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The Man in Both Corners: Mark Twain the Shadowboxing Imperialist

The Kanakas will all die out some day and then the Sand-Is are going to be gobbled up by France or England or America. I don't know which—by America, maybe, if such be the will of Providence.¹

ALTHOUGH MARK TWAIN deleted the above passage from his Sandwich Island Lecture Number 5, he apparently had clear views on the future awaiting the Hawaiian people. Freedom through absorption into one of the world's great imperialistic democracies, perhaps; but independence, definitely not. Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa explains how the conquest of the Pacific region progressed:

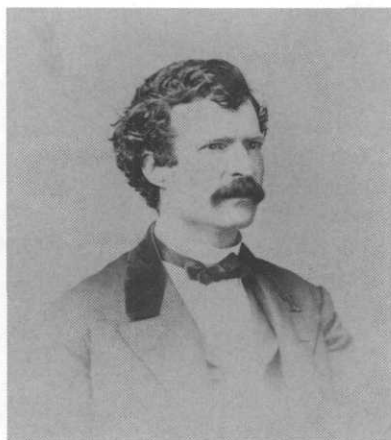
Great Britain's seizure of Australia in 1788 for use as a penal colony was a great feather in the British imperial cap. France, often envious of Britain, hoped to claim New Zealand, the next largest land mass in the Pacific, to even up the score. As American businessmen settled in Hawai'i they too began to consider Hawai'i within their sphere of influence.²

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Soon after Captain James Cook made landfall in 1778, Western imperialist powers began posturing for control of Hawai'i. By the middle of the 19th century, Hawai'i had undergone radical transformations: the islands had been united by King Kamehameha I, the population had been decimated by introduced diseases, the people had been schooled by the American missionaries, and foreigners had been appointed to ministerial posts and elected to the legislature. When Mark Twain arrived in 1866, foreigners wielded power in the religious, political, and economic sectors of this constitutional monarchy, and their influence had been systematically displacing the indigenous culture by forcing assimilation to the American way of life. Sugar was supplanting whaling as the major industry, and the Americans, who controlled the potentially profitable sugar industry, were soliciting outside support as the surest means of protecting their investment in Hawai'i. The planters argued that a stronger alliance, whether a trade treaty or annexation, would be good for all the island residents, both natives and immigrants.

As a correspondent for the *Sacramento Daily Union*, Twain found himself cast in a responsible role. In addition to the humor for which



Mark Twain, 1865/1866.
Courtesy of the Mark Twain Project
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Reference Number 00010

he was already known, the newspaper expected him to document the economic life in the Islands and to inform Californians of the importance of Hawai'i to their state's prosperity. Twain's analysis of the political, economic, and cultural atmosphere in the Islands took the form of a series of letters published in the *Sacramento Daily Union*. Perhaps it was because of his employer's agenda that Twain waxed patriotic in these "Letters to the *Union*." Still, Twain did not seem sure of what stance he should take. Was he in favor of American territorial absorption of Hawai'i? Or did he believe in the sovereignty of the people? Despite the fact that Twain eventually came to view foreign intervention in the internal affairs of this independent Kingdom as harmful, at the time he contributed significantly to the movement aiming to take control of Hawai'i. This paper will examine Twain's Hawai'i writings to show how the agenda of his employer and the sources he relied on for facts influenced his interpretation of the political and economic climate in the Islands, and caused him to shadowbox around the important issues of annexation and reciprocity.

I

In the first half of the 19th century, England, France, and the United States were engaged in a struggle for control of Hawai'i. Historically, France and England had made aggressive overtures that threatened the independence of the country, but America was not free of charges of intrigue, either; secret talks between an agent of the U.S. government and Kamehameha III were held in the mid-1850s to discuss the purchase of Hawai'i.³ At the time of Twain's visit, there seemed to be little to fear from the European contenders, yet the Americans in Hawai'i were distressed over their diminishing political influence. Americans regarded the 1861 appointment of Thomas Nettleship Staley, the first Anglican bishop of Honolulu, as a major setback. The Americans, who had long had a say in state affairs, charged that Staley was using religion covertly to increase Britain's political influence in Hawai'i at the expense of America.⁴ Twain took up the rhetoric of the American-slanted *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, which was run by Henry Martyn Whitney, the son of an American missionary. Mercilessly attacking the bishop, Twain warned that the ecclesiastical showdown between the Americans and British would have severe political

consequences. And Staley, claimed Twain, was instrumental in the British push for control. In his "Sixteenth Letter to the *Union*," Twain disparaged Staley for causing setbacks in the religious development of the Native Hawaiians achieved through 40 years of arduous American missionary efforts. He then described the American and Anglican churches as doing battle and intimated that the Kingdom might be the spoils to be had by the winner. Patriotism suffuses his prediction of the outcome. The bishop, he wrote:

is fighting with good nerve, but his side is weak. The moneyed strength of these islands—their agriculture, their commerce, their mercantile affairs—is in the hands of Americans—republicans; the religious power of the country is wielded by Americans—republicans; the whole people are saturated with the spirit of democratic Puritanism, and they are—republicans.⁵

Such a statement was no doubt intended to rally American support, for these freedom-loving unfortunates deserved protection. Here Twain is echoing the opinions of Whitney, who wrote about the bishop's fund-raising campaign to America and urged Americans to take a stand. Whitney stated:

No member of the American Episcopal Church will forget that, in whatever character anybody may choose to address him, he still remains a citizen of the United States, and that even in supporting an 'Episcopal enterprise' in the Sandwich Islands, he is bound to consider the interests of his own country, to promote her welfare and to guard against any blow aimed at her influence or honor, either present or future. We will add that, considering the past history of England and the unscrupulous extension of her influence, she is the last power on earth in whose behalf, even in movements of the fairest external appearance, an exemption from suspicion can be conceded or scrupulous inquiry be safely forborne by any true American.⁶

In retrospect, there seems to be no validation for the charges of political intrigue leveled against the Anglican church; however, if the sugar planters and other American residents wanted to force a stronger alliance with the U.S., it was to their advantage to promote the idea of a struggle. It is well documented that the former king, Kamehameha IV, and his wife Queen Emma, favored the British over

the Americans, yet their reason for initially requesting an Anglican bishop was primarily to oversee the education of their son, Prince Albert.

Mark Twain's views on the American missionaries ranged from patriotic praise to humorous censure.⁷ One main difference between Twain's opinions of the American and British clergy is that he did not publicly link the American missionaries with attempts to attain hegemony, as he had done with Staley, an oversight that seems unfair, given that Twain was aware that some missionaries had left the church, and after purchasing large tracts of land became the owners of sugar plantations. Despite these apparent inconsistencies in his logic, Twain charged Staley with trying to advance the interests of the British Empire, while maintaining that the Americans were there for the good of the people. Twain's letters on this topic substantiated the menace of British intrigue, but Twain was not alone in his denunciation. The mainland press also charged the English mission with being involved in political subterfuge. The *Boston Daily Advertiser* did not mince words when it reported: "The work of Bishop Staley in the Hawaiian Islands is merely a part of a long existing British intrigue for the control, if not the eventual possession, of the group, and in direct opposition to every American interest."⁸ In September 1866, the San Francisco *Daily Alta California* ran a series of articles on the situation in Hawai'i and promulgated opinions similar to those that Twain had already published in his letters. The anonymous reporter suggests, just like Twain had, the scenario in which the people and the monarch were at odds with each other:

England has sought to control the government of these islands, and has labored to bestow attentions on the rulers of this Kingdom, but in the hearts of the Hawaiian people, American influence is strong and paramount. . . ; and American capital and enterprise has flowed freely into their Kingdom and is pushing to rapid development resources which now have acquired marked importance, both to them and to us, . . .⁹

Whether or not such an opinion was grounded in fact, is not the issue here. What is important is that there seems to be the intent of creating the appearance of a rift between the people and the monarch, perhaps in hopes of involving America politically.

Because of California's advantageous geographical position, the state and its citizens stood to profit from any improvement in relations between Hawai'i and the United States, and Twain's letters and lectures sparked interest in the Islands, not only as a place where one might travel to find the exotic, but more importantly as an opportunity for investment. Critiquing a November 1866 Twain lecture in Oakland, one reporter wrote, "we think that some of them [the audience] felt the inclination to visit the Sandwich Islands and see for themselves the funny things which he described. He seemed to thoroughly understand the interests of Americans there, and gave us a good idea of their extent and importance."¹⁰ Another report on a later lecture interpreted Twain's message more directly. Writing on the 1873 lecture at Steinway Hall in New York, the author stated that Twain, "believes in sugar, and urges his audience by the strongest arguments to go there and become sugar-planters forthwith."¹¹

Trade with Hawai'i was an opportunity that America must not miss. Honolulu was being considered as a stop on the government-subsidized China Mail steamship trade route, which Twain stated was to begin service between San Francisco and Shanghai in January 1867; surprisingly, Twain came out against the idea of diverting the China Mail steamer to Honolulu. He explained in detail how expensive the detour would be to the company if the steamship had to travel south to call at Hawai'i. Twain, who had sailed on the second voyage of the steamer *Ajax* out of San Francisco, strongly supported a direct steamship service between San Francisco and Honolulu. Twain urged the owners of the *Ajax*, or if they were unwilling, called for another company to establish a regular route between the two ports. To make such a capital investment attractive, Twain suggested government subsidies:

The legitimate way to establish a steamer on a paying basis from the first is to give her a Government subsidy of fifty or a hundred thousand dollars a year for carrying the mails, and subtract it from the \$500,000 a year appropriated for the China Mail Company, which is to begin business the first of next January.¹²

California would surely prosper from the trade with the Orient. One of Twain's mission objectives was to promote better trade rela-

tions between Hawai'i and the U.S., yet Twain also sermonized on the value of the China trade for California:

what State in the Union has so splendid a future before her as California? Not one, perhaps. She should awake and be ready to join her home prosperity to these tides of commerce that are so soon to sweep toward her from the east and the west. . . .

California has got the world where it must pay tribute to her. She is about to be appointed to preside over almost the exclusive trade of 450,000,000 people—the almost exclusive trade of the most opulent land on earth. It is the land where the fabled Aladdin's lamp lies buried—and she is the new Aladdin who shall seize it from its obscurity and summon the geni and command him to crown her with power and greatness, and bring to her feet the hoarded treasures of the earth!¹³

Although Twain was a humorist of the Southwestern tradition and thus inclined to exaggerate, his melodramatic assessment of California's future reads more like an advertisement aimed at luring capitalists by stressing the state's regional importance.¹⁴ With the heyday of the 1849 Gold Rush behind it, California needed a new platform for growth, and the benefits of external economic expansion were presented as a means of accessing domestic prosperity. Those who hesitated would miss out.

II

Twain was among the first to benefit from California's projected bonanza, for he wasted no time cashing in on the Hawai'i mania with what was to become his long-running Sandwich Island Lecture. Upon his return to California, Twain took advantage of the popularity of his letters to the *Union*, and debuted on the San Francisco lecture circuit on October 2, 1866. During the performances of his "Sandwich Island Lecture" and in his "Letters to the *Union*," Twain blended humor with seriousness, and augmented the popular misconception of a democratically predisposed people being denied basic rights by a monarch who had abrogated the constitution and repealed universal suffrage. Ironically though, Twain came out in favor of this authoritarian decree. He wrote, "if my opinion were

asked. I would say he [Kamehameha V] did a wise thing in this. . . .”¹⁵ Kamehameha rescinded democratic rights, and Twain not only supported this decision, but he called the king “a man of good sense and excellent education,” then assured the reader that the king “uses his vast authority wisely and well.”¹⁶

A timely media event may have provided Twain additional incentive to try lecturing. On September 24, 1866, Queen Emma, the widow of King Kamehameha IV, visited San Francisco on her way back home from Europe. Emma was the first noblewoman of her rank to visit San Francisco and her stopover fueled Californians’ interest in the Hawaiian Islands, and may have contributed to the success of Twain’s lecture. There were even instances when Twain and the queen appeared together in print, as shown by this example from the *Daily Alta California*:

The presence of Queen Emma and the opening of steamship communication with the Sandwich Islands, makes that section of the Pacific archipelago of more than ordinary interest to San Franciscans. Mark Twain, a writer of wit and humor, who has recently visited the Hawaiian kingdom, announces a lecture thereon. . . .¹⁷

In anticipation of the queen’s visit, the *Daily Alta California* ran front-page articles that discussed the history, culture, and economy of her homeland, yet there is enough overlap in the articles to surmise that the *Alta*’s reporter had either referred to Twain’s letters to the *Union* for information, or that similar sources had been used by both writers. In an article that appeared on the same day as Twain’s California homage quoted above, the *Daily Alta California* reiterated Twain’s call for improved relations with potential trading partners. The newspaper proposed that:

We, who are of San Francisco, have but to cast our thought into the future to realize what importance and prosperity are based upon the steady growth, constant development, and unbounded fertility of this, our neighboring archipelago. As citizens of the United States, and more especially of California, the development of these islands is a deeply interesting problem. No other nation or people have there such interest at stake as have our American merchants, planters, seamen, and missionaries.¹⁸

A burgeoning island economy was perceived as a boost to San Francisco and the state, that is, if Californians could be inspired to act in their own interests. Twain was among those who threw down the gauntlet and encouraged others with his pro-trade arguments. In his "Third Letter to the *Union*," which was penned while he was enroute to Honolulu, Twain stated, "It is a matter of the utmost importance to the United States that her trade with these islands should be carefully fostered and augmented. Because—it pays. There can be no better reason than that."¹⁹ Once reliable transportation connected the two ports, Twain suggested there were two other variables in the formula for success. The first was the reduction, or preferably, the elimination of tariffs on certain goods traded between the two countries, and Twain cautiously called for government action when he wrote, "Let Congress moderate the high duties somewhat; . . ."²⁰ Secondly, Twain surmised that a stronger sugar industry, which would benefit from the reduction in tariffs and regular steamship service, would attract more capital, and once money flowed in, people would follow. Twain wanted "the Islands . . . populated with Americans."²¹

The heavy tariffs imposed on Hawai'i sugar when it was imported into the United States threatened the livelihood of the sugar planters—many of whom were former missionaries or their progeny. Quoting from a letter of a leading businessman to a former missionary, Ralph S. Kuykendall verifies this. He wrote that the "'whole plantation interest would be ruined,' if a reciprocity treaty were not obtained."²² In a September 21, 1866 article, the *Daily Alta California* compared Island plantations with the sugar producers of Louisiana and discussed the advantages of Hawai'i's growing season, the superior yield per acre, and the potential lower cost of Hawaiian sugar to American consumers.²³ Twain's letter on the sugar industry, which was published two days later, hammered home to Californians the importance of the sugar trade with slightly different statistics. Queen Emma's visit to San Francisco and Twain's contributions to the local papers obviously helped stimulate interest in Hawai'i. Yet, the numerous local press accounts must have had another aim, possibly of luring investors and settlers to the Islands. Twain was well aware, however, that where Americans and American investment flowed, so too did promises of protection.

Twain had stayed at the homes of some sugar planters as he trav-

eled around the Islands, and he was familiar with the economic burden that the high tariffs on sugar exports to the United States placed on the planters. There was much talk of protecting Americans and American investment in the Islands, and Twain no doubt had heard it. One purpose of such propaganda may have been incendiary in nature, intending to manufacture a crisis and force an American response. For many Americans in Hawai'i protection meant military intervention. In his *Notebooks & Journals*, Twain evinced the necessity of protecting American property. In an entry that may have been anticipating the permanent anchoring of the *U.S.S. Lackawanna* in February 1867, an idea that was favored by American missionaries, businessmen, and sugar planters, with whom Twain had regular contact, he wrote that it would, "Be good idea to have men-of-war there often, hear there is one to be stationed there."²⁴

Does a declaration written in private *Notebooks* manifest support for the protection of Americans and their property in Hawai'i? If yes, what did Twain perceive to be the danger: a Hawaiian revolt or a European takeover? Considering the charges in the press of English political intrigue, either of these ideas seems plausible. But, there may have been another motive behind Twain's inference. It can be interpreted as a cloaked endorsement for annexation. In Honolulu, Twain met Anson Burlingame, who had stopped over in Honolulu on a return voyage to his post as U.S. minister to China. Twain respected Burlingame and wrote admiringly of him in letters home.²⁵ Following the death of King Kamehameha V in December 1872, Twain wrote two letters on Hawai'i for publication in the *New York Tribune*. In a private letter to the editor of the *New York Tribune*, Whitelaw Reid, dated January 3, 1873, Twain revealed Burlingame's thirst for Hawai'i. He wrote, "Mr. Burlingame told me privately that if he were minister there he would have the American flag flying on the roof of the king's palace in less than two weeks. And he was in earnest, too. He hungered for those rich islands."²⁶

Twain's statement validates Burlingame's personal interest in Hawai'i as a target of American territorial expansion. It stands to reason that Twain, who frequently socialized with Burlingame and his son Edward, would have heard the minister's opinions on this topic. In an official diplomatic dispatch to Secretary of State William H.

Seward, whose land-grabbing proclivities were well-known, Burlingame informed the secretary that there was no danger of Americans losing their position. Obviously, high level government officials were concerned about American interests in Hawai'i. Burlingame wrote:

At the Hawaiian Islands I heard much of foreign intrigues but after a careful examination of the evidence, I am constrained to say that, in my judgement, there is no danger to be apprehended from these; for the reason that our people are so alive to them, and because the Americans, and the natives who agree with them constitute nearly the whole population. The King is said to be against us, and this may be true in so far as he naturally sympathizes with his confreres; but he can do nothing practically to harm us, and those who are to succeed him are quite in our interests. The business of the Islands is conducted by citizens of the United States—they are the principal land owners, and thirty years of missionary efforts exclusively American, have impressed the native population with American ideas.²⁷

Was public opinion overwhelmingly pro-American, as Twain, the American-biased press, and men like Burlingame indicated, or were they voices of propaganda aiming to swing mainland public opinion towards initiating a movement to call for an elimination of the tariffs through a trade reciprocity treaty or annexation? It appears that the reports of an English conspiracy were overstated by Twain and the Hawai'i English-language press to serve the agenda of the American sugar interests.

As Twain had heralded the advantages of regular steamer service between the two ports, he argued that such ships,

would soon populate these islands with Americans, and loosen that French and English grip which is gradually closing around them, . . . if California can send capitalists down here in seven or eight days time and take them back in nine or ten, she can fill these islands full of Americans and regain her lost foothold.²⁸

With the continent united under the stars and stripes, America started flexing its imperialistic muscle extra-territorially. After the recent purchase of Alaska from Russia (1867), Hawai'i and the Caribbean were both prospective territorial acquisitions. Twain had lived

through the era of Manifest Destiny and was well aware that wherever Americans proliferated, so too did the country's domain. The peopling of Hawai'i with Americans would be interpreted as a step toward possession.

III

When Twain reported for the *Union* he had both an employer and a reading audience to please, so he included letters on the island economy along with his humorous portrayals and exotic adventures. Twain wrote on the halcyon whaling days and of the prosperity the trade had brought to Honolulu,²⁹ as well as the slower growing coffee industry;³⁰ however, Twain insisted that the key to Hawai'i's future economic success was sugar.³¹ Once he took to the lecture circuit he had eliminated the editorial source of control, yet Twain realized that live audiences could be a more fickle master than a known editor, and to appease his ever-changing patrons Twain constantly rewrote his lectures for target audiences.³² Many of the press reports of his lectures stressed the entertainment aspect of the performances. Yet, one must ask, if Twain was primarily there to make the crowds have a good time, why did he continue to include serious topics of national importance that would have appealed to American expansionists? Humor was, of course, what attracted the crowds, but even after the successful tour through California and Nevada, Twain pushed this economic agenda to his New York audiences. Writing of the May 1867 performance in New York, the *Brooklyn Union* commented:

The opening of the lecture was in a serious vein, and even condescended to statistics. From these it was learned that for the production of sugar there is no country in the world, so far as the experiment has been tried, equal to the Sandwich Islands.³³

It appears Twain either still believed in the mission on which he was originally hired to expatiate, that is, promoting the idea of Hawai'i as a good investment for America, or, he recognized the value in continuing to promulgate the views that the United States, its missionaries, and its money were good for the Islands, and, in turn, the Islands were good for America. Lecture fragments in his own

hand reveal how central the discussion of trade treaties and annexation were to his message. After giving specific details on the successful Makee plantation on Maui, Twain wrote that the planters:

have every advantage in the world save + except that they have to sell their sugar to us + pay 3 cents a pound duty on it (we, of course paying it over again before we consume it,) + The planters always will be burdened with that exasperating duty until the Islands belong to America. If they belonged to us now, some of the heaviest planters would clear \$60,000 + \$80,000 this year instead of \$30,000 + \$40,000.

I have dwelt upon this subject to show you that these islands have a genuine importance to America—an importance which is not generally appreciated by our citizens. . . .

I do not know what the sugar yield of the world is now, but ten years ago, according to the Patent Office reports, it was 800,000 hogsheads. The Sand Is, properly cultivated, by go-ahead Americans, are capable of producing one-third as much, themselves. [Unreadable deletions in text here]. With the Pacific Railroad built + the great China Mail Line of steamers touching at Honolulu <They begin their trips next January> we could stock the Islands with Americans + supply a third of the civilized world with sugar— + with the silkiest, longest-stapled cotton this side of the Sea Islands + the very best quality of rice.³⁴

Here, Twain's views are explicitly clear: He favors increased American control. Even if Twain occasionally edited the forcefulness of his statements for individual audiences, he believed that all involved—Native Hawaiians, resident aliens, Californians, and the American consumer—would benefit from an elimination of tariffs, whether through a trade pact or annexation, and he disseminated these opinions to audiences nationwide. However, privately he was less convinced of the benefits of annexation. In his *Notebooks*, Twain presented the popular view held by Americans in Hawai'i, then added his own in a separate entry on the topic. He explained that "Americans want annexation, of course, to get rid of duties," before continuing, "It would be fair to have reciprocity anyway—then—no duties at either end, Cal would have entire Sandwich Island trade."³⁵

Initially, Twain took a firm stand against the trade reciprocity treaty, which Charles Coffin Harris, the Hawaiian envoy, had signed with General Edward Moody McCook, the American negotiator, in

San Francisco in May 1867. This was because of his prejudice toward the man representing Hawai'i in the negotiations. Twain viciously satirized Harris in print and from the podium, and his disdain for this government official endured as long as Twain presented his Sandwich Island Lecture.³⁶ In a May 26, 1867 letter from New York to the *Daily Alta California*, Twain warned Americans about doing business with this untrustworthy individual. Twain wrote:

I must tell him [Harris] to mind his own business—to mind his reciprocity treaty, and keep his hands off the things. If he does his work just exactly as he wants to do it, and as only his tireless industry and his marvelous cheek can do it, he can succeed in clinching a treaty that will make American interests very sick in the Sandwich Islands. The *Herald's* Honolulu correspondence of this morning rather warns Congress to look out for Harris, and I am inclined to think the warning was very well put in, and would find an echo from every American in the Islands.³⁷

Why did Twain take this opportunity to vilify Harris? As the envoy representing the Hawaiian government lobbying in Washington for the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty, Harris was, according to Twain's own published opinions, aiding the economic development of Californians and America at large. Could Twain have been serving the American propaganda machinery? After returning from the *Quaker City* excursion to the Holy Land in late 1867, Twain was employed as a private secretary for Senator W. M. Stewart of Nevada in Washington.³⁸ This sinecure provided Twain with a stable income and the time to work on his first book, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). It appears that Twain was waffling, yielding to public pressure rather than resisting the trend towards annexation. This is easily apparent when one understands the American government was more receptive to annexation than reciprocity.

High-level government officials, including the Secretary of State William Seward, were in favor of annexation. Kuykendall discussed the damage reciprocity would deal the movement toward possession. He wrote: "The argument ran that reciprocity would destroy all prospect of annexation or would at least postpone it for a very long time; and if the reciprocity treaty were not ratified, there would be an irresistible demand for annexation."³⁹ Kuykendall's interpretation

validates the theory that the United States wanted to annex Hawai'i, yet it must be considered whether the numerous press accounts, as well as official and unofficial sources, which claimed the Native Hawaiians sided with America and would support annexation helped sway official policy. However, Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio contends that the Hawaiians were strongly in favor of independence and had no desire to become a part of America. The natives, he argues, would "explode" if annexation was forced on them.⁴⁰ The U.S. Senate finally defeated the Reciprocity Treaty in 1870, which had been ratified by the Hawaiian legislature over two years earlier on September 10, 1867, primarily because it would put annexation on hold. In 1867, America purchased Alaska and Captain Reynolds of the *U.S.S. Lackawanna* (which was permanently stationed in Honolulu) took possession of Midway Island. America was in an expansionist mood, and Hawai'i was too attractive a prize to permit another country to claim.

By December 1867, Twain had changed his opinion on reciprocity, and he wrote to the *Daily Alta California* that, "the treaty has grown and grown upon my reverence until, in my eyes, it has become a perfect monument of mathematics and virtue."⁴¹ Was Twain now convinced that the benefits of the treaty outweighed his personal antipathy for Harris? Or had Twain merely been posturing for public attention by using Harris as a foil? Twain recognized this expansionist trend and capitalized on the public sentiment. Intent on becoming a national celebrity, just seven months earlier Twain had deferred to public opinion for his New York lecture debut on May 6, 1867. In the lecture program for the Cooper Institute performance, item number 31 to be discussed was: "Kanakadom as a really useful and valuable companion purchase to our ornamental Russian Possessions."⁴²

After Twain became a successful novelist, he criticized social wrongs rather than resorting to personal attacks as he had as a reporter and lecturer. Yet Twain availed himself of another opportunity to comment on the future of Hawai'i-American relations. By the time King Kamehameha V passed away on December 11, 1872, the trade reciprocity treaty had already been rejected by the U.S. Senate. With reciprocity a moot issue for the moment, Twain sarcastically supported annexation in his second letter to the *New York Tribune*. Twain concluded the letter with a long defense of the benefits of American

civilization and how it would benefit the Natives. In the section entitled "Why We Should Annex," Twain averred:

We *must* annex those people. We can afflict them with our wise and beneficent governments. We can introduce the novelty of thieves, all the way up from street-car pickpockets to municipal robbers and Government defaulters, and show them how amusing it is to arrest them and try them and then turn them loose—some for cash and some for "political influence." We can make them ashamed of their simple and primitive justice. . . .

We can make that little bunch of sleepy islands the hottest corner on earth, and array it in the moral splendor of our high and holy civilization. Annexation is what the poor islanders need. "Shall we to men benighted, the lamp of life deny?"⁴³

CONCLUSION

The benefits of seeing the world had become apparent to Mark Twain for he deduced in *The Innocents Abroad* that: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things can not be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."⁴⁴ There is little doubt that his Hawai'i experience, as well as his first trip to Europe and the Middle East, altered the writer and man, but it is unlikely that Twain did a sudden about-face on such important issues as the annexation of Hawai'i. Privately, Twain was still unsure of the best future for Hawai'i. In the January 3, 1873 letter to Whitelaw Reid quoted earlier, Twain asserted, "To speak truly, I would rather those islands remained under a native king, if I were there, but you can easily see that that won't suit those planters."⁴⁵ While he was in Hawai'i, Twain had not resolutely formed his own ideas on America's role in the world. Men like Henry M. Whitney and Anson Burlingame, the American missionaries, the sugar planters, along with the agenda of the newspaper that hired him, contributed to the opinions Twain included in his press accounts and lectures. By 1873, Twain regarded American intentions as being destructive to Hawai'i. Later in life he would become a major opponent to American imperialism, but when he visited Hawai'i, Mark Twain's pro-American public stance helped

popularize the reciprocity-annexation debate. Despite the waffling of his public persona, Twain opined that the Islands were just too important to remain independent. In one of his first public performances, he predicted what would happen to Hawai'i and encouraged Americans to relinquish their passivity when he stated, "The property has got to fall to some heir— + why not to the U. States?"⁴⁶

NOTES

- ¹ Mark Twain, "Sandwich-Island Lecture," No. 5 P & S Draft. Microfilm Edition of Mark Twain's Literary Manuscripts Available in the Mark Twain Papers. 42 vols. Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 2001. Reel #17.
- ² Lilikalā Kame'elehiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desire* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum P, 1992) 169.
- ³ In July 1839, Captain Laplace of France issued a list of demands to Kamehameha III to stop the persecution of Catholics. If the demands were not complied with, war would begin immediately. See Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. I, 1778–1854 *Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1938) 163–167. In 1843, Lord George Paulet responded to a diplomatic crisis between Hawai'i and Britain by annexing the Islands for a period of five months. See Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom* Vol. I, 206–226. For a brief analysis of American attempts to purchase the Kingdom, see Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 2002) 130–131.
- ⁴ By the late 1830s Gerritt Judd, an American missionary, had resigned his post in the mission and became a very influential and trusted advisor to the king. See Osorio 19.
- ⁵ Twain, "Sixteenth Letter to the *Sacramento Daily Union*," June 30, 1866, rpt. in Walter Francis Frear, *Mark Twain and Hawaii* (Chicago: Lakeside P, 1947) 354. All of Twain's "Letters to the *Union*" quoted hereafter are reprinted in Frear.
- ⁶ Henry Martyn Whitney, *PCA*, Apr. 7, 1866: 4.
- ⁷ For a discussion of Twain's opinions on the American missionaries, see David Zmijewski, "Mark Twain's Dual Visions of Hawai'i: Censoring the Creative Self," *HJH* 38 (2004) 99–119.
- ⁸ "Bishop Staley in Boston," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, rpt. in *PCA*, Apr. 7, 1866: 4.
- ⁹ "More of Interest Regarding the Hawaiian Islands," *Daily Alta California*, Sept. 23, 1866: 1.
- ¹⁰ "Mark Twain's Lecture," *Oakland News*, Nov. 28, 1866: 3.
- ¹¹ "The Sandwich Islands," Mark Twain Scrapbook #8. Mark Twain Project. U of California, Berkeley. This lecture was held on February 10, 1873 in Steinway Hall, New York. The article from which this account is taken has no date, no newspaper name, and no page number.
- ¹² Twain, "Third Letter to the *Union*," Mar. 1866: 272.

- ¹³ Twain, "Twenty-Third Letter to the *Union*," Sept. 10, 1866: 407.
- ¹⁴ The Southwestern humorists wrote from the 1830s to the mid-1850s. The stories of these writers, which included stylistic uses of exaggeration, American vernacular, and tall-tale humor, were set in the then southwestern border states of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. The writers of this school derived their name from the southwestern border states mentioned above.
- ¹⁵ Twain, "Twelfth Letter to the *Union*," May 23, 1866: 318–319.
- ¹⁶ Twain, "Twelfth Letter to the *Union*," 318–319.
- ¹⁷ "The Sandwich Islands," *Daily Alta California*, Sept. 30, 1866: 1.
- ¹⁸ "More of Interest Regarding the Hawaiian Islands," *Daily Alta California*, Sept. 23, 1866: 1.
- ¹⁹ Twain, "Third Letter to the *Union*," Mar. 1866: 271.
- ²⁰ Twain, "Third Letter to the *Union*," 271.
- ²¹ Twain, "Third Letter to the *Union*," 271.
- ²² Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. II, 1854–1874: *Twenty Critical Years* (Honolulu: U of Hawai'i P, 1953) 209.
- ²³ "Our Neighbors, The Hawaiian Islands," *Daily Alta California*, Sept. 21, 1866: 1.
- ²⁴ Mark Twain, *Notebooks & Journals*, Vol. I (1855–1873), Frederick Anderson, Michael B. Frank, and Kenneth M. Sanderson, eds. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975) 123. For a detailed analysis of the incident involving the *U.S.S. Lackawanna*, see David Zmijewski, "The Conspiracy that Never Existed: How Hawai'i Evaded Annexation in 1868," *HJH* 37 (2003) 119–138.
- ²⁵ Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. I 1853–1866, Edgar Marquess Branch, Michael B. Frank, and Kenneth M. Sanderson, eds. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 343–346.
- ²⁶ Mark Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 5 1872–1873. Lin Salamo and Harriet Elinor Smith, eds. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997) 264.
- ²⁷ Anson Burlingame, Shanghai, to [William Henry Seward, Washington], Sept. 19, 1866, Dispatches from U.S. Ministers to China, Jan. 6-Dec. 1866, roll 24, dispatch number 119, microfilm, Hamilton Library, U of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- ²⁸ Twain, "Second Letter to the *Union*," Mar. 19, 1866: 266.
- ²⁹ Twain, "Tenth Letter to the *Union*," Apr. 1866: 308–312.
- ³⁰ Twain, "Eighteenth Letter to the *Union*," Jul. 1866: 365–371.
- ³¹ Twain, "Twenty-Third Letter to the *Union*," Sept. 10, 1866: 398–407.
- ³² Fred W. Lorch, "Mark Twain's Sandwich Island Lecture at St. Louis," *American Literature* vol. 18, no. 4 (Jan. 1947): 299.
- ³³ "Mark Twain at the Athenaeum," *Brooklyn Union*, May 11, 1867: 4.
- ³⁴ Twain, "Sandwich-Island Lecture," No. 5 P & S Draft. Microfilm Edition of Mark Twain's Literary Manuscripts Available in the Mark Twain Papers. 42 vols. Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 2001. Reel #17. <> indicate deletions in text made by Twain.
- ³⁵ Twain, *Notebooks & Journals* Vol. I (1855–1873) 124.
- ³⁶ For a detailed analysis of Twain's attacks on Harris, see David Zmijewski, "Mark

- Twain and Hawaiian Politics: The Attack on Harris and Staley," *Mark Twain Journal* vol. 31, no. 2 (Fall 1993) 11–27.
- ³⁷ Twain, "Concerning the Reciprocity Treaty," rpt. in Frear, 465.
- ³⁸ R. Kent Rasmussen, *Mark Twain A–Z* (New York: Oxford U P, 1995) 505.
- ³⁹ Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, Vol. II 1854–1874: *Twenty Critical Years*, 220.
- ⁴⁰ Osorio, 134–135. See also, Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke U Press, 2004). Although Silva focuses on the resistance to annexation in the 1890s, her work documents just how strongly Native Hawaiians favored independence to annexation.
- ⁴¹ Twain, "The Hawaiian Treaty," rpt. in Frear, 466.
- ⁴² "Kanakadom or The Sandwich Islands," Mark Twain's Cooper Institute Lecture Program, May 6, 1867. AH, Honolulu.
- ⁴³ Twain, "The Sandwich Islands," rpt. in Frear, 500.
- ⁴⁴ Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, [1868], Shelley Fisher Fishkin, ed. (New York: Oxford U P, 1996) 650.
- ⁴⁵ Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 5 1872–1873, 264.
- ⁴⁶ Twain, "Sandwich-Island Lecture," No. 5 P & S Draft. Microfilm Edition of Mark Twain's Literary Manuscripts Available in the Mark Twain Papers. 42 vols. Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 2001. Reel #17.

