waxed bilious. George Bush complained to Governor Kekūanao‘a on October 15 that, although he had been given an exclusive right to sell spirits, many other stores were doing so illegally. Throughout the years this was a constant gripe.20

Further restrictions soon appeared. A law of August 21, 1838, cut off importation of rum, brandy, gin, alcohol, and all other distilled spirits as of January 1, 1839. After that, no wine could be landed without a report to the harbormaster and payment of duty. The *Sandwich Islands Gazette* condemned this sirocco from Lahaina, and it seized the chance to voice sincere and impartial wishes for the downfall of the missionaries in Hawai‘i and Tahiti. This was the high tide of “cold water,” but it ebbed quickly.21

A warship was the only real cure for such terrible dryness of throat,
and relief appeared in due course. First to come was H.B.M.S. Sulphur, bearing Capt. Edward Belcher, in June 1839. Complaints about the liquor drought assailed his ears, and Belcher fumed: this harassment of foreign residents ignored their many contributions to island life. Were their drinking habits a problem? No: they had been taught "to abstain from indulgence, in excess, of wine or spirits." A startling revelation. It practically solved the booze situation, certified the good judgment of the foreign population, and ennobled Western education. The Hawaiians? A tariff of a dollar a gallon on wine and spirits would keep them sober.

Belcher's exhalations were just that; not so with the demands delivered on July 9 by Capt. Laplace of the French frigate L'Artemise. Eight days later, the king, fearing war, signed a convention that French wines and brandies could not be prohibited or pay a duty higher than 5 percent ad valorem. Kamehameha III extended the same privileges to the "subjects of all the great nations" and thereby in effect repealed the law of August 21, 1838.22

The spigot, thus opened, ran copiously. In October 1840, Honolulu hosted two hotels, two taverns, and twelve sailors' boarding houses, "alias grog shops." In 1842, although not one grog-shop had been licensed, fourteen or fifteen graced the town—this despite the decision of the king and chiefs to enforce the law of March 20, 1838. In 1843 the British Commission cut the official number to nine and charged $150 a quarter for a license. This got rid of some of the worst dives. In 1844 the restored Hawaiian government made two changes: the number of legal shops in Honolulu was reduced again to six and licenses were sold at public auction. The total take: $1,974. Licenses had to be paid quarterly ($37.50) in advance. Retailers had to sell by the glass, to be consumed on the premises. Drunkenness and disorder were prohibited. Hawaiians could get no liquor. Hours were daylight to 10 P.M. For 1844–45 retail licenses went to Henry Zupplien, Samuel Thompson, Jacob Stupplebeen, John Meek, Joseph Booth, and partners John Clapp and Edward Dennis. They had plenty of goodies to dispense. In 1843 ships brought in many thousands of gallons of ale, beer, brandy, gin, cherry brandy, cordials, liqueurs, Italian brandy, rum, whisky, champagne, claret, and California and other assorted wines. This did not include what was illegally produced and guzzled in the islands. But The Friend hailed the advent
of better times: “Not long ago, drunkenness in Hawaii was no disgrace, and grog-shops were patronized by those high in authority.”

In 1846 the minister of the interior admitted that import duties on liquor made money for the government. But the next year he noted with satisfaction that sales had fallen. With brandy costing $7 a gallon and rum $6, the “poorer classes” were pretty well priced out of the market—which, he said, “must be a blessing to them and to the public.” And their gratitude must have been beyond measure.23

The “Act to Organize the Executive Departments” provided for wholesale and retail liquor licenses. Wholesale licenses cost $25 a year, but prospective retailers had to bid at public auction. The highest bidders, if approved by the Privy Council, got licenses that set definite rules. General requirements included: no sale or furnishing of liquor to Hawaiians; no noise or disorder; no breaches of the peace. Wholesalers could not sell a package of less than five gallons; retailers could not sell a package of more than this. The penalty for selling without a license (wholesale or retail): a fine of $500 for each offense and jail for six months, at the court’s discretion. In practice, retail licenses fell into two groups: (1) by the bottle—hotels and (2) by the glass—grog-shops and victualing houses holding liquor licenses. Billiard tables and bowling alleys were regulated also.

In the nineteenth century people felt quite at ease slapping labels on nearly everything. The custom flourished at a time when being “politically correct” was much simpler. Mostly it was a matter of keeping the big boys purring by whatever means necessary. Thus it was that the laws of 1845–46 laid it all out: “A house for the ordinary entertainment of sailors” was “to be called an inn or victualing house,” while “a house of public entertainment for the higher classes of society” was a hotel. Inns were forbidden to harbor deserters; too, they had to “serve wholesome food whenever required.”

The grog-shop was the tyrannosaurus rex of early Honolulu’s social menagerie. Nobody expected anything but trouble. Keeping the back door open on Sundays—a widespread and time-hallowed custom—provoked no general outcry, and the police assumed their usual role of frustrated spectator. But what about the hotels, those bastions of position and privilege? In the mid and late 1840s there were two “decent” houses in town—Henry Macfarlane’s Commercial Hotel and J. O. Carter’s Mansion House. This meant that the rest
were "indecent." Everybody knew that their fun facilities ran full throttle day and night on Sundays; fame attended their Sabbath morn card games. The "natives" were encouraged to try their skill in the hotel bowling alleys, and bowling led to boozing. "All the houses" habitually sold liquor to Hawaiians, but somehow the authorities could seldom come up with the required proof. A conspiracy of silence and subterfuge baffled their efforts. May we assume that the lawmen were universally zealous in the discharge of their duties?

In 1847 the four hotels on or mauka of Hotel Street charged from $4 to $7 a week for board. Sleeping rooms, not usually attached to the hotels, were extra. Rents ranged from $4 to $12 a month for ordinary quarters. Rates charged by the fifteen victualing houses operating in January 1847 are not at hand.

The seesaw game went on and on. In 1847–48 "a domestic liquor called beer" made of "unwholesome ingredients" foamed official concern. Then government tried a new gambit: it drew a cordon sanitaire around the whole mess. Sale of "ardent spirits" was confined to an area bounded by the sea, Fort Street, and Beretania Street (the Commercial Hotel to Ho'oliliamanu's house). In 1849 another pesky Frenchman plagued Hawai'i. This was Rear Admiral Legoarant de Tromelin. He seized Honolulu in August, sacked the fort, and made a thorough nuisance of himself. One of his chief peeves was Hawai'i's "interpretation" of Article 6 (the liquor clause) of the treaty Laplace extorted. Everyone else found its terms explicit—but not de Tromelin. Honestly or otherwise, the admiral demonstrated that while one of the functions of language is to convey intelligence, another is to try to conceal the lack thereof.24

So how did it all work out? To put it most kindly: the gulf between law and practice approximated distances created by the original big bang. In 1856—a full decade after the "Act to Organize . . . "—a baker's dozen of irate critics popped from the muck to vent their wrath. They were the town's "respectable" retailers: William Wond, James Dawson, James Davis, G.W.Houghtailing, George Friel, John Bartlett, William Pearson, William E. Cutrell, G. Peterson, Joseph Booth, L.Franconi, Henry Macfarlane, and Victor Chancerel. Their complaints: a two-year business slump; "numerous illicit vendors diffused among all the classes of society," in private saloons, stores, offices, and public beer shops; lax law enforcement; a "fictitious
monopoly"; and Draconian laws hanging over their heads (though seldom enforced because of their unjust severity) which paralyzed their "fruitless privilege."

This scatter-gun approach lacked focus, but the petitioners learned fast. In December they were back: both Marshal W. C. Parke and Prefect of Police H. S. Swinton confirmed that fifty-two houses in Honolulu sold liquor without licenses. The petitioners wasted no paper and ink asking for better enforcement. They wanted two more hours of open time—until midnight—to up their take. Petition granted. This episode said several things; one was that wherever one might find himself downtown, he was within easy weaving distance of alcoholic refreshment.

By this time the picture had changed. Gavan Daws drew the new outlines: strong drink found a champion in Robert C. Wyllie, who in 1845 became the longtime minister of foreign affairs. During this decade every high chief who was a church member came under suspension at one time or another, many for liquor-related offenses. Through the 1850s and 1860s smuggling abounded, drunken Hawaiians appeared in court by the hundreds each year, and illegal manufacture of intoxicants continued. That constant hissing in the background marked the deflation of what many regarded as the hot-air balloon of puritanism.

As we rejoin those sailors on the pier to begin our rambles, we must voice a word of caution: any among them dreaming of stardom in Honolulu’s annals of inebriety face staggering competition from the local talent. More particularly, they should know of the exploits of giants such as merchant John Graves Munn. In July 1848 he had been drunk for seven solid weeks, yet he was able to ride a wave of “blue ruin” for another twenty-one years until his death at seventy-one in 1869. In the process of emulation our would-be champions could discover a greater truth: while beauty, virtue, and talent may not reap fitting rewards, stupidity almost never fails to get its due.

Here is our itinerary (numbers keyed to the map in fig. 1): It shows why Nu‘uanu was called “Fid Street”—a fid being a drink or measure of liquor.

1. SHIPYARD HOTEL (LCA 784[1]): On January 11, 1827, the fatally ill Kalanimōkū leased to James Robinson half of the pier commonly called the King’s Wharf. Robinson would pay half of the
FIG. 1. Some grog-shops, hotels, and eateries in early Honolulu (circa 1817 to 1850) located on an 1847 map.
expenses thereof, also half of the receipts for use of the wharf and premises. These were at Ka Pākākā, “The Point.” In mid-September 1830, Joseph Elliott moved to The Point to open a hotel with Robinson. The Shipyard bar fell under Kuakini’s ax in 1831, but it rose again. Elliott “fell dead from his seat” in October 1836, but of course did not rise again. Robert G. Lawrence and Robert W. Holt, Robinson’s partners, appear to have specialized in the hotel and liquor business, which also featured a boarding house. The Shipyard Hotel had the advantage of being a “first chance—last chance” operation. Hiram Bingham noted during the Kuakini interlude that the grog-shop was a place “where formerly a boat’s crew would get drunk in half an hour, though ordered to stay by the boats.”

2. ALEX. SMITH’S PRIVATE GROG-SHOP (Grant 1753): It almost seemed that whenever two or three got together in the name of inebriation, Smith was pouring the drinks. This mid-career venture occupied part of British Consul Richard Charlton’s original holding. In early November 1837 A. Smith and Co. were advertising a “well-stocked bar” in Charlton’s premises “near the beach.” Smith was ubiquitous but not immortal. He went to The Big Grog-Shop in the Sky at the end of February 1849.

3. OAHU HOTEL AND SOUTH SEAS TAP (LCA 626[1]): The original derivation of title to this property, then near the beach, is not clear. James Robinson, who came to Honolulu in 1822 and worked for a time on this site, thought the area belonged to Kalanimoku. Shortly after (or perhaps during) 1822, a John Reeves (Rice? Rives?) put up a house as a hotel. Later Robinson used it for ship repair. Near the sea stood a blacksmith shop. George Marin had the place by early 1826, and on March 18 he opened his “new house.” Later Amos Knight became a partner. Marin built a fence and a wharf. Eventually the hotel grounds held the main building, a woodshed, a kitchen, a hog pen, a canoe house, a cook house, a bowling alley with a lookout on top, a sleeping house, a grog-shop (South Seas Tap), a pump system well with a flume to fill tanks to water ships, and of course a “necessary.” In the middle of July 1830 Knight had just come off a week-long binge. Apparently mending, though very weak, he collapsed on the morning of the 15th while sipping coffee. Some year and a half later George Marin met a spectacular end on Wallis Island (Uvea), where he had set himself up. The “easy-going natives” found the
going so hard under George’s despotic hand that on February 4, 1832, he got a terminal evaluation from the business end of a hatchet. William Thornton had taken over the South Seas Tap early in January 1831. In 1832 Stephen Reynolds bought an undivided half of the hotel, sold to settle George Marin’s estate, for about $1,100. In September 1838 he bought the other half from Amos Knight’s estate for $1,500. But Reynolds had closed the hotel about six months earlier. It was a longtime loser. Finally—in May 1847—he pulled down the old buildings.

4. WILLIAM R. WARREN’S BOARDING HOUSE (LCA 38): In September 1819, Capt. Babcock of Marshall and Wildes put up an imported “prefab” on the firm’s seaside property ewa of Nu‘uanu Street. It became a center of early commercial enterprise. In those early days it was called simply “the wooden house.” Late in January 1826, Warren (“the Major”) wanted to rent the upstairs for a “genteel boarding house.” M&W agent Alpheus B. Thompson voted “yes,” mainly because the respected Major would draw custom to the ground-floor store. A month later Warren finished alterations and moved in. It was a short venture. By the end of September 1827, Warren had left “some time since—he couldn’t stand it.”

5. JOSEPH NAVARRO’S HOTEL (LCA 625): Some time before 1809 Joseph Navarro, an American seaman, came to Honolulu. He said that he paid Kamehameha I dollars for this place. He probably opened his “house” in the days of that monarch. Thomas Holman and his wife slept there in the summer of 1820. Navarro, a dedicated woman-chaser (but often rebuffed), found The Joy of Sex elusive. In 1825 Poalinui, his current flame, succumbed to the charms of one Capt. Sistare. Navarro climaxed his fanny-messed destiny by shooting Sistare in a jealous rage. The result: banishment. This killed Navarro’s hotel career. Not to grieve: Navarro was about fifty-eight in 1825, and being an aging “mine host” was not all fun and games. In March of that year he was the victim of a “high scrape.” A rowdy bunch got “merry” (blasted) aboard the Rochester. They adjourned to Navarro’s, where they gleefully smashed glasses, bedsteads, and other property. William French rented the place in 1825, and four years later Stephen Reynolds bought the lot.

6. BLONDE (LCA 2671): In 1827 this lot called Ai‘ēnui (“big debt”) belonged to the firm of Chapman and Lawler. Boki gave them
another place in part or full payment for Aiʻenui in 1827. In May of that year he moved up a wooden house on The Point to be his store, hotel, and grog-shop. He named it The Blonde. Boki stocked his bar with cheap, bad wine—a mixture of several kinds—from China, saying it was good enough for the sailors. But his usual ill luck or bad judgment dogged the enterprise. Hiram Bingham’s remark summed it up: “However lucrative Boki’s store and hotel might have been to his English clerks, they were probably losing concerns to himself.” A trio of employees included Eugene Sullivan, a Mr. Roberts, and one Jack Red-face (Keaka Makapaula). Sullivan went with Boki as supercargo on the Becket. One of the few to get back alive, he then claimed that Boki hired him December 1, 1827, to take charge of the Blonde Hotel, and that he had worked two years and four days without pay. In the 1830s this edition of the Blonde became Boki House.33

7. SHIP AND WHALE, BLONDE (LCA 786): Originally Richard Kilday got this lot from the king. In 1826 James Fleming bought from Kilday and ran a grog-shop. David Owen “kept the house.” In July 1828 Capt. Samuel J. Dowssett arrived in the brig Wellington and moved ashore with his wife. Dowssett bought out Fleming but continued the grog-shop as the Ship and Whale. Owen stayed on. In March 1831 Robinson and Co. bought it from Dowssett for $725. Under Joseph Elliott’s supervision one Fay, then Thomas Pratt, then Joseph Booth managed the grog-shop. The new owner changed the booze boutique’s name to The Blonde. Booth, who entered the scene in 1834 or 1835, was a feisty but genial Britisher; he flew his country’s flag with pride. Some of Joe’s former customers defected to the temperance ranks. Booth ran a notice in the Polynesian: Pay up or see your names and the amounts you owe in the public press. This “Sydney Duck” was famous for his “large hospitality to all sailors,” making The Blonde a favorite hangout.34

8. INDIGENOUS GROG-SHOP (LCA 114): Here we have something different: a groggery owned and run by Hawaiians. Before 1825 Kamoa and Napihi “built a house with a long counter” (bar) here. Kupihe (Napihi?) put up a “festivities house” (grog-shop). Later Manuia bought the place from Kupihe. When Manuia “went on a trip,” he put Nahakina and Kekoa in charge. When Nahakina died, Kekoa took over as owner. Nahinu, husband of Keala, lived in this place under Kekoa as a liquor dealer. Apparently Kekoa, who for-
merly dispensed rum, reformed. In 1831 he sold the house and lot to Abner Pāki for $50.35

9. PEARL RIVER HOUSE (LCA 3122): This lot of Pelelewa (Polelewa) appears to have belonged to Manuia ("Snuff") and Kekianaoa before 1829, when the former died during the Boki expedition. In 1833 a grog-shop, the Pearl River House, occupied part of the property.36

10. SIGN OF THE ANN (LCA 9): Kaupena, Manuia’s wife, was lucky enough to return from Boki’s fatal expedition. At once she waded into the grog-shop scene with her Sign of the Ann. But late in November 1830, she sold to well-known Alexander “Little” Smith for $350. Six months later Smith sold to Stephen Reynolds for $600.37

11. JOEL DEADMAN, ALEX. SMITH, JAMES VOWLES, CHURCH, CHARLES TURNER (LCA 37): Here we have a gang of grog-shop keepers bearing down on an unresisting location. A foreigner was living on the place earlier, but Louis Gravier got it from Kaleohano for $60 in 1831 with Gov. Adams’s consent—"a form of permission always required in courtesy to the lord paramount, whose title was not extinguished by such transactions." In 1832 or 1833 Stephen Reynolds bought from Gravier for $200 and sold to Deadman for the same price. Deadman kept a grog-shop. Alex. Smith was his partner. Deadman sold his share to one Church, and Vowles bought Smith’s ninety-nine-year lease for $225 in November 1834. Vowles was no ornament to Honolulu. He got his professional coup de grace on April 12, 1846. The charges: noisy and disorderly conduct, assault, battery, and drunkenness—his usual repertoire, but concentrated here in a single, stunning performance. Vowles forfeited his bond, plus costs, and lost his grog-shop license. On April 21 he sold to James Austin for $1,000. Austin opened a store in partnership with old-timer William Bacle. In January 1850 Charles P. Turner took the location to institute his Honolulu Restaurant.38

12. TELEGRAPH TAVERN (LCA 5528): Over the years this property came under the control of a precious crew of grog-shop magnates. Timothy G. Pease was the first foreign occupant of record. At an auction in June 1832, Robert Boyd (who came to Hawai‘i in 1822) bought the place for $250, apparently with the permission of Abner Pāki. In April 1833 Boyd sold a half interest to the ruff ‘n’ tuff Vowles. In October 1845 "Dutch Harry" Zupplien and Vowles held
adjoining lots in this arresting neighborhood. At one time Pāki observed shortcomings in Boyd’s deportment that led to his ejection. But harmony was restored, and in October 1845 Pāki sold to Boyd in fee simple. Two months later Boyd sold to Edward Dennis for $1,000. In September 1846 Dennis leased to John McDuff and George Friel, who ran here the Telegraph Tavern, not famed in song and story, but where many a man bade sobriety farewell. In May 1850 Friel assigned his half interest in the lease (twelve years from September 4, 1846) to John Cavene for $2,500. On November 1 John McDuff got the same price for his interest assigned to William Wond, a tavern-keeper of the better sort.39

13. EAGLE TAVERN, NATIONAL HOUSE HOTEL (LCA 272): Capt. Kapihi was the first owner of record. In August 1840 Joseph Booth leased the lot for life at $40 a year. Kapihi died in 1844, willing all of his property to Kamehameha III. The king confirmed Booth’s lease, but in September 1844 deeded the place to Dr. T. C. B. Rooke for services rendered with reversionary interest to Rooke after Booth’s death. Rooke immediately sold to Booth for $200. In 1846 the property was identified as “formerly known as the Eagle Tavern”—about which this researcher has no information. By May 1847 Booth was building an “extensive hotel,” stone below and wood above, at a cost of some $10,000. In those days “stone” generally meant coral blocks hewn from the reef. In August it opened as the National House Hotel for seamen, under the management of James F. Lewis. He was a poor choice; in December Lewis skipped with about $9,000 of Booth’s liquid assets (no, not liquor). The trustworthy William Wond replaced Lewis. As time passed, Booth increased his landholdings in the area; eventually the hotel fronted on both Nu‘uanu and King streets.40

14. SHIPWRIGHT ARMS (LCA 2937): This parcel was part of the land Kamehameha I gave to John Harbottle for his services. William, John’s son, leased to William Lykes for $60 a year in April 1840. Lykes probably ran a grog-shop here. Wilkinson and Clapp bought the lease from Lykes by 1843. In that year the place was called the Shipwright Arms. In January 1847 Harbottle sold to Joseph Booth.41

15. JOHN CROWNE (LCA 622): At one time, this lot belonged to a Capt. Davis (probably William Heath Davis, Sr.). He sold to one Conant, and Conant sold to John Crowne of Great Britain. Here
Crowne became one of the first to open a grog-shop in Honolulu; he “always had a great share of custom.” But he died a debtor in May 1833. David Owen bought the place from Crowne’s executor for $400. The deed called Owen a victualer. Owen occupied the lot from 1835 to 1841, when he sold to Stephen Reynolds for $3,400, turning a nice profit.42

16. TELEGRAPH (LCA 133–34): The claim of George Wilkinson included a mauka and a makai lot. The latter Wilkinson got from Kaluna’aïna, a chief, in August 1840. It fronted on Nu’uanu Street. In 1843 Wilkinson wrote that the premises were “lately called the Telegraph, lately a public house,” but at that time occupied by Wilkinson. In 1846 McDuff and Friel ran the Telegraph on LCA 5528. Wilkinson’s executors leased his makai lot to Tyhoun (Tyhune), a Chinese merchant.43

17. JOHN HOBBS (LCA 601): In April 1838 Hobbs was identified as a retail liquor dealer for some time past. His grog-shop was then located on Nu’uanu Street. But road work in that year cut up his place. He got this lot in 1843.44

18. COMMERCIAL HOTEL (LCA 991): Honaunau bought this lot from Kamehameha III in 1835. He paid $500. Honaunau leased to Henry Macfarlane on November 20, 1845, and December 27, 1846, and sold to him for $3,500 in February 1854. In November of 1845 Macfarlane was improving and adding to the existing residence. His two-story wooden hotel opened New Year’s Day, 1846. The drink department offered “superior wines, pure spirits, ale, porter, lemon and other syrups, peppermint, lemonade, soda water, etc.” Macfarlane and Frank Marin started a livery stable to let “superior saddle horses by the day, week, or month.” This was early in September 1848. All hotels hosted social gatherings from time to time. A “bachelors’ ball” at the Commercial in July 1850 gave the invited ladies a chance (not ignored) to show a lot of wishbone.45

19, 20. SAMUEL THOMPSON (LCA 107, 170, Kekūanao’a to Thompson): Lot 107 came to Antonio Manuel from Keaniani, whose wife was a sister of Manuel’s spouse. He held grog-shop licenses in 1846 and 1847. But his boozerie was rowdy and disorderly, and he lost his license on July 1 of the last-named year. The place passed to Samuel Thompson; by October 1848 it was known as Thompson’s “tavern lot.” The ewa property originally belonged to Kinopu, one of
Kamehameha I's "trusty men." He willed it to Mataio Kekūanao'a, who sold to Thompson. A notice in the *Polynesian* of July 8, 1848, touted Thompson's Maine Hotel "in a large building erected by him on Broadway [King Street]." In August 1848 Edward Brown and George Friel took over management.\footnote{21}

21. **Francisco de Paula Marin's Boarding House and Hotel (LCA 217):** This property Marin got from Kamehameha I in the period following the Battle of Nu'uanu. By 1811 he was living in a stone house here. In that year Stephen Reynolds's captain and others lived in Marin's house. Chamisso, the *Rurik's* naturalist, ate at Marin's in the fall of 1817. He noted that the foreign merchant captains took their meals there.\footnote{22}

22. **Adelphi (Kamehameha III to John Meek):** John Meek, Jr., ran a grog-shop called the Adelphi. He died shortly after mid-November 1848 at age twenty-seven.\footnote{23}

23. **William E. Gill's Hotel (LCA 28 [part]):** With frontage on the mauka side of King Street, this lot was part of the place awarded to Keaniani. Gill bought from Kaleimemehu on June 24, 1847. He profited from Manuel Antonio's laxity; the Privy Council assigned the retail liquor license to him. Gill was a hotel and bar owner, whereas Manuel was just a saloon-keeper. Gill was still operating in 1851.\footnote{24}

24. **Louis Gravier, Thomas Mossman (LCA 691):** Before 1837 John Jason, blacksmith, got this lot from Kekūanao'a for services rendered. In 1844 he sold to Isaac Montgomery for $250; the same year Montgomery sold to Gravier for $500. In 1843 Gravier had opened a temperance eating house for seamen under the care of Manuel the Portuguese. Another, the Washingtonian Eating House for Seamen, was in the works. Gravier held various hotel and grog-shop licenses. In February 1847 Capt. Thomas Mossman opened a boarding house on premises formerly occupied by Gravier. In October he gave his address as "Liberty Hall." Gravier succumbed to domestic difficulties. His wife was a slut, or possibly a near-slut. Two piquant side-dishes in her banquet of life were Frank Marin and William E. Gill. Gravier shot himself on a Sunday morning in August 1849.\footnote{25}

25. **Dog and Bell, Rising Sun, White Swan (LCA 275):** These were successive monikers for the grog-shop Henry "Dutch Harry" Zupplien opened here in 1823. (It stood nearly opposite the
Seamen's Bethel built 10 years later. The proximity of the two institutions offered sailors a clear and convenient choice.) Kalanimōkū was a partner, in fact, providing liquor to sell for mutual benefit. This was the year in which Kalanimōkū and Keʻeaumoku tabooed drunkenness. It is not clear how supporting a grog-shop contributed to the success of this effort. In some way goats were involved in the deal. "Goats and liquor"—a rare combination—were behind Kalanimōkū's gift of land. Kalanimōkū had a pen of the butters in western Honolulu. A decade after opening his groggy, Zupplien almost came to grief. It was—to use a Briticism—a near thing. The Oahu Charity School was dedicated in January 1833. "Dutch Harry" refused to lend his bass drum for the grand procession and was insolent to the king. He worked up such a tizzy that he grabbed an ax and split the drum. Zupplien's mood proved contagious. The king had Harry's house nailed shut (a favorite gambit) and turned him out with very little of his property. "Many residents exulted." Their exultation faded three days later when Zupplien coughed up $100 and got his place back. He was still at his old stand in the late 1840s.

26. THE RED LION (LCA 3204): Liliha (Kuini, Madame Boki) held this lot in 1830. Then and for some years later it accommodated the Red Lion grog-shop of Greene, Western (possibly Michael Weston, who died October 13, 1831), and Elliott. At least one customer didn't make it to the exit. He was stabbed to death in the grog-shop in December 1832. The owners rented this spot until they moved to Samuel Thompson's yard, Waikiki. The king granted the property to Martin Beck in 1841.

27. ALEX. SMITH'S, SAMUEL THOMPSON'S GROG SHOPS (LCA 787): This lot originally belonged to Capt. George W. Cole. Henry A. Peirce bought from Cole, and Smith bought from Peirce for $2,500 in June 1833. About three weeks later Smith opened a grog-shop (what else?). But in mid-August he sold to Robinson, Lawrence, and Joseph Elliott for $2,600. At his death in 1836 Elliott willed his rights to the surviving partners. Late in 1849 Samuel Thompson occupied the place, as he had for some time. Gorham Gilman, describing Honolulu in the early 1840s, wrote that a little blind alley between high walls (Rose Lane and extension) led from King Street to Hotel Street, "coming out at Thompson's famous saloon, a man who although he kept a saloon told me that for years he did not
know the taste of liquors.” Thompson called his business here the Buck and Hounds.  

28. WARREN HOTEL, CANTON HOTEL (LCA 790): Maj. William R. Warren, “The Major”—he of the big paunch, red face, and blonde eyebrows—said that he got this place from Kaikio‘ewa, the governor of Kaua‘i. He was in the hotel business in 1817 and offered a July 4 dinner in 1818. His pioneer enterprise gave Hotel Street its name, although in the 1830s that part of Hotel between Fort Street and the hotel was called Warren Square. In 1836 Warren went to California. He asked Stephen Reynolds to sell or rent his property. Near the end of December 1837 Reynolds sold to Dr. Edward Espener for $1,600. The hotel was rebuilt “in most ample order” and reopened March 7, 1838. As a hotelkeeper, Espener was a good physician. His debts mounted; by December 1841 he owed William French more than $11,000, including a mortgage for $6,500. To get out from under, Espener deeded the hotel and its furnishings to French. This enraged other creditors. A jury trial confirmed French as legal owner. The others agreed to take Espener’s note, payable in nine months. Espener left town on a whaleship. With French as owner, William Jarrett reopened the Warren Hotel in mid-March 1842 as a five-year lessee paying $900 a year. But Jarrett didn’t work out either. On June 15, 1844, French made a 50–50 partnership deal for operation of the hotel. The partner: Ahung, a Chinese. He brought in three Chinese copartners—Atai, Ahsing, and Ahlan—all doing business as Hungtai. Ahung soon died; at his death Hungwa bought into the enterprise and became the proprietor of the Canton Hotel—an outfit featuring Chinese cooks and waiters. The hotel was of course mired in the notorious French-Greenway mess. Receivers sold the Canton Hotel at auction in January 1846 to James Robinson and Co. for $4,620. Hungwa and Ahsing were still on the ground, but gave up their leases. A year later the firm of Hungwa (Apuo, Ahsing, and Ahlan) dissolved by mutual consent. The Canton Hotel was rebuilt and enlarged again. The veteran Samuel Thompson took over management at the end of July 1849. A year later Leonard Mitchell succeeded Thompson; he lasted about a week. Then came John Bartlett and Co. It is now July 20, 1850—time to check out.

29. THE BLONDE (LCA 10806 [PA MO'O]): This lot was part of the award to Kamehameha III. The origin of his title is not clear.
Oblique evidence suggests that the Pa Mo'o accommodated a grog-shop before Boki set up his Blonde on Nu'uanu Street. Numerous land documents identify the Pa Mo'o as the “Blonde Yard”—a common designation for grog-shop lots. And on November 23, 1826, Stephen Reynolds mentioned an inquest held at the “Sign of Blonde.”

30. JOSE NADAL’S GROG-SHOP? (LCA 1045): This lot was George Holmes’s part of the Oliver Holmes estate. In January 1847 George leased it to Jose Nadal. Stephen Reynolds wrote that Nadal intended to open a grog-shop and sailors’ boarding house. He put up a “large Yankee tavern-like wooden” erection. But there is no evidence at hand that his plans went through. In September 1847 F.W. Thompson set up his auction room in Nadal’s place.

31. GLOBE HOTEL (LCA 92): The history of this well-known hotel lies just beyond the limiting date of 1850 set for this article. The Globe occupied the former home of Hannah Holmes Davis Jones, who died here in April 1847. Her lot was part of the land Kamehameha I gave to Oliver Holmes in 1811 or 1812 for services rendered.

32. HILL AND ROBINSON COFFEE HOUSE (LCA 6201[1]): S.J. Mills married Polly Holmes and built a house on part of her portion of the Holmes estate. Late in November 1837 (the year of Polly’s death) Hill and Robinson set up a coffee house at the Mills place.

33. ALEX. SMITH AND JOHN MUNN (LCA 624): Here’s Alex again. In 1829 he “separated from” blacksmith John Colcord and got this lot from Eku (Itu’u), Kina‘u’s “head man.” He inaugurated a sailors’ boarding house and its satellite grog-shop. Smith appears to have operated also a combination consular boarding house and hospital for those under the care of the American consul. In May 1831 Stephen Reynolds went over to see the “sick, lame and lazy” and made rules for consular boarders to watch over the ill. Smith’s digs were popular. Near mid-July 1833 Kamehameha III gave all deserters their freedom and permission to go where they liked. They trooped from the fort to board at the Smith menage. By March 1841 Smith owed Reynolds $1,500; at that time he sold to Reynolds for $2,500, debt included. In November of the same year, Reynolds leased to the hard-drinking John Munn, still on the bottle at age forty-nine, for $225 a year. Munn took over “to keep U.S. gov’t. distressed seamen.”
He also accepted other boarders, including Reynolds. In October 1845 U.S. Consul Alexander Abell took care of distressed seamen from Munn and gave it to John Ladd. Munn kept only destitute men maintained by the government while waiting to ship out.  

34. **Paulet Arms (LCA 628):** Keali‘iahonui and Kekau‘onohi were the first recorded owners of this vacant lot. They took on a debt of $800 due Henry Sebastian Swinton from America Shattuck and gave Swinton this property to settle accounts. The year: 1839. Swinton was taking in boarders as early as 1833 and in 1838 had been retailing liquor. In 1843 Swinton, a Scot, ran a grog-shop on the future LCA 628. This was the year of the British Commission, and Swinton must have thought he was backing a winning horse when he named his business the Paulet Arms. But of course Paulet soon disappeared, arms and all. In 1842 he had mortgaged the lot to Reynolds to satisfy a debt of $3,600. Swinton was never able to pay up, so Reynolds took the property. Reynolds seems to have had a definite flair for buying up grog-shop lots. If he had really applied himself to this endeavor, he might have brought the liquor business to its knees single-handedly.  

35. **French Hotel (LCA 924):** J.P. Peabody bought the part of this lot that held the French Hotel from Moody French in December 1833. No evidence at hand supports the idea that there was ever any connection between the two. Dr. T.C.B. Rooke held the place jointly with Peabody. In 1837 Rooke got a power of attorney letting him settle the affairs of the partnership. In May 1848 he bought the property at auction for $2,700. The French Hotel alighted here in July 1848 with a lease from Rooke to Pierre Le Gueval and Hippolite Salmon (Psalmon) for two years at $600 a year. But in May 1849 the lease went to Victor Chancerel of Lahaina—three years at an annual rent of $600. Then in April 1850 came a three-year lease at $200 a quarter to Chancerel and Ariene Medaille.  

36. **Capt. Nye's Boarding House (LCA 2341):** In 1831 John Mitchener occupied this lot, apparently on lease from the Hawaiian government. On August 10, 1831, he rented the place to Capt. Gorham H. Nye of the Loriot for one hundred years. The price: $1,600. Nye intended to have a hotel and did in fact accept boarders. But in June 1834 he sold his lease to Henry Paty, who opened a store.
37. **George Chapman’s Consular Boarding House** (Kamehameha III to William Wond): Apparently Boki held this lot in the mid-1820s, giving it to Chapman and Lawler in exchange for LCA 2671. In the 1830s Chapman boarded English sailors under consular care. But he angered the authorities. In January 1836 Abner Paki and a party of Hawaiians ejected Chapman and took him to the fort. When he returned, he found that belongings had been stolen. British Consul Richard Charlton fired off a protest, and everybody settled down to await the next English man-of-war.\(^{62}\)

38, 39. **John Rives’s Hotel and Grog-Shop** (LCA 62, 62B, 189): These awards were all parts of a big lot that Kamehameha II gave to Rives, probably for esteem rather than service. Rives, of Bordeaux, had arrived in the 1807–10 period. When Tavish Rees came to Honolulu in 1819, Rives had a big house in which he kept a hotel. In 1822 or 1823 Rives opened a grog-shop on LCA 189. But he went to England with Liholiho and never returned.\(^{63}\)

40. **French Hotel** (LCA 1026): This lot was originally included in Alexander Adams’s grant from Kamehameha I. In 1829 Adams sold it to Capt. Samuel J. Dowsett—a sale confirmed in 1834 when Adams made over the property to Dowsett’s widow. The French Hotel (or Hotel de France) existed as early as 1843. It was located on the Dowsett premises by October 1, 1845, when Jacob Stupplebeeen (doesn’t sound French) held the license. In mid-August 1846 the public learned that Pierre Le Gueval (that’s better) had taken “this well-known establishment.” It was well that Mrs. Dowsett’s big place brought her income. In June 1846 her son James shot at a dove. The ball ricocheted and struck the lady, who was enthroned in the “necessary”; the wound left her a cripple.\(^{64}\)

41. **Royal Hotel, Despairie’s Victualing House** (LCA 801): Alex. Adams got this place from Kamehameha I as part payment for services as a sailing master. About March 1845 Adams and family moved some three miles west to Kalihi. This freed the lot for other uses. Mrs. Mary Ann Whittaker, a widow with three children, thought she saw her chance. By October her Royal Hotel—specializing in hosting seafaring masters and officers—was in business. Adams gave her a five-year lease starting April 1, 1846. Whittaker’s rent: $500 a year. But soon she was up to her apron-strings in trouble; by the end of March 1846, she advertised the hotel for sale: six dwell-
ing houses, a stone store house, a big cook house, a bowling alley, a billiard table, complete furniture, and a stock of wines and spirits—plus the lease not yet begun. At April's end she assigned her lease to John R. von Pfister for $200. Later one Charles Armand Desprairie tried his luck at a victualing house business. This, too, failed. At the end of February 1848 he was to be sold out for debts totaling $1,438.42. He wanted to sell the unexpired lease, thirteen tables, twenty-two chairs, thirteen bedsteads, and a lot of other stuff. 65

42. FRENCH HOTEL, MRS. CARTER’S BOARDING HOUSE (LCA 2272): Capt. William S. Hinckley got this place about 1831 with Kuakini's permission. He sold to William French, who in turn sold to Capt. John Bancroft in August 1838 for $2,000. In the summer of 1839, Bancroft, in the Llama, anchored at Santa Cruz Island, off Santa Barbara. There Indians hunted otters for him. On a particular evening the hunters returned with a skimpy take. Bancroft ignored the niceties of social intercourse in communicating his disappointment. The Indians stormed the ship and gunned down Bancroft. His wife (a daughter of old Oliver Holmes) rushed on deck and flung herself on the body. She got wounds that proved fatal after her return to Honolulu. Another homesite was thus opened to development. At the end of April 1843, Stephen Reynolds noted that "a Frenchman has opened a new hotel at the Bancroft house." This probably marked the advent of the peripatetic French Hotel. It soon moved. On the first of June 1844, the same diarist wrote that Mrs. Carter (see LCA 111) was to "keep house" at the Bancroft place; she wanted from four to six boarders. 66

43. MANSION HOUSE HOTEL (LCA 111): Late in 1833 Kamehameha III sold this lot to J.O. Carter for $100, with the condition that the land would revert to the king if and when Carter left the islands. Afterward, in an "act of grace," the king agreed to a fee simple award on the same condition attending all other such—that the property should never pass to any other than Hawaiian subjects. Carter fenced the place and built a "substantial" residence that became known as the Mansion House. Carter's hotel was in business (in fact if not in name) by the fall of 1835. F.W. Thompson ("jolly Fred") and Carter opened a regular hotel at the house on July 1, 1843. Apparently one Nathaniel Parker was a partner for a short time in 1844. Thompson withdrew by mutual consent on January 1, 1846.
On July 1 of that year Henry Macfarlane entered into partnership with Carter; he withdrew November 30, 1847. Carter suffered financial reverses and after a spell of delirium tremens died August 1, 1850. Subsequently his widow “consented to use her home for the accommodation of visitors.”

44. MRS. DOMINIS'S BOARDING HOUSE (LCA 850): John Dominis bought this lot (now Washington Place) from Richard Charlton in December 1840. It was part of a 299-year lease Kalanimōkū gave to Charlton in October 1826. Over the course of several years, Capt. Dominis built a “costly [some $10,000] and elegant mansion.” It was well along when Dominis sailed for Manila in August 1846 and—like Capt. Dowsett—disappeared. A year later the house was finished. A respectable widow with a spacious dwelling could always open a boarding house, and so it befell. Anthony Ten Eyck, the U.S. commissioner, and Capt. B. F. Snow were prominent early clients.

45. ROBERT BOYD’S GROG-SHOP AND HOTEL (BOYD): Another tentative location based on Boyd’s ownership of this parcel—his only downtown holding. Boyd came to Hawai‘i in 1822. In 1844 he was destitute. This inspired him to enter the liquor business. He held licenses for the Union Hotel and L’Ambuscade, a grog-shop. In April 1846 Jacob Stupplebeen ran the Union Hotel, probably in partnership with Boyd. On the twelfth of that month Boyd was found gambling on the premises at 3 a.m. Stupplebeen lost $525 plus his liquor, hotel, and billiard licenses. Boyd may have taken over, but he too was shot down. At January’s end 1847 he reaped a $500 fine for sowing temptation in the path of Hawaiians to whom he sold liquor.

The record points to this conclusion: A growing visitor industry furnished Honolulu transients the essential Three Bs by the time Kamehameha I died in May 1819. Revisionist hands scribble over many a page of history. But in the foreseeable past the high and low life of early Honolulu will keep their power to bemuse and beguile.

NOTES


6 Campbell, A Voyage 93, 119, 155.

7 Tyerman and Bennet, Journal of Voyages 2:54.


9 Kamakau, Ruling Chiefs 335; SR 5–8 Feb. 1827; Ralston, Grass Huts 146.


11 Account Book no. 23, Sandwich Islands Mission Collection. HMCS. Eighty-four books include various types of accounts.


16 FO&Ex, 25 Mar. 1833; SR 22 Mar. 1833.


18 SR 8 Feb. 1837; IDM 1 Dec. 1837; Boaz Mahune to Paul Kanoa, 6 Aug. 1838, IDM; IDM 31 May and 4 Nov. 1839.


20 FO&Ex, 3 and 5 Apr. and 15 Oct. 1838; SR 30 Mar. and 1, 14, and 15 Apr. 1838.

21 *Hawaiian Spectator* 1:4, 390–92; SIG 8 Sept. 1838.


27 SR 28 July 1848; FOct. 1869, 88.


32 LCA 1:421–22; Foreign Register (hereafter FR) 2:89; Foreign Testimony
journal of Mrs. Maria Sartwell Loomis . . . , ts, 52. HMCS; James Macrae, *With Lord Byron at the Sandwich Islands in 1825* (Honolulu: n.p., 1922) 43.

33 LCA 1:425; FT 2:169; Eugene Sullivan to John C. Jones, 14 Feb. 1839, FO&Ex; SR 2, 3, 4 May 1827; SIG 17 Sept. 1836; Kamakau, *Ruling Chiefs* 293; Bingham, *Twenty Years' Residence* 361.


37 LCA 1:74; FR 1:27; NR 1:15-16.

38 LCA 1:132; FR 1:48; FT 1:40; NT 1:84; Vowles to British Commission, 17 Apr. 1843. BCLC. In this case, it seems that George Hyatt, a literate black, wrote a letter for Vowles, an illiterate white; HBC 2:178; P 25 Apr. 1846, 26 Jan. and 18 May 1850.

39 LCA 1:579; FR 1:113; FT 1:106; NT 1:15-16; Wilkinson to British Commission, 13 Apr. 1843. BCLC; HBC 2:52.

40 LCA 1:333; FR 2:77; FT 2:40-41; NT 2:335; FO&Ex, 5 Apr. 1838.

41 LCA 1:520; FR 2:77; FT 2:40-41; NT 2:335; FO&Ex, 5 Apr. 1838.