

Hilo Boarding School: Hawaii's Experiment in Vocational Education

Ralph Canevali

When the first American missionaries arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in 1820, they witnessed a culture in transition. Forty-two years after Captain Cook's initial sighting of the Islands, a whole generation of Hawaiians had grown up with at least an awareness of the existence of the white man. Even if none were to be seen, their presence was felt everywhere. Their sophisticated weapons were utilized with bloody effectiveness in Kamehameha's wars of unification and their diseases had drastically reduced the native population, though greater epidemics were yet to come. Already the Hawaiians' rigid class system based upon taboos and their religious beliefs were in disarray.

In such an atmosphere the first New England missionaries arrived in the islands. Their hope was to convert a "heathen" nation into a Christian civilization. Essential to their early efforts was a program of education, for a Religion of the Word could hardly have been appreciated by an illiterate populace. Instruction was first carried on in English, but after 1822, when the first printings in the native language were issued, the Hawaiian tongue came to be the universal mode of education. With the vigorous support of the Queen-Regent Kaahumanu, attendance in mission schools increased from about 200 in 1821 to 2,000 in 1824, 37,000 in 1828 and 41,238 in 1830, of which nearly half were pupils on the island of Hawaii.¹ The people fairly leaped at the opportunity of receiving the white man's education. Children and adults exchanged food and other personal belongings for spelling books. Institutions

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known as common schools sprang up in villages all over the islands. Sometimes these schools were manned by the wandering missionaries, but more often they were staffed by young native men who had themselves received a rudimentary education at the station school. In these common schools, classes and attendance were quite irregular, but nevertheless basic reading and writing skills (in Hawaiian) and fundamental Christian doctrine were communicated to large numbers of people. In Hilo and Puna alone, one missionary district, there were some 100 common schools in the late 1830's, reaching between 4,000 and 5,000 men, women, and children in an area where the total population approximated 12,000.² On the entire island perhaps 7,000 natives customarily frequented the thatched huts of the common schools.³

In 1831 the American Board of Commissioners of the Foreign Missions (A.B.C.F.M.) headquarters in Boston, decided that the Hawaiian Mission should exhibit greater self-sufficiency. What was needed was a school for promising young native men who would carry on the work of white missionaries in other areas of the Pacific, and help shoulder the burden of education in Hawaii. Such an institution was created with the establishment of the Lahainaluna Seminary on Maui by Lorrin B. Andrews in 1831.

It soon became obvious that the new seminary faced some major difficulties. The common schools of the islands proved to be so inadequate that they produced few scholars with sufficient educational backgrounds suitable for seminary training. Also, it seemed that the initial enthusiasm exhibited by the Hawaiians toward the Christian religion had largely disappeared, and missionaries everywhere were decrying the lapse in religious zeal. The Reverend David B. Lyman of Hilo noted in his report to the Mission in June 1833, "We have been obliged during the whole year to mourn the absence of the converting and sanctifying influences of the spirit."⁴ As the response of the natives to the rigorous callings of the church declined, an exasperated Lyman reported again, "We are in the midst of a depraved and degraded people, a people who without a more abundant outpouring of the Spirit than has been here witnessed, will live and die heathens."⁵

David Belden Lyman (1803-1884), a member of an old and distinguished New England family, managed the station school at Hilo. He had arrived in Hilo on July 16, 1833 with his wife, Sarah Joiner Lyman (1806-1885). At that time there were only two houses in the town, Lyman's and the Coan house built by an early missionary, Joseph Goodrich, in 1828, about one-fourth of a mile above Hilo Bay. Lyman's partner was the fiery evangelist and regular minister of the Hilo station, Reverend Titus Coan, who arrived in 1835. Lyman alternated his duties

as chief instructor with that of preaching, as Coan was often proselytizing in the outlying areas of his circuit, which stretched from Hakalau in the north to Puna in the south. Hence, as Lyman was often unable to devote even half his time to education, much of this burden passed to his wife. Reverend Lyman operated a school for the instruction of native teachers, many of whom eventually attended the Lahainaluna Seminary, also a school for chiefs and other important personages of the community, and a children's school. Due to inadequate facilities and teaching staff, as well as general apathy on the part of the natives, the achievements of the Hilo station schools were modest indeed. In a community of approximately 1,500 individuals,⁶ only sixty to seventy children regularly attended the mission school in Hilo.⁷

It soon was apparent to the missionaries that the future of the Congregational Mission in Hawaii would be largely dependent upon the success of its schools. Lorrin Andrews and David Lyman both recognized the need to establish "feeder schools" which would transmit to their students fundamental reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, and religious training before admission to the Seminary. The question of constructing such a school was first discussed at the general meeting of the whole mission in 1835, but was rejected. However, the following year, Lyman and Andrews overcame the reservations of the older missionaries. After an investigating commission upheld Lyman's and Andrews' recommendations, the mission appropriated \$500 for the construction of a boarding school in Hilo. The introduction of boarding at the Lahainaluna Seminary that year, and the formation of a girls' boarding school at Wailuku on Maui, assured the missionaries of the practicability of such an institution. As he would be unable to devote his entire time to the school, Lyman decided not to utilize the Board's entire appropriation, but rather to construct a smaller establishment costing about \$140. In October 1836, after several months of labor, two grass houses were completed between Lyman's house and Coan's house. On October 3 the school opened with eight boarders, but the number soon increased to twelve.⁸

II

Hilo Boarding School, under the tutelage of the Lymans, was an immediate success. In 1837 six graduates were sent to Lahainaluna Seminary.⁹ At the annual meeting of the mission that year plans were made to enlarge the school to accommodate as many as fifty boys from all mission districts of the islands.¹⁰ During the next two years HBS continued to be a fruitful enterprise. With community support its enrollment increased, until by 1839 twenty-eight boys were enrolled.¹¹

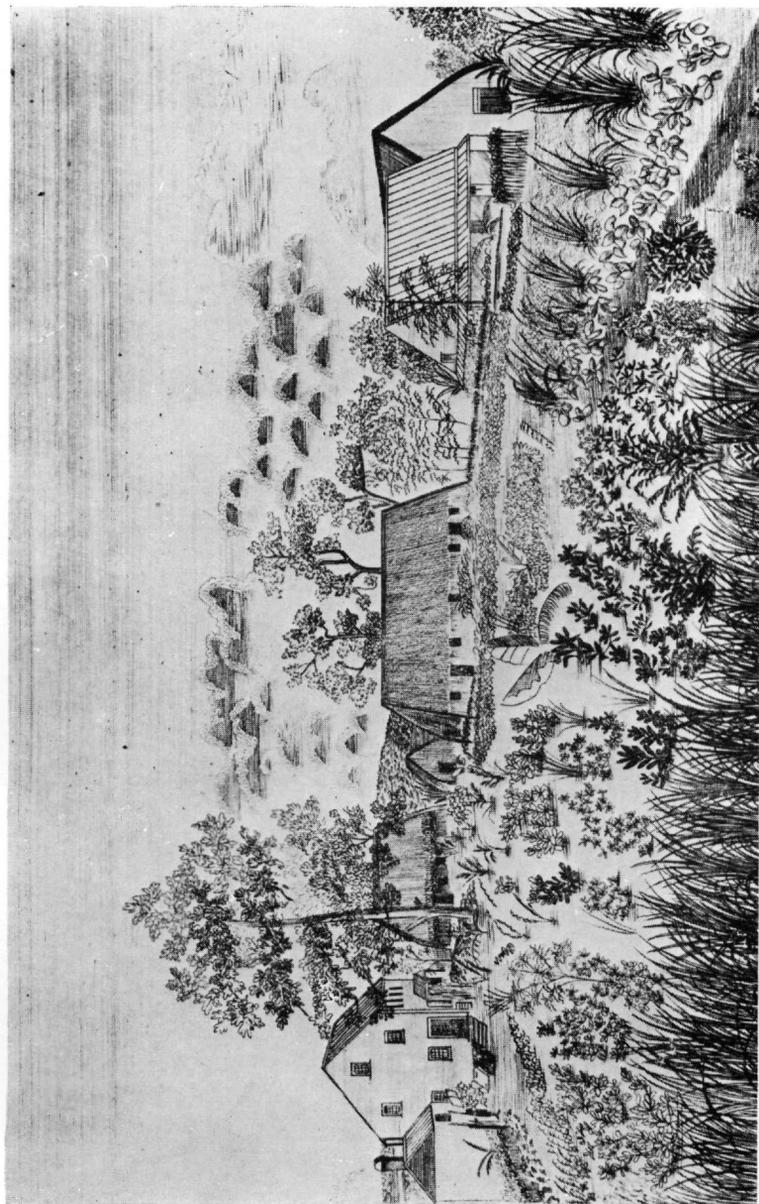
Because of the diligence of its teachers, more and more “graduates” were sent to Lahainaluna. Lyman’s efforts were clearly vindicated.

Despite some improvements in 1837, the meager facilities of the school could no longer satisfy the needs of Hawaii island. At the general meeting of the mission in 1839, HBS was formally endorsed. Its board of trustees included Lyman and representatives from each of the five mission districts of the island. The old school buildings were torn down. Lyman purchased in entirety the first shipment of lumber to arrive in Hilo. With this valuable cargo and material from the first building, a new school was constructed, with the labor of his students and their families, at a site slightly above that of the original, close to the farmland of the mission. The new wood and thatch structures costing \$400 would accommodate from sixty to seventy boys. They included a dormitory and school-house, as well as a smaller cookhouse and infirmary. Also constructed was a new house for the principal, now known as Lyman House.

A new mission family, the Wilcoxes, took up residence in the original Lyman House, later known as the Wetmore House. The new school building lodged fifty-five pupils in its first year of existence, most of them coming from outside Hilo.¹² In 1840 sugar cultivation commenced on adjacent mission land, soon producing 5,400 lbs. of sugar and 4,000 gallons of molasses.¹³ The sugar plantation was worked entirely by the boys of the school along with a “monthly concert” of labor by all members of the parish. The cane was probably ground in a Chinese-owned mill in Hilo.

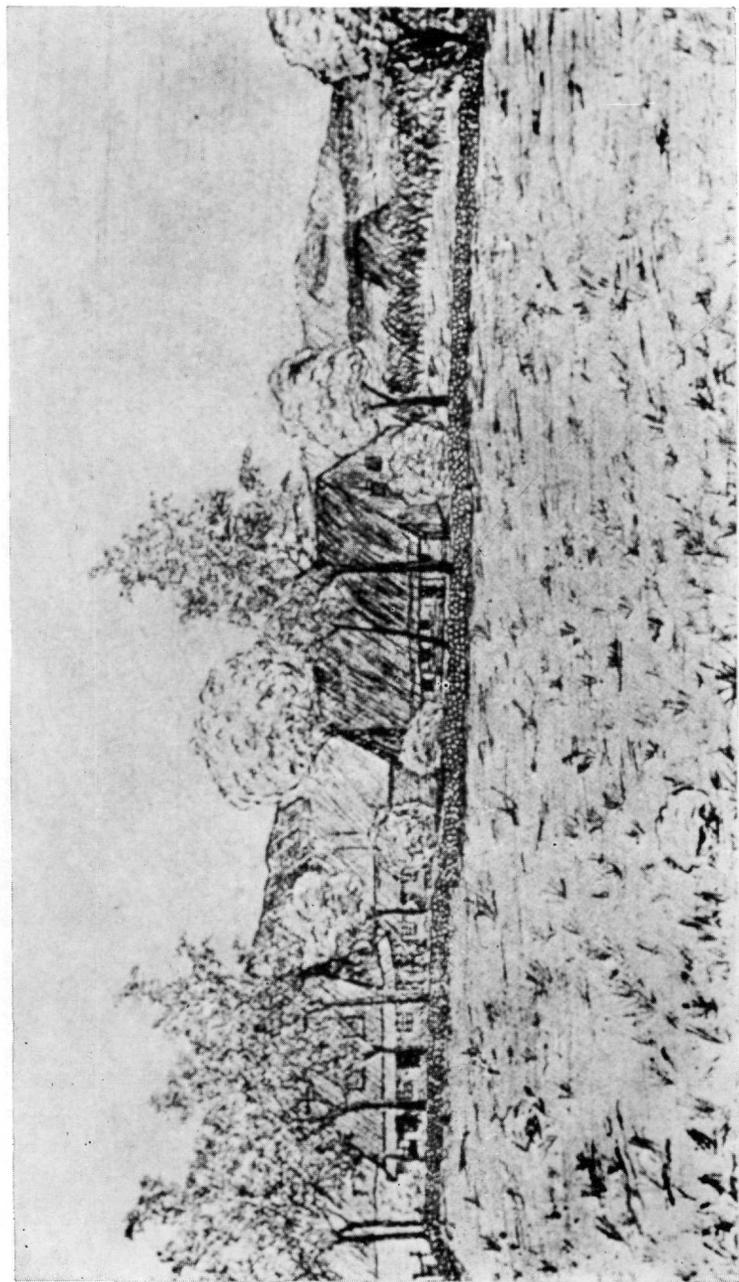
Lyman was himself the son of a Connecticut farmer, and he never failed to stress the character-building qualities associated with honest manual labor. After awakening at 5:00 a.m. and a time for prayer, the boys went to the fields for several hours of work before school. They would return to the farm late in the afternoon for another hour or so of work before dinner. Upon the several acres of fertile land granted by the chiefs to the school, taro and other vegetables were cultivated for home use.

Although some income was achieved from the sale of sugar cane, the bulk of the support for the school and Lyman’s family during these years came from the mission. Lyman estimated in 1841 that the school’s annual expenses, when no major repairs or building were required, fluctuated between \$750 and \$800 (excluding the principal’s stipend).¹⁴ Though little cash profits were achieved from agriculture, the plants cultivated at HBS played an important part in providing food for the school, especially taro (which was a staple in the boys’ diet) and thereby helped to allay expenses.



The original thatched building of the Hilo Boarding School, erected 1836. Lahainaluna engraving from a drawing by Rev. Edward Bailey.

Courtesy of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society.



The second building of the Hilo Boarding School, erected 1839.
Courtesy of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society and the Lyman House Memorial Museum.

In 1840 two groups of Americans, one led by J. D. Dana, the other by Commodore Charles Wilkes, brought with them exciting evidence of the recent technical advances of the outside world, of which many of the older missionaries were unaware. Marvels revealed to the people of the isolated village ranged from postage stamps and metal-wheel clocks to talk of grain reapers and trans-oceanic cables. This sparked a renewed passion among many of the local inhabitants for the acquisition of Western knowledge and skills. Lyman wrote in 1842, "There is increasing evidence that the advantages of the school are becoming more highly prized by the pupils, their friends, and by the community."¹⁵ This new acquisitive spirit of the people soon became manifested in the program of HBS. Tailoring (1840) and dairy (1844) departments were added to the curriculum. Lyman also conducted a cartography class. In 1841, in a letter to R. Anderson, Secretary of the A.B.C.F.M. in Boston, Lyman wrote that he believed that a hundred interested pupils could be accommodated if facilities were expanded. He said, "It is beginning to be seen by them of any considerable discernment among all classes that knowledge is power."¹⁶

Other important developments during Lyman's principalship of HBS included King Kamehameha III's grant to the mission in 1846 of the deed to the water rights of the Wailuku River in Hilo.¹⁷ In 1848, in accordance with the promulgation of new laws on land tenure, HBS received a government charter and was incorporated. Hence, the mission's holding of about forty acres of land between the school and Halai Hill was formally acknowledged. (However, HBS land claims were based on verbal edicts, not written deeds, so in the 1910s and 1920s the school encountered much trouble in retaining its land.) The administration of the school was reorganized, a new and larger board of trustees being selected. In that the same year, Dr. Charles Wetmore arrived in Hilo, occupying the Lyman's original house, and serving as physician and teacher at HBS.

Meanwhile the mission in the islands was undergoing severe financial strain. In 1849 it was forced to relinquish its legal hold over the Lahainaluna Seminary, the school reverting to the government's control. With the Seminary no longer in operation, HBS' original purpose as a "feeder school" ceased to exist. Thus, while in actuality the mission continued to render financial aid to HBS, after 1850 it disclaimed any future responsibility for the continuation of the school. Between 1836 and 1851 the mission had spent \$5,563 on the support of the school, an average of \$371 per year. A total of 325 pupils had attended HBS. Some ninety of these progressed to the Seminary at Lahainaluna, seventy-two others were presently teaching, sixty others were former-teachers,

about ten held other government or clerical positions, and seventy-three had been dismissed on account of ill health or misbehavior.¹⁸ These figures are significant in several respects. First, the high rate of dismissals (22 percent) during the period from 1836–51 continued to plague HBS throughout its entire history. In this early period, dismissals on account of ill health were noteworthy as epidemics of measles, whooping cough, influenza, and many other diseases afflicted the native population. Remarkably few deaths occurred at the school itself, possibly due to the care administered to the pupils by Lyman and Dr. Wetmore, but some of the boys died in their home districts after returning from school.¹⁹ A second reason for the high rate of dismissals can be explained by the exacting standards of behavior and discipline demanded of the pupils by Rev. Lyman and his wife. The school's policy in this matter was succinctly expressed by a later principal, the Reverend William B. Oleson (1878–86): "Only those scholars are retained who give promise of steady advancement in the studies of the school, and who maintain a good moral character."²⁰ One can imagine how the comparatively lax and care-free behavior of the natives must have tried the patience of the puritanical missionaries. In 1841, when the ways of the *haole* had not yet been deeply assimilated, Lyman noted, "The only new rule of any importance" was "that no boy leave his sleeping apartment without pantaloons."²¹ These figures also demonstrated the reason why HBS continued to prosper even after the dissolution of the Seminary on Maui. More than one-third of the boys who had attended the school eventually became teachers in the common schools of the kingdom. In 1850 the Minister of Public Instruction, Richard Armstrong, reported that HBS "is one of our most important schools. It is the very life and soul of our common school on that large island."²² Thus, when HBS burned down in 1853, the mission, the government, and its citizens, both native and *haole*, clamored for its reconstruction.

In October 1853, there is record of an unsuccessful attempt to destroy the school by fire. On November 2nd of that year, however, a second attempt succeeded. A culprit was supposedly sighted, but no one was apprehended, nor a motive discerned. Luckily none died in the fire, although one boy was badly burned. The building had been razed.

The Lymans were faced with a crisis. Reconstruction of the school would be expensive, and the mission could no longer be entirely counted upon for support. With great enthusiasm the people of the islands rallied to the aid of HBS. The Honolulu press extolled the merits of the institution: "It has sent forth some of the most enterprising men of the nation."²³ Ultimately the mission contributed \$2,000 toward the school's revitalization, and another \$1,500 were gathered through church and

private donations. The most important single source of aid was the legislature, which voted \$4,000 for the rebuilding. With this support the board of trustees marshalled their efforts to reconstruct the entire HBS.²⁴ David B. Lyman was appointed treasurer, and an executive committee of all resident board members was organized to coordinate operations. A new site about one-half mile above Haili Church was selected for the school. This was to be the third and final location of HBS. In 1856 the T-shaped, two-story wooden building was completed. It included a stone basement and an attic with a corrugated zinc roof.

Beginning in 1853 English was taught at HBS, although a special \$10/year fee was required for such instruction. The Protestant missionaries in general, including Lyman, looked upon the increasing use of English in the common schools with disapproval. Their opposition to English stemmed from the long tradition of instruction in Hawaiian and the need for changing from accepted Hawaiian texts. In addition, the use of the native language enabled the missionaries who had mastered it to continue their hold over Hawaiians. Also knowledge of English would encourage the natives, the clergy believed, to make contacts with unsavory foreigners, particularly seamen, and to forsake their agricultural ways of life for the dissolute pleasures of foreign ports. Lyman noted in 1856, "the establishment of entirely English speaking schools where no manual labor system exists does not tend to make Hilo Boarding School popular with the pupils of the native population."²⁵ Despite Lyman's initial opposition, by 1856 HBS devoted three hours a day to English instruction funded by the government. In 1859 boys who had made poor progress in English in the public schools were sent to HBS for remedial work. In that year also HBS formally undertook the responsibility of training teachers for government schools. In 1864 Lyman was elected permanent chairman of the board of trustees.

The last decades of Lyman's administration were times of increasing financial difficulties for HBS. A decreasing native population, new employment opportunities for Hawaiians, and a sufficient number of English common schools in the Hilo/Puna areas (twenty-seven schools handling 600 pupils in 1860)²⁶ meant a marked decline in the number of applications to HBS. In earlier years the school had been able to accommodate only a fraction of the total applicants. The reduction of mission support for the school prompted the board of trustees to appeal for more government aid and to cut back expenses. After 1853 the school no longer could supply clothing to the boys of the school (at an expense in excess of \$200 a year).²⁷ After 1857, when state-promoted English instruction ceased, the use of English in HBS was also cut back. This move was not

to the principal's distaste. In his annual report to the mission in 1861 Lyman said, "Few if any of them [the students] will be perceptibly better men, better teachers, or better preachers, than they would have been without any knowledge of English while the door to temptation is thereby more widely opened to them."²⁸ Despite the fiscal straits of the school, Lyman continued in his work at HBS. With yearly government aid, the missionary and his wife, several other *haole* teachers, and a few native assistants kept the institution alive. Some of the graduates continued to pass on to Lahainaluna, despite the fact that it was no longer a mission-operated seminary, and attendance at the HBS remained fairly stable. But Lyman's health had been failing for several years, and the search for a new and more dynamic principal was necessary. On February 1, 1874 the 70-year-old founder of the school finally retired his principalship. David Lyman did continue as treasurer of the board of trustees until 1881, three years before his death.

Reverend David B. Lyman's accomplishments in his twenty-eight years as active principal of HBS are noteworthy. The school he founded soon came to be a model for all the common schools of the islands, and filled the need for a good educational institution on the island of Hawaii. The HBS produced more than its share of native educators, clergymen, and government officials in a kingdom where these positions previously had been monopolized by foreigners. During Lyman's tenure as principal nearly one-half of the 874 boys who attended HBS became teachers, while about one-fourth of them progressed on to the Lahainaluna school.²⁹ More than anything else, Lyman was a man of God. The students were constantly encouraged to join the congregation, but so taxing were the duties of membership that throughout most of Lyman's administration less than one-half of them were accepted into the church. Lyman wrote:

. . . to train the boys to industrial moral habits, based in the principals of the Gospel has been our chief care. The Bible, whether regarded to its influence on the government of the school, or on the Character, mental and moral from time to eternity, is deemed of more influence than all other books studied in school.³⁰

III

After several unsuccessful attempts to find a *haole* principal to replace Lyman, the Reverend J. Makaimoko Naeole was appointed to that position. The new principal was unable to reverse the trend that had developed in Lyman's latter years. In a letter to the mission in Honolulu, dated August 22, 1877, Reverend Lyman noted that the school was "deteriorating."³¹ Despite an annual government subsidy of \$1,125, the

school was still in a financial predicament. Attendance remained set at fifty pupils that year, no significant change in the size of the student body since the completion of the second HBS in 1839. In April 1878 Rev. Naeole resigned, and A. O. Forbes served as Acting Principal until September.

In that month Reverend William B. Oleson became principal, marking the beginning of a new and dynamic period in HBS history. The year 1878 witnessed the first major building at HBS since repairs to the basement necessitated by an earthquake ten years earlier. A principal's house was raised, as the former principal's house continued to be the Lyman residence. At the same time, a roadway was begun connecting HBS to School Street (now Kapiolani Street), and completed in 1880. In 1883 an iron cook house and bath house costing \$515 were erected and a park was laid out. The following year a classroom and two dormitories on the south side of the school were completed at a cost of more than \$1,000. In 1886, \$1,381 was spent on the construction of a two story dining hall, which included dormitories and a tailor room, at the rear of the school. The row of palms leading from the school to what is now Haili Street was also planted in that year. Oleson initiated the practice of instruction solely in English. In 1880 he purchased a printing press to be operated by the students. Carpentry and tailoring classes were organized in 1886, with tools and sewing machines being donated to the school. In that year also, Oleson left to become the first principal of the Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu. From 1886-1890 the Reverend A. O. Burt served as principal of HBS. In 1887 Burt coordinated the construction of an Industrial Hall, effected largely through a grant by the Board of Education to the school. During Burt's administration the HBS's vocational program continued to expand, with the acquisition of another printing press, a wood-turning lathe, and a turbine wheel.

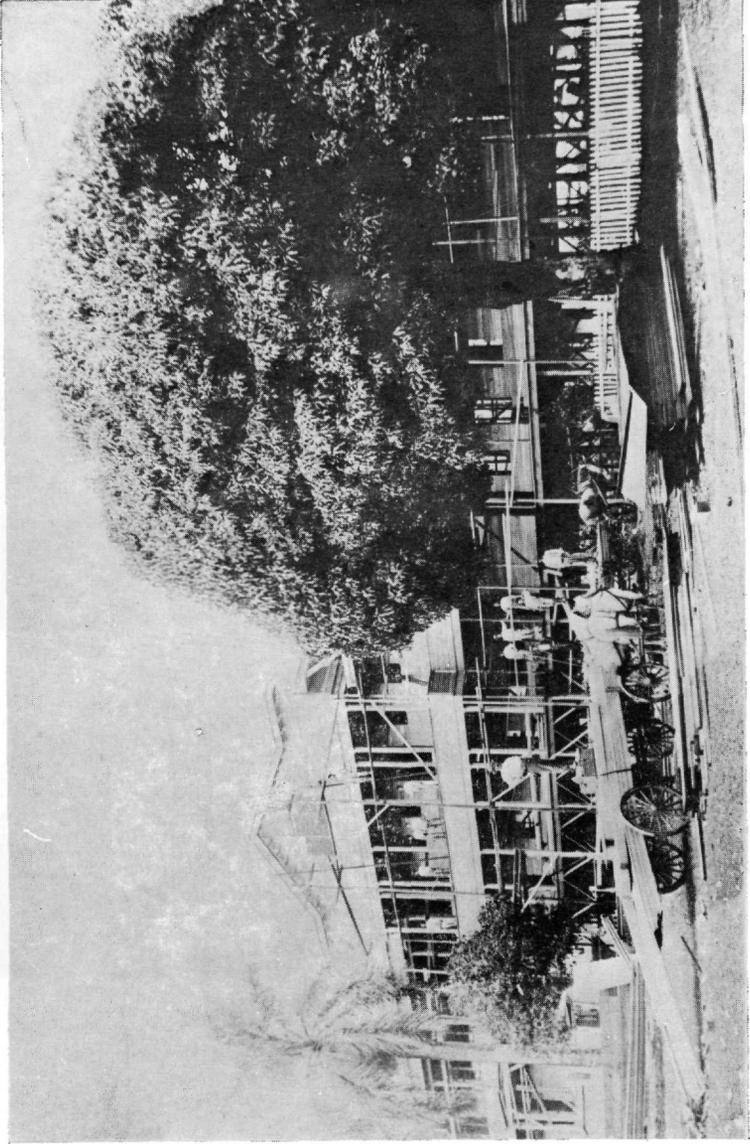
The tenures of Oleson and Burt saw much progress in HBS' development, especially in construction and in the development of the school's vocational program. Instruction in English became the norm in the classroom. The acreage of land under cultivation was extended and the income derived from the students labor was increased (\$3,500 in 1883-84).³² Yet the school continued to face numerous problems. Despite continued subsidization by the government, the HBS was forced to require a board tax of \$10 a year from its pupils in 1881. The problem of runaways and truancy, often due to parental neglect or apathy, continued to plague the school. The selective admission requirements of the HBS, which had existed even during Lyman's tenure as principal (they entailed some fluency in reading and writing and a basic knowledge of arithmetic) continued until late in the nineteenth century, contribut-

ing to the relatively low number of pupils in attendance. Probably a combination of all these problems led Elias Bond to write to Dr. Charles Wetmore in 1889, "Is it [HBS] to be an out and out wreck? . . . if reports are true it is not far from that condition now."³³

In 1890 Mrs. Cassie B. Terry was appointed principal of HBS. Four years later her husband, Willard S. Terry, joined the school as manager. During the seven years of Terry's management, HBS continued to expand its facilities despite its financial difficulties. They expanded the blacksmithing class, and the ingenious Mr. Terry even invented a wooden poi-pounding machine. In 1892 a fifteen-light dynamo was installed at HBS and, through the hydroelectric power guaranteed by the school's exclusive control over water rights, it became the first establishment in Hilo to be lighted by electricity. In 1894 a one-half ton ice plant was situated on the campus, ice being produced for both school and community use. In 1897 HBS shut down its own generator and ice plant as administrators of the school came to be major stockholders in the newly formed Hilo Electric Light Company (HELCO). HELCO came to an agreement with the board of trustees of HBS, whereby the former would provide free electricity to the school in exchange for control of the water rights in Hilo. The Terrys resigned their joint principalship in 1897. After a short interim period when Rev. R. K. Baptiste held that position, the mantle passed to the grandson of the founder, Levi C. Lyman.

IV

Levi Lyman encouraged numerous developments in the more than twenty-five years of his management of HBS. His administration spanned the American annexation of the Hawaiian Islands and the expansion of the industrial age in the United States. Hence, he was moved into a greater degree of cooperation with the U. S. government and the imitation of American educational models. Great developments in construction marked Lyman's tenure as principal. In 1899 a teacher's cottage was constructed on the north side of the school, to be followed three years later by another on the south side, in order to accommodate the small but growing faculty of the institution. In 1911 a Chinese-operated laundry facility was set up on campus to meet the boys' increased needs for clean uniforms. At a cost of more than \$5,000 a gymnasium was erected adjacent to the school in 1916. Clearly the greatest achievement of this period was the erection of a new school building in 1905. Since the turn of the century at least, plans had been made for the building of a large co-educational institution on the grounds of HBS. While financial problems slowed this particular development, the plans for a new HBS



The 1906 building of the Hilo Boarding School under construction, one month after it was begun.
Courtesy of the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society.

were ultimately carried out. The antiquated building of 1856 was removed to a location to the rear of its former site, later to be converted into a workshop. In 1905 the new two story complex was raised at a cost of \$16,682, a figure considerably lessened by the free labor of the students who helped to construct it. The basement of this wooden structure included a dining hall, toilets, and lavatories. On the first floor were six classrooms, an assembly hall, office, library, and reading room. The top floor contained a dormitory for the younger pupils, forty furnished bed-rooms for the older boys, and two teacher's quarters.

Lyman greatly encouraged the advancement of the school's vocational programs. Notable improvements and modernization of the school's dairy and printing facilities took place, along with advances in home crafts and production of poi. In 1917-18 Lyman took a leave of absence from his duties as principal, travelling all over the mainland, acquainting himself with the intricacies of the new phenomenon of the automobile. Upon his return, the enterprising principal founded an auto mechanic class at HBS.

Lyman also sought to improve the efficiency of the HBS agricultural program. Coffee cultivation had commenced on the farm in 1892. In 1897 a coffee bean drying house was established. The board of trustees of the school entered into an agreement with the U. S. Government, establishing on the grounds of the school a U. S. Agricultural Experiment Station, which involved the scientific cultivation of cocoa and bananas. In 1906 pineapple and taro cultivation were introduced on the farm. Two years later two stables for livestock were constructed. In 1908 and 1919 modern farm machinery, including a tractor and plow, were purchased.

Levi Lyman's long term as principal equalled that of his venerable grandfather; yet HBS had changed immensely since the days of the missionaries. Perhaps the most visible contrast between David Lyman's HBS and that of his grandson was in the composition of the student body. The number of students had certainly increased since those early days, yet in 1918-19 only eighty-three students attended the school,³⁴ not an especially significant increase in numbers since the 1870's. The average number of students during these years was around 100. But, more important, by 1918-19 more than one-half of the student body was of Oriental ancestry.³⁵ From the time the first Japanese students were admitted to the school in 1886, the ethnic composition of the students began to reflect the demographic changes on the island at large. The number of Japanese gradually grew, to match the Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian pupils in the school. Other groups, such as Chinese, Korean, Filipinos, and Caucasians were represented in small numbers. The

influx of Oriental immigrants produced new problems for HBS. Older immigrant boys often had to be placed with the younger native children in English language classes. Increased emphasis on religious and citizenship programs for these newcomers was necessary. The Oriental students adapted quickly. Ambitious and eager to learn, they served as models to the native Hawaiian student. The incorporation of Oriental pupils into HBS contrasted favorably, in the eyes of many observers, with the exclusive racial policies of the Kamehameha Schools in Honolulu.

Lyman and his wife had visited Hampton Institute in Virginia, the vocational school for blacks founded in 1867, based largely upon the model of HBS. Upon his return to Hilo in 1909, Lyman was eager to introduce into HBS many of the programs he had seen at Hampton. Among these were the home craft classes, which included meat-cutting, butchering, and soap making. In 1910 Lyman established a military regimen at HBS, complete with rifles, drills, and uniforms, based upon another program he had observed at Hampton.

Another of Levi Lyman's innovations was the work-scholarship program initiated in 1898. Students unable to pay the \$25 boarding fee each month (\$35 after 1904, increasing to \$50 by the time the school closed) were permitted to meet their obligations to the school through an extra hour of daily labor in the field, in addition to the usual three hours required of all students. As the vast majority of the pupils received little or no support from their parents, the work-scholarship program was vital to maintaining attendance at HBS. By substituting manual labor for mere grants to needy boys, the school not only augmented its resources but reinforced its traditional philosophy that "character, not scholarship, is the ideal aim of education."³⁶ Lyman also instituted a system of "pupil government" in 1900 which, in conjunction with the school's cosmopolitan student body, represented an infusion of a "democratic spirit"³⁷ into HBS's operations. This system included a judiciary body composed of student magistrates, who meted out penalties for violations of school regulations and military discipline. A school bank was created to accommodate the boys' savings and to provide loans for them.

The daily schedule of the boys at HBS continued to be as regimented as in the days of the founder. In 1920-21, the agenda from Monday through Saturday was as follows:³⁸

A.M.	5:20	Rising Bell
	5:35-6:25	Study Hour
	6:30	Breakfast
	7:00-8:20	Work Hour

A.M.	8:20	Dispensary
	8:40	Inspection of Rooms
	8:50-12:00	School
P.M.	12:00- 1:00	Lunch
	1:00- 4:00	Work Hour or Shop
	4:15- 5:15	Drill (Tuesdays)
	5:45	Supper
	7:15	Chapel
	7:20- 8:30	Study Hour
	8:45	Taps

On Sundays the boys were permitted to rise at 7:00 a.m. and spent most of the day in different religious activities. With the exception of the military regimen, the routine of students at HBS had remained basically unchanged since the 1840's.

One characteristic of the student body that remained uniform from the days of the missionaries was the relatively advanced age of the pupils. In early times few boys younger than seven or eight were available, and the school, heavily dependent on student farm labor, was reluctant to admit boys younger than ten or twelve.³⁹ The new students would generally spend two to four years at HBS before progressing to Lahainaluna Seminary or entering the field of teaching. This policy of the school was maintained throughout its history. Even in the last years of regular classes some pupils as old as thirty,⁴⁰ presumably non-English-speaking Orientals, attended HBS. These generally spent a longer period at the school than did their earlier counterparts, passing through grades three to eight. Very young children who boarded at the school normally attended classes at the nearby public elementary school.

In 1920 the U. S. Government published a survey of Territorial schools and among the institutions investigated was HBS. This Department of Interior survey offered valuable statistical information concerning HBS, and revealed glaring defects that led eventually to the suspension of classes in 1925. The survey noted the transformation of the racial composition in the student body. It pointed out that the majority of the pupils residing at HBS were from the rural districts of the island of Hawaii: in 1918-19, fifty of the eight-three students at the school belonged to this category. Hence, no fundamental change in the geographical origin of the student body of HBS had occurred since the school's inception.⁴¹ The report was highly laudatory of the school's curriculum.

There is a concerted attempt to build up the academic work in close connection with the industrial, making the intellectual problems grow out of the occupations of the farm, the shops, the kitchens, and the dairy.⁴²

The survey also discussed in detail the condition of the school's facilities. Much of the equipment was worn-out or obsolete, particularly that of the carpentry and blacksmithing departments. Lighting in the halls, dining room, and shops was reputedly poor, and the barn and shed were in a poor state of repair. The school's library contained several thousand volumes, but many were badly outdated. Few adequate maps were owned, and materials for the teaching of modern science and agriculture were sorely lacking. The situation of HBS was not unusual: "The school equipment, like that elsewhere in the islands, is far below the minimum of efficiency".⁴³

Another serious problem of HBS cited by the government survey was the abnormally high rate of pupils who failed or dropped out of school. In 1918-19 only fifty-one of the ninety-one students were promoted. Twenty failed and twenty more dropped out, a staggering ratio of 44.0 percent. According to the survey, ratios of failure and dropping exceeding 20 percent usually indicated "pathological conditions and call for diagnosis and treatment".⁴⁴ The report failed to elaborate on the specific causes at HBS.

A major defect mentioned by the report was the absence of an adequately trained teaching staff.⁴⁵ Of the eleven teachers of the school, only one had a B.A. and only five possessed the equivalent of a high school education. The faculty was also found wanting in sufficient teaching experience. Only two teachers possessed five years or more of instructional practice, while five of them had been on the job for less than two years.

Levi C. Lyman resigned as Principal in 1922, though he continued to serve as a trustee of the school. He was replaced by George M. Hargrave, who served through 1925.

V

By the conclusion of the 1924-25 school year, it had become obvious to the school's administration that HBS had outlived its usefulness. Levi Lyman wrote:

Owing to the fact that High Schools and Junior High Schools are now located within easy access of pupils in nearly every district of the island, the urgent necessity of an institution such as the Hilo Boarding School, seems less pronounced than in the past.⁴⁶

Immediate plans were made to limit expenses through a cutback on programs and a reduction of the faculty. Greater emphasis was to be laid upon those subjects in the curriculum that were most self-perpetuating, namely carpentry and handicrafts. The committee appointed to draft plans for the future work of HBS suggested that, of courses in non-vocational instruction, only the English classes should be retained.

It recommended dropping the non-productive blacksmithing and auto mechanics classes. The committee also urged that the school's farm be maintained at a more productive level, and that HBS embark upon a program of community social work including Bible studies, citizenship training, and athletics, for which its facilities could be readily utilized.

In 1925 Levi Lyman reassumed the principalship. In the first year after the suspension of regular classes at HBS, a new approach was taken by the school administration.⁴⁷ The boys who boarded at the school, in that year a mere twenty five, were obliged to pay a substantial \$150 board fee. However, only half of the sum was to be paid in cash, the other \$75 to be earned through daily labor in the fields. The boys were expected to work for an hour before attending classes at Hilo High School each weekday morning (although a few of the students at HBS were among those barred from attending high school), as well as two hours of farm work on three afternoons a week. An additional five hours of labor on Saturday afternoons added up to a total of sixteen hours of work per week expected from the boys. Carpentry and auto mechanic courses were offered after school, two days out of the week.

A fire in March 1927 destroyed the school's workshop, one of the oldest structures in Hilo, it having been the original 1856 school building that was moved in 1903 to accommodate the new edifice. All of HBS' machinery was lost, including the steam plant, the dairy, carpentry, and printing equipment, effectively terminating all shop classes. Several months later a swimming tank was constructed on the old cement floor of the burned building, along with a dairy, store-room, lumber room and garage. Between 1926 and 1928 most of the school facilities were turned over to the Hilo Standard English School, in return for the Territorial government assuming the burden of maintenance and upkeep of the boarding school.

Succeeding principals, G. Shannon Walker (1926-27), Villas Drago (1928-29), and Ernest A. Lilley (1929-39), continued the inevitable process of the transformation of HBS from a regular educational institution to a community center. In 1932 classes in citizenship training, maintained since 1925, were dropped. Boys continued to board at the school, in 1929 their number being about forty.⁴⁸ In fact, in 1940, under the directorship of John H. Beukama, more than \$11,000 was allocated for the renovation of HBS dormitories, at that time renamed Lyman Hall. Assorted religious and community activities continued to be held on the premises of the school, as most of its facilities, including the gymnasium, were opened to the public. After HBS was put in charge of the playground facilities in Hilo, greater emphasis was placed upon the construction of a new recreational building in a more central location.

This goal was realized in 1937 with the completion of Hilo Center, at a cost of nearly \$30,000.

Another development in these later years of HBS' history was the consolidation of its different endowments into one large benefaction, the Lyman Fund, in 1926.⁴⁹ The HBS endowment had originated with the sale of part of the school's herd of cattle in 1861 for \$2,500, the ancestor-animals having been donated to the school years before by local missionaries. This Building Fund had been increased to about \$10,000 by 1886, and to \$40,000 by 1897. Despite the expansion of the curriculum and the rebuilding of the school in 1905, the need for the school to repurchase some of its own land from the government after a legal dispute in 1914, and the incorporation of twenty-seven acres of pasture after 1916, the total endowment of HBS continued to swell through private donations, until it was nearly \$169,000 by 1935 and \$335,285 by 1943.

With the advent of World War II, the entire dormitory facilities were donated to the U.S. Army, which occupied the buildings until 1943. Thereafter, the facilities of HBS were utilized by different community groups until the final destruction of its buildings, between 1968 and 1972.

VI

In recent times the whole concept of vocational education for "inferior races" has been subject to attack. Much of this criticism is clearly due to the strong paternalism of some of the educators involved. Samuel C. Armstrong (1839-93), son of Richard Armstrong, the Minister of Public Instruction in Hawaii during the days of David B. Lyman (1847-60), went on to found Hampton Institute for Negroes in Virginia in 1867. Hampton Institute was established as a vocational school for displaced freed-men of the South after the Civil War. Armstrong admittedly drew much of his program from David Lyman's work among the Hawaiian people. Samuel Armstrong, himself Hawaii-born, believed that the Polynesian, like the Negro, suffered from a "deficiency of character"—for "in the weak, tropical race idleness, like ignorance breeds vice." He noted that "the school at Lahaina has been a warning against a too exclusively mental culture on a soft and pliant race, the one at Hilo [HBS] an illustration of an equilibrium of mental, moral and industrial force."⁵⁰

Such a condescending attitude was less apparent in the writings of Lyman and his successors, though it undoubtedly existed. The missionaries in Hawaii generally frowned upon educating their own children together with those of the natives, whom they expected to exert a corrupting influence. None of the Lyman children ever attended HBS.

Rather, they joined the rest of the offspring of the islands' *haole* elite at Punahou in Honolulu, after that school's establishment in 1841. Elias Bond, one of the noted missionaries on the island of Hawaii, praised the accomplishments of David B. Lyman, whom he characterized as "steadfast, patient, modest . . . quiet and even in his methods of discipline; thoroughly understanding the Hawaiian boy. . . ." ⁵¹ Bond justified Lyman's emphasis on vocational education:

Nothing could induce him to contribute one jot towards feeding the vanity and puffing up the infantile and chaotic mind of the Hawaiian as he then was, by imparting to him a shallow smattering of things too high for him. ⁵²

Lyman and his wife, like other missionaries, were stern disciplinarians. Accounts of their no-nonsense dealings with immorality, disobedience, and disrespect attest to this. The high number of dismissals from HBS for disciplinary reasons, from its earliest days up to its dissolution, give further proof of their attitudes.

One Anglican Bishop wrote:

The rules and regulations set by the missionaries were stern and strict and constituted burdens too great for the free and easy Hawaiians. It was the aim of these teachers to transform a Hawaiian village into the likeness of a new England town. It was, of course, an impossible task and no teaching and no laws, however rigorous, could accomplish it. ⁵³

It must be remembered however, that until its waning years, HBS was never a purely vocational institution. It offered courses to its students on "natural science", botany, geography, World and American history, algebra, physiology, grammar, and spelling. While inferior to many schools in the U. S., the curriculum at HBS was not dissimilar to that of any American junior high school in the 1920's. It should be restated as well that HBS was founded as a preparatory institution for men entering the seminary at Lahainaluna. At first greater emphasis was placed upon producing teachers and missionaries than upon molding farmers or craftsmen. Only with the closing of the seminary did the goals of HBS become reoriented to stress vocational training. In an independent nation, and later in a United States territory, where the economic levels of the common people were frightfully low, a program as offered by HBS was the most realistic. HBS, it must be noted, operated on a financial borderline throughout its entire history. Faced with diminishing mission aid and uncertain government support, the school depended increasingly upon the produce of its farms and workshops. Between 1836 and 1886 receipts from those sources totalled more than \$18,000, about one-fifth of the entire receipts of the school during that fifty year period. ⁵⁴ Thus vocational education in HBS was no longer a noble experiment, but rather a dire necessity for a financially troubled institution.

It must also be remembered that first and foremost, the Lymans were missionaries. They were sent to Hawaii in the employ of the Congregational mission, and the propagation of the gospel was always their main concern. Unlike Titus Coan, however, David Lyman preferred teaching to proselytizing. In his annual reports to the mission, he constantly commented upon the level of religious feeling among his students and their prospect for being ordained into the church.

Lyman was truly motivated by the Christian ideal. As one writer has observed of the missionaries in Hawaii: "To hear them preach, you would suppose all mankind damnable scoundrels, to see them act, you felt sure that they did not at heart feel that the human race was so bad after all."⁵⁵

Hilo Boarding School was the crowning achievement of the missionaries of Hilo. It stood originally as a testament to the propagation of the Christian faith in Hawaii, and the school's real success lay in its ability to reorient to meet the needs of the community in which it was established. Under flexible and wise leadership, programs and curriculum were molded to meet the demands of the people. Only with the advent of a public high school in Hilo (which graduated its first class in 1909) did the continuation of HBS become impractical. Despite its numerous setbacks, failures, and deficiencies, the survival of HBS was no mean accomplishment. As the Bureau of Education in Washington, D. C. remarked in 1920:

The fact is noteworthy that elementary tool work and industrious training were well started in this school by "Father Lyman" forty years before the founding in Boston, in 1878, of the first manual training school on the mainland.⁵⁶

NOTES

¹ Merze Tate, "The Sandwich Islands Missionaries Lay the Foundation for a System of Public Instruction in Hawaii", *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXX, No. 4, (Fall 1961), pp. 397-98.

² Edwin O. Hall, "Condition of Common Schools at the Sandwich Islands," *Hawaiian Spectator*, 1, No. 4 (October 1838), p. 356 and *The Reports of the Principal to the Trustees of the Hilo Boarding School: 1829-1886*. (Unpublished Collection, Lyman House Museum Library, Hilo, Hawaii), p. 14.

³ Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

⁴ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶ Milton C. George, *The Development of Hilo, Hawaii: A Modern Tropical Sugar Port* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Edwards Letter Shop, 1948), p. 20.

⁷ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸ David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 12 Nov. 1840, to R. Anderson in *Letters Pertaining to the Hilo Boarding School: 1834-89* (Unpublished letterbook, Lyman House Museum Library, Hilo, Hawaii), p. 13.

- ⁹ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- ¹³ Nettie H. Lyman, *Appendix to Notes on Hilo Boarding School* (1937), p. 38.
- ¹⁴ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- ¹⁶ David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 24 Nov. 1841, to R. Anderson in Letters, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- ¹⁷ When Kamehameha III and Kaahumanu granted land in the Punahoa district of Hilo to the A.B.C.F.M. (circa 1827), the mission received as well the water rights to an ancient man-made ditch extending from the Piionua district, several miles above the town. After its construction, the HBS depended on water from this ditch for domestic purposes and irrigation. When the original landgrant to the mission was confirmed during the Mahele (1848-9) so was the right of HBS to utilize the ditch water. After 1888 this water was used to power a turbine wheel which ran the school's shop machinery, and after 1892 a dynamo which provided electric lights in the HBS. In the 1890's these water rights were leased to the Hilo Electric Light Company (HELCO) in exchange for the guarantee that sufficient water be allowed the school for household, irrigation, and electrical purposes. However the exact quantity of water entitled to the school remained in doubt until litigation in 1917, which set the figure at 5,590,000 gallons of water daily. (See Trustees of Hilo Boarding School, A Corporation v. The Territory of Hawaii. No. 965, pp. 595-603 in *Hawaii Reports* Vol. 23,)
- ¹⁸ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.
- ²⁰ *Hilo Boarding School Scrapbook I* (Unpublished Collection, Lyman House Museum Library, Hilo, Hawaii), p. 36.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3.
- ²² Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1778-1854, I* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1938), p. 365.
- ²³ "Fire at Hilo," *The Friend* (Honolulu), 6 Dec. 1853, p. 93.
- ²⁴ Only the Lyman (Principal's) House survived the fire.
- ²⁵ Ethel M. Damon, *Lyman House Memorial* (1932), p. 20.
- ²⁶ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- ²⁹ *Catalogue of the Hilo Boarding School for boys. Hilo, Hawaii, T.H. 1920-1* (Hilo: Boarding School Press, 1920), p. 8.
- ³⁰ David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 27 Aug., 1840, to Dibble in Letters, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- ³¹ David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 22 Aug., 1877, to Ware, *Ibid.*, p. 144.
- ³² Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
- ³³ Elias Bond, Kohala, letter, 15 Nov., 1889, to C. Wetmore in Letters, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
- ³⁴ U.S., Department of the Interior, *A Survey of Education in Hawaii* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), p. 348.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*
- ³⁶ Catalogue, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

Sixty years earlier, during the administration of David B. Lyman, the daily program at HBS was as follows:

A.M.	5:00	Rising
	5:15	Prayers
	6:15	Breakfast
7:00-	8:30	Work Hour
9:00-	11:30	School
	11:30	Bath
	12:30	Lunch
1:30-	4:00	School
4:30-	5:45	Work Hour
	6:15	Supper
	7:00	Prayers
	9:00	Lights Out

(from David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 27 Aug., 1840 to S. Dibble in Letters, *op. cit.*, p. 3.)

³⁹ David B. Lyman, Hilo, letter, 15 Nov., 1840, to R. Anderson, in Letters, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁰ Catalogue, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴¹ In its early years the majority of HBS students came from outlying districts of the island. The following statistics taken for the years 1838-42 indicate this (from *Reports*, pp. 24, 27, 29, 31, 35):

	Kau	S. Kona	N. Kona	Kohala	Waimea	Hamakua	Hilo	Puna	Maui
1838 (26)	4	3	7	3	3	4	2	—	—
1839 (30)	3	3	7	3	2	7	5	—	—
1840 (57)	3	5	10	9	2	10	—(17)	—	1
1841 (50)	1	4	8	9	—	(13)	14	—	1
1842 (62)	3	7	9	11	—	10	14	7	1

⁴² Department of the Interior, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁴⁶ Lyman, *op. cit.*, p. 34. Among the junior high schools built on the island in the 1920's were the ones at Honomakau in Kohala (1920), at Konawaena, Laupahoehoe, and Honokaa in 1921, and in Hilo in 1924.

⁴⁷ Reports, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁴⁸ Benjamin O. Wist, *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Hawaii Educational Review, 1940), p. 101.

⁴⁹ *Chronological Summary of the Hilo Boarding School*, pp. 2, 4, 10, 12.

⁵⁰ Samuel C. Armstrong, "Lessons from the Hawaiian Islands," *Journal of Christian Philosophy* (N.Y.: John A. Paine, Jan. 1884), p. 213.

⁵¹ *Jubilee Notes. Hilo Boarding School: 1836-86* (1886), p. 1.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵³ Henry B. Restarick, *Hawaii 1778-1920 from the Viewpoint of a Bishop* (Honolulu: Paradise of the Pacific, 1924), p. 50.

⁵⁴ Jubilee, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁵⁵ George, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ Homer L. Ross, "The Hilo Boarding School," *The Friend* (Honolulu) July, 1923, p. 171.