Honolulu
August, 1828

Housekeeping at last in two little rooms and a chamber, under the same roof with the Binghams! The clapboards are bare and admit quantities of dust which the trade-winds bring in such fearful clouds. We have three chairs, a tale, and a bedstead. Dr. Judd has converted the wooden trunk that Uncle E made for me into a safe for our food, by placing it on stilts set on pans of tar water, which keeps out roaches and ants. Mrs. Bingham kindly allows me to have one of her trained servants, who does the washing and assists in the kitchen.

We have commenced a school for native women, which already numbers forty-five, including Kaahumanu, Kinau, Namahana and several of their attendants. They are docile and very anxious to learn. I devote two hours a day teaching them to write on paper; Mrs. Bingham spends two hours more in giving them lessons on the slave, and teaching them how to divide words and sentences. They prefer to join words together in continuous lines across the page, without stops or marks. Our school-house has no floor, nor desks, the only substitute being a long board, supporter by crosstrees for the writers. A flag is raised to signal the hour for school.

I cannot begin to say how happy I am to be here, and how I love to work for this interesting people. I little thought when teaching children in the State of New York what the discipline was preparing me for. I was but sixteen when I made my entrance as a school teacher.

We have a very hot summer, no rain, the earth parched, and clouds of dust blowing every day. I have emptied quarts of it from my bed cover at night, and it pours in so thickly that in a few minutes it is impossible to distinguish the color of the different furniture.

Our yearly supply of sugar, flour, and other stores, sent from Boston in a whale-ship, was carried by mistake to Japan whaling grounds, and we have been on short allowance. The drought almost produced a famine in the vegetable kingdom. Our good queen-mother has often been absent, and we have missed her presents of taro, fish, and other good things. The poor cattle have almost starved, and of course our supply of milk has failed.

Honolulu
November, 1829

After many months of hard labor our new thatched church is completed. Several hundred men at a time have been engaged in putting on the thatch under supervision of Governor Boki. The church has a neat pulpit, of native mahogany (koa) furnished by Kaahumanu. The young king was anxious to have it grand as possible, as it was his chapel.

Judd, Gerritt, P. *A Hawaiian Anthology*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1967.

Honolulu
November, 1829

I record another anecdote of Kaahumanu; the incident occurred a few weeks before the dedication of the church. Mrs. Bingham, Miss Ward, and myself were spending the day with her in Manoa valley. As we were seated at our sewing, Kaahumanu very kindly inquired what we thought of wearing at the dedication of the new church. Without waiting for an answer, she added: It is my wish that we dress alike; I have made a selection that pleases me, and it only waits your approval." She ordered the woman in waiting to bring the material; it was heavy satin, striped pink, white and blue.

We were sorry to oppose her wishes, and she was unhappy all afternoon. As we were about to leave in the evening, she resumed her cheerful manner, and asked what we would like to wear on the occasion. We thanked her and said we would like to make something handsome for her, but we should prefer black silk to anything else for ourselves. She made no reply, but bade us an affectionate good-night. The next morning we received two rolls of black silk, with an order to make her dress exactly like ours.

Kaawaloa, Hawaii
1829

I had the honor of assisting some of the ladies of the mission in organizing the first school for native women. The adult portion of the population had been collected into schools by thousands, and were learning to read and write. But the children were not yet tamed, and to catch them even was considered impossible.

The first effort was made with the children of the church members, in an unfurnished building. Cotton cloth was scarce, and the people were poor; but water, thank Heaven, was plenty. We brought the children together, looked into their bright faces, asked their names, sung to them, and asked them to join us. Thus we discovered they possessed the requisites for musical culture, ear, and voice. We made for them drawings in natural history. A description of each taught them, in the form of questions and answers.

These exercises gained their attention and gave them some idea of order. The singing and pictures attracted other children, and the numbers increased. Seated together on the mats, it was difficult to keep them quiet, for their tongues and elbows were in constant motion. Some method of seating them separately was a subject of study. Wooden seats were too expensive. The parents of the students were happy to work and with the aid of a bright sun long rows of seats with braided mats were set up.

Native women helped in teaching reading; and oral lessons in geography, with the aid of outline maps, were given them. The elements of arithmetic also were taught in the same simple method. As the children had never before seen a map of the world, they were quite astonished at the comparative littleness of their own islands.

Judd, Gerritt, P. *A Hawaiian Anthology*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1967.

Article XXVII
Preaching and School

The first time that Mr. Thurston preached before the king through an interpreter, was from these words: “I have a message from God unto thee.” The king, his family, and suite listened with attention. When prayer was offered, they all knelt before the white man’s God.

The king’s orders were that none should be taught to read but those of rank, those to whom he gave special permission, and the wives and children of white men. For several months his majesty kept foremost in learning, then the pleasures of the cup caused his books to be quite neglected. Some of the queens were ambitious, and made good progress, but they were met with serious interruptions, going from place to place with their intoxicated husband. The young prince, seven years old, the successor to the throne, attended to his lessons regularly. Although the king neglected to learn himself, yet he was considerate to have his little brother apply himself, threatened punishment if he neglected his lessons. He told him that he must have learning for his father and mother both, - that it would fit him for governing the nation, and make him a wise and good king when old.

The king brought two young men to Mr. Thurston, and said: “Teach these, my favorites, Ii and Kahuhu. It will be the same as teaching me. Through them I shall find out what learning is.” To do *his* part to distinguish and make them respectable scholars, he dressed them in a civilized manner. They daily came forth from the king, entered the presence of their teacher, wearing white, while his majesty and court continued to sit in their girdles.

Article XLV
First Introduction of a Written language

An alphabet of twelve letters was fixed upon which would give every sound in the pure Hawaiian dialect. In one year and nine months after the missionaries left the brig *Thaddeus*, a Hawaiian spelling book was issued from the press. The chiefs received it with deep interest; the scholars with enthusiasm. Writing letters in the native language was soon introduced. A door was now opened which allowed learning to become general.

In the morning more than sixty natives of rank were there assembled and all behaved with an affecting decorum, rarely seen at public places. Thus, evening and morning the missionaries continued to teach and assist Governor Cox of Maui (brother of Kaahumanu). He said, “others might do as they pleased, but he should have all people taught to read and write, and to understand the good Word.” So he not only opened his own house for the worship of God, but for school in instruction for himself and others.

Gov. Cox’s example produced happy effects. A multitude flocked to attend public worship, headed by kings and chiefs. The principal characters, almost without exception, together with common people, united in cry, “Give us books. Give us teachers.” This new impulse called into exercise all the energies of the mission. Scholars from the school already established at our house, gave help in instructing the people. The king sent for one hundred spelling books, to give to his friends and attendants.

Thurston, Lucy G. *Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston*. Honolulu: The Friend, 1934.

The Great Awakening

Between June 1831 and April 1837, five new companies of American Board evangelists arrived in the islands. By the beginning of 1838 nearly ninety workers were in the field.

Thousands of natives came to church regularly. Except in certain districts, the natives no longer suspected the Christians of bringing disease and death by their prayers. Churches were sometimes called luakinis, the old word for temples, but no one still believed that missionaries killed people to use their blood for communion wine. In fact a good many Hawaiians had come to accept and even approve of Christianity. They kept the Sabbath well, far better than the average foreigner did. They enjoyed dressing for church. Their ability to memorize long passages of Scripture was amazing.

The natives understood that their old gods had abdicated in favor of a single new god with a new set of kapus. They knew that this Christian God watched them, and that he wanted them to do right. They had a number of good examples to follow – Opukahaia, whose story could bring entire classes in schools to tears no matter how many times the story was told.

Go Ye Forth into All the World

Opukahaia was orphaned during the wars of Kamehameha. In 1809 an American sea captain offered him passage to the United States along with another island boy, Hopu.

Samuel J. Mills, one of the missionary leaders, heard about Opukahaia and got the idea of having him trained and returned home as a Christian leader. Opukahaia spent several years learning English and then enrolled in the Foreign Mission School in Connecticut.

Opukahaia was an exemplary convert. He took delight in praying, publicly and privately. He kept a model Christian journal, translated the book of Genesis into Hawaiian, and began to work on a Hawaiian grammar, dictionary, and spelling book. His teachers were sure that he was going to be a great help for his own people, but before the first Protestant mission to the Sandwich Islands, he fell ill with typhus.

Opukahaia's death made the supporters of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) more eager than ever to see the Sandwich Islands evangelized as part of a worldwide program to save the heathen from himself.

The American Board's first mission to the Sandwich Islands was organized in 1819. In place of Opukahaia four other Hawaiians educated at the Foreign Mission School were chosen to be sent home: Hopu, William Kanui, John Honolii and George Kaumualii.

The mission family also included several specialists including Daniel Chamberlain, who was the oldest in his late thirties. The rest of the missionaries were younger, some of them barely out of their teens: Elisha Loomis (the printer), Samuel Ruggles and Samuel Whitney (the teachers), and Thomas Holman (the physician). Only Chamberlain, a father of five, was married when the call for missionaries came. After finding brides in a short two-month span, the newly-wed missionary couples boarded the brig Thaddeus for a long trip of eighteen thousand miles to Hawaii.

Daws, Gavan. *Shoal of Time.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968.

The First Years of the Mission

The missionaries decided to split up. One of them, Hiram Bingham, stayed with the king in Kailua, Hawaii. The rest traveled on to Honolulu. They spent the first few months studying Hawaiian customs and learning the language.

Hawaiian ways shocked the missionaries. The king, for instance, had five wives, and one of them (Kamamalu) was his half-sister. Hawaiians went around with practically no clothes on, and their hulas were often very seductive. The missionaries were not against love, but they thought it should be more restricted and private. And they were amazed that Hawaiian women, who loved their men and children so well, could turn around and kill their infants.

Hawaiian mothers did sometimes practice infanticide. They would kill their newborn babies if they turned out to be deformed, diseases, or if there were already too many other children. Hawaiians did, however, believe it was wrong to commit murder. But whether killing was murder or not depended on who was doing it to whom. If a chief killed a commoner, that was not murder. If a mother killed her baby, it was not considered murder. The missionaries thought all killing was a terrible sin.

If a chief died in Hawaii, the family and friends were likely to react with much grief. For Hawaiians death was the end. It was a terrible, terrible loss. At a deathbed there was often loud wailing, and some people might tear their hair out or knock out teeth and some would die. Kamehameha had knocked out his front teeth at the death of his aunt Kalola. While Hawaiians thought it was proper to show grief in these extreme ways, the missionaries thought it was horrible.

The missionaries did not care for the kahunas, either. To them, the healing kahunas were either fakers of the devil. We know that they were a bit hasty in this judgment.

The Hawaiians seemed lazy to the missionaries. William Ellis who was helping the Americans, wrote: “Hawaiians work hard to play, but play at work.” The missionaries believed that people should work hard and be productive. According to thin definition, a lot of things the Hawaiians did, like singing chants or making leis, were just time-wasters.

New Englanders had the reputation of being especially hard workers for having an especially solid government. The missionaries were very proud of this reputation. They themselves were hard-working and solidly governed. Many historians feel this is one of the reasons these missionaries were so successful.

To be sure, the missionaries admired some things about the Hawaiians. The Reverend Ellis was pleased to see how the chiefs were collecting plenty of trade goods. He believed that if Hawaiians began to wish for such things as fine homes and fancy clothing, they would be more and more willing to work hard to get them.

The missionaries of course, were glad to hear that Liholiho had done away with the heathen gods and savage laws of the old religion. They saw Hawaii as “a cleared field, ready and waiting for the first seeds of Christianity.” They were very optimistic about their mission, especially if it appeared as if the Hawaiian chiefs were going to help them.

Wong, Helen and Carey, Robert. *Hawaii’s Royal History*. Honolulu: Hogarth Press, 1980

Education under the Missionaries

The missionaries planned to deliver the Christian message in three different ways: preaching, teaching and printing. But first they had to learn the Hawaiian language. Fortunately, the Hawaiian language is similar to Tahitian and earlier missionaries had done some work with that language. With that information the missionaries were able to learn the Hawaiian language without much difficulty.

But the missionaries realized they were still too few in number. They could not hope to reach enough of the people unless they put their message down in writing. But the writings had no written language, so the missionaries were forced to develop a way of writing the language.

A group of them worked together at it. First they wrote down all the sounds of the Hawaiian words. This was not always easy, because different people said things differently. The name for Hawaiian cloth, for instance, was pronounced kappa in Honolulu, but tapa on Kauai. The missionaries selected from the Honolulu dialect. When they had selected what seemed like all the sounds, they attached each sound to a letter of the English alphabet. To make things as simple as possible, they collected sounds that were similar and put them under just one letter. They used the fiver vowels, a, e, i, o, and u, added seven consonants, h, k, l, m, n, p and w, and the twelve letters enabled any Hawaiian word to be written down.

Then the missionaries created a Hawaiian dictionary, and thus gave a precious gift to the Hawaiian people – the gift of writing. The chiefs were particularly thrilled with the idea of writing. They were sure that written words have ore mana, or force, than spoken words.

Now the missionaries needed to write some books. The first books printed in Hawaii were really pamphlets. The missionaries were in a hurry to get started. They wanted Hawaiians to get the message.

The First Reading and Writing Schools

Hawaiian-style grass-houses, most of them without chairs or desks, were the first schools. The pupils sat on the floor and wrote on tablets. To the Hawaiians it was a new and exciting experience. The king and all the members of the royal family were good students. “If the palapala, the written word, is a good thing, we must have it first, for it is not right that a people know more than its rulers.” In the missionary school everyone was welcome.

The teaching methods were as simple as the textbooks. The teachers read aloud and the students would repeat, in unison. The Hawaiians learned to read quickly.

In the first years of the mission, most pupils were grown men and women. They were taught how to read and how to behave as good Christians. They learned to shake hands. They learned how to cover up the whole body. They took exams every three months by standing and reading from the Bible, or writing out phrases on their slates.

Wong, Helen and Carey, Robert. *Hawaii’s Royal History*. Honolulu: Hogarth Press, 1980.

The Story of Opukahaia

One of the most touching stories in Hawaiian history is that of a lad named Opukahaia. In 1808 this sixteen-year-old boy swam out to an American ship anchored in Kealakekua Bay and begged the master, Captain Brintnall of New Haven, Connecticut, to take him to America. He had been orphaned in one of the tribal wars. Terrified by this experience, he had resolved to seek a new home in a foreign land.

Although Brintnall already had one Hawaiian cabin boy, he agreed to take Opukahaia (also known as Obookiah) with him on his return trip to New York, by the way of China. Pleased by Opukahaia's progress in learning English, Brintnall installed the boy in his home in New Haven. It is recorded that Opukahaia was found one evening on the campus of Yale College weeping. On being asked why he wept he replied that "nobody gave him learning."

Several of the students undertook to teach him, and a Yale professor took him into his home. Here he learned the basic beliefs of Christianity and was received into the faith. His earnest desire to carry the gospel to his native Hawaii interested the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, a Boston interdenominational group made up chiefly of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The Board decided to found a missionary school at Cornwall, Connecticut for the "education of heathen youth." Opukahaia and several other Hawaiian youths then in New England entered this school.

Opukahaia never achieved his dream of returning to Hawaii. In February of 1818 he contracted typhus fever and died. He is buried in West Cornwall, and it is said that even today fresh flowers are often found on the tablet over his grave.

The Board, although they had lost a promising missionary, held to their great project of saving the souls of the Sandwich Islanders. On a tablet at Napo'opo'o, near the rock from which Opukahaia leaped into the sea, is this inscription:

"In memory of Henry Opukahaia. Born in Kau, 1792. Resided in Napo'opo'o 1797-1808. Lived in New England until his death in Cornwall, Connecticut, in 1818. His zeal for Christ and love for his people inspired the first American Board Mission to Hawaii in 1820.

The Arrival of the Missionaries

In October of 1819 the Board organized the first company of missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands. On the twenty-third of October they sailed from Boston in the 240-ton brig Thaddeus on a painful and exhausting 160-day voyage around Cape Horn. By mid-century, eleven other companies were allowed to follow them and each would make its own special contribution. The trials and labors of the first company, however, are of greatest interest to us today.

The seventeen members were led by two ordained ministers, the Reverend Hiram Bingham and the Reverend Asa Thurston. They were instructed to set their mark high; to cover the islands with fruitful fields, dwellings, schools and churches; to learn the language of the people; to teach them to read the Bible.

Potter, Norris W. *Hawaii Our Island State*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc, 1964.

The Arrival of Missionaries

On March 30, 1820, the *Thaddeus* was anchored at Kawaihae on the Big Island. Messengers were sent ashore to find out what had been happening. They returned with the news that Kamehameha was dead and that Liholiho had abolished the kapus. The missionaries interpreted this report as proof that God had blessed their plans, and they sang the hymn, “Wake, isles of the South! Your redemption is near…”

Learning that the King and chiefs were at Kailua, Captain Blanchard sailed there. After being received by Prime Minister Kalanimoku, Bingham and Thurston called on Kuakini, the governor, and John Young, the King’s haole adviser. They then gained an audience with Liholiho, presented gifts, and asked for permission to stay in the Islands

For several days the King withheld his decision while he talked with his chiefs. On April 6 Bingham invited him and his queens to dine on the Thaddeus, an experience which the royal party enjoyed thoroughly. The next day some of the ladies in the missionary party went ashore with the men. The Hawaiians often seen haole men and their children by native women, but the sight of haole women was new to them. Samuel Kamakau describes the excitement as the party came ashore and walked along the beach:

“…the people came in crowds, men, women, and children, and exclaimed over the pretty faces of the white women, their deep set eyes, their bonnets that jutted forward, their long necks which won for them the name ‘Long neck’ (‘A’ioeoe). Crowds gathered, and one and another exclaimed, ‘How white the women are!’…’What long necks! But pleasing to look at!’ ‘What pinched-bodies! What tight clothing above and wide below.’

On the next day Bingham pressed the King for a decision. “Let us proceed to Honolulu,” he said. “It is not wise for all of us to remain here in Kailua. Some of us should proceed to Oahu, where our work can bear great fruit and where we can be self-supporting.”

John Young and the dowager queen supported the missionaries in their request for permission to stay. Among their opponents were some of the chiefs and a scheming haole drinking companion of the King, a Frenchman named Jean B. Rives, who had somehow gained a strong influence over Liholiho. It is probable that the shrew Rives foresaw that the presence of the determined men of God would loosen his hold on the young, pleasure-loving King. He argued that the missionaries were dangerous, that they would try to seize the government, and that in any case their religion was not true Christianity. Later on in Honolulu, other foreigner’s traders and whalers would try to arouse the chiefs by charging that when the missionaries dug cellars under their houses they intended to store powder there in preparation for an armed uprising.

Finally the King made his decision. “You may go to Honolulu, where quarters will be provided. But the doctor and one of the ministers must remain here. You shall not send for more missionaries and you may stay here only one year.

Potter, Norris W. *Hawaii Our Island State*. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc, 1964.