

Notes & Queries

The Journal welcomes responses to previously published articles, statements on Hawaiian and Pacific history, and queries for information that will assist research. Opinions expressed here and elsewhere in the pages of the Journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or the Hawaiian Historical Society.

EARLY PRE-PRESIDENTIAL VISITS TO HAWAI‘I

The first U.S. president to visit Hawai‘i before becoming president was Herbert Hoover. In February 1899, while sailing to China on a business trip, Hoover stopped in Honolulu to visit his former Stanford University classmate, Johnny Wilson. Wilson, one of the builders of the Pali Highway and a future mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, took Hoover on a buggy ride to the Pali lookout.¹ Hoover was president from 1929 to 1933.

In April 1900, only fourteen months after Hoover’s visit, a second future president of the United States stepped ashore. This was William Howard Taft, sailing to his new post as governor of the Philippines. In 1905, as secretary of war, Taft made a second visit to Hawai‘i, this time accompanied by Theodore Roosevelt’s daughter, Alice.² Taft served as the nation’s president from 1909 to 1913.

The third future president to see the Islands was Senator-elect Warren G. Harding of Ohio, who arrived, accompanied by his wife, on February 3, 1915. During his ten-day stay, Harding addressed meetings of the Ad Club and Bar Association and a Chamber of Commerce banquet held in his honor. Ad Club President Farrington presciently introduced him as “a future president of the United States” and warmly praised Harding’s sterling character.³ Harding was inaugurated in 1921 and died in 1923.

The first U.S. president to visit the Islands while in office was Franklin D. Roosevelt, in July 1934. Roosevelt made a second visit in 1944 during World War II.⁴

Visits after leaving office were rare. One that was expected but

failed to materialize was by U. S. Grant and his wife on a postpresidential tour of the world in 1879.⁵

Only one U.S. president has actually lived in Hawai'i: Jimmy Carter, who, with his family, resided in Navy housing while serving aboard a nuclear submarine from 1948 to 1951.⁶

Past and future presidents from countries other than the United States who at one time or another lived in Hawai'i number seven: Sanford B. Dole (Hawai'i), Sun Yat-sen (China), Syngman Rhee (South Korea), Tosiwo Nakayama (Federated States of Micronesia), Lon Nol (Cambodia), Ferdinand Marcos (Philippines), and Kuniwo Nakamura (Palau).⁷

NOTES

¹ Bob Krauss, *Johnny Wilson: First Hawaiian Democrat* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1994) 67.

² Robert C. Schmitt and Ronn Ronck, *Firsts and Almost Firsts in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1995) 147-48. This source refers to Taft as "The first U.S. president to visit the Islands before he reached office," but in reality Taft was the second, after Hoover.

³ *HSB* Feb. 1, 1915: 3; *PCA* Feb. 3, 1915: 7; *PCA* Feb. 4, 1915: 6, 7; *PCA* Feb. 13, 1915: 1; *HSB* Feb. 13, 1915: 5.

⁴ *HAA* 1935: 39-43; *HSB* June 20, 1960: 7.

⁵ Philip R. Moran, ed., *Ulysses S. Grant 1822-1885 Chronology—Documents—Bibliographical Aids* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, 1968); letter, minister of interior to W. H. Dimond, Feb. 18, 1879, AH; A. P. Taylor, "General Grant Never Visited Honolulu," *HA* June 21, 1929, ed. p.

⁶ Schmitt and Ronck, *Firsts* 147.

⁷ Robert C. Schmitt, "Hawai'i, Residence of Presidents," *HJH* 31 (1997); *HSB* Oct. 27, 1995: A-14. This list of presidents given in the *HJH* article omitted Kuniwo Nakamura, not yet elected when the article was drafted.

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