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## “O That My Mouth Might Be Opened”: Missionaries, Gender, and Language in Early 19th-Century Hawai‘i

“O THAT MY MOUTH might be opened, and my tongue loosed, that I may be able to communicate readily, and with plain[n]ess to the understanding of the people. I long for ready utterance.”<sup>1</sup> Like lines from a psalm, these words written in Honolulu by Andelucia Lee Conde in 1838 symbolize the yearnings and frustrations of the missionary women, who, having been sent to Hawai‘i by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, found it difficult to acquire a working knowledge of the native language. In her monograph, *Paths of Duty*, Patricia Grimshaw argued that American missionary women in the Sandwich Islands failed to take on an active public role in the mission because nineteenth-century American middle-class notions about a gendered division of labor kept women in the home.<sup>2</sup> However, she fails to consider that the construction of gender roles impeded the women of the mission in their acquisition of the Hawaiian language, thus making problematic their active role in the evangelical process. This paper will examine the difficulties and gendered nature of language acquisition by members of the American mission in Hawai‘i in the early nineteenth century.

The first company of missionaries that landed in Hawai‘i in 1820

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believed undoubtedly that their own English language was superior to that of the islanders' whom they had come to elevate to a "state of Christian civilization."<sup>3</sup> For example, the ethnocentrism of Maria Patton showed clearly, when, in 1828, she wrote, "My ears were stunned with the noise of their tongues, and my eyes were disgusted with the sight of their degradation."<sup>4</sup> However, their situation compelled the members of the mission to learn the local vernacular in order to proselytize: certainly, the Hawaiians were not going to be conversing in English any time soon. Additionally, they needed to learn the native tongue in order to influence the Hawaiian chiefs, known as *ali'i nui*.<sup>5</sup> Before their arrival, the only acquaintance the members of the pioneer company had with the native language was through the three Hawaiian youths who accompanied them aboard the brig *Thaddeus* to the islands. Yet, the Americans spent little, if any, time investigating the native tongue during their long journey. Once they arrived in Hawai'i, the missionaries faced the daunting task of learning a new language, creating a written grammar and orthography, and, eventually, translating the Bible into Hawaiian.

Their education before their departure had some bearing on the missionaries' ability to acquire the native language once they arrived in Hawai'i. For the most part, both the men and women who had been sent to Hawai'i had received more schooling than the average New Englander. The male evangelists had trained at colleges such as Princeton, Yale, and Bowdoin, and at theological schools such as Lane Seminary in Ohio and Union Theological Seminary in New York. The women of the mission had been schooled at female seminaries and select schools. For example, Mary Kitteridge Clark attended Pembroke Academy in Massachusetts, Fidelia Church Coan studied at Middlebury Female Seminary in Vermont, and Maria and Lucia Smith graduated from the Clinton Female Seminary in New York. Despite the fact that each had high levels of schooling, the male and female missionaries had received different kinds of education based on white Protestant middle-class notions about the appropriate sphere of learning for each sex. Because women were excluded from male professions such as the law, medicine, and the clergy, those who attended female academies did not usually receive instruction in foreign languages.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, men's colleges and seminaries trained their students in Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Although these bore little resem-

blance to Hawaiian, their instruction in these languages gave the male members of the mission a familiarity with the study of foreign grammar and orthography that their female counterparts mostly lacked.<sup>7</sup>

The evangelists who arrived in the first decade of the mission encountered the greatest difficulties in acquiring the native language. While, over the years, a number of white sailors and merchants had taken up residence among the Hawaiians, only a small number of people on the several different islands of the chain spoke any degree of English. In addition, those foreigners who did live at the islands were generally hostile toward the missionaries.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the members of the white trading community actually stopped the American mission from sending some of their numbers to Tahiti in 1821, preventing them from obtaining help with the language from the members of the London Missionary Society. Consequently, the evangelists faced the task of learning Hawaiian without the aid of those who were best in a position to help them.<sup>9</sup>

The cultural ideals of the evangelists also had an effect on the gendered nature of language acquisition. At the turn of the 19th century, there existed a direct relationship between the egalitarian democracy of men and the deferential behavior of women in the United States. Especially in the north, women's deference became the moral base on which she would raise her sons and discipline her husband to become virtuous and patriotic citizens. Thus, women became moral leaders within their own domestic sphere, while men exercised leadership in the public realm. The ABCFM missionaries brought this ideology with them to Hawai'i. The men of the group served as leaders of the mission. Perhaps less equal than the Republican men of their homeland, the clergymen among them had the greatest influence. For the women of the mission, these beliefs limited their participation in both the administration of their evangelical enterprise and the work on the native tongue. These ideals meant that women's individual talents for either management or the study of foreign languages had little importance outside of their own homes.<sup>10</sup>

The work of transforming Hawaiian from an oral to a written language consequently fell to the male missionaries. Their training in foreign languages and their leadership role in the mission once again gave the men an advantage over their female counterparts in learning the tongue that would prove crucial to their success as evangelists.

The men of the first company spent much of their time developing a written orthography, deciding which letters of the Roman alphabet to include in the Hawaiian alphabet and working on a written grammar. While the female members of the company also spent time studying the native tongue, the missionaries' beliefs that the women played a secondary role in their enterprise kept them from participating in this important work. Later, after they had created a written orthography and grammar, the men translated the books of the Bible into Hawaiian, wrote Hawaiian/English dictionaries, and served as translators to the *ali'i nui* and foreign visitors. The women of the mission were left out of all of these endeavors, thus making their acquisition of the native language more difficult.<sup>11</sup>

Despite their work, the male evangelists initially saw limited success in gaining a basic understanding of Hawaiian. In January 1822, they printed their first sheets of paper in the vernacular of the islands. Nevertheless, this did not mean that the clergymen could efficiently employ the native tongue. For example, more than two years after his arrival in the Sandwich Islands, the Reverend Hiram Bingham found that he could do little more than preach "short petitions, confessions, and ascriptions of praise and adoration" in Hawaiian.<sup>12</sup> Almost two years later, in May 1824, an American trader living in the islands by the name of Stephen Reynolds reported that a native told him that "Mr Bingham spoke so that she could not understand more than half [he] said. . . ."<sup>13</sup> Undoubtedly, their lack of fluency meant that most of the clergymen's efforts at preaching proved ineffective in conveying their message of salvation to the islanders. In that sense, they had not accomplished much more than their wives had.<sup>14</sup>

In the spring of 1822, a delegation from the London Missionary Society in Tahiti arrived, greatly aiding American missionaries' efforts to learn Hawaiian. The Reverend William Ellis and his two Tahitian helpers found the Tahitian and Hawaiian languages so similar that they had little trouble learning the latter tongue. Because the Protestant ministers in Hawai'i had problems with both the foreign merchants and the native vernacular, two members of the English delegation, the Reverend Daniel Tyerman and George Bennett, suggested that Ellis and his wife Mercy remain in the Sandwich Islands and join their fellow clergymen in their missionary endeavors. The American missionaries credited William Ellis with providing crucial assistance

in their efforts with the native language. Before the Ellis's left for England in September 1824, the minister aided them in constructing a Hawaiian grammar and served as a translator. Significantly, the members of the Sandwich Island mission did not mention whether Mercy Ellis—who had worked for eight years in Tahiti with her husband, and probably could understand Hawaiian—had any part in helping them learn the language.<sup>15</sup>

Even with the assistance of William Ellis, both the men and women of the mission experienced frustration as they worked to acquire a basic knowledge of Hawaiian. For example, two members of the first company of reinforcements, the Reverend William Richards and his wife Clarissa, experienced such difficulties. In 1823, the mission assigned the two to man a station alone at Lahaina, Maui, just three short months after their arrival at the islands. Everyday tasks such as finding a proper home and food acquisition and preparation kept both from close study of the language.<sup>16</sup> Mrs. Richards lamented that "it is far the severest affliction I have experienced since my residence here to be unable to converse with those by whom I am surrounded on subjects of the deepest moment."<sup>17</sup> The Reverend complained that he "ought to spend considerable time every day in attending to the languages."<sup>18</sup> Instead, daily chores meant his only chance of improvement came when he wrote his weekly sermons in Hawaiian. In addition, he found that it was "no small thing to acquire a knowledge of a strange language so as to speak it fluently."<sup>19</sup> He sat at his "barrel" and wrote short sermons that were "perfectly intelligible," yet when he heard the Sandwich Islanders speak he understood little of what they said.<sup>20</sup> Yet, Richards appreciated the advantages he had over the pioneer company of missionaries. He commented, "the work accomplished by [the first missionaries] has been a great one; for they as it were, formed the language. They only had materials in a rude state, while we have a little spelling-book and twenty hymns. . . ." <sup>21</sup> The Richardses may have had these advantages, but they were not enough to allow them to run their mission station successfully. At the end of January 1824, they returned to Honolulu because their "faculties for acquiring the language will be greater there than here."<sup>22</sup> Clarissa Richards knew they had made the right decision because when they returned to their station they would be "better qualified for usefulness [sic] among the people of our own charge."<sup>23</sup>

Back in Honolulu, the evangelists tried several approaches in their efforts to learn Hawaiian. On several occasions, various missionaries asked members of the *aliʻi nui* to instruct them.<sup>24</sup> They also formed an evening school where they made attempts at composition.<sup>25</sup> One of the best ways the eager missionaries facilitated their own learning was through teaching the islanders how to read and write Hawaiian. Still, it was not until two years after their arrival that the male members of the first company of missionaries began to preach in Hawaiian.<sup>26</sup> Another member of the pioneer group, Mercy Partridge Whitney, accurately summed up the disadvantages faced by those who arrived in the early years of the mission when she commented that later reinforcements had “the benefit of a vocabulary containing a large collection of words; & particularly a grammar, which is of essential aid to them in constructing sentences, & in getting a fundamental knowledge of the language. . . .”<sup>27</sup>

Eventually all of the missionaries who stayed on at the islands became, at the very least, proficient and often fluent in the native tongue. Yet, the amount of time it took the evangelists to learn Hawaiian and the degree to which they obtained a fluency varied according to individual talent and the sex of the would be speaker. The female members of the mission generally took longer than their male counterparts to acquire a working knowledge of the vernacular because they spent considerably less time with the Sandwich Islanders and because all of the evangelists believed that it was more important that the men of the mission be able to speak and understand the language.

The female missionaries expressed an intense yearning to become proficient in Hawaiian and take part in evangelizing the natives. These young women had left their New England homes because missionary work was one of the few acceptable outlets for their youthful energies and enthusiasms.<sup>28</sup> Like Andelucia Conde, they craved “ready utterance” because only through acquisition of the local tongue could they fulfill their longings to engage in useful work and discharge their duty to god. For example, Mary Ann Tenney Chapin wrote that she was “very desirous of acquiring the language, that I may not only converse with them as I meet them from day to day; but that I may make myself more extensively useful to them.”<sup>29</sup> Clarissa Richards lamented, “I do long to be able to speak to them on the coming of eternity and direct

their erring feet in the path of heaven.”<sup>30</sup> Another evangelist, Juliette Montague Cooke declared, “I can but wish that I had 12 tongues all fitted by this language to tell the news of redeeming love—[.]”<sup>31</sup> Finally, Maria Patton, one of the few single women sent by the American Board, declared “O how I long to have my mouth opened, that I may in their own tongue declare the wonderful works of God.”<sup>32</sup>

However, ready utterance did not always come easily to these women, or to the other female missionaries. As pious, middle-class New Englanders, the missionary women had grown up believing that a woman’s sphere of influence was in the home.<sup>33</sup> First and foremost, it was their duty to create, to the best of their ability, a household modeled on those they had left in United States. In so doing, they would create a proper domicile in which to meet the needs of their husbands and children. At the same time, their efforts served as examples of Christian domesticity to the Hawaiians whom they wished to civilize as well as convert.<sup>34</sup>

Unfortunately, the ladies’ domestic efforts proved so time-consuming in the alien and tropical environment of the islands that they interfered with their efforts to learn Hawaiian, which prevented them from fulfilling their duty to evangelize the Sandwich Islanders.<sup>35</sup> For example, Maria Patton—who married the mission’s secular agent, Levi Chamberlain, five months after her arrival—found herself so constantly preoccupied with domestic duties that she struggled to find even a moment of time to study. Although she had applied a fair amount of effort to learning Hawaiian before her marriage, after trying to pray and sing at a meeting for native women, she declared that she “was never so embaressed [sic] in my life. [I] felt grieved & ashamed that I had no better knowledge of the language after dwelling two years on missionary grounds & resolved that I would labour harder than ever to get a knowledge of the language—[.]”<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Andelucia Conde wrote, “Find many obstacles to obtaining a knowledge of the language.”<sup>37</sup> She feared she would never be able to do “much good among this poor people” because her “health and circumstances, have prevented any close application to study. . . .”<sup>38</sup>

For one missionary wife, the study of the Hawaiian language brought pleasure, while her lack of understanding caused frustration and a sense of isolation. A member of the eighth company, which



arrived in Hawai'i in 1837, Juliette Montague Cooke had the advantage of being able to study the native tongue while on board the barque that conveyed her to the islands. Of her initial efforts, the former school teacher observed that "This study always gives me pleasure, not only in account of its connexion [sic] with duty, but because it is in itself pleasing. . . ." <sup>39</sup> However, after arriving at O'ahu, she experienced frustration rather than satisfaction when she found that her Hawaiian pupils "talked so fast that I could understand but a very little of what they said—[.]" <sup>40</sup> A month later, she complained, "It seems when I talk in native as if it did not mean half as much as when I talk in English." <sup>41</sup> Furthermore, her lack of understanding of the native language and her inability to communicate left her feeling isolated. After returning from one of the few church services that the ministers preached in English, Cooke passionately declared, "Oh it is a privilege that I can occasionally hear a word from the desk in my *native* tongue. I feel it to be so." <sup>42</sup>

Other missionary women also found that their inability to understand Hawaiian left them isolated and lonely. Many, like Cooke, missed hearing church services in English. Mary Ann Chapin confessed that "I have at times felt the loss much of many precious privileges I enjoyed. While at Kauai, nearly three months, I did not hear one sermon I could understand. When my health would admit of my going to church the preaching was altogether in native there." <sup>43</sup> Others felt lonely. <sup>44</sup> Many missionary couples were stationed on the outer islands. Often they were alone in the field. Generally, male evangelists toured the villages within their territories for weeks at a time. Consequently, when women could not speak Hawaiian it meant they were completely isolated from the outside world. For example, Andelucia Conde and her husband, Daniel, were stationed at the remote village of Hāna on the island of Maui. In 1837 and 1838, the isolated young woman, who found so "many obstacles to obtaining the language" lamented, "but alas! They are a strange people, and little society for us—a poor substitute indeed, for the dear circle we have left in our beloved native land." <sup>45</sup> Conde even found that her failure to learn Hawaiian interfered with her domestic duties. She complained that her patience was "at times much tried with ignorant domesticks [sic]" and she felt "much the need of a better knowledge of the language, that I may be able to instruct and tell them the rea-



son of things.”<sup>46</sup> She continued, “I find myself as yet hardly able to give off the orders necessary, and therefore have to work more myself. . . .”<sup>47</sup> No doubt, the other American women felt frustrated in their inability to communicate with their Hawaiian servants.

Their lengths of stay in the Sandwich Islands also had a bearing on the women’s acquisition of the language. Andelucia Lee Conde wrote the above comments during the first year of her sojourn in Hawai‘i. Mrs Conde arrived in Hawai‘i in the spring of 1837 and lived on the island of Maui until her death in 1855. Undoubtedly, she at least became proficient in the language during her 18 years in the islands, especially considering that she spent ten of those years isolated from much of white society in the remote location of Hāna. Similarly, Juliette Montague Cooke expressed her frustrations at learning the native vernacular in 1837, during her first years in Hawai‘i. Nevertheless, Cooke had a knack for languages and she remained in Honolulu until her death in 1896. In all likelihood, she became fluent in the native tongue. On the other hand, Mary Ann Tenney Chapin arrived in the islands in 1832 and left three short years later in 1835. Clearly, she did not have much time to master the language.<sup>48</sup>

The health of female evangelists also had an impact on their ability to learn Hawaiian. For example, Mary Ann Chapin left the Sandwich Islands so soon because she had spent most of her time bedridden. Under such circumstances, she could fulfill neither her evangelical duties nor progress much in learning the language, although she did draw pictures that her husband engraved for use in the mission schools. The isolation of many of the women on remote mission stations may have contributed to their illnesses. For instance, as previously noted, in 1837, Andelucia had commented that infirmity had prevented her from studying.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps, her loneliness at the remote Hāna station played a role in her sickness. On the other hand, Abigail Willis Tenney Smith—who lived in Honolulu—was desperately ill. She often spent months, and at times, years, restricted to her bed. Smith had arrived in Hawai‘i with her husband Lowell in May 1833 as part of the sixth company. By July, she had come down with an unknown sickness that would plague her for years. In October 1836, her husband reported “Abba has been ill for nearly three years, though able to do more or less. There is very little prospect that she will ever enjoy

firm health again, while she resides at these Islands.”<sup>50</sup> Undoubtedly, Smith’s long years of illness affected her ability to study and communicate in Hawaiian. In 1856, she taught native children in the English language, before the Hawaiian government had made it mandatory to do so. She may have done this because she lacked fluency in the Hawaiian language. Finally, some women succumbed to illness before they could become skillful in the native tongue. For example, Emily Hoyt Ballard Dole died in 1844, three years after her arrival. Similarly, Louisa Clark Munn passed away in 1841, four years after coming to the islands.<sup>51</sup>

Excessive domestic work proved the greatest obstacle to the female missionaries’ efforts to learn the native vernacular. As Patricia Grimshaw has pointed out, in the alien environment of Hawai‘i, the American evangelists clung to the cultural forms of their northern homeland. Therefore, the women’s domestic labor provided both a sense of identity for the evangelists and a model of what they considered appropriate gender roles for the natives. The ladies of the mission felt compelled to replicate their New England homes in the Sandwich Islands. This required an immense amount of work considering that the climate and the material culture of Hawai‘i differed greatly from that found in their places of birth. Once the missionary women began having children, their problems were compounded. They had to raise their offspring according to the values of white Protestant middle-class New England. This meant protecting their progeny from the islanders, who they believed endangered their children’s souls with their open sexuality and less than delicate behavior. Since most of the female evangelists began having babies within two years of their arrival in Hawai‘i, they soon found that they devoted so many of their hours to domestic duties and raising their children that they could allocate little time to the study of the local vernacular. Their focus on domesticity also meant that they spent less time with the Hawaiians, thus missing a perfect opportunity to learn the language through immersion. Consequently, their focus on domesticity slowed their acquisition of the language skills necessary to fulfill their evangelical roles.<sup>52</sup>

Despite knowing—as one missionary wife pointed out—that their acquisition of Hawaiian was the “key to the heart of the people,” these would be evangelists also understood that the members of the mission,

the American Board, and they themselves believed it more important for their husbands to obtain a knowledge of the language.<sup>53</sup> In the socially constructed gendered spheres of 19th-century New England, men shouldered the responsibilities of public leadership.<sup>54</sup> This was doubly true in the alien environment of the Sandwich Islands. Therefore, it became paramount that the men of the mission quickly acquire knowledge of the language in order to influence the chiefs and proselytize to the natives. The women of the mission internalized their society's belief that their sex made their need to communicate with the Hawaiians less important than their husbands'. Instead, through their role as Christian examples of domestic and maternal virtue they would fulfill their duty to convert the Sandwich Islanders.<sup>55</sup> Hence, the women of the mission often noted their husbands' efforts and rejoiced when they made progress learning Hawaiian. For example, in February 1824, ten months after they had arrived in Hawai'i, Clarissa Lyman Richards proudly pointed out that "Mr. R[ichards] attempted a letter to Kramoku in the native language. . . ." Similarly, Andelucia Conde exclaimed, "Rejoice that my Husband with all his obstacles has obtained a sufficient knowledge to be able to preach in native."<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, Juliette Cooke worried because her husband, Amos Starr Cooke, did not have the "ear for sounds that she" did.<sup>57</sup> Juliette had studied a great deal on the long voyage to Hawai'i and had talent for languages, whereas Amos did not.<sup>58</sup> Although her husband claimed that it was a "privilege which few enjoy, to have a wife able to instruct them[.]" this role reversal contrasted with the control and dominance the other men had over their wives with regard to the native vernacular.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, shortly after their arrival at the islands, Juliette Cooke exulted, "Mr. C. says that he understood more today than he ever did before—[.] Thank God for it."<sup>60</sup> Two weeks later, she happily proclaimed, "I do not know that I desire anything more strongly than that my dear husband become acquainted with this language. I have been praying to God that he would help him. . . ." <sup>61</sup>

Male missionaries were less passionately expressive of their longing to learn Hawaiian, but their desire to speak the native tongue was equal to that of their female counterparts. In general, they learned the language faster than their wives did because they spent so much time preaching in the field surrounded by Hawaiians.<sup>62</sup> The mental

and emotional support they received from their spouses and the others in the mission, no doubt, was also a great help. For the most part, the men began to preach and/or teach anywhere from several months to two years after their arrival. Later arrivals tended to begin preaching and teaching in the vernacular much sooner than did earlier ones.<sup>63</sup>

Many of the men became fluent in the Hawaiian language. Peter J. Gulick, member of the third company, wrote in his autobiography that the pioneer missionary, Asa Thurston, "spoke the Hawaiian language so perfectly, that if he was not seen, when speaking, it would have naturally been supposed that you were listening to a native."<sup>64</sup> Another minister, Lorenzo Lyons, had been in the islands but a short time when he observed that he "thought in Hawaiian" more often than in his own language.<sup>65</sup> In an oral history interview, Sam Wilcox, son of the missionary Abner Wilcox, stated that the "Hawaiians told me that my father spoke excellent Hawaiian, much more idiomatic and understandable than Mr. Johnson's Hawaiian."<sup>66</sup> Hagiographic accounts often emphasized how well specific male missionaries spoke Hawaiian.<sup>67</sup>

Unlike their female counterparts, the men of the mission found that acquisition of the native tongue proved crucial to their success at the islands. They needed to have a basic understanding of the language in order to communicate effectively with Hawaiian political leaders and to preach the gospel. Male evangelists often lamented their inability to communicate with the natives. After encountering some Hawaiians on a journey across O'ahu, Levi Chamberlain commented that the "interview was pleasant; but it would have been much more so if we had been able to converse with them, and to have discoursed respecting that Savior who came to seek and to save that which was lost. . . ."<sup>68</sup> Ministers desired to have a proficient knowledge of Hawaiian in order to more effectively convey their sermons. After preaching for the first time in the native language, Peter J. Gulick was "grieved that I felt so little the spirit of my texts, & from ignorance of Hawaiian was obliged to read my discourse."<sup>69</sup> Chamberlain and Gulick could excuse their lack of knowledge of Hawaiian to the newness of their situation. In the end, however, not a single male missionary could afford to have a cursory knowledge of the language.

Like Amos Starr Cooke, some male evangelists experienced unusual difficulty in learning Hawaiian. According to Peter Gulick, Reuben Tinker was "peculiarly sensitive; & this prevented him from getting intimate with the natives, & becoming deeply interested in them, & familiar with their language. Hence, after 10 years, he returned to the U.S. . . ." <sup>70</sup> Whether this was the case or not, it is clear that in this instance a male member failed to function successfully in the mission, at least in part, because after ten years in the islands, he had yet to obtain an adequate command of the Hawaiian tongue. Another male missionary, the Reverend Isaac Bliss, also had trouble with the native vernacular. Commenting on the ministers' predicament, Lucy Hart Wilcox wrote to Lucia Smith Lyons, "Why is Bro. Bliss discouraged in learning the language? Cannot he persevere longer than this?" <sup>71</sup> Wilcox wrote this a year after Bliss's arrival. Two years later, Bliss and his wife, Emily Curtis Bliss, returned to the United States. Although it is clear that Bliss left the mission after being criticized several times for wife abuse, his problems in learning the language may have contributed to his obvious frustrations. <sup>72</sup> The members of the mission acknowledged that it was more important for the men to learn Hawaiian: this proved to be an advantage and a disadvantage. Although the men received much more support and encouragement in their efforts to learn the indigenous language, they also had substantially more pressure on them to become fluent in a completely unfamiliar tongue. The women could continue at the islands and fulfill their roles as missionaries whether or not they acquired a firm grasp of the local vernacular.

In contrast, the case of Miss Lydia Brown demonstrates that the mission did not hold men and women to the same requirements in language competency. An unmarried woman in her fifties, Brown arrived in Honolulu in June 1835 as a member of the seventh company of missionaries. <sup>73</sup> She was stationed at Wailuku, Maui, where the Reverend Jonathan Smith Green had worked since 1832. In April 1836, almost a year after she took up her residence, Green complained to Rufus Anderson of the ABCFM that "she *will* not *try* to learn the language. . . ." <sup>74</sup> Seven months later, the minister frankly declared, "she declines learning the language of the islands . . . I say this not by way of fault finding but to show you that we cannot at all depend

upon Miss Brown.”<sup>75</sup> Although he made it clear that Brown was not equipped to work at their school for Hawaiian girls, he admitted that “We value her in her department and I think she is, and will be useful.”<sup>76</sup> Green alluded to Brown’s usefulness as a domestic laborer for the members of the mission. Thus, their work within the home shielded women like Lydia Brown who could or would not learn Hawaiian, while men like Reuben Tinker found themselves denigrated and dismissed for similar failures.

While the women of the mission did not feel the same pressures to learn Hawaiian, it was important to the majority of them. Quite simply, it made their lives and their work easier. An understanding of the local tongue meant they could enjoy their husbands’ sermons, communicate with their servants, and teach and pray with the Sandwich Islanders. Perhaps most importantly, their acquisition of the language made them feel less isolated in the alien environment of Hawai’i. Consequently, in order to function successfully at the islands, each female evangelist needed, at the very least, a basic knowledge of Hawaiian. Undoubtedly, all of the women who remained at the islands eventually achieved this minimum standard and many more became fluent in the native tongue. Some like Betsey Curtis Lyons mastered the Hawaiian language in a “remarkably short time.”<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, the construction of gender roles that the evangelists brought with them to the islands kept the women of the mission from readily acquiring knowledge of the Hawaiian language. This made their active role in the evangelical process problematic and left many female missionaries “long[ing] for ready utterance.”<sup>78</sup>

## NOTES

Unpublished primary sources are located at the Hawaiian Mission Children’s Society Library (HMCS) in Honolulu, Hawai’i, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>1</sup> Andelucia Lee Conde, “Journal,” June 3, 1838, HMCS.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Char Miller, *Selected Writings of Hiram Bingham*, 1814–1869 (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 132–33.

<sup>4</sup> Maria Patton Chamberlain, “Journal,” March 31, 1828, HMCS. See also, Lucia R. Holman, *Journal of Lucia Ruggles Holman* (Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1931) 20–32.

- <sup>5</sup> Orramel Hinckley Gulick, *The Pilgrims of Hawaii: Their Own Story of Their Pilgrimage from New England and Life Work in the Sandwich Islands, Now Known as Hawaii* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918) 32.
- <sup>6</sup> Charlotte Close Knapp proved an exception to this rule. On their voyage to Hawai'i, Juliette Montague Cooke noted that, unlike the other women, Knapp understood Latin and Greek. Juliette Montague Cooke to Charles Cooke, March 28, 1837, in Mary Atherton Richards, *Amos Starr Cooke and Juliette Montague Cooke: Their Autobiographies Gleaned from their Journals and Letters* (Honolulu: The Daughters of Hawaii, 1987) 108.
- <sup>7</sup> Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty* 7, 9–10, 16. Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1980) 210–221. Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Women's Sphere' in New England, 1780–1835* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977) 118.
- <sup>8</sup> Rufus Anderson, *History of the Sandwich Island Mission* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1870) 21–22. Mercy Partridge Whitney, "Journal," December 10, 1829, HMCS. Lucy G. Thurston, *Life and Times of Lucy G. Thurston* (Ann Arbor: S.C. Andrews, 1882) 232–235.
- <sup>9</sup> Samuel Whitney and Samuel Ruggles to Samuel Worcester, October 14, 1820, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS. Bingham, Ruggles, Whitney to S. Worcester, October 11, 1821, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS. Maria Sartwell Loomis, "Journal," July 25, 1821, HMCS. Hiram Bingham, Daniel Chamberlain, Asa Thurston, Elisha Loomis to Prudential Committee, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, November 25, 1821, HMCS.
- <sup>10</sup> Kerber, *Women of the Republic* 285. At their annual General Meetings, clergymen had one vote, male assistants had half a vote, and women had no vote whatsoever.
- <sup>11</sup> Bingham, Thurston, Ruggles, Chamberlain, and Loomis to Samuel Worcester, July 6, 1821, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS. Bingham, Chamberlain, Thurston, Loomis to Prudential Committee, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, November 25, 1821, HMCS. William Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis: A Narrative of a Tour through Hawaii in 1823* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd., 1917) 351. William Richards to Rufus Anderson, March 1, 1825, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS. Juliette Montague Cooke, "Journal," March 23, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>12</sup> Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1981) 163.
- <sup>13</sup> Stephen Reynolds, "Journal," May 30, 1824, in Pauline King, ed., *Journals of Stephen Reynolds* (Salem, Massachusetts: The Peabody Museum of Salem, 1989) 31–32.
- <sup>14</sup> Bingham, *A Residence* 156.
- <sup>15</sup> Rev. Daniel Tyerman and George Bennett, Esq. of the LMS to ABCFM, August 9, 1822, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS. Ellis, *Journal* 7, 346.
- <sup>16</sup> Anderson, *History* 34.
- <sup>17</sup> Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," March 18, 1824, HMCS.
- <sup>18</sup> William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS.



- 19 William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS.
- 20 William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS.
- 21 William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS.
- 22 Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," January 30, 1824, HMCS.
- 23 Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," January 30, 1824, HMCS.
- 24 Levi Chamberlain, "Journal," July 17, 1823, HMCS.
- 25 Chamberlain, "Journal," September 15, 1823, HMCS.
- 26 William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS.
- 27 Mercy Partridge Whitney, "Journal," November 30, 1823, HMCS.
- 28 Dr. Henry Lyman, *Hawaiian Yesterdays: Chapters from a Boy's Life in the Early Days*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1906) 2-3.
- 29 Mary Ann Tenney Chapin, "Journal," May 28, 1832, HMCS.
- 30 Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," February 7, 1824, HMCS.
- 31 Juliette Montague Cooke, "Journal," July 17, 1837, HMCS.
- 32 Maria Patton Chamberlain, "Journal," March 31, 1828, HMCS.
- 33 Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty* 100-127. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" *American Quarterly* 18 Summer 1966 151-74. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood* 63-100.
- 34 Anderson, *History* 24, 33-34. Thurston, *Life and Times* 120-123. Sarah Joiner Lyman, *The Lymans of Hilo: A Fascinating Account of Life in 19th Century Hawaii* (Hilo: Lyman House Memorial Museum, 1979) 112-113. Oliver Pomeroy Emerson, *Pioneer Days in Hawaii* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1928) 72-73.
- 35 Mercy Partridge Whitney, "Journal," July 23, 1825, HMCS.
- 36 Whitney, "Journal," March 5, 1830, HMCS.
- 37 Conde, "Journal," September 3, 1837, HMCS.
- 38 Conde, "Journal," September 3, 1837, HMCS.
- 39 Juliette Montague Cooke, "Journal," February 26, 1837, HMCS.
- 40 Cooke, "Journal," June 12, 1837, HMCS.
- 41 Cooke, "Journal," July 1837, HMCS.
- 42 Cooke, "Journal," June 26, 1837, HMCS.
- 43 Chapin, "Journal," October 3, 1832, HMCS. Generally, the male evangelists only preached in English during the General Meeting of the Mission that met once a year on the island of O'ahu. Many of the women missed even this chance to hear services in their own language: those who lived at stations outside of O'ahu often chose not to attend because of the hardships involved in traveling on inter-island schooners.
- 44 Titus Coan, *Life in Hawaii: An Autobiographic Sketch of Mission Life and Labors, 1835-1881* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Company, 1882) 110-14. Mary Dillingham Frear, *Lowell and Abigail: A Realistic Idyll* (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1934) 78-80.
- 45 Conde, "Journal," September 3, 1837, March 17, 1838, HMCS.
- 46 Conde, "Journal," August 20, 1837, HMCS.
- 47 Conde, "Journal," August 20, 1837, HMCS.

- <sup>48</sup> Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, *Missionary Album, Sesquicentennial Edition, 1820-1970* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 1969) 72-75, 66-67.
- <sup>49</sup> Conde, "Journal," September 3, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>50</sup> Lowell Smith, October 2, 1836, in Frear, *Lowell and Abigail* 108.
- <sup>51</sup> Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, *Missionary Album*, 66-67, 85, 149. Frear, *Lowell and Abigail*, 80, 96, 108, 180-181, 189, 194, 217-219.
- <sup>52</sup> Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty*, 150-153. Jennifer Fish Kashay, "Problems in Paradise: The Perils of Missionary Parenting in Early Nineteenth-Century Hawaii," *Journal of Presbyterian History* Summer 1999.
- <sup>53</sup> Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," March 18, 1824, HMCS.
- <sup>54</sup> Kerber, *Women of the Republic* 285.
- <sup>55</sup> Anderson, *History* 24, 33-34.
- <sup>56</sup> Conde, "Journal," September 3, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>57</sup> Amos Cooke to Charles Montague, October 7, 1837, in Richards, *Amos Starr Cooke and Juliette Montague Cooke* 134.
- <sup>58</sup> Juliette Montague Cooke, "Journal," February 18, 1837, February 26, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>59</sup> Amos Cooke, December 1837, in Richards, *Amos Starr Cooke and Juliette Montague Cooke* 138.
- <sup>60</sup> Juliette Montague Cooke, "Journal," October 1, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>61</sup> Juliette Montague Cooke, October 15, 1837, HMCS.
- <sup>62</sup> Gulick, *The Pilgrims of Hawaii* 252-53. Coan, *Life in Hawaii* 42-60. Mrs. Lydia Bingham Coan, *Titus Coan: A Memorial* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1884) 45-50. Cochran Forbes, *The Journals of Cochran Forbes: Missionary to Hawaii, 1831-1864* (Honolulu: Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, 1984) 53-58, 66-70.
- <sup>63</sup> Whitney, "Journal," November 30, 1823, HMCS. Forbes, *The Journals of Cochran Forbes* 39. Peter J. Gulick, "Unpublished Autobiography," 31, HMCS. William Richards, "Journal," October 30, 1823, HMCS. Clarissa Lyman Richards, "Journal," April 11, 1824, HMCS.
- <sup>64</sup> Gulick, "Unpublished Autobiography," 75, HMCS.
- <sup>65</sup> Emma Lyons Doyle, *Makua Laiana: The Story of Lorenzo Lyons* (Honolulu: Star-Bulletin, 1952) 107.
- <sup>66</sup> Abner and Lucy Wilcox, Ethel M. Damon, ed., *Letters of Abner and Lucy Wilcox* (Honolulu: Privately Printed, 1950) 276.
- <sup>67</sup> Although hagiographic accounts have a tendency to be somewhat biased, I do not doubt that the majority of these male missionaries spoke the Hawaiian language fluently.
- <sup>68</sup> Chamberlain, "Journal," January 18, 1823, HMCS.
- <sup>69</sup> Gulick, "Autobiography" 24-25, HMCS.
- <sup>70</sup> Gulick, "Autobiography" 53, HMCS.
- <sup>71</sup> Wilcox, *Letters* 165.
- <sup>72</sup> Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty*, 77-78.

<sup>73</sup> Hawaiian Mission Children's Society, *Missionary Album* 57.

<sup>74</sup> Jonathan Green to Rufus Anderson, April 10, 1835, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS.

<sup>75</sup> Jonathan Green to Rufus Anderson, November 21, 1836, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS.

<sup>76</sup> Jonathan Green to Rufus Anderson, November 21, 1836, ABCFM-Hawaii Papers, HMCS.

<sup>77</sup> Betsey Lyons, "Journal," notation by Isabel Lyons, HMCS.

<sup>78</sup> Conde, "Journal," June 3, 1838, HMCS.