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Barrels and Bibles: Conflict and Compromise Between Whalemen and Missionaries in the Sandwich Island, 1820-1860

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BARRELS AND BIBLES:

CONFLICT AND COMPROMISE BETWEEN WHALEMEN AND MISSIONARIES IN THE SANDWICH ISLANDS, 1820-1860

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the relationship between New England whalemen and American Protestant missionaries after each group traveled to the Sandwich Islands in the early nineteenth century. Arriving at virtually the same point in time, these two groups had very specific, but mutually irreconcilable goals in the islands. Whaling ships could be away from their home port for four years or more and created no shortage of weary sailors and battered gear. For whalemen, the Sandwich Islands were the locale where they restocked with supplies and reinvigorated their men with alcohol and women. Contrary to the debauchery sought by the whalemen while ashore, missionaries worked to instill the native population with Christian values in preparation for the coming of the Millennium. In an era of benevolent societies, these missionaries found the souls of Pacific islanders as their primary target for conversion. In an attempt to shield their new followers from sin, missionaries held disdain for anyone who brought values contrary to the Bible to the islands. These conflicting goals created tension between the whalemen and missionaries that often led to violent encounters.

This relationship manifested itself in a series of ways with physical and ideological conflict being the most visible. After successfully converting the Hawaiian monarchy and gaining influence over their decision-making, missionaries encouraged native government officials to enact laws barring sailors from partaking in alcohol and prostitutes. When whalemen came ashore after months at sea, they were outraged at to find that the influence of the missionaries robbed them of their long awaited time for excess and frequently rioted in protest.

The second facet of this study highlights the reasons for leniency or compromise given to the whalemen. Fear of alienating the American whaling fleet and forcing them to another port led to preferential treatment of whalemen in Hawaiian law. Because whalemen brought wealth to the islands, a unique relationship developed where missionaries and converted Hawaiians both disliked whalemen for their behavior, but became reliant on the whalemen for the capital they brought. The Sandwich Islands serve as a unique setting where it is possible to see exactly how whalemen and missionaries related to one another and how they impacted the native population. The spread of western culture, the introduction of Christianity, and the treatment of women are also themes that appear.

This study presents a more complete historical understanding of how these groups interacted and the implications associated with this contact. Recent maritime history has moved away from the "nautical" stigma of weights, guns, and tonnages and been more concerned with the social circumstances of the average sailor, or Jack Tar. This discussion continues this trend by increasing the awareness of Jack Tar as human rather than an industrial or military cog. Similarly, in addressing the topic of missionaries, a deep theological discussion is deferred in favor of and analysis of everyday living in the Sandwich Islands. This not only includes the interaction the missionaries had with the whalemen and the native population, but also discusses the way in which they were part of larger social trends of the nineteenth century.

The project covers the years from 1820, when the first missionaries and whalemen arrived, to 1860, when depleted stocks and the American Civil War decimated the American whale fishery. During this time, hundreds of ships and thousands of sailors

visited the ports of Honolulu and Lahaina. At the same time, missionaries sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) established and maintained its most successful foreign mission. Although some of the sources used show the biased and rhetoric of the missionary cause, they yield insight into the complex relationship that developed in the Sandwich Islands during this time period. They reveal that the cultural conflict between whalemen and missionaries was softened by the economic benefit of allowing the whalemen to visit the islands.

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I am also greatly indebted to the members of my committee who have both guided me and inspired me. To Dr. I.R. Mather, whose constant guidance and feedback on all things maritime have kept me accurate and well-read throughout my graduate studies. To Dr. Marie Schwartz, whose attention to structured writing and knowledge of Antebellum America has sharpened my critical eye. To Dr. Richard Pollnac, whose multi-disciplinary approach to scholarship has forced me the approach questions in alternative ways.

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PREFACE

This thesis was prepared within format set forth in the University of Rhode Island Graduate School Format Guidelines for theses and dissertations. Various chapters from this thesis have appeared as scholarship for classes taken while a graduate student and will be submitted for publication in the future.

Quotations in this thesis are kept in the form of those who produced them. "Sic" is used when a quotation is grammatically incorrect to let the reader know that it is not a typographical error. Where grammar and spelling are obviously incorrect or abbreviated, the use of "sic" is not employed. This is especially true with logbook entries that reflect the poor education and limited time of sailors aboard ships. In these cases, the form of the quotation was not altered because the original reveals more about the sailors.

The Hawaiian culture possessed no written language prior to the arrival of American missionaries in 1820. As missionaries applied a written language to Hawaiian, the spelling varied. When the meaning of the word is not obvious, the more accepted form of the word is placed in brackets. For instance, Honolulu could be spelled, Onoruru, Honoruru, or Onoruva. In this case, "Onoruva" will be followed by "Honolulu" in brackets. Additionally, the first time a Hawaiian language word is presented into the text, it will be placed in italics to alert the reader.

The use of the word "Hawaiian" will always refer to the ethnic group and not the geographic location. If the word Hawaii is used, it refers to the specific island. The use of the title Sandwich Islands will be used to refer to the modern day state known as Hawaii.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

In the early morning hours of April 20, 1845, Benjamin Doane kissed his mother on the cheek, bade his father good-bye, and headed toward the waterfront. A small tender waited to carry him to a mooring in the harbor where the whaleship *Athol* stood. In the previous months, Doane had assisted the other crew members and craftsmen in fitting out the brand new ship for a voyage that would last more than two years. The voyage would take them around the world and bring them to the distant reaches of the Pacific and to the fruitful whaling grounds off the coast of Japan. For Doane, a whaling voyage was a chance at adventure, the opportunity to get away from home, and the dream of enriching himself. If enough whales were captured and adequate quantities of oil and bone produced, he would leave the ship with enough money to buy his own farm or his own small vessel. The journey not only offered the promise of financial gain, but also a chance to explore the Polynesian islands, visit coastal South American cities, and see the Asian world. For these reasons, Benjamin Doane, filled with the excitement of what the voyage might bring, eagerly boarded the *Athol.* Yet at the same time he was filled with sadness at leaving his parents and sister behind.

At twenty-two years old, Doane was like many other sailors found on a whaling vessel in the early nineteenth century. He was young, had a limited amount of experience around the waterfront, and was eager to leave home. Doane was the youngest of four brothers who had all gone to sea. Perhaps he waited until he was twenty-two to take his first voyage because of the fate of his older siblings. All three of his older brothers had

shipped out, "never to return in life."[1] While any sea voyage in the nineteenth century had its share of hazards, a whaling voyage was one of the most dangerous upon which any mariner could embark. Long periods of monotony were excited by vicious storms near Cape Horn or in the Arctic Ocean, daring climbs atop the rigging to search for whales, and violent outbursts by harpooned whales while the men sat defenseless in small wooden boats away from the ship. Any of these challenges could have meant that, like his brothers, Benjamin Doane would not return home. Perhaps knowing this reality, Doane fought back his own emotion and walked away from his home without looking back.[2]

Despite the risk, many young men like Doane went to sea in whaling vessels during the antebellum era. The period between 1820 and 1860 was the golden age of American whaling and the majority of the world's whalers came from ports in the North Atlantic. Doane left from Halifax, but many others also came from coastal New England towns. These maritime enclaves sent vessels to sea each year in the hopes of enriching their citizenry with the sale of whale oil and whalebone. During the antebellum era young men from rural farms eagerly made their way to these ports and shipped out on any vessel that would take them. In their youth, they may have had heard stories of tropical islands where barely-clothed women welcomed each ship with promises of hedonistic delight. They may have also heard of the ruthless cannibals that waited ashore in the Pacific islands or of the merchants in Asia who peddled exotic goods. The experience they were met with was anything but that which they had envisioned.

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[1] Benjamin Doane, *Following the Sea: A Young Sailor's Account of the Seafaring Life in the mid-1800s.* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Nimbus Publishing Limited, 1987), 49.

[2] Ibid., 50.

Greenhand sailors quickly learned that whaleships were not a passport to the South Seas, but rather little more than floating factories.[3] Violent storms, unpalatable food, and cramped, dark quarters were only some of the circumstances that made life on a whaleship unpleasant. Yet, the most dangerous aspect of the voyage was not the weather or the food, but rather the act of whaling itself. Whether climbing the rigging or harpooning a whale, every task that sailors performed involved a high degree of danger. Doane recalled one incident when he and other crew members were hunting a whale off the coast of South America. After being harpooned, the whale turned on the small whaleboat that Doane and four other men were manning, hit the boat with its flukes, and left the men swimming for their lives to safety. Doane remembered hearing only "the crash of splinters and the cries of men" as he dove overboard.[4] In this instance, all the men survived because they were in temperate waters and in close proximity to help. However, when incidents like these occurred in Arctic whaling grounds, men often succumbed to the icy water in minutes.

When a whale was successfully killed, sailors would spend long hours, without sleep or rest, processing the valuable bone and oil. The blubber would be stripped from the carcass, boiled, cooled, and barreled to be sold when the ship returned. In order to minimize the risk of the oil spoiling, the refining process would continue non-stop until the entire whale had been stripped. The decks became slippery with oil and blubber, and the men dirty and tired from the long hours of processing. Only when the whale was completely stripped of all blubber and bone could the men retreat to the forecastle for

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[3] For a discussion of whaleships as factories and whalemen as industrial cogs, see Mary Molloy, "Whalemen's Perceptions of 'The High and Mighty Business of Whaling,'" *Log of Mystic Seaport* 41, no. 2(1990): 56-67. In this she argues that nineteenth-century whalemen were treated little better than their northern, urban counterparts who were laboring in factories.

[4] Doane, 105.

much-needed rest. The reality of a whaling voyage was not so much one of exploration and adventure, but rather tedium and danger.

Despite all of the danger and inconvenience, Benjamin Doane stayed committed to the voyage and was careful to comment not only on the voyage itself, but also on all of the ports he visited. In Peru, for example, he commented upon the instability in the government. In the Galapagos Islands, he amused himself with fishing and sealing. However, of all of the ports that Benjamin Doane visited during his voyage and all of the excitement that took place while he was whaling, none elicited a more peculiar discussion than Honolulu in the Sandwich Islands (modern day Hawaii).[5] Like all whaleships that sailed to the Pacific Ocean, the *Athol* made a planned stop at these islands. From the 1820s through the 1860s, the whale fleet used these islands as a place to replenish their supplies and unload some of their catch. Whether it meant bringing fresh meat or produce aboard the vessel, repairing sails or spars, or giving the men an opportunity to go ashore, the Sandwich Islands became a haven for whaleships and a source of income for the Islands. The seasonal nature of sailing ensured that the ships would return to port on a bi-annually.

Of all of the ports that vessels stopped at, the Sandwich Islands port of Honolulu was the busiest. When Doane arrived there in 1847, he described Honolulu as a "busy little place" full of "spouters" like himself.[6] Americans dominated the whalefishery throughout the mid-nineteenth century and most of the ships in the Sandwich Islands ports of Honolulu, Lahaina, and Hilo would have hailed from places like New Bedford,

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[5] The term "Sandwich Islands" is used throughout this discussion when referring to the modern state that is known as "Hawaii." The term "Hawaiian" will be used to refer to the native inhabitants of the islands. "Hawaii" refers to that specific island in the archipelago. "Sandwich Islanders" refers to the entire population of the islands which includes, native Hawaiians, foreign merchants, and Christian missionaries.

[6] Ibid., 120.

Massachusetts; Bristol, Rhode Island; or Sag Harbor, New York. Each ship carried between twenty-five and thirty young men, not unlike Doane, who came ashore to escape the confines, labor, and dangers of seafaring life. Doane noted that there were usually ten to twenty whaleships in port at any time, but the numbers could increase tenfold between the whaling seasons. The town was small with a few dry goods stores and boarding houses to accommodate travelers. Doane noted the section of town where the American missionaries lived, describing their "well-built" houses surrounded by verandahs and tall hedges.[7]

When Doane described the geographical and cultural setting of Honolulu he took particular note of the laws that he encountered there. Once ashore, he noticed a strange reality that existed in the Sandwich Islands. American Protestant missionaries were not only part of the social landscape, they seemed to dominate it politically as well as culturally. This manifested itself, in part, in the passage of municipal laws that reflected their own Christian moral standards. Although the missionaries had been in the islands only twenty years, Doane's description tells how much Christianity had taken hold. The *Athol* had only been in port for a short while before the Reverend Samuel C. Damon made a call to the whaleship and appealed to the sailors to worship at his church.[8] Damon, the pastor of the Seamen's Bethel, was only part of the strict religious presence in Honolulu. Far more influential than Damon were the missionaries who represented the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). They concerned themselves less with the welfare of sailors than with the conversion of the native

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

population. Their influence created a God-fearing people in the native population who closely adhered to the teachings of the Bible.

Although the missionaries in Honolulu worried primarily about their native pupils, they feared how the whalemen might negatively impact the work that they were doing. After months, or even years at sea, sailors in ports all around the world searched for women and booze when they came ashore. While it is safe to say sailors did not universally act in this way, there is enough documentary evidence to support the idea that many whalemen did, in fact, indulge in this behavior. However, some officers and seamen, like Doane, adhered to Victorian principles and temperance values. Victorian society demanded that men and women follow strict gender roles and maintain values such as chastity and temperance. While all of these sailors would have been aware of these expectations, the fact that many chose not to follow them was the source of the conflict with the missionaries.

One of the most revered of these Victorian values was temperance. Throughout the nineteenth century, temperance and abstinence societies were formed that sought to curb or eliminate the use of alcohol. Sailors were one of the most visible targets of these groups and by the time Doane reached the Sandwich Islands, the temperance sentiment had as well. While visiting, Benjamin Doane encountered what he called "the peculiar liquor law of Honolulu."[9] The law dictated that the sale of alcohol or hard spirits was not altogether outlawed, but the restrictions were such that it made it nearly impossible for sailors to buy or sell hard alcohol. These laws were passed in order to deter drunkenness, not only among the sailors, but also to keep their negative influence from impacting the native population. The fear amongst the missionaries and native lawmakers was that

[9] Ibid., 121.

sailors' drunkenness would have a negative influence on the newly Christianized Hawaiian people.

Although the laws were enacted to curb drunkenness among sailors, a peculiar reality existed that showed that they did not work as intended. The inhabitants of Honolulu, whether transient or permanent, did not always exist in the quiet, God-fearing manner that the lawmakers intended to create. As Doane observed:

> With the crews of a dozen whaleships ashore at once, a great deal of drunkenness was seen. In fact, all the drunkenness there was visible, for the liquor had been drunk in the street—not from glasses, with water on the side, the bottle passed from mouth to mouth and the stuff was swallowed neat, till a docile, simple-hearted knot of men were transformed into a set of howling savages such as the 'King of the Cannibal Islands,' in his best days never dreamed of.[10]

Despite the laws, the waterfront in Honolulu was clearly a place for outlandish behavior. Sailors lined the streets, drinking from bottles and creating discord with their drunken rants, raucous laughter, and foolish brawling. Doane's inability to explain why the laws were not enforced warrants further exploration.

Benjamin Doane's experience was similar to countless other sailors who traveled the Pacific and came ashore in the Sandwich Islands in the nineteenth century. By the mid-1820s, the influence of the missionaries was well-known among travelers and sailors and they were quickly learning about the laws that prohibited the use of hard alcohol and women from coming aboard ships. Yet despite the reluctance of the crews to observe the laws, the whaleships continued to flock to the islands to refit and give their men shore leave. The reality of the relationship that developed between whalemen, missionaries, the native population, and foreign residents seems to have been pragmatic. A near symbiotic association developed whereby the whalemen were allowed to act as they

[10] Ibid., 122.

pleased as long as they kept visiting the islands with their change-purses open. Despite the objections of the Hawaiians and the missionaries about the whalemen's shore-side behavior, they continued to welcome the whalemen to the islands for the economic benefits brought by these sailors.

This delicate relationship resulted in conflicting views among the islands' population whether whalemen should be welcomed. Missionaries from Boston and whalers from New Bedford arrived in the Sandwich Islands at virtually the same point in time and despite the cultural conflict in which they were engaged, were forced to find common ground. The arrival of whaleships, the influence of missionaries on local government, and the huge economic growth of the Sandwich Islands in the 1820s and 1830s all play a role in explaining the paradox of whalemen being simultaneously rejected and accepted by local inhabitants. The missionaries were charged with converting the native population and preparing the world for the coming of the Millennium. Even though whalemen disrupted this goal with their womanizing and drinking, they were welcomed because of the economic rewards they brought. As a result, Hawaiian officials, under the influence of New England missionaries, and foreign settlers chose to look away from the poor morals of the whalemen and allow the fleet to visit their harbors. A symbiotic relationship was created giving whaling vessels a place to refit and sailors a place to act out, while the local population—foreign or native—benefited from the influx of capital which was reinvested it in the growth of their society. This dynamic has been previously unexplored, but is a critical to understanding the place of whalemen in the nineteenth century.

The complex relationship that developed between the whalemen, missionaries, and Hawaiian people involves a series of subtopics. By looking at each of these groups and their goals separately, it is easier to understand the interaction between them. Whalemen, missionaries, and Hawaiians all had very different lifestyles and the clash of these was at the root of the conflict. By tracing some of the riots, protests, and conflicts that occurred, it will be easier to understand just how these sailors and missionaries came to be so far from their home only to fight with each other. This conflict manifested itself in many ways and ranged from letters of objection by the missionaries to full-scale riots against the passage of a law. After the root of conflict and the form it took is discussed, the focus will shift to the compromise and leniency that was extended toward whalemen in the Sandwich Islands. This connects directly with the social, cultural, and economic development of the Sandwich Islands. It is only through the analysis of this compromise that the story of American whalemen, missionaries, and native Hawaiians will be made more complete.

Historians have noted the relationship that existed between the whalemen and the shore dwellers in the Sandwich Islands and, to a degree, have emphasized the conflict that took place. The volumes of literature that the missionaries produced give historians access to everyday life in the Sandwich Islands, but are very biased. This fact is reflected in the historiography and whalemen are most often categorized as drunken womanizers. Until recently, historians have only focused on whalemen in terms of the work that they performed and have done little to analyze the way they lived while ashore. The problem with the historiography concerning whalemen is that it largely focuses on the nautical aspects of the industry. In other words, historians have used traditional

maritime history to bolster the picture of a nineteenth-century sailor and the chores he attended to each day. Volumes are dedicated to the description of whale biology, the construction and dimensions of whaling vessels, the hunt for whales, and the processing of whale oil.[11] However, neither historians writing about missionaries, nor those interested in maritime history have fully explored the conflict and compromise that took place in the Sandwich Islands.

Recent, social-oriented studies too often focus on a single voyage or small aspects of a whaleman's life.[12] Scholars have chronicled the lives of nineteenth-century whalemen in many ways and their interpretations allow the reader to understand the complexities of the industry and the behavior of sailors. Topics such as ritual aboard vessels, over-exploitation of whalemen, and mutiny are seen now well understood. Historians have also noted the place of missionaries in the Sandwich Islands and viewed them in the context of the religious revivalism of the nineteenth century. Another approach by historians is to look at the specific interaction between whalemen and missionaries in order to analyze the relationship that existed between these two very different groups. Tones of commercialism and colonialism weave their way into the story of the Sandwich Islands leaving a complex web of relationships between sailors and Sandwich Islands inhabitants.

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[11] For explanations about whaling as an industry, see William M. Davis, *Nimrod of the Sea or The American Whaleman* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat Co., 1926); Foster Rhea Dulles, *Lowered Boats: A Chronicle of American Whaling* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1933); Richard Ellis, *Men and Whales* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); Jim Murphy, *Gone A-Whaling: The Lure of the Sea and the Hunt for the Great Whale* (New York: Clarion Books, 1998); and Edouard A. Stackpole, *The Sea Hunters: The New England Whalemen During Two Centuries: 1635-1835* (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1953).

[12] The most extreme examples of micro-histories are Joan Druett, *In the Wake of Madness: The Murderous Voyage of the Whaleship* Sharon (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2003) and Gregory Gibson, *Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship* Globe (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2002).

In order to frame how historians have analyzed the behavior of whalemen in the Sandwich Islands, their shore-side activities must be viewed. The most comprehensive overview of sailors ashore in the nineteenth century is Stan Hugill's book *Sailortown*. In this account, Hugill follows sailors—who were commonly referred to as Jack Tar—ashore into the brothels and grogshops of the world's ports. Sailortowns were seaside neighborhoods housing seamen and offering them every opportunity to spend their money on booze, prostitutes, and gaming. Of particular interest is Hugill's discussion of the sailortowns found on Pacific islands. According to Hugill, Honolulu was a "whalers' paradise, with a lot of opportunities for a wild time ashore with the booze and the native *wahines*." The extended period of time a sailor spent away from land encouraged him to "get rid of his 'Artic Virginity'" when he finally came ashore.[13] As a result, Hugill gives the traditional picture of Jack Tar as being at the mercy of his own hedonistic desires and shady grog shop owners. While Hugill provides the reader with a sketch of all the possible vices sailors could encounter, he never gives an assessment as to why the sailors behaved the way they did, how the local populations were impacted by this behavior, or if contrary evidence suggests that some sailors acted outside the stereotype of Jack Tar.

Other historians, have addressed whalemen in the Sandwich Islands more specifically. In *Islands and Empires*, Ernest R. Dodge highlights how sailors impacted and influenced Pacific Islands and how the local populations were affected by their arrival. In his discussion of whalers ashore, Dodge writes about the conflicts between whalemen and missionaries. The arrival of missionaries in the first quarter of the nineteenth century saw attempts to restrict the social freedoms that made Honolulu appealing to sailors. Dodge argues that "conflicts between whalers and missionaries

[13] Stan Hugill, *Sailortown* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1967), 272.

were constantly erupting. The sailors as usual spent their money on rum, women, and occasionally souvenirs."[14] Although Dodge's work supports the traditional view of sailors as drunken womanizers, the work is particularly valuable because it places the sailors and this kind of behavior specifically in the Sandwich Islands. Dodge focuses on the extent to which the inhabitants interacted with the sailors contending that, "whalers almost certainly contributed more white blood to the population" than did other demographic groups.[15] Here Dodge refers to the fact that prostitutes regularly visited whaleships when they came into port. Ultimately, however, Dodge fails to question the social impetus behind sailor behavior, how complicit the native and missionary population was in allowing it to occur, and how the native population was impacted.

Margaret Creighton has most extensively addressed the question of the social behavior of whalemen and the underlying cultural reasons for it. In *Rites and Passages*, Creighton uses gender roles and spatial divisions to define the place of sailors in the nineteenth century. She argues that the behavior of the whalemen was due, in large part, to the tough conditions they worked under, the long periods of time they spent away from their loved ones, and a need to live up to Victorian ideas of masculinity. While she addresses the lifestyle of sailors aboard and the rituals associated with it, one of her most provocative arguments centers on sailors' behavior ashore. Creighton maintains that strenuous working conditions caused whalemen to develop strong fraternal bonds. Once ashore, however, social and ethnic diversity kept them from being a cohesive group of ruffians. She notes that "Community might suit an entire ship's company when faced with a whale or a gale at sea, and collectivism certainly characterized the forecastle at

[14] Ernest Dodge, *Islands and Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 82.
[15] Ibid., 84.

times, but many of the bonds that had linked men in shared interest dissolved ashore."[16] Creighton does acknowledge sailors had the capacity to create turmoil, but her view "challenges especially the image of whalers as a socially uniform group given to lawless rampage."[17] Despite the fact the whalemen did not universally act lawlessly, Creighton highlights the fact that the missionaries allied themselves with the native population in curbing the sailors' behavior. Overall, Creighton develops provocative conclusions about how Victorian gender roles influenced behavior on whaling vessels and whalers ashore, yet she misinterprets the complex social stratification they found when they came ashore in the Sandwich Islands. Furthermore, her study largely focuses on the rituals whalemen undertook at sea. The result is that her discussion of the whalemen and their behavior in such places as Honolulu is rushed and incomplete.

Briton Busch's historical work has focused more directly on the interaction between whalemen and missionaries. In his article, "Whalemen, Missionaries, and Christianity," Busch relies heavily on the documents of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in order to trace the conduct of missionaries and whalemen in the Pacific Ocean. The ABCFM sent Christian missionaries throughout the world in the nineteenth century in an attempt to convert non-Christian population. Busch maintains that despite differences, whalemen and missionaries adhered to the same Yankee-Christian upbringing. This meant that the missionaries and whalemen shared a hatred for what they perceived to be the savage ways of the native population. It also

[16]Margaret Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling, 1830-1870* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 146.
[17] Ibid., 140.

meant that these two American groups respected fair trade and commercial interest.[18] This point is unique in the discussion of sailors in the nineteenth century and is paramount in understanding the economic common-ground that was ultimately established. The problem with Busch's argument, however, is that it is too sweeping given the limitations of his evidence. He often makes a case for the whole group of Pacific islands based simply on one example from one port. Additionally, Busch implies the main reason whalemen and missionaries tolerated each other was because they had a mutual disdain for natives. This fails to recognize that the two groups interacted with the native population in very different ways. Busch's analysis may not be flawlessly executed, but his assertion that there was a certain amount of common ground between missionaries and whalemen makes a novel contribution to the historiography of the Sandwich Islands.

Religious historians and anthropologists have also sought to categorize the social relationship that developed in the Sandwich Islands, though to much less of an extent. In *Errand to the World*, William Hutchinson traces the rise of missionary work in the nineteenth century and some of the issues that the religious leaders faced in other parts of the world. Even though missionaries founded perhaps the most successful mission on the shores of the Sandwich Islands, they found it difficult to keep all parties pacified. Focusing specifically on the Sandwich Islands, Hutchinson states that success was often wrought with "peril."[19] The ABCFM demanded that they convert the native population, but also wanted the missionaries to stay clear of political influence. Their success as

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[18] Briton C. Busch, "Whalemen, Missionaries and the Practice of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century Pacific," *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 27 (1993), 92.

[19] William Hutchinson, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 69.

carriers of the Christian faith intertwined them with the political nature of the Hawaiian people and left them the object of scorn among outsiders, including whalemen. While Hutchinson's assessment extends beyond theology, it would benefit from analyzing some of the perceptions others had about the missionaries.

Anthropologists Patrick Vinton Kirch and Marshall Sahlins have authored a multi-volume ethnography that defines the culture of the islands' original inhabitants. In doing so, they show yet another perspective through which to understand the nineteenth-century Sandwich Islands. One major problem with the historiography to date is that it has been largely ethnocentric. American whalemen, businessmen, and missionaries are made the center of attention; the Hawaiian population is often neglected. Historians are plagued by the fact that no written record exists in the Sandwich Island prior to the arrival of the missionaries in the early nineteenth century. Oral tradition was the only means by which the Hawaiians recorded their past. This is where Kirch and Sahlins add greatly to the discussion. Their analysis of physical remains and oral tradition frame the Hawaiian culture as highly developed and autonomous. By tracing the social structures of the Hawaiian people and the strength with which these structures were entrenched, Kirch and Sahlins give the Hawaiian people a voice in the story.[20]

Overall, historians and anthropologists have failed to adequately explain the relationship between sailors, missionaries, and the Hawaiian people in the first half of the nineteenth century. This complex story involves discussions of whalemen as over-exploited workers, missionaries as carriers of ideology, and Hawaiians as a group struggling to adapt to the spread of Western culture. The social milieu is further

[20] Patrick V. Kirch and Marshall Sahlins, *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

compounded by European interests, colonial expansionistic ideas, and ecological concerns. Despite all of this social upheaval, historians have failed to adequately explain the economic common ground that whalemen, missionaries, and Hawaiians found.

By expanding the scope of the historiography, it is possible to gain a richer understanding of the shore-side life of nineteenth century whalemen. Culturally, the whalemen clashed with both the Hawaiian population and the Protestant missionaries. But it is not adequate to assume all sailors conducted themselves in the same manner, that the Hawaiian population universally accepted Christianity, or that the missionaries were not able to adapt their goals. The larger question to consider is why the whalemen were encouraged to visit the Sandwich Islands despite the objection of these residents? It is only through a careful discussion of the cultural conflict and the economic resolution that a more complete understanding of nineteenth-century whalemen in the Sandwich Islands can be gained.

Chapter 2:

Hawaiians and Western Cultural and Economic Influence

In order to analyze cultural conflict and economic compromise that occurred between whalemen, missionaries, and Hawaiians a deeper understanding is needed about Hawaiian culture and the impact of western ideology upon it. The social, religious, and political forms of the Hawaiian people reveal a complex and vibrant culture prior to western contact. The arrival of traders and explorers from the United States and Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, along with the unification of the islands under a single ruler contributed to the changing social landscape. A polytheistic religion with strict codes of worship that kept the Hawaiian people under tight control was replaced by an equally stringent Christian faith. Political and social institutions enforced ideas about land ownership and kinship and imposed a stratified class structure upon the Hawaiians.

The arrival of western influence in the Sandwich Islands and the impact it had on the Hawaiian people begins with Captain James Cook's exploration of the islands in the 1770s and extends through the arrival of American sandalwood traders in the 1810s. This time period saw early western visitors impact the islands in a profound way. Whether trading guns and ammunition with chiefs or entering into lucrative trade deals with the islanders, the early contact set some precedents that were to be followed throughout the nineteenth century. Relationships were formed, treaties were signed, and political and economic interaction grew steadily. The influx of goods, people, and ideology impacted the existing structures of Hawaiian society.

The Sandwich Islands occupy a geographically unique area in the Pacific Ocean. Largely volcanic in nature, they could be termed as a crossroads of the Pacific. These islands were untouched by western influence until the late eighteenth century, when British mariner Captain James Cook found them largely by accident. The physical nature of the Sandwich Islands is one of both geographic isolation and of plentiful natural resources. The archipelago consists of eight major volcanic islands - Hawaii, Maui, Kahoolawee, Lanai, Molokai, Oahu, Kauai, and Niihau - accompanied by smaller, uninhabited islands. The island chain stretches for nearly two thousand miles along a southeast to northwest line between the twentieth and thirtieth parallel north. With deep harbors, fertile coastal plains, and dense interior forests, the Islands possess natural resources enough to support a large population. When Cook arrived in the Sandwich Islands in the late eighteenth century, the population was estimated to be as high as three-hundred thousand inhabitants.[1] They cultivated plants such as taro, sweet potato, and various gourds. Additionally, the Hawaiians were an ocean-going people who used advanced fishing and navigational technology to supplement their diet. Among the archaeological remains that can be found on the islands presently are the remains of complex fish ponds and weirs. The Hawaiian fishers used these stone structures in harvesting and farming fish for the population. Additionally, the use of various types of dugout canoes and outrigger vessels allowed the Hawaiian people to travel to offshore fishing grounds. As such, the population grew to such a size that it put pressure on the natural resources of the islands.

[1] Kirch and Sahlins, 4. Kirsch and Sahlins give the population estimate in the 1770s at 300,000 to 350,000. The authors note that some estimates have been presented as high as 800,000, but dismiss these as unrealistic.

While the geographic setting of the islands does much toward explaining the everyday existence of the Hawaiian people, far more relevant to this discussion are the religious and political institutions that guided the large population. The Hawaiian people are believed to have arrived in the archipelago via other Polynesian island groups. As such, they had a very similar language and religion as found in other Pacific Ocean islands. Lacking a written language, most of what is known about their early religion and social institutions is a result of oral tradition and reports of early western settlers. In the context of this discussion, the two most important factors to understand about the Hawaiian people are the religious structures and the unification of the islands under a single ruler. These had the greatest direct impact, not only on the whalemen and missionaries, but also on all foreign visitors to the islands.

The Hawaiian religion is relevant because it played such a large role in the conversion of the people to Christianity. The missionaries were able to draw parallels between the Hawaiian belief system and Christianity that helped them to soften the process of conversion. No American more completely understood the traditions of the Hawaiian people than did missionary Hiram Bingham. As the head of the first Protestant mission sent to the Sandwich Islands in 1819, Bingham gained an understanding of the existing Hawaiian religion. In his memoir, Bingham uses his skewed perception of the Hawaiian people to explain how they were following false gods and improper morals. Bingham explains the Hawaiian's belief in their creation in this way:

> Tradition represents the Hawaiian race as having sprung from two distinct sources; the two original occupants, Kahiko (the ancient) and his wife, Kupulanakahau, and the first two immigrants Kukalaniehu, and his wife Kahakauakoko. Wakea, the son of the former, and Papa, the daughter of the latter, became the progenitors of the Hawaiian race. Papa was considered a goddess, and it was said of her that she brought forth the islands, and that an offspring of her head became a god. Wakea

is regarded as the patriarch of the whole tribe.[2]

Bingham explains that the Hawaiian religion involved complex rituals, the worship of multiple gods, and that it centered on nature. Hawaiian religion was polytheistic and relied on a gradation of gods with the four major ones being: *Kane, Ku, Lono,* and *Kanaloa* .[3] Each god represented a different and not necessarily constant aspect of the natural world. By using stories like the one Bingham relays it is easy to see how oral tradition of the Hawaiian people served to keep and enrich their vibrant religious history.

Along with the oral tradition and the stories of the gods, came elaborate ceremonies and rituals. At the center of these rituals were influential priests who acted as intermediaries between the gods and the people. The priests performed their rituals at ornate stone platforms or altars known as *heiau.* Inside the walls of the heiau were religious objects, houses, and other structures used in the ceremonies with the altars being at a place of prominence. The heiau were used for a variety of purposes from human sacrifice, to asking for a successful fishing voyage, to pleading for a god's blessing in war. Heiau varied in importance with the most elaborate being associated with the higher gods. The existence of many gods and the highly organized fashion in which the Hawaiians worshipped is important because it serves as the backdrop for the great change that the missionaries brought with them. Additionally, it serves to show the rich cultural heritage and the independence of the Hawaiian people.[4]

Bingham's description is also important is because of the social implications that came from the story of Wakea and Papa. In the Hawaiian tradition, Wakea consulted a

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[2] Hiram Bingham, A *Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands.* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), 20.

[3] Ralph Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1778-1854.* (Honolulu: The University of Hawaii Press, 1947), 7.

[4] Ibid., 7-10.

priest as to ask how he could "commit incest with his first-born daughter, and escape the resentment of Papa, his wife."[5] Bingham describes the story of Papa and Wakea and the birth of tabu:

> This gave occasion to the *tabu* system, the first prohibition of which forbids women the pleasure of eating with their husbands...The jealous Papa called the husband to account. Upon this he was angry, and forbade her various kinds of food; such as in modern times have been *tabu* to women; degraded her—spit in her face, and put her away and made a wife of his daughter...and hence the sanction of the separation at pleasure, of husbands and wives, and of the grossest pollution, incest, and fraud.[6]

Tabu became the central means by which rulers and priests were able to extend their power. On the simplest level, tabu means the prohibition of an article or behavior. The idea of tabu is the most important and central belief in the Hawaiian religious and political tradition. Understanding how it came to be and how it was later used gives the proper perspective for understanding the laws that ruled the lives of the Hawaiians and later the whalemen.

Although Bingham's disdain for the Hawaiian belief system is evident, it also reveals the origins of Hawaiian social order. The secondary role of women is shown through the story of Papa and Wakea. As a result of Papa's jealousy, Hawaiian women were not only kept from eating with their husbands, they were also prohibited from eating certain kinds of food. Through this story, it is easy to see how the religious beliefs of the Hawaiian people helped to reinforce the horrific treatment of women under the tabu system. Additionally, it reveals something about sexuality among the Hawaiian people. Polygamy was noted among the Hawaiians, as was incest. Even though this is only a

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[5] Bingham, 20.
[6] Ibid.

story in the Hawaiian religion, it reveals much about harsh treatment of women in this culture.

As foreigners visited the islands throughout the nineteenth century, tabu became an obsession in such things as diaries, journals, and letters. Before the missionaries gained influence over the souls of Hawaiian population, tabu was seen as the primary means by which the Hawaiian hierarchy abused their power. But it was not only the Hawaiian rulers who acknowledged the power of tabu and used it to their benefit. Once the mission gained influence, outside observers claimed that Bingham and others used tabu for their own benefit. The very institution of tabu and the way in which it was used by the Hawaiians made it subject to criticism and speculation. It encapsulated both political and religious empowerment and was largely dictated solely at the discretion of those in power. In an account of the Sandwich Islands mission, missionary Charles Stewart described how tabu compared with the Anglo-Christian tradition:

> The tabu, though intimately connected with the services of religion, did not consist of any fixed and unchanging observances—but was uncertain and arbitrary in its requisitions. It was an instrument of power, in the possession of the priests and king, which might be made to assume any shape, which interest, passion, or even caprice, might dictate, and to extend to all things civil as well as religious. And every breach of tabu being punishable with death, it was a system under which the people were governed as with a rod of iron.[7]

Stewart's account implies corruption and abuse by the priests and chiefs. However, he highlights another important aspect of the tabu; the fact that it could be punishable by death. This makes it much more a guideline for the Hawaiian people to follow. Strict observance could mean the difference between life and death. It is under this structure

[7] Stewart, C.S., *Journal of a Residence in the Sandwich Islands.* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970), 33-34.

that laws or tabus were eventually passed regulating such things as drinking and prostitution.

Along with religion, the political structure and the unification of the Hawaii Kingdom played a role in defining the Sandwich Islands prior to western arrival. Something approaching a caste system was in place in the islands prior to the eighteenth century. There was a hierarchy of chiefs who were land owners and an underclass of people who were tied to the land. The chiefs divided up the land and, although the Hawaiian culture was fairly homogenous, frequent conflicts arose over control of each district and each island. It was not until after the arrival of foreigners that one the chiefs, Kamehameha, was able to unify the various islands into one Hawaiian Kingdom. His control over the chiefs and religious leaders and his influence on newly arrived foreigners allowed him to become the most powerful chief of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

One important aspect of Kamehameha's rise to power is understanding exactly how chiefs functioned in society. At the top of the Hawaiian socio-political scale were the chiefs who controlled a given parcel of land and its inhabitants. These chiefs, known as *ali'i*, gained their power by the amount of land that they controlled and their close association with the priests and the gods. Whether controlling an entire island or a small parcel of land, the ali'i status gave these chiefs power over the people and the power to enforce tabus. That being said, ali'i were not considered equal amongst themselves. Like the nobility of medieval Europe, there were lesser and greater chiefs. At the top was the *alli-aimoku*. This was the chief ruler of a given district, island, or sub-kingdom. He had the right to divide up lands and give them to lesser ali'i. Throughout the time period

before the arrival of the westerners this system was in place and it gave a structured hierarchy to the islands.[8]

The land that was segmented among the ali'i played a few specific functions. The most important function is that the segmentation served as a helped to bolster the power of the chiefs. The system that existed framed the ali'i as eaters of the land. As such, the chiefs were the consumers and the lower classes were the producers.[9] More than anything, the land served as a means to support the people and it was worked the by the lowest segment of the population, known as the *makaainana*. As in many societies, the subjugated class faced harsh treatment and arduous work. The life of the common people:

> was that of subjection to the chiefs, compelled to do their heavy tasks, burdened and oppressed, some even to death. The life of the people was one of patient endurance of yielding to the chiefs to purchase their favor...If the people were slack in doing the chief's work, they were expelled from their lands, or even put to death.[10]

This passage sums up nicely the entire social and religious structure in place in the Hawaiian Islands prior to the arrival of the westerners. A ruling class of chiefs and priests used religious vehicles, such as tabu, to subjugate a common class of people. Religion and tabus were intertwined with the ideas of survival and politics.

The distinction between rulers and ordinary people was not the only societal divide on the islands. Below the makaainana there was also a class of slaves, known as *kauwa*.[11] There was a difference in the group as compared to other classes because they were not bound to the soil like serfs, but rather to the service of specific chiefs. This further stratified the class structure of the islands and gives credence to the idea of a highly

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[8] Kuykendall, 8-10.

[9] Kirsch and Sahlins, 27.

[10] David Malo, *Hawaiian Antiquities,* translated by N.B. Emerson (Honolulu, 1903), 87-88. For more discussion on David Malo's account, see Kirch and Sahlins, 27-35 and Kuykendall, 8-12.

[11] Kuykendall, 9.

developed but segmented society. Chiefs ruled over commoners, men subjugated women, and tabu enforced the laws of the society.

Because they were relatively isolated from each other geographically, the kingdoms found within the islands were largely un-unified. Kamehameha I brought cohesion amongst the islands and rulers and he became the dominant figure at the center of Hawaiian interactions with early settlers. Kamehameha was present when James Cook and the first British explorers arrived and negotiated an early diplomatic framework with the British. Similarly, when the first fur and sandalwood traders came to the islands in the early nineteenth century, it was the shrewd business dealings of Kamehameha that allowed them to harvest sandalwood and trade it in Asia. These actions by the king paved the way for relations with Europeans and Americans throughout the nineteenth century.

Because Kamehameha is the dominant figure in the discussion of the Hawaiian Kingdom, he is relevant to this discussion in two ways. First, he was able to unify the majority of the Sandwich Islands under one ruler. Even though he gained power through both dynastic and military conflict, the details of his rise are less important than the actions he took once there. The unification allowed for a stronger central government and control over the people. Second, is the way in which Kamehameha dealt with the arrival of foreign powers to the islands. By not only acknowledging, but also engaging foreigners as part of his own government, he established a precedent of using European and American advisors that was to be followed throughout the nineteenth century.

Kamehameha's rise was largely influenced by his use of new arms brought by westerners and careful military planning. By 1795, Kamehameha was able to gain

control of most of the archipelago by using a relatively small force that was able to quickly move between the islands using outrigger canoes. At the same time he was enjoying military success, Kamehameha benefited from the deaths of a few major chiefs which allowed him to wrest power more easily. During the summer of 1795, Kamehameha moved first to Maui and then to Oahu where he was able to gain control of both islands. Victories at both of these places allowed him to unite the largest parts of the Hawaiian population under one ruler. Throughout the next decade, Kamehameha continued to solidify his control over the islands and gain control of some of the lesser islands as well.[12]

Once in power, Kamehameha employed some foreign advisors in his government affairs, but western influence on political affairs extends much deeper than a white man being named ali'i. The interaction of between Hawaiians and outsiders was largely defined by how the existing social, economic, and political structures were interpreted and altered by western actions. In January of 1778, British explorer James Cook arrived in the Sandwich Islands with his two ships, *Resolution* and *Discovery*. Cook was sailing throughout the Pacific taking survey of the islands, their geography, and the people who inhabited them. The goal of his expedition was not only to explore Pacific Islands, but also to find an entrance to the Northwest Passage by way of the Pacific Ocean. Cook happened upon a previously uncharted group of islands which were dominated by towering mountains. He named this archipelago after the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich.

Upon Cook's arrival in the Sandwich Islands, the native population speculated as to whether these ships brought with them the god Lono. Lono was one of the chief gods of

[12] Ibid., 48.

the Hawaiian people who was associated with the *makahiki* season. During this season, wars were suspended and taxes were collected throughout the islands. The imagery associated with Lono was that of a pole with a crosspiece with leis hanging from it.[13] Because the construction of an eighteenth century naval vessel closely resembled some this Hawaiian imagery, the natives welcomed Cook as the god Lono. The mast, with the sails hanging off the yardarms was nearly identical to the representations that the Hawaiians used when worshipping Lono. The sailors were welcomed ashore by the Hawaiian people and given the necessary provisions needed to continue their voyage. Cook needed to get his ships northward to the Arctic Circle during the summer months to search for the passage. As such, the interaction with the native population was limited, but cordial.

Upon his return the following year (after exploring the Bering Sea), Cook was showered with gifts. He and his men stayed in the islands for a time graciously accepting the attention of natives who still thought him to be a god. After spending some time there, exploring the islands, recording the geographical layout, and enjoying the gifts of the native population, Cook's ships departed. However, he was forced to return to the islands when one of his ships was damaged in a storm. The return to the islands went against the behavior of a Hawaiian god. The Hawaiians maintained that Lono would not have overstayed his welcome and then returned in haste to ask for additional supplies. Although they were able to take a broken spar ashore and repair it, the relationship between the British and the islanders became increasingly malevolent. A group of Hawaiians stole one of the tenders to Cook's ship. This angered the British and only served to heighten the tensions between the two groups. When Cook went ashore to

[13] Ibid., 8.

demand the return of stolen goods, a fight broke out between the Hawaiians and the British. Shots were fired upon the Hawaiians and Cook took a blow to the head that left him dead, and his body kept captive by the Hawaiians. He was still given the funeral of a great king or god, but the relations had been strained and the British had no choice but to leave. Cook's men were able to finish the repairs to his ship and return to England, bringing with them the accounts of his voyage. These accounts and the story of his ultimate demise were circulated throughout Europe and America, and perhaps no other place yielded so much interest as did the visit to the Sandwich Islands.

After Cook's ships returned to England and the men reported what they had encountered in the Pacific, the British began to appreciate the strategic and economic importance of the Sandwich Islands. Their location in the middle of the Pacific would be very advantageous for any country that could gain influence there. British explorers and naval personnel continued to visit the islands through the closing years of the eighteenth century. One of Cook's crew members, who later commanded a ship to the islands was British mariner George Vancouver. Vancouver had been exploring the Pacific Ocean in the 1790s when he spoke to the Hawaiian chiefs. Vancouver was instructed by the British government to continue the work that Cook had started and to also create diplomatic ties with the Hawaiian leaders. On February 25, 1794, he succeeded in fulfilling his orders. In fact, he went well beyond what the British government had expected of him, for it was on this day that Kamehameha ceded the lands of the Sandwich Islands to Vancouver and the British Empire. While there may have been a misunderstanding about whether this was a true cession or whether the Hawaiians simply sought the protection of the British government, the act of cooperation instead of confrontation defines the protocol with

which the Hawaiian officials acted throughout the time period in question. In the British version of the event, Kamehameha handed over the islands to the British in so that they could be considered a protectorate. However, the Hawaiian version of the story maintains that "Kamehameha did not mean to give away the land but only to ask aid for Hawaii."[14] At this time Kamehameha was only in control of the single island of Hawaii and Vancouver's treaty did not apply to the entire Sandwich Islands chain. Vancouver's treatment by the chiefs on the other islands "lacked the confidential quality that characterized his relations with Kamehameha."[15] As a whole, the Sandwich Islanders noticed the need to cooperate and benefit from interactions with western powers.

After the visits of the initial explorers, curiosity about the Sandwich Islands grew and non-military westerners started to travel there. Along with stories of pagan rituals and cannibalism, fur and timber traders noted the invaluable resources the Pacific Islands offered. The sandalwood trade predated the arrival of the missionaries and whalemen by about two decades, yet the contact these men had with the native population displays how westerners impacted and influenced the Hawaiian people. The culture of the Hawaiian people contrasted greatly with the western ideology they were used to. Despite, this, a lively economic partnership was created.

One of the most visible ways sailors impacted the islands was through sexual contact with Hawaiian women. Sailors were known to have sought out prostitutes in every port they visited, but it is unclear if the Polynesian people had a clear idea about prostitution or if this was a western construct. Either way, American and British traders who visited the islands set a precedent of westerners as womanizers. The women the sailors

[14] Ibid., 41.
[15] Ibid., 44.

encountered on the islands contrasted heavily with the Victorian women that had left behind in the United States and England. While the women at home would be expected to adhere to virtues such as modesty and chastity, the Hawaiian women they encountered danced provocatively and wore little clothing. This enamored many of the sailors who visited the islands and sexual contact, whether mutual or in the form of prostitution, became commonplace.

The form that the sexual relations took on was referred to as prostitution by most outside observers. Many of the sailors had wives at home in North Atlantic ports, but the arrival of a ship in the Sandwich Islands meant the arrival of women aboard. One chronicler noted, "Almost every man on board took a native woman for his wife while the vessel remained, the men thinking it an honor, or for their gain, as they got many presents of iron, beads, or buttons."[16] This account implies that the normal form of prostitution was not taking place at all. In fact, the women were the ones giving the gifts to the men. What the true intention of the women was it difficult to say, but this does leave the possibility that they had more agency than simply being victims of sexual exploits.

Here, as in other ports, the women who came aboard were known as wives. Western ideas about fidelity, companionship, and love may have been one of the major reasons sailors used language of marriage when discussing prostitutes. These traders, and later whalemen, lived a life largely void of female companionship and attaching a familiar social construct to these women must have been a great escape from the solitude they found at sea. In addition to the sexual contact between the traders and Hawaiian women, services such as laundry, sewing, and cooking were performed. It may be that the use of

[16] A. Grove Day and Carl Stroven, Eds., *The Spell of Hawaii* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), 55.

the term wife helped to silence the concerns of missionaries whose beliefs "insisted on conjugal relationships."[17] This seems likely as the men would have been in the islands for only a short time and had little potential to create lasting relationships. However, the reality of the life of the Hawaiian women was something far bleaker. One unintended consequence of this contact was the spread of western disease throughout the islands. Epidemics and venereal disease decimated the island population within a generation. Additionally, pregnancy among Polynesian women left large numbers of children fatherless. It is difficult to say how the islanders would have treated light-skinned Hawaiian children, but the stress of having a child to feed and raise was something real. Nevertheless, relationships between sailors and Hawaiian women, were central to the spread of western ideology.

The arrival of fur and timber traders in the early nineteenth century was the first example of large-scale economic cooperation between that Hawaiians and westerners. While its ultimate impact on the islands was dwarfed by the whaling industry later in the century, the timber trade established the eagerness of the Hawaiian oligarchy to cooperate with American economic interests. Originally, fur traders bound for China came to the islands to re-supply. Later, ships that were sent specifically to trade sandalwood negotiated trade rights with eager Hawaiian chiefs and kings. As such American merchants based out of New England ports began to frequent the islands in the opening years of the nineteenth century and was the next phase of western-Hawaiian interaction. This cooperation resulted in mutual economic benefit for both the Hawaiians in power and for the American traders.

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[17] Creighton, 183.

Fur traders began to stop in the islands while en route to Asia in the early 1800s. They found that the Sandwich Islands possessed few finished goods, but the Island's raw materials were in high demand in Asian markets. When fur and timber trade with China became a viable way to boost profits for American merchants, they began to send ships around Cape Horn to the west coast of North America and across the Pacific Ocean. On the west coast they collected furs from the Native Americans to trade with the Chinese. The trade with China quickly became very lucrative and ships began to cross the Pacific Ocean on a regular basis. The long Pacific crossing was nearly impossible to achieve in a ship that was laden with trade goods. This left little room for supplies like fresh meat and fresh water for the crew.

The Sandwich Islands provided a convenient place for these mariners to replenish their supplies while en route to Asia. Boston fur trader William Dane Phelps commented on the rapid growth of the trans-Pacific trade in the early 1800s. Speaking about the trade with China and the rise of the Pacific as an important market, he noted that the area was a "mighty Empire which is fast arising."[18] The fur trading endeavor would be short lived, but the economic impact that Americans would have on the Pacific Rim was yet to be fully realized. By venturing across the Pacific and establishing the Sandwich Islands as a stopover point on the way to Asia, they opened trade routes and established the maritime importance of the islands.

In 1811, Nathan Winship, Jonathan Winship, and William Heath Davis brought three trading vessels across the Pacific to trade in China. They had been to the Northwest coast of America and were on their way to deliver a cargo of furs to Canton. After stopping in

[18] Briton Busch and Barry M. Gough, eds. *Fur Traders from New England: The Boston Men in the North Pacific, 1787-1800, The Narratives of William Dane Phillips, William Sturgis, and James Gilchrist Swan.* (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1997), 32.

the Sandwich Islands and meeting with King Kamehameha, they decided to take some sandalwood on their ships to be traded as well. As part of the business deal with the king, they promised to sell the wood in Canton and give a percentage of the proceeds back to Kamehameha. The three captains were able to successfully sell their cargos and brought back finished goods to the king as repayment. This is seen as the beginning of the Hawaiian-Canton sandalwood trade that thrived and brought in huge profits for American merchants throughout the 1810s. While the fur trade with China may have established the geographic importance of the Sandwich Islands to trans-Pacific trade, the sandalwood trade is of far more significance in understanding the relationship between foreigners and native Hawaiians. This trade was contingent on finding a favorable market in Asia.

Nonetheless, the sandalwood trade more directly impacted the Hawaiians because it was grown and harvested in the mountain regions of the Sandwich Islands and demanded the cooperation of large segments of the population. The social stratification of the Hawaiian people is seen through the use of the slave and criminal segment of the population to harvest the wood for the American traders. The Asian markets for tropical wood grew quickly and buyers paid a high price whenever western merchants were able to deliver a quality batch of it.

The sandalwood trade highlights the eagerness of the Hawaiian monarchy to become involved in larger economic enterprises. It was not enough for Kamehameha to supply these merchants with the wood, he also demanded that he receive some of the profits as additional payment. In 1812, when the king entered into a contract with Winship and Davis, he demanded a fair share of the profits. The agreement stated that Kamehameha would "collect or cause to be collected for them and them only, a supply of

sandalwood...of the best qualities."[19] The agreement went on to state that the two parties would be bound in this deal for ten years and the king would receive one-fourth of the net sales of sandalwood. This shows that the Hawaiians were prone to giving preference to a single group. Just as they gave preference to Vancouver and would later give preference to American missionaries, Kamehameha granted a monopoly to these American traders. It also displays the business minded nature of the Hawaiian hierarchy. By showing an appreciation and an understanding of global trade and western economic policy, the king sought to enrich himself.

Captain Samuel Hill also profited by trading the Sandwich Islands during the early nineteenth century. Hill had left Boston aboard the ship *Ophelia* in 1815 and served as both supercargo and captain. As captain he was responsible for the safety of the ship and the delivery of goods. As the supercargo, he was a representative of a trading house - in this case William Sturgis - and responsible for the buying and selling of all cargo. After traveling around Cape Horn, along the west coast of South America and out to the Galapagos Islands, *Ophelia* set a course for the Sandwich Islands. Hill had been briefed about the disposition of the king and the chiefs and where he might be able to procure a cargo of sandalwood. Upon visiting with King Kamehameha, Hill relayed his intentions to the king:

> After the usual civilities and inquires had passed, I introduced the subject of my visit, *viz.*, the purchase of a cargo of sandalwood. I informed him I was ready to pay him a fair price in Spanish dollars. He immediately replied that he had none ready to cut, that the wood was in the mountains and his people were now unwilling to work as formerly, because they had not been paid according to their agreement for the many cargoes which they had furnished to Captains Winship and Davis.[20]

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[19] Ibid., 75.

[20] *Journal of Captain Samuel Hill,* edited by James W. Snyder, Jr., "Voyage of the *Ophelia* from Boston to Canton," *The New England Quarterly,* Vol. 10, no. 2 (June 1937), 365.

Hill's commentary reveals the growing complexity of the relationship between westerners and Hawaiians. He was directly involved in the business dealings with the Boston traders and was able to grant or deny them cargo. From this economic agreement, we can see how trade with western powers impacted the whole Hawaiian population. The King granted the rights to the wood to the Boston traders and would demand that the lower classes cut the wood when needed. Large amounts of manpower would be mobilized depending on the agreement Kamehameha made.

Hill's account not only reaffirms the shrewd business-minded nature of the Hawaiian monarchy, but also the different cultural norms that they lived with. After discussing business with the king during the day, Hill invited Kamehameha aboard his ship in the evening. Hill soon found that he agitated the king on two accounts. First, the king and his wives became annoyed and cut their visit short when Hill refused to "furnish them with strong spirits in sufficient quantity to make them intoxicated." Second, Hill questioned the king proclivity toward polygamy.[21] This is a rare glimpse into westerners perception about pre-missionary Hawaiians. Clearly Hill held the ideas of chastity and temperance in high regard. On both of the accounts, he found Kamehameha to be lacking. The nature of polygamy implied the subjugation of women and the use of strong spirits went again the temperance principals of antebellum America.

By the time the first whalemen and missionaries arrived in the islands, the Hawaiian government was not only conducting political and economic business with foreign powers, it was also beginning to use foreign-born men as advisors. Since the islands are geographically dispersed, it was virtually impossible for the king to rule all areas from one central location. The answer to this problem was to install governors on each of the

[21] Hill, 366.

islands. These ali'i gave their allegiance to Kamehameha and, in the absence of the king, conducted his business on each island. As western influence grew, some of the king's governors were not Hawaiians born of royal lineage, but rather westerners who had arrived on trading vessels. White ali'i often acted as intermediaries and negotiators with the foreign powers. The unification of the Hawaiian Empire and the rise of economic interaction with westerners also saw the influence of westerners grow in the islands.[22]

Eventually, the extent of the interaction between the Hawaiian ali'i and European and American merchants went much further than trading simple goods like taro or sweet potatoes or even larger commodities like sandalwood. Guns, ships, and other weaponry became some of the favorite items of trade for the chiefs.[23] As a result of the growing amount of trade, the Hawaiian population was exposed to western culture. At the level of the ali'i, they went from a splintered group to being unified and business-minded. The lower classes gained ever-growing access to the westerners through petty trade. Economic concerns defined much of the relationship between Hawaiians and westerners, but the political and religious structures also adjusted after the initial western contact.

The discussion of the Hawaiian people and their religion, politics, and economics prior to the arrival of the missionaries in 1819 showcases many of the themes that occurred when Hawaiians interacted with New England missionaries and whalemen. Hawaiians were not simply a pagan people easily subjected to the will of the missionaries or foreign governments, nor were they helpless in controlling the actions and behavior westerners in the islands. Rather, they maintained a legacy of organization and

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[22] Kirch and Sahlins, 42. John Young, Issac Davis, and Oliver Homes were all given ali'i status. Young and Davis were British sailors who were captured and befriended by the king. Oliver Homes came to the islands later. Each of these men married into the Hawaiian hierarchy and acquired land under Hawaiian law.

[23] Ibid., 38.

independence. They held close to a religious tradition that ruled virtually every aspect of their lives. Tabu enforced laws, dictated behavior, subjugated women, and forced the masses to bend the will of the rulers. The rise Kamehameha and his unification of the islands brought a large group of materially wealthy islands under one rule. The economic and political dealings in the early years of contact gave westerners groundwork for further economic cooperation. All of these factors not only help to give a better understanding of the Hawaiian people and their culture, but the also how western influence impacted them. For American traders, they saw the Sandwich Islands as a place to restock their supplies, a place with strange religion and exotic women, and a place where kings readily cooperated in the interest of economic benefit. This, of course, was not true. The Hawaiian people possessed a rich oral tradition and a proud culture that was profoundly impacted by nineteenth-century Americans.

Chapter 3:

Exploiter and Exploited: The Life of Nineteenth-Century Whalemen

Few characters in American maritime history have received more attention than nineteenth-century whalemen. Graced with an abundance of contemporary accounts, logbooks, diaries, and novels, maritime and social historians gravitate toward American whalemen.[1] They portray these mariners as survivors of impossible conditions, victims of exploitation, and enactors of shore-side mischief. Countless stories exist of perilous hunts and the massive whales that took these men on Nantucket sleigh rides. In this scenario, a harpooned whale, tethered to a small wooden dory, would tow the crew sometimes miles from the whaleship. In other accounts, cruel, impatient captains punished young, green-hand sailors as they learned the ways of a large and complex whaleship. Some whalemen were drawn to the profession by the promise of riches. Others were enamored with the idea of seeing the world or proving their masculinity. At the very least, a whaling voyage would travel to Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the coast of South America. In all of these ways the nineteenth-century whaleman caught the attention of his contemporaries and his life typified the adventurous spirit of the sea. Further analysis of the American whalemen is needed in order to gain an understanding

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[1] Jim Murphy, *Gone-A-Whaling: The Lure of the Sea and the Hunt for the Great Whale* (New York: Clarion Books, 1998), Richard Ellis, *Men and Whales,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), Foster Rhea Dulles, *Lowered Boats: A Chronicle of American Whaling* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1933), Gregory Gibson, *Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship* Globe (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), and Margaret S.Creighton, *Rites and Passages: The Experience of American Whaling,1830-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). This represents a partial, but varied, reading list on the topic of whaling. This list spans from Dulles' dated account that relies heavily on a discussion of technology and shipbuilding to Gibson's monograph that tells a micro-history about one single whaling voyage. The variety of sources left behind by both whalemen and their contemporaries has left a seemingly endless amount of topics related to whaling.

of these nineteenth-century mariners and how their every-day activities impacted their existence in Hawaii.

While the experiences of many whalemen followed a similar path to that of Benjamin Doane, it is unfair to assume that every whaleman had the same experience. Doane sailed on a dry vessel where no alcohol was allowed and was eventually discharged from the vessel early because of an infection in his arm. Other New England whalemen returned penniless or in debt despite years of toiling in dark, damp conditions. Therefore, it is impossible to categorize the life of a nineteenth century whaleman under one single rubric. The whalefishery changed over time as technology developed and the demands on the sailors grew. Additionally, changes in the economic market for whale products shifted during the course of the nineteenth century. Despite these changes, some aspects of whaling remained relatively constant throughout this time period. The majority of the world's whaling vessels continued to come from ports in New England and the makeup of the crew continued to consist of white northern men. There was a shift in the later part of nineteenth century away from white crews to foreign-born sailors. The Sandwich Islands became one of the popular places to recruit new crew members.[2] The demands placed on the sailors, however, remained similar. These aspects reveal much about what it meant to be a nineteenth-century whaleman.

Only after the lifestyle of a whaleman, both ashore and afloat, is understood is it possible to frame his experiences in the Sandwich Islands. Three specific aspects of the whaling industry can put the discussion into better context. First, the growth and

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[2] For more on the race and the crews of New England vessels, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997) and Elizabeth Fischer, *Prevailing Winds, the Azores and Azoreans in the American Whalefishery and Subsequent Immigration to the United States* (Kingston, RI: University of Rhode Island, 2003).

development of the whaling industry throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was defined by longer voyages and a growing demand for whale oil. This will include a discussion about the growth of the industry in the Americas and also a discussion about what made whales a necessary commodity. Second, the life of a whaleman both compares and contrasts to the lives of other mariners. Although the technology and the ships used in whaling altered from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the place of a green-hand living before the mast did not alter significantly. What remained constant for these sailors were the dangerous lifestyle, poor living conditions, and ill perception by those outside the industry. The third aspect of whaling that must be discussed has to do with the perception of whalemen by contemporaries. By viewing their lifestyle ashore and how their families were impacted as a result of their lengthy voyages, the whalemen are seen less as laborers and more as humans. This discussion includes some of the pre-conceived notions held by some about nineteenth-century whalemen and the impact of stereotype on sailors.

The American whalefishery went through two centuries of development before it arrived in the Sandwich Islands. In its earliest form, Native Americans and colonists would scavenge whales that washed ashore or were found floating dead in coastal waters. Even then, people understood that their blubber could be used for cooking and lighting. Early settlers in Massachusetts noticed that there were an abundance of whales to be found in the waters off Cape Cod. As such, they sought to exploit these whales and were granted permission in their earliest Royal Charter of Massachusetts to do so. Although whaling had taken place around the world for centuries before, the origins of the American whalefishery lie with these colonists and the Native Americans who they

emulated in their capture technique. It was not only Massachusetts residents who kept their eyes out for whales in coastal waters. Elsewhere along New England's south coast and on Long Island, this action was repeated. When whales began to be hunted rather than just scavenged, a person was stationed in a coastal watchtower to search for breaching whales. When a spout was seen, men would jump into small boats, go to the whale, and kill it. They would then tow it back to shore where they could cut the blubber from it and process the oil. Additionally, whales were prized for the whalebone they produced. Instead of having teeth some species of whales have a series of bone-like plates in their mouths known as baleen. While the whales used these to filter food, people found a series of uses for this 'whalebone' from corset stays to umbrellas to walking sticks.[3]

The whale fishery continued to function unchanged for the first century after British colonization. New Englanders built larger vessels and Nantucket, Massachusetts, became the whaling capital of the British colonies. Its place off the coast and close proximity to the warm waters of the Gulf Stream made it a primary location for the whaling industry to be based. This allowed the ships to venture further out into the Atlantic Ocean without completely losing touch with a land base. The initial species that was hunted was the right whale. Right whale blubber was processed to create train oil which was used extensively in the leather tanning industry, as lubrication on machinery, as lamp oil, and in the production of soap. During this time, a whale would be captured at sea, but the blubber would not be processed until the ship returned to land. The blubber would be

[3] Ellis, 99.

stripped off the carcass and casked for transport. It would only be when the ship returned that the blubber would be boiled, processed, and used.[4]

The trend away from using train oil from right whales became apparent when sperm whales were found to be the source of the highest quality oil. The story of Christopher Hussey is one that changed the direction of the American whaling industry from short, coastal fishing trips to lengthy, offshore voyages. Hussey's voyage in the North Atlantic was a tale of mishap and bad luck, the end result of which was the birth of the American sperm whale fishery. Hussey was a Nantucket captain who, in 1712, found himself in a powerful storm that blew him off course and out to sea. As he and his crew made their way back to Nantucket, they saw peculiar spouts of water rising out of the ocean. These were not the vertical, split spouts of right whales, but came out in a single spout that angled forward. Captain Hussey and his men decided to pursue the whale and were successful in killing the sperm whale. Sperm whales were rarely seen in coastal waters, but were highly prized for the quality and amount of oil they yielded.[5]

The birth of the sperm whale fishery is attributed to Hussey's discovery of the whales in offshore rather than coastal waters. Hussey's specific voyage highlights the movement of the industry farther away from land and sperm whales as the primary target of these fishers. The reason that this species was sought after more than any other was because of its unique biology. Inside of its large, square head was a cavity that contained a semi-clear fluid known as spermaceti. Spermaceti became the most highly desired part of every sperm whale that was captured. Its unique nature caused it to solidify when exposed to air and this substance was used to make the highest quality candles. Spermaceti candles,

[4] Ibid., 100.
[5] Ibid., 141-142.

unlike those produced from other kinds of fats, burned virtually smokeless and odorless. During the course of the nineteenth century, spermaceti candles became very desirable and kept the demand on sperm whales high. It was not only the spermaceti that made the sperm whale desirable. Two other parts of sperm whales also made them the object of the hunt. A spongy mass found in the head could be pressed to produce oil nearly equal to spermaceti. Also, a hard mass found in the digestive track of sperm whales, known as ambergris, was used in cosmetics and perfume.[6] These biological parts were unique to sperm whales and became the reason that they were targeted above all other species.

Logistical problems arose from this form of offshore hunting that forced the creation of new technology. Longer trips meant that blubber placed in casks would spoil long before the ship returned to port. As a result, whalemen began to process blubber on board their vessels. Iron cauldrons were placed in brick furnaces on deck and the oil was *tryed out* while the ship was at sea. Processing whale blubber at sea was particularly stressful for the whalemen. Since the blubber had to be boiled, processed, and stored quickly, the sailors would work tirelessly until all the work was complete. Because of this, whalemen were viewed as little more than factory workers. Perceptions from within the maritime culture had naval and merchant mariners looking down upon the whalemen as dirty and unskilled. Sailing further offshore, consistently hunting one species and gaining the ability to process the whale aboard the ship greatly extended the length of the voyage. As a result, the development of the sperm whale fishery made nineteenth-century whalemen a peculiar breed of sailor.

[6] Ibid., 144-145.

With the background of the whaling industry established, the life of nineteenth-century whalemen becomes the center of the discussion. A whaleman was first and foremost a mariner. Although his duties could expand to include *cutting in* or *trying out* a whale, his daily function was not much different than that of other sailors. Like their naval counterparts, he was forced to live in cramped, dark, and damp conditions. There he suffered poor health, ate poor food, and feared harsh treatment from the captain. As sailors he and his fellow tars were forced to move with precision and perform their duties flawlessly. The typical sailor, or Jack Tar, was not only different from land-based workers in his duty, but also had "an unmistakable way of talking that included technical terms, unusual syntax, distinctive pronunciation, and a generous portion of swearing and cursing."[7] Sailors were instantly recognized by land dwellers and many did fit into the stereotype found above. The image was often romanticized in fiction. William Thomes's volume titled *A Whaleman's Adventure in the Sandwich Islands* includes several stories about young sailors. In this, he includes a description of a young Jack Tar and all the personal items needed for a whaling voyage:

> The store was filled with boots and shoes, tin pots and pans, sheath knives and sheaths and belt, Guernsey frocks, red flannel shirts, thick trousers, pine chests, boxes of cheap cigars and tobacco, fancy shirts, portable looking-glasses, formidable appearing fine tooth combs, and a hundred other things which go to make up a sailor's chest and stock for a long voyage.[8]

Jack Tar was universally stereotyped by the red flannel shirt, Guernsey Frock, and thick trousers. The items found in a sailor's chest were often the only possessions that a sailor owned. Still, the apparent romance and adventure of life at sea, whether real or imaginary, appealed to many young men in the nineteenth century.

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[7] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 11.

[8] William Thomes, *A Whaleman's Adventures in the Sandwich Islands.* (Boston, 1872), 23.

Class and social standing did little to dissuade many men from going to sea. Perhaps the most well-known adventure-seeking youth that found his way aboard a nineteenth-century vessel was Richard Henry Dana, an upper-class Ivy League student. Throughout the annals of history, their land-dwelling counterparts have often viewed sailors as social outcasts. The nineteenth-century sailor was no different, and Dana's account helps to underscore this fact. In 1834, Dana decided to leave his studies at Harvard University and embark on a voyage to California as part of the ship's crew. In doing so, he changed from the "tight frock-coat, silk cap, and kid gloves" of an Ivy League student into the "loose duck trousers, checked shirt, and tarpaulin hat of a sailor."[9] If Richard Henry Dana fit in with his fellow shoremen as a college student, his decision to become a sailor distanced him from them. He would have been noticeable, not only because his clothing was different, but also because he would have used much of the jargon that went along with sailing and fishing. This apparent change in speech and clothing that Dana undertook underscores the underlying cause of conflict between whalemen and land dwellers. The reality of being a sailor was that they simply looked and acted different than those who lived on shore.

Enoch Carter Cloud, an adventurous Christian youth, joined the crew of a whaleship in the 1840s and had a similar experience as Richard Henry Dana. From the beginning of the voyage, Cloud questioned whether or not he made the correct decision. He recounted, "I met a stranger today on one of the wharves, who accosted me in a friendly manner and inquired 'If I was bound a whaling.' I replied in the affirmative. 'Take my

[9] Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast: A Personal Narrative of Life at Sea* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 1.

advice young man,' said he, 'and don't go!'"[10] By mid-century, a whaling voyage of two to three years was commonplace and it was not unheard of for a voyage to last well into the fourth. As Cloud continued his voyage, he found that the man on the wharf was correct in warning him against becoming a whaleman. Cloud found that there were very few men like him on the crew; men who adhered to Christian virtues. He noted, "I have made a careful calculation, concerning the character of Whalemen; and I find that out of every 100 men in the service, 75 are run-away apprentices; of the remaining 25, 20 are fugitives from justice,--leaving a remainder of 5 honest men."[11] Regardless of their backgrounds, the stories of the Enoch Carter Cloud, Benjamin Doane, and Richard Henry Dana mirror one another. All three of these men were young and adventurous and were drawn to the sea despite the warning of those around them. That they happened to be from middle and upper class families makes them unusual among whalemen. The majority of the whalemen were from the lower class, rural families and may very well have been like the men that Cloud lamented having on his ship.

When sailors stepped onto a whaling ship, they stepped into an uncertain world. Storms, accidents, and disease were a constant threat. Benjamin Doane, who lost three of his brothers to the Oceans, knew that leaving on a whaling voyage represented a considerable risk. While physical danger was definitely a concern, the financial uncertainties of the voyage generated even greater anxiety. Whalemen, like other fishers, based their pay on the lay system. The lay system affected the nineteenth-century whaleman because it "allowed owners to share the financial risks of whaling and the

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[10] Elizabeth McLean, ed. *Enoch's Voyage: Life on a Whaleship, 1851-1854.* (Wakefield, Rhode Island: Moyer Bell, 1994), 14.

[11] Ibid., 33.

costs of monitoring with employees."[12] Stated another way, the lay system tied the financial success of the crew to the amount of oil and bone it was able to produce on a voyage. This system was virtually universal among nineteenth-century whaleships. In the nineteenth century, the two major commodities that whaleships could produce were whale oil and whale bone. The more oil and bone a vessel could process, the better the payday would be for the sailors once they came into port. An observer in Honolulu noted the following lays as being average: "Captain: 1/17, First Officer: 1/20, Second Officer: 1/45, Third Officer: 1/60, Boatsteerer: 1/80-1/120, and Common sailors: 1/120 to 1/150."[13] The amount of lay that a crew member would receive was dependent on his position in the ship, the amount of experience he possessed, and the decision of the owner. The breakdown given above is fairly generous and was certainly the best a sailor could hope for. Lays became progressively shorter as the century wore on and crews became less experienced. No matter the distribution of lays the members of the crew kept on whaling until the hold of the vessel was full and the decks were piled high with bone. The problem with the lay system was that it was inherently corrupt and led to the exploitation of the whalemen by owners. Sailors and masters alike often accused the boat owners of cheating them out of their share of the lay and by the middle of the nineteenth century disputes over pay often found their way into the courts.[14] The lay system, even though flawed, was another aspect of whaling that separated these men from their wage earning, terrestrial counterparts.

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[12] Lee Craig and Robert Fearn, "Wage Discrimination in a Competitive Industry," *Journal of Economic History* 53 (March 1993), 125.

[13] *The Polynesian.* 1 May, 1844.

[14] Gaddis Smith, "Whaling History and the Courts," *Log of Mystic Seaport* 30, no.3 (1978): 67-80. In this article, Smith traces some of the trends among nineteenth-century whalers. The most prevalent of these was for whalemen to take the boat owners to court and demand a fair share of the whale oil. Another consideration was the overcharging of masters and owners of the supplies that whalemen needed.

If the financial risks of the lay system were great, then the physical risks of whaling were very real as well. More than a few whalemen met their demise if not being stove by a whale, then by falling from the rigging or simply being thrown overboard in a gale. In the earliest history of American whaling, Alexander Starbuck began his analysis by stating that the whalefishery was a "nursery of hardy, daring, and indefatigable race of seamen."[15] By Starbuck's account, whalemen had a disposition that many other fishers before and since have had. While they may have been hardy and daring, the most dangerous aspects of a whaling voyage lay not in sailing around the Southern Ocean or climbing the mast, but in the hunt for the whale itself. Conditions could deteriorate rapidly and put the crew in a dangerous position. Logbooks, newspapers, and journals all give stories of men perishing at sea. The high latitudes and cold waters at which the sailors were sailing and the lack of life-saving equipment meant that death seemed omnipresent.

The imagination of American society and its perception about whaling were fueled through the pages of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick.* In this novel, Melville develops a complex story about friendship and obsession, but he also reveals much about the whaling industry.[16] The dangerous conditions reported in the logbooks of whalers in the Pacific Ocean were very real. As crews sought to fill the holds with whale oil and bone, the men would take turns watching for whales to break the surface. Once this happened, the small wooden dories, or whaleboats, were lowered on davits and the crew of each boat would row toward the whale. One of the officers would then ready himself to throw a harpoon into the whale and lash the line tightly to the boat as the beast began to pull. A

[15] Alexander Starbuck, *History of the American Whalefishery* (Seacaucus, NJ: Castle Books, 1989), 1.
[16] Herman Melville, *Moby Dick: Or the Whale,* 12th Ed. (New York: Reinhart & Co., Inc., 1959).

multi-ton whale could put up quite a fight and leave the crew in harm's way. In the words of the first mate of the whaleship *Vesper*:

> [The] boat got the midship oar broak by the whales flooks when they struck. the W boat got the steerer nockt overboard by the whales flooks. the whale hove his flooks over the boat without tutching hur. the whale stove the S boat with his fins. thurd Mt kil d the whale and he sunk. lancht another boat and took the stoven boat aboard.[17]

The account book of the *Vesper* and every other nineteenth-century whaleship are full of narratives like this one. In this case, no one was killed and only one boat was stove, or capsized, by the whale. However, this was business as usual for whalemen and it was not unusual for an entire whaleboat full of men to perish if there was a particularly violent encounter. As the officer stood in the front of the boat he carried three things next to him: a harpoon, some rope, and an axe. The tip of the harpoon was attached to the rope, which as stated would be cleated off after the whale was stuck. The axe was in case the officer had to cut the rope because he and his men were about to be dragged under by the whale. In the uncertain world of nineteenth-century whaling whalemen took advantage of any whale sighting, ignored the danger, and hoped to reap the potential financial rewards.

Given the unquestioned dangers of whaling why were rural New England farm-boys so attracted to the whale fishery? Many of the sailors who went to sea did so because they were, in fact, adventure seekers. It has been suggested that fishermen, in general, are of a certain breed of men who can be classified as risk takers. James Acheson has noted that, "There is substantial evidence that fishermen in many societies are aggressive, courageous, and independent. This is perhaps to be expected in a dangerous

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[17] "Journal of the Whaleship *Vesper*," 15 May 1847, G.W. Blunt White Library, Mystic Seaport Museum (hereafter MSM), Mystic, CT.

occupation."[18] Others have traced job satisfaction among fishers and have stated that fishers are likely to be categorized as 'risk takers'.[19] Additionally, boys may have gone to sea as whalemen to prove they lived up to Victorian ideas of masculinity. In order to distance themselves from their mothers, young men "were not to appear sympathetic, nurturing, tender, and sentimental like their mothers."[20] Shipping out on a whaling vessel would certainly take away some of those qualities and replace them with masculine traits such as independence. Whether looking for adventure, hoping for a large share in the lay, or ignoring the physical risk whalemen worked in a difficult and stressful setting that was unique to their industry.

The whaling industry had gone through massive changes by the second quarter of nineteenth century. As whales became tougher to find, the demands on captains grew to meet quotas. Ships traveled further and stayed at sea longer in search of whales. The demands on the crew increased commensurate with the length of the voyage. As a result, sailors would not return home for years at a time and desertion became commonplace. Further heightening the pressure on crews was the fact that they became more heterogeneous in their composition. Upon visiting the Sandwich Islands, Mark Twain gave a concise explanation these stresses:

> The whaling voyage to the North Seas occupies about seven months; then the vessel returns to Honolulu, tranships her oil to the States, refits and goes over to the coast of California about November or December, to put in her idle time catching hump-back whales or devilfish [California grey whales], returning here along in March and April to "recruit"--that is, procure vegetables, and especially potatoes, which are a protective against scurvy, and give the men a few days run on shore,

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[18] James M. Acheson, "Anthropology of Fishing." *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 10(1981): 296.

[19] Richard Pollnac and John Poggie, "Job Satisfaction in the Fishery in Two Southeast Alaskan Towns," *Human Organization,* (Fall 2006), 6-20.

[20] Creighton, 52.

and then off for the north again as early in the Spring as possible.[21]

This description recounts the hardships of working on a whaling vessel. The cycle was a vicious one that could leave whalemen at sea for years at a time only to be in debt at the end of the voyage.[22] The life of a nineteenth-century whalemen, then, was dominated by long periods at sea, followed by short time-spans when the sailors were allowed to come ashore. The activities of sailors ashore provide the makings of great tales.

The geographical distance and the amount of time that these sailors spent away from their home port categorized them as outsiders. The social distance with which they were viewed can be taken literally as they were often thousands of miles away from home. This distance may also be seen as ideological because the time they spent at sea figuratively distanced them from their contemporaries. The life of a whaleman aboard the ship was dominated by danger, but his life ashore may not have been much more pleasant. His physique, clothing, actions, and vocabulary categorized him as the stereotypical Jack Tar. Contemporaries always noted the swearing, drinking, and womanizing that sailors engaged in. Much of this description is simply a matter of perception. Since sailors were categorized as troublemakers and outsiders, it became easy for observers to make comments against them and ignore the fact that many sailors did not fit into the stereotypical mold. At least some sailors followed a strict Christian lifestyle and stayed away from the usual vices. In terms of this discussion, though, the perception of whalemen is as important as the reality. The fact that some whalemen may

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[21] Mark Twain, "Scenes in Honolulu," reprinted in *Log of Mystic Seaport* 43, no 3 (Fall 1991), 66.

[22] For a more complete discussion of the finances of whalemen, see Lisa Norling, "Contrary Dependencies: Whaling Agents and Whalemen's Families 1830-1870," *Log of Mystic Seaport* 42, no. 1 (1990): 3-12.

have been drunks and womanizers is less relevant than the idea that most observers perceived them all to be this way.

One area that this perception left out of their lives was mentioning that many of these sailors left behind wives and families. Because the lay system did not guarantee money, these families were at the mercy of the local whaling agent to advance them money while their husbands were at sea. The assumption was that the voyage would yield a profit, but if this did not occur, the result was debt-ridden families. The ability to provide for one's family was severely hampered by the absence of the male figures, and wives and mothers were forced to take on the role of provider and look after the well-being of their families. The result was a stressful lifestyle not only for the whaleman while he was away, but also for the women and children who were alone for years at a time.

The life of a nineteenth-century whaleman was complex and challenging. Unlike the coastal fishermen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the nineteenth-century whaleman became, more or less, an industrial cog.[23] The rapid industrial development of the nineteenth century fueled the whaling industry. It is no accident that New Bedford, Massachusetts, became both the center of the American whaling fleet and a large producer of textiles. The whale oil that was brought back to its docks found its way into the machinery and the global connections ship owners gained presented them with avenues of trade. The whale oil not only kept the machinery in these mills lubricated, but also kept the mills lit and workers laboring into the night. Once revered as noble fishermen of the eighteenth century, the whalemen of the nineteenth century became the dregs of society. They were categorized as "jacks" and stereotyped as troublemakers

[23] See Mary Molloy, 56-67.

without morals and without any real skill. While this perception does reflect reality, the ways these mariners lived was a response to the dangerous work, years of solitude, and financial burden they carried.

Chapter 4:

Missionaries, Hawaiians, and Nineteenth Century Conversion

Equally influential in this story are the American Protestant missionaries, whose arrival in the Sandwich Islands helped facilitate a shift in the social, political, and religious norms of that society. Riding a wave of religious revivalism that categorized Antebellum America, feeling the urgency of millennialist ideals, and holding true to their Puritan roots, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) sent a group of young, energetic New England missionaries and their wives to the Sandwich Islands in an attempt to convert the pagan inhabitants. Through personal charisma, strategic decision-making, and considerable luck these missionaries were not only allowed to stay at the islands, but also rose to become influential social and political voices directing the Hawaiian people. The success of the Sandwich Islands mission was touted in Christian publications. In an age when colonialism and empire building were still strong in Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific, the absolute success of the Sandwich Islands mission was contrasted against the miserable failure of missions in other parts of the world.

The story of how these missionaries were successful in converting the Hawaiian people and how their influence impacted the native people encompasses ideas of western impact and social upheaval. The actions of the ABCFM missionaries in the Sandwich Islands followed the trend in the United States and Great Britain toward religiosity, benevolence, and conversion. The appearance of religious revivals and the growth of more progressive denominations set the stage for the Second Great Awakening. As the sentiment spread through the United States, countless benevolent societies and charity

groups were formed. Each of these groups focused on the needs of a specific segment of the population from prisoners to sailors to mill workers. Beyond the social and religious background of religion in antebellum America, the specific form and function of the ABCFM is relevant.

As the United States struggled through the social and political unrest of the antebellum era, the money and effort that went to benevolent endeavors was always on the rise. Similarly, religious fervor reached high levels throughout this period reaching a peak in the 1830s and 1840s. The writings of Yale divinity students Lyman Beecher and Nathaniel Taylor were some of the most studied for this heightened sense of religiosity.[1] They pressed the idea of disinterested benevolence upon their followers and asked them to spread a charitable spirit throughout the world. Disinterested benevolence was the idea that true Christian followers should not be overly concerned with themselves, but rather they should improve their spirituality by looking outward and help those that needed charity the most.[2] This charity could take on different forms from providing housing for women to sending missionaries to convert non-Christian populations. Along with these actions, mass meetings and revivals throughout northern cities and southern countryside also defined the Second Great Awakening. Spiritual conversion became the greatest means by which a person showed that his or her faith in God was found or renewed.

The most visible effect that came from the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening was a heightened awareness about those in need of charity. By far, the most

[1] Glenn Gordinier, "Evangelists, Landsharks, and the Character of Seaman's Benevolence in Nineteenth Century America," *Log of Mystic Seaport* 43, no. 2 (1991), 31.

[2] Clifton Jackson Phillips attributes this idea to the teaching of Samuel Hopkins in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Hopkins was a Calvinist minister who maintained service and following evangelical doctrines were more important that focusing too much on theology. Phillips continues, "The spirit engendered by Hopkinsian theology is indeed the key to much of the whole humanitarian crusade: antislavery, temperance, and world peace, as well as missionary program of distributing tracts and converting a pagan world." 6.

dominant feature of this charity was the creation of benevolent societies. These groups focused on those that they believed had lost or been robbed of their ability to worship the Christian God. Whether helping orphans, prisoners, drunks, or slaves, nineteenth-century Americans had a wide variety of worthy causes to choose from. In the 1830s, the amount of money being taken in by these benevolent groups exceeded the budget of the United States Government.[3] At a time when the government was unwilling to support social programs, groups like the American Seamen's Friend Society, Bethel Union, Marine Bible Society, and a host of others constituted the only means by which the poor and abandoned received help.[4]

Of all of the downtrodden that received the good will of Christian benevolent societies, the American seaman was highly targeted. The conditions that he lived under at sea often denied him access to proper Sabbath worship. Ashore, he was a character who was both exploited and whose actions were very much in need of moral regeneration. As a result, seaman's benevolence groups began to appear in port cities during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Sailors were seen as victims exploited by landsharks, crimps, grogshop owners, and innkeepers. These land dwellers sought to capitalize on the sailor's time in port and did their best to take his money and leave him penniless. As such, benevolent groups offered sailors safe places to sleep, Christian reading rooms, and seamen's chapels.

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[3] Hugh H. Davis, "The American Seamen's Friend Society and the American Sailor, 1828-1838," *The American Neptune* 39, no. 1 (January 1979), 45.

[4] Gordinier, 31. Here Gordinier argues that in the early republic, citizens' acute awareness to separation of church and state made the government reluctant to enact any type of charity programs. Gorndinier continues, "Among the most pervasive effects of this philosophy is the growth of lay activism. Without the support of the massive machinery of the state, churches and their constituents in the United States have long relied on lay support in the form of volunteerism. This system of doing to one's self, with bureaucracy and it's cadre of professionals, was very much characteristic of life in this country in during the last century."

One example of a reform society concerned with the welfare of seamen was the Boston Society for the Religious and Moral Improvement of Sailors.[5] The society was founded in 1812 and its goals were specifically tailored to the lifestyle of sailors. They felt as if sailors were given access to religious services and bibles and other literature were placed aboard ships, sailors would be more likely to let go of their drinking and swearing and favor proper Protestant values. Despite these intentions, the Boston Society failed shortly after the outbreak of the War of 1812, when embargoes and privateers put the American maritime industry at a standstill. The Boston Society shows that very early in the nineteenth century concerns about the religious and moral welfare of sailors came into the public's consciousness resulting in attempts to improve his lot in life. These actions were repeated countless times by many societies, yet the reality of a sailor's life in the nineteenth century changed very little.

These benevolent groups worked hard to raise money and awareness about the life of a sailor both at sea and ashore. Flogging, abuse, and poor living conditions were all areas of concern. In 1854, Robert Bennet Forbes made an "appeal to the public" to help the circumstances that sailors lived under.[6] This speech was presented to the men and women of Boston and focused primarily on the lives of merchant sailors. In the hierarchy of sailors, the merchant sailors fell between naval personnel and whalemen. The treatment of naval sailors was an issue for the government to address and the lot of whalemen seemed hopeless, making merchant sailors a logical focus. However, many of the poor conditions that plagued merchant sailors made life difficult for whalemen as

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[5] Gordinier, 32.

[6] Robert Bennett Forbes, *An Appeal to Merchant and Ship Owners, on the Subject of Seamen*, (Boston: Sleeper & Rodgers, 1854).

well. In an attempt to pacify some of these issues and raise awareness, Forbes spoke to his audience:

> I see before me many who are co-workers in the common field of humanity, and I appeal to them to put their whole soul into the good work of the regeneration of seamen...We have been much too accustomed to consider the seaman, the foremast "Jack," as a mere machine, a mass of bone and muscle...The seaman may be said to have no political existence; he cannot vote because of his absence, or for the reason that when present near the polls, he may not have been here long enough to warrant the exercise of this right. His wages are small considering the amount of labor and the responsibility devolving on him, than are the wages of any other class of our working population. He must be up day and night incessantly, when duty calls; and, when on the Sabbath, that great boon of the landsmen comes, his rest depends on the faithless winds of Heaven. He has no day, no night which he can call his own...he often has no home.[7]

Forbes attempted to rouse the audience to action and cause them to alleviate the plight of the sailors. The right to vote, the ability to earn a fair wage, and the right to have a rest day on the Sabbath were among his primary concerns. Forbes believed enough in the Christian spirit of the audience to appeal for their help, and throughout the time period Americans did respond with their time and their donations.

Other benevolent groups were also particularly concerned with the life of sailors while they were ashore. The American Seamen's Friend Society (ASFS) focused on how sailors were treated when they came ashore. Many of the activities and people found in sailortowns were exactly what the ASFS was trying to combat. Crimps, thieves, prostitutes and grogshop owners all offered whiskey, women, and gambling to the weary sailors. Crimps were the most dangerous and exploitive group faced by the sailors. In the crimping game, the sailors were taken advantage of even before they stepped foot on land. Runners would row out to the ships when they arrived and "lure the men ashore

[7] Ibid., 6.

with liquor and promises of pleasurable times."[8] This, in and of itself, was objectionable to the Christian groups. However, the true exploitation came when the sailor actually arrived on shore. Crimps lured sailors to boarding houses where the owner would set up an account in the sailor's name. The goal then was to run up a debt by making the sailor spend his money on booze and prostitutes. The carefully charted plan ended with the boarding house master setting up the exploited sailor on a new vessel and demanding a couple of months of his pay to cover the bill.[9] It was this exact behavior that the ASFS fought hard to combat. The most visible way in which it did so was to set up banking houses where the sailors could deposit their money. If they had placed their wages in a bank, then it became more difficult for them to have their money taken away by boardinghouses. Along with this, the ASFS set up a series of boarding houses of their own and established seamen's chapels.[10] By not charging fees for pews, conducting nonsectarian masses, and distributing Bibles, the ASFS typified the use of benevolent societies to benefit the lives of sailors.

One of the most important ways benevolent societies were able to mobilize was through the use of women's auxiliaries. Women both individually and as groups, moved by the religious wave of the nineteenth century, also sought to improve the life of sailors. In coastal American cities, women's auxiliaries mirrored the work of groups at the Bethel Union and the ASFS. When Forbes addressed the group in Boston he noted, "I trust there are some here among the fairer part of our creation, 'our better halves,' who are interested in the various Societies."[11] One way in which women's benevolent groups

[8] Gordinier, 33.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Davis, 52.
[11] Forbes, 6.

affected the maritime society was in the establishment of schools for the children of lost seamen. Places, such as the Free School for the Daughters of Seamen, helped young women by teaching them such skills as sewing and writing.[12] Here too, it is possible to see just how widespread was the focus of the Christian benevolent groups on the maritime world.

Another way some women used their piety to improve the life of a whaleman was through their actions on ships. Because a whaling vessel would be at sea for upwards of four years, many captains took their wives and children with them. Although they were usually confined to the aft part of the ship and would have had limited contact with the sailors in the forecastle, women did seem to impact the overall moral welfare of the crew. The paradox for these women was how they lived up to Victorian ideals of femininity in an extreme, marine environment.[13] By conducting Bible readings and teaching against the vices of drinking and harboring prostitutes, these women gained a sense of purpose by being moral guardians of whalemen. To these women, the dreadful thought of living in the monotonous environ of a whaleship was minimized because the "very idea of being an arbiter of morals gave a whole romantic aura" to the voyage.[14] Whether listening to a speech appealing to the public to help sailors, offering a safe place to eat and sleep, or monitoring the life of sailors from aboard a ship, nineteenth-century Christians sought to improve the lives of sailors. They, at once saw them as innocent victims and outrageous villains. But no matter how they viewed sailors, the benevolent societies of nineteenth

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[12] Gordinier, 35.

[13] For further discussion about the lives of women aboard vessels in the Nineteenth Century, see, Julia Bonham, "Feminist and Victorian: The Paradox of the American Seafaring Woman of the Nineteenth Century," *American Neptune* 37, no. 3 (July 1977), 203-217.

[14] Joan Druett, "More Decency and Order: Women and Whalemen in the Pacific," *Log of Mystic Seaport* 39, no. 1 (Spring 1987), 67.

century were an outgrowth of the larger religious movement known as the Second Great Awakening.

If the lives of sailors were carefully monitored by some benevolent groups, the goals of missionaries in the Sandwich Islands aimed their efforts elsewhere. The breadth of American benevolence spanned a wide range of endeavors. Whether focused on the moral regeneration of sailors or the conversion of heathen these all fell under the larger religious movement. The goals of the ABCFM always centered around the conversion of non-Christian people to Christianity. When the Sandwich Islands missionaries left Boston in 1819, they were continuing a movement started some years before when, in February of 1812, in the Tabernacle Church in Salem, Massachusetts, five young men were ordained as missionaries to the "heathen of Asia."[15] Throughout the nineteenth century, the ABCFM grew to include missions in Asia, Africa, the American West, and the Pacific Islands. The reasons for the success of a mission were variable and could be influenced by anything from the influx of money and support, to political instability, or even incompetent preachers. No matter the case, the Sandwich Islands mission was born from Protestant zeal and became the most successful ABCFM mission of its time. Its success was measured in many ways, including the number of Bibles printed, the number of schools built, and the attendance of mass by the native population.

The theology behind the ABCFM missions reflects the changing tide in American Protestant thinking and the desire of Calvinist preachers to maintain supremacy throughout New England. For the members of the ABCFM, the establishment of foreign missions was an attempt to grasp on to the Puritan religion of their forefathers and ensure that the heathen of the world received their brand of Christianity. The Great Awakening

[15] Phillips, 1.

of the early eighteenth century and the rhetoric of the American Revolution had done much to damage the established religions in New England. As the nineteenth century approached, a new wave of religiosity came over the land and even in Puritan, Calvinist churches human agency—as opposed to divine agency—became the key to salvation. No longer would it suffice to accept that God's will determined all facets of life and saved or damned a given soul. The faithful were asked to take an active role in displaying their faith. By converting the heathen of the world, ABCFM missionaries would be able to prepare themselves and those to whom they had brought the word of God for the second coming of Christ.

Because they inherited the structured, religious tradition of Puritan Massachusetts, these preachers struggled to keep their own congregations from exploring other denominations. The creation of new, liberal denominations, such as Unitarians, caused fear among the preachers of New England. "New Light" religions, as they had been termed during the First Great Awakening, appeared more welcoming and less stringent in their rules of worship. To combat this, the conservative Protestant religions took the teachings of Samuel Hopkins and put them to use in the form of foreign missions. The establishment of seminaries and foreign mission schools ensured that the faithful would be properly instructed and prepared before they were sent to other parts of the world.

As the ABCFM organized its missions, one important tool that they employed was the use of native preachers. By bringing natives of the Sandwich Islands and other locations to the United States and giving them religious training, the missionaries hoped that this would make the island population more receptive to the Christian message. As such, Polynesian youths were brought back to Connecticut on merchant vessels returning

from Asia. There, they were instructed first in the English language, but soon after they were taught the lessons of the Bible:

> The Foreign Mission School for educating heathen youths in this country, established in the year 1816, was intimately connected with the rise of the Hawaiian mission. It was also the first decisive experiment made of educating such youths in the midst of an advanced Christian civilization, to be helpers in missions to their barbarous pagan countrymen.[16]

It was hoped that the use of native preachers and members from the ABCFM would provide a double incentive for the people of the Sandwich Islands. Where the American preachers may run into resistance from the population, the native preachers would be able to explain the Bible to the natives in a culturally unique way. With this conversion and understanding, the converts would become less barbarous and more civilized. Although places like the Sandwich Islands were culturally, politically, and religiously complex, the perception of the Christian missionaries was that without the proper religious training and understanding of God's will, it was impossible for any country to be truly civilized.

Henry Obookiah, a native Hawaiian brought to the United States, was instructed in the English language and the Christian religion to be a native preacher. He was placed under the tutelage of Samuel J. Mills in New Haven, Connecticut. Obookiah's diary was published after he succumbed to disease, yet it reveals a lot of what the missionaries wished to convey. Students came from different parts of the world and it became necessary to have a central school where they could standardize the instruction of the youths. The ABCFM members met in 1816 and they decided to set up a school in Cornwall, Connecticut. The function of the seminary was noted by Obookiah:

> The object of the Seminary, as set forth in its Constitution, was,-'The education, in our own country, of heathen youths, in such manner as, with subsequent professional

[16] Rufus Anderson, *A History of the Sandwich Islands Mission,* (Boston, MA: Congregational Publishing Society, 1870), 10.

> instruction, will qualify them to become useful missionaries, physicians, surgeons, schoolmasters, or interpreters; and to communicate to the heathen nations such knowledge in agriculture and the arts as may prove the means of promoting Christianity and civilization.[17]

Although it is unlikely that Henry Obookiah actually authored the book, this work was widely distributed in Antebellum America and it served to be an inspiration for foreign missions. Once again, the importance of rousing support and showing that the mission was to be a success superceded authenticity. But the importance here is that it shows how the ABCFM wished the mission to function. Obookiah and other natives believed that they were going to become an integral part of the mission.

While it is doubtful that Obookiah's writing was so polished only a couple of years after learning English, the message sent in the memoir, highlights the goals of the mission perfectly. Upon hearing of another Hawaiian boy who had arrived in Connecticut, Henry Obookiah went to visit him and made this comment:

> I went to Tyngsbury last week to see a boy who came from Hawaii. He arrived last June—this is not Thomas that came with me. As the distance from this place was small, I went to visit him. I hope the Lord will have mercy upon his poor soul. He knew nothing of the Savior before I told him…; then he said, 'O how foolish we are to worship wood and stone gods; we give them hogs, and cocoa nuts, and banana but they cannot eat.[18]

While it is impossible to measure the piety of young Obookiah, it is not outrageous to assume that this excerpt is exaggerated. Surely the conversation between him and the newly arrived Hawaiian would have touched upon the topic of religion, but to have such perfectly crafted words in a casual conversation would be unlikely. However, this passage is useful because it gets to the roots of the perception and attitude that the missionaries carried with them to the Sandwich Islands. The importance of the mission

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[17] E.W. White, *The Memoir of Henry Obookiah: a native of the Sandwich Islands, who died at Cornwall, Connecticut, February 17, 1818, aged 26* (New York, American Tract Society), 11-12.

[18] Ibid., 40.

was to destroy all idols and establish Christianity as the true religion and build a new society.[19]

When the ABCFM decided to send a mission to the Sandwich Islands in 1819, it sought to present young, energetic preachers to lead the mission. Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston had not even been ordained as ministers when they received word of their instructions. Bingham and Thurston were ordained as ministers on September 29, 1819, only weeks before they were to leave for the Sandwich Islands. At their ordination, Reverend Hiram Humphrey noted that, "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed."[20] The instructions of Humphrey were clear. The missionaries were to go out and civilize the world by spreading the Christian faith among those who had not possessed it. Bingham and Thurston received further instruction and were encouraged, "to go forth in the name and under the banner of the Saviour, to claim the Sandwich Islands as the rightful possession of the Church."[21] The missionaries had the singular notion they were going to spread the word of God to the Hawaiian people and create a land where Christian morality would succeed over native lawlessness.

When Reverend Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston led a group of missionaries from Boston to the Sandwich Islands in 1819, the ABCFM sought to give the missionaries all the tools necessary for a successful mission. Accompanying the two ministers were their wives, Sybil Bingham and Lucy Thurston. Additionally, two schoolmasters, a doctor, a printer, and a farmer were sent. Together, they would seek to convert the island

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[19] See Hutchinson, *Rebuilding the Christian Commonwealth.* In this, he maintains that in many ways, the missionaries were trying to place the ideals of eighteenth century New England into the minds of the Sandwich Islanders and others.

[20] Anderson, 16.

[21] Heman Humphrey, *The Promised Land* (Boston, 1819) in Clifton Jackson Phillips, *Protestant American and the Pagan World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 93.

population and present them with western culture. The small contingent of missionaries boarded the brig *Thaddeus* in Boston harbor on October 23, 1819. After five months at sea, the vessel dropped anchor off Lahaina in the Sandwich Islands in March of 1820. As they prepared to go ashore and establish the mission, Bingham remembered, "The object for which the missionaries felt themselves impelled to visit the Hawaiian race, was to honor God, by making known his will and to benefit those heathen tribes, by making them acquainted with the way of life."[22] Bingham clearly had high expectations. This optimistic view was made possible through years of preparation by the ABCFM and the success with which the Sandwich Islands mission was to be accepted would soon to be realized.

Upon their arrival, the missionaries could not have known of the extreme influence they would gain. They also did not know of the series of events that had taken place in the Hawaiian power structure while they were on their voyage. When their ship anchored in March of 1820, a complete shift in Hawaiian government and social policy had occurred that made their mission far easier. For many years prior to the arrival of the missionaries, a series of tabus defined proper social behaviors for such things as worship, eating, and marriage. While they were on the long voyage from Boston to the Sandwich Islands, the king had died and the new regime overhauled the social structure. Like other rulers who used the tabu system, Kamehameha demanded a strict behavioral code for his subjects. The tabu system that enforced these rules was eventually abolished by his successors Kaahumanu and Liholiho just before the missionaries arrived. Bingham and the others took this as a sign from God that the native population was ready to be

[22] Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Hartford: Hezekiah Huntington, 1847), 60.

converted which gave them the confidence to move forward with the mission. While the restructuring of Hawaiian beliefs and politics was extremely complex, it important for this discussion only to explain how it affected the missionary cause.

In effect, the removal of the social and religious codes associated with tabu, created a vacuum which the missionaries were able to fill. The unification of the kingdom, its political expansion, the growth of trade with the West, and the failing tabu system left room for the missionaries to provide spiritual guidance over the Hawaiians. Even Hiram Bingham admitted that luck and prophecy played a large part in the acceptance of the Sandwich Islands mission:

> The most wonderful [fact] which I gathered from the chiefs is the prediction insisted on by the native prophet Kalaikuahulu, of the generation preceding the introduction of Christianity, that a communication would be made to them from heaven, entirely different from anything they had ever known, and that the tabus of the country would be subverted...Was it the spontaneous conjecture of some of the more sagacious of the aborigines, who saw and felt the infelicity of their absurd religion, and ventured to express the hope or the opinion that it would be laid aside for a different if not better system?[23]

Bingham's analysis of the social shift in Hawaii took the credit away from him and the members of the mission and placed it on the shoulders of the enlightened Hawaiian monarchy. The grace of God smiled upon the missionaries and allowed the Hawaiian people to accept the Christian word. Furthermore, Christianity was accepted because the rulers acknowledged the fact that the tabu system was flawed and they needed a new set of spiritual guidelines.

Many outside observers took note of the shifting political and social changes that occurred in the Sandwich Islands prior to the arrival of the missionaries. Depending on

[23] Bingham, 28.

where they fell on the religious continuum the accounts varied from thankful to scathing. One of the more humorous accounts of the power shift was remembered as such:

> Old Kamehameha I was dead, and his son, Liholiho, the New King, was a free liver, a roistering dissolute fellow, and hated the restraints of the ancient tabu. His assistant in the government, Kaahumanu, the Queen dowager, was proud and high spirited, and hated the tabu because it restricted the privileges of her sex and degraded all women very nearly to the level of brutes. So the case stood. Liholiho had half a mind to put his foot down, Kaahumanu had a whole mind to badger him into doing it, and whisky did the rest. It was probably the first time whisky ever prominently figured as an aid to civilization.[24]

While the tone of this account is clearly light-hearted and exaggerated, it goes to show how fully it was understood that the breaking of the tabu system completely altered the Hawaiian social system by eliminating long-standing laws and traditions. In this passage, the implication is that the abolition of tabu gave women the agency they lacked previously. While complete equality could not be hoped for, the removal of tabu took away some level of degradation for Hawaiian women. While this only serves as an anecdotal story as to why the tabu system broke down, it does give support to the change in the political and social system. The breakdown of the tabu system was also seen in other Polynesian islands as well. This change left room for the missionaries to place Christian structure among the preexisting structures of tabu.

Once the tabu was broken, the missionaries were able to gain the cooperation of the Hawaiian monarchy in allowing their work to proceed. Sources outside the ABCFM commented on the influence that the missionaries enjoyed within the ranks of the hierarchy. Kaahumanu, the queen dowager, was most profoundly influenced by the ABCFM missionaries. She came to be the dowager because of her high status and the high regard with which Kamehameha I held her. Upon his death, she advised

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[24] Twain, 184.

Kamehameha II and a short time later, his son, Kamehameha III. Liholiho, or Kamehameha II had been the one to break the tabu and thought it necessary to westernize the Hawaiian people. To prove this Liholiho boarded a ship in 1823 and sailed to England to meet with the monarchs and political leaders. Upon arriving in England both the Hawaiian king and his wife became sick and soon both were dead. When news of this traveled back to the Sandwich Islands, the heir to the throne was still young enough that he needed the assistance of advisors in conducting the affairs of state. Kaahumanu was one of the strongest personalities, male or female, of her time. She is given much of the credit for the downfall of the tabu system.[25]

Kaahumanu became best known for her fierce association and protection of the Protestant missionaries and especially her fondness for Bingham's council. While the missionaries consistently downplayed their close association with the royalty, other observers saw a very different picture:

> Since several years, I knew, the Protestant missionaries had gained and were still enjoying great favor with the old Kaahumanu, but I did not know how great their influence had become. They so dominated the mind of this woman that she saw only through their eyes and acted only on their prompting.[26]

This accusatory tone is critical to understanding the conflict between the missionaries and the sailors who visited the islands. Throughout the time period discussed here, foreign visitors, often accused the Hawaiian monarchy of becoming a puppet for the missionaries. In the minds of whalemen visiting the islands and foreign merchants, the

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[25] For more on Kaahumanu's regency, see Kuykendall, 117-132. In this discussion it becomes clear that Kaahumanu played the role of primary political voice of the Hawaiian people throughout the decade of the 1820s.

[26] Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, *A Voyage to California, the Sandwich Islands & Around the World in the Years, 1826-1829* (Berkeley: Berkeley University of California Press, 1999), 211-212.

transformation of the Sandwich Islands from tropical playground to Christian kingdom was only traceable through the puppetry of the missionaries.

Conversely, the missionaries had a very different take on their ability to gain access to and influence over the Hawaiian people. Lucy Thurston was one of the group that had arrived in the spring of 1820, not knowing what to expect from the native Hawaiians. Thurston and her compatriots questioned whether they would be able to live among the native population and if they would be able to successfully spread Christianity. One of the conflicts the local belief system had with Christian teachings was the king's right to multiple wives. Lucy Thurston took note of this dynamic:

> The king had just put down one religion. In doing it his throne had tottered. It was a grave question for him to accept a new one. Hopu [one of the native preachers] who was apt to teach, had told them that our religion allowed neither polygamy nor incest. So when Kamamalu [sic], the sister and marked favorite out of five queens, urged the king to receive the mission, he replied: 'If I do they will allow me but one wife, and that will not be you.' After various consultations, fourteen days after reaching the Islands, April 12, permission, simply for one year, was obtained from the king for all the missionaries to land upon his shores.[27]

Thurston's observation about the king and his reaction to a monogamous relationship was indicative of the influence the missionaries were able to gain over the Hawaiian people. Rather than being outraged at the thought of only one wife, the king joked about who he would pick to be his only wife under the Christian laws. Lucy Thurston was careful to note the radical changes occurring even before the missionaries had arrived. The one-year charter was later extended and the missionaries became a permanent fixture in the lives of the Hawaiian people. Thurston's own optimism toward the success of the mission meant that her perspective was much less harsh than the voice of outside observers.

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[27] Day and Stroven, 124.

Whether influence over the native population was the intention of the missionaries from their arrival or if it was an unintended consequence is a subject for debate. The important fact is that the Christian rules the missionaries brought with them were easily superimposed over strict tradition of tabu, now vacant in the Sandwich Islands. This influence was subsequently forced upon the entire community through the enactment of laws and enforced by native police. One outsider took note of how the missionaries were able to gain influence over the local population and encourage changes in the laws:

> The missionaries obtain these [changes] by means of the taboo or kapu, which is a law, either permanent or temporary, that the islanders only rarely dare to transgress. Through the influence of Kaahumanu they receive kapus from the king for everything they want: to build their churches, their houses, their cloisters, their walls, and the like. At such times all the people are required to perform the prescribed tasks. Another kapu fills the schools.[28]

Here, even though tabu was theoretically dead among the Hawaiian people, it was employed by the missionaries to their advantage. The Christian religion gave the Hawaiians a moral code to abide by, as well as a model by which they could construct municipal laws. The cooperation between the king and the missionaries allowed the members of the ACBFM to use tabu to spread western influence.

The alignment of the ABCFM with the monarchy allowed them to accomplish their goals more easily. After the missionaries landed on the Sandwich Islands, it was important for them to indoctrinate the native population not only with Christian ideology, but with more secular western customs as well. As the missionaries succeeded, the lifestyle of the Hawaiians changed to adapt to western culture. As such the demand for such things as "western style clothing or the cloth with which to make it, Bibles, tracts,

[28] Duhaut-Cilly, 213.

printing presses, and paper" rose.[29] However, much of the capital needed to fuel this development came from the very sailors who the missionaries despised. Out of the demands of the whalemen, these towns grew with the construction of dry goods stores, and the appearance of sailmakers, and ship-fitters. One visitor noted:

> Honolulu exhibits, even to a distant view, many dwellings built in the European style, with look-outs, and several steeples rising above the habitations. Some edifices of large size are also seen in the progress of construction. Native houses with thatched roofs, however, predominate, which prevent it from losing the appearance of a Polynesian town, and are associated with ideas of semi-civilization.[30]

This commentary embraced the importance of the growth of the Sandwich Islands. The shift is from a small island outpost to a semi-civilized town that had European dwellings and a skyline dominated by Christian steeples. This account displays the rapid pace with which western culture took over after the arrival of Christianity. Reverend William Ellis was a British missionary in Tahiti before he came to aid the Sandwich Islands mission made a similar observation:

> [Honolulu] has also, since the number of shipping has increased, become populous, and is one of the largest [towns] in the islands, usually containing 6000 or 7000 inhabitants. It is the frequent residence of the king and principal chiefs, who are much engaged in traffic with foreigners visiting the islands, or residing on shore, for purposes of trade.[31]

Honolulu had grown into a town that relied on the movement of people and the movement of goods. The sheer number of vessels and sailors ensured that capital would flow into towns like Honolulu, Lahaina, and Hilo and the king and chiefs were an integral part of helping this cultural and economic growth.

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[29] Briton Cooper Busch, *Whaling Will Never Do for Me: The American Whaleman in the Nineteenth Century* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994), *112.*

[30] Charles Robert Anderson, ed., *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition during the Years 1838-1842.* Volume III . (Philadelphia: Lea &Blachard, 1845), 373.

[31] William Ellis, *Journal of William Ellis* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1979), 11.

Perhaps the most difficult part about maintaining a successful mission was having a sustained source of funding that would allow for such things as building and printing. Middle and upper class Americans were the largest source of funding for all benevolent groups, but to an extent, the ABCFM relied on the money in the Sandwich Islands to carry out its mission. The capital spent in the islands found its way to the ABCFM missionaries and went toward building a society based on European and American cultural ideals. An ABCFM pamphlet instructed the missionaries on the importance of raising infrastructure in order to create a realm that was safe for conversion:

> You are to aim at nothing short of covering those islands with fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings, and schools and churches; of raising up the whole people to an elevated state of Christian civilization; of bringing, or preparing the means of bringing, thousands and millions of the present and succeeding generations to the mansions of eternal blessedness.[32]

Infrastructure in the form of churches and schools brought western civilization to the natives and with this a moral, Christian citizenry. This reveals some of the methods that the missionaries employed in teaching the native population. The adoption of western dress and dwellings and the establishment of churches and schools all made the conversion of the native population to Christianity occur at a more rapid pace. Part of the approach was to get the native population to abandon their old culture which was seen as heathen and void of morals.

Various missionary publications were distributed throughout the islands that were intended to teach English, present western customs, and reinforce Christian doctrine. *The Hawaiian Luminary* was a periodical published by native seminary students in the 1830s and 1840s. While natives authored the articles, the content very much reflects the extent

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[32] *Instructions of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands Mission (*Lahainaluna, 1838*)* in Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 101.

to which the American missionaries had established their influence among the native population. An article about the development of the islands noted the old morals and customs of the Hawaiians:

> There was good in the days of old, as well as bad, and there is good in the new times, as well as bad. Here is the bad of the days of old: ignorance; they were unaware of the falseness of their gods. They had many gods. Women slept with two different men, even three four or five. Men did the same with women. The hula was another...and so many other indulgent games. What each of these indulgences had in common was adultery.[33]

This description comes from the voice of a converted Hawaiian author and the rhetoric is clearly reminiscent of the missionary cause. Not only does it imply that the old Hawaiian regime was foolish, but it completely denies all cultural identity. By saying that such things as marriage ritual and the hula were ungodly, the voices of these early writings make it difficult to understand how the masses felt about Christianity. The story they present make it seem as though the Hawaiian population, as a whole, was suddenly inspired by the missionary work and the word of God. While this was unlikely and some Hawaiians were reluctant to give up Hawaiian tradition completely, others did embrace Christianity. The promiscuous and openly sexual society the Hawaiians had, clashed sharply with the nineteenth-century values of chastity and modesty.

The Second Great Awakening marked a socially unique period in the history of the United States. Christian society became a very visible means by which Americans tried to better the lives of the less fortunate or non-Christian. Whether aiming at the moral regeneration of sailors, the education of urban workers, or the conversion of Polynesians in the Pacific, spirituality and the Bible guided benevolent groups. The aim of these tasks was to save the souls of those who had strayed from the Christian path, and at the same

[33] *The Hawaiian Luminary,* "On the Old Morality and the New Morality," February 21, 1834.

time, hope that God's grace smiled upon their works. Hiding behind the text of the Bible, they claimed that all of their work was the will of God and that His aid and protection guided them. Their intentions may have been benevolent, but for missionaries especially, the cultural impact they had on foreign societies was immense. The first group of missionaries to the Sandwich Islands had very specific goals. They were charged with focusing on the native population and bringing Christianity and western cultural norms to them. They could not have guessed at the success of the mission, but within a generation the fruits of their labor could be seen with the adoption of western culture and deep faith by many of the natives. It is this influence that they touted as success and it was this control that was the object of conflict with whalemen.

Chapter 5:

Riots, Violence, and Conflict in the Sandwich Islands

The relationship that developed between whalemen, missionaries, and native Hawaiians in the first half of the nineteenth century can be described as tumultuous, at best. Each of these three groups offered a vital piece to the financial, social, and political success of the Sandwich Islands, yet there was always a sense of skepticism, if not disdain, in one another's behavior and motives. While whalemen served as a growing source of revenue for the islands, they carried with them a lust for native women and booze. Missionaries were the moral and spiritual stewards of the Hawaiian people, but over-stood their charge and became political advisors. The Hawaiians were able to maintain, at least in title, political control in the islands but were accused of being puppets by outside observers. Even though they coexisted, the relationship between these groups was very often categorized by conflict between whalemen and missionaries, and exploitation of native women. Disagreement always existed because the missionaries were seen as the true authors of the Hawaiian laws that outlawed prostitution and some forms of drinking. While the conflict was often categorized by words and threats, it became violence at various points between the 1820s through the 1840s.

The years just after the arrival of the missionaries saw a rapid shift in shore-side activities in which sailors were allowed to partake. The whalemen were used to visiting Polynesian islands, where promiscuity was visible among the natives and women were welcomed aboard. Native wives would come to the ships and conduct a lively trade in prostitution and petty goods. The 1820s saw this behavior outlawed in the Sandwich Islands, and the reaction of sailors against the new laws was violent and loud. Sailors

also sought to bring alcohol ashore and unwind after a long season of whaling in cold, Arctic waters. Very little time passed between the arrival of a whaleship in a given port and the construction of a grog shop. Often the first merchants to set up boardinghouses and grogshops were no merchants at all, but deserters who stayed at the islands after leaving a vessel.[1] Here too, the laws of the Sandwich Islands began to limit the sailors in their ability to sell or drink alcohol. The grogshops and boardinghouses saw an increasing amount of scrutiny as Christian values began to dominate the political culture.

If perception has been an undercurrent throughout this discussion, then the perception of the whalemen's behavior in the Sandwich Islands by missionaries and natives does much to reveal the nature of conflict between the three groups. The perception of missionaries was that the whalemen were a bad influence on the native population they were trying to convert. What was largely lost is that whalemen were not a singular group that only had intentions of seducing Hawaiian women and drinking rum. Some whalemen consciously stayed away from the vices that plagued their shipmates. Such activities as bowling, boxing, hiking and horseback riding were alternatives found in the Sandwich Islands.[2] Additionally, some captains ran temperance ships and forbade the use of alcohol on board. This type of ship usually attracted Christian-minded sailors who would keep from the stereotypical behavior of sailors. The sustained existence of a Seamen's Chapel in Honolulu implies that there was a measurable portion of the whaling population who adhered to Christian teachings. While there was certainly variance in the whaling population, the portion that sought out prostitutes and alcohol were, by far, the dominant group and are at the center of the conflict with the missionaries.

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[1] Robert W. Kenney, "Yankee Whalers at the Bay of Islands," *American Neptune* 12 (1952), 22-44.

[2] For a discussion on whalemen ashore in the Sandwich Islands, see Creighton, *Rites and Passages*, 139-161.

The first whaleships started to arrive in the Sandwich Islands during the early 1820s, virtually the same time as did the missionaries. The discovery of the fruitful whaling grounds off the coast of Japan brought the whaling fleet out of the South Pacific grounds near New Zealand and into the northern Pacific. Whalemen stopping at the Sandwich Islands exhibited behavior that bolstered the stereotype of them as troublemakers. A traveler to the islands took note of the actions of both English and American whalemen:

> If the English show more order and capacity to manage their ships, once the whalers have reached the Sandwich Islands [English and American whalemen] compete with each other in dissipation. English and Americans, officers and sailors, all display the same manners. As soon as they set foot on land, the streets are full of drunken men; nothing is to be heard but quarrels and bickering. What a spectacle for the islanders; you see them run shouting toward the places where the Yankees and John Bulls dispute their differences. The captains arrive, sometimes more drunk than the men, and would send them back on board; the latter resist; the captains strike, and sometimes the sailors strike back; all shout at the same time; the *God damns* and *damnations* are like thunder; kicks and blows of the fist come down like hail; *black eyes* shine like lightning. It is late at night before the storm abates, only to blow up again the next day.[3]

Chastising narratives like this were echoed by observers around the world as they watched beleaguered seamen file ashore in search of ways to spend their valued leave and precious money. Landsharks, grog-shop owners, and prostitutes lured sailors into a life of hedonism, and the ports of Honolulu and Lahaina were no exception. These sailors were occasionally seen as the victims of exploitation, but also took their share of editorializing. The pressures of the industry forced young whalemen to seek physical and emotional escape when they came ashore.

Whalemen were also perceived as causing trouble because they were not being watched by their peers at home. Whether originating on a voyage that left from Bristol, England, or New Bedford, Massachusetts, whalemen felt as though the Sandwich Islands

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[3] Duhaut-Cilly, 227.

were far away enough from the watchful eye of their communities that they could act as they pleased. This too contributed to the stereotype of sailors as troublemakers whose only interest ashore was drinking, fighting, gambling, and fornicating. If any of these behaviors went against the teachings of the Bible, they did not necessarily take notice:

> Wicked men have their reasons for opposing the progress of the gospel. Their opposition at the Sandwich Islands, in the days of Kaahumanu, arose the fact that the introduction of Christianity interfered with their unlawful gains and sinful pleasures. In the first years of the mission, the Islands were regarded by not a few seamen and traders who visited them, and by the foreign residents viciously disposed, as so far out of the world, that they felt it safe for them to act without regard to public sentiment in Britain or America. Whatever they might do that was abusive to the native government and people, or to the missionaries, or in violation of their duty to God, they expected no report of it to reach their relatives and friends at home.[4]

In this account, British and American sailors were once again grouped together and categorized by the behavior they exhibited while ashore. This does not speak of the sailors' specific actions as much as it does of the motives that they used for acting in this manner. Here, sailors were conscious of the fact that they were out of the watchful eye of their friends and family and could do as they pleased without suffering consequences and judgment. The sailors who visited the islands took the time to enjoy their time ashore to the fullest and did little to alter their behavior when met with resistance.

While these two accounts are broad, sweeping generalizations about the whalemen who visited the Sandwich Islands, they serve to show the stereotypes that accompanied Jack Tar to every port he visited. In order to fully understand the conflict between whalemen and their land-dwelling counterparts, we should divide the discussion ito two phases. The first phase will cover the most violent and outrageous riots that took place in the Sandwich Islands in the 1820s. The second phase will cover the mostly verbal protest that took place over temperance issues. In the first phase, three events within this time

[4] Anderson, 65.

period highlight the heightened violence and overreaction all parties were prone to. The crew of the British whaleship *Daniel* reacted violently when they found that the laws of the Sandwich Islands had been altered. They came ashore, threatened the life of a local missionary, and thrived off of a mob mentality. The second event involved another British ship named *John Palmer*. Here too, the men were outraged at the thought that women were not allowed aboard ships and once again escalated the conflict to violence. The last example of violence in the 1820s is a riot that takes it name from the American naval vessel *Dolphin.* This riot occurred over the allowance of women aboard ships for the purpose of prostitution and saw a mob march on Hiram Bingham's house. A close look at these three examples shows that British and American sailors were the driving force behind the violence in the Sandwich Islands in the 1820s.

The first major conflict of the 1820s era, did not directly involve American whalemen, but a fight between American missionaries and the crew of a single British whale ship called *Daniel.* This is important because the British and American whalemen were, by many accounts, homogeneous in their shore-side behavior. Upon the arrival of a ship in port, a company of women would come aboard and spend anywhere from a night to a few weeks on the ship. Through the use of tabu and the influence of Christianity, the men of the *Daniel* found that women were not allowed to visit them. With the encouragement of the captain, the whalemen came ashore and immediately sought out the missionary leader, William Richards. Whalemen blamed Richards, the head missionary at Lahaina, for the passage of the law that prohibited women from coming aboard. When pressed by the sailors, Richards could only respond that "he could procure its repeal only by telling the chiefs and people that the law was opposed to the

law of God, which they well knew he could not do."[5] In this account, Richards affirms that the chiefs were the only ones who could lift the tabu. The meshing of Christian ideas with secular law is seen when Richards gives he reasoning why it could not be repealed. This account shows that the Hawaiian chiefs were under enough religious influence that it caused them to enact new laws. The law that they established was following the laws of a Christian God, revealed to them by the members of the ABCFM.

The crew of the *Daniel* was not satisfied with the Richards' response because it did nothing to help them access to the Hawaiian women. The tension between the Richards and the whalemen from the *Daniel* continued to escalate over the next few days. During this time, a group of men from the *Daniel* threatened the life of Richards and his family. In response the threats, Richards' wife, responded:

> I have none to look to for protection but my husband and my God. I might hope, in my helpless situation, that I should have the compassion of all who are from a Christian country. But if you are without compassion, or if it can be exercised only in the way you propose, then I wish you all to understand that I am ready to share the fate of my husband, and will by no means consent to live upon the terms you offer.[6]

This account reveals just how polarized the conflict between whalemen and missionaries was even during the early years of the mission. Even though the whalemen and the missionaries were not from the same country, they did have the same understanding of Christian behavior. It was the apparent deficit in those values that outraged the Richards. Even though she promised compassion for all Christians, she claimed that she would rather given her life than allow women aboard the *Daniel.*

Captain William Buckle of the *Daniel* did not give any assistance to the missionaries and even encouraged his men to take action against them. Whaleships in the nineteenth

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[5] Anderson, 64
[6] Ibid.

century tended to have one of two types of captains. Some, like Buckle, seemed to allow the men to do as they pleased while they were ashore while others temperance and abstinence values aboard their ships. They demanded that their men abide by the strict moral code that became increasingly defined throughout the Victorian Era. The existence of wives and families aboard whalers would have bolstered this idea as well. Buckle, did not seem overly concerned with upholding Christian values amongst his men, his only response to Richards' protestation was that he could not control the behavior of his men ashore. Furthermore, he maintained that the only way the situation between the whalemen and the missionaries would be achieved would be when the women were allowed aboard.[7] Richards remained strong and although his house had to be guarded by native body guards while the whaleship was in port, the women were not allowed to go aboard and the *Daniel* eventually departed leaving the men angered by the missionary influence.

A similar occurrence happened two years later when the crew of the British whaleship *John Palmer* found issue with the missionaries and the native authorities. This conflict did not end as peacefully as the *Daniel* conflict and ultimately involved the *Palmer* firing upon the town. The *John Palmer* conflict reveals the complexity of the involvement government in the lives of sailors. While most observers who visited the islands saw the influence that American missionaries held over the native people, the British had exerted influence from the earliest contact with westerners. The *John Palmer* incident, which took place in 1827, seems to underline the fact that whalemen were more than happy to ignore the apparent laws of the Sandwich Islands. When native authorities found that Hawaiian women were illegally aboard the *John Palmer*, they immediately

[7] Ibid.

demanded that the women be returned to shore. When the captain came ashore to discuss the issue, he was detained by the native authorities. Soon thereafter he was released and allowed to return to his ship with the understanding he would return the women ashore. When Captain Clark came back aboard, but rather weighed anchor, fired a few "nine pounders" toward the town of Lahaina, and sailed to a different port in the Sandwich Islands still with all the women aboard.[8] While the fate of the women aboard is not known, ships did occasionally leave with women aboard. Here the conflict over the legality of prostitution had already escalated to the point of more serious violence. While the missionaries cried outrage at the behavior of Clark, Buckle, and the entire crews of these two whaling vessels, they did not prohibit the visit of whaling ships to their ports. Rather they continued to welcome whalemen continued to the ports of Honolulu, Lahaina, and Hilo throughout the 1820s.

In many ways, this type of conflict not only reflects the desire of sailors to have access to prostitutes, but also the expectations that the missionaries held for their countrymen. Bingham, Richards, and the others felt that naval vessels would protect the rights of the missionaries against violent whaling crews:

> The expectations of the missionaries upon the arrival of the Dolphin in Honolulu were that they would offer a certain amount of protection from the naval force. They had hoped that the arrival of the Dolphin would afford protection to the American Missionaries, the lives of whom had been feared in jeopardy by the assaults of foreign seamen.[9]

Clearly the missionaries led themselves to believe that a military vessel would be the best way to protect them from the outrages they suffered at the hands of the *Daniel* and *John*

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[8] Busch, 94.

[9] Elisha Loomis to Samuel Southard 14 August 1827, *Papers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Boston, MA. Hereafter, abbreviated ABCFM.

Palmer. In this passage, missionaries believed that American sailors would act differently than British whalemen. The reality that took place while the *Dolphin* was in port must have served as a large disappointment for the missionaries.

On August 14, 1825, Lieutenant John Percival of the United States Navy received orders from his commanding officer. Secretary of the Navy, Samuel Southard, ordered Percival to *Dolphin* and crew out into the Pacific Ocean to search for a mutinied whaleship and return what crew remained to the United States. News had been circulating in the United States about a mutiny aboard the Nantucket whaler *Globe*. As a result of the appeal by those in Nantucket to politicians, the orders made their way to Percival.

In many ways, Percival and the crew of the *Dolphin* sailed on a voyage that any whalemen might have made in the early nineteenth century. They stocked their ship along the Peruvian coast in South America and then headed west into the Pacific Ocean toward the Galapagos Islands. Whaleships, of course, would have been trying to find their prey at the grounds near the Galapagos. Percival took a similar route stopping there to provision before going out to sea. After speaking with the natives on a series of Pacific islandsthe *Dolphin* did find the remaining crew of the *Globe*. However, by that time, all but two were dead; the rest had either been killed in the mutiny or were killed once they came ashore.[10]

The crew of the *Dolphin*, however, is not best known for the daring rescue of the marooned whalemen, but for a riot they took part in. Days after arriving in the Sandwich

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[10] For more on the mutiny of the Globe, see Gregory Gibson, *Demon of the Waters: The True Story of the Mutiny on the Whaleship* Globe (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002) and Thomas Haffernan, *Mutiny on the Globe: The Fatal Voyage of Samuel Comstock* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2002).

Islands with the rescued men, the crew learned that there was a tabu prohibiting women from visiting ships. A group of sailors went to Hiram Bingham's house to demand women be allowed to visit the ship. The ensuing riot gave each side reason to complain. The most popular story about the *Dolphin* riot comes from the accounts of the ABCFM and other missionary writings. These stories give skewed accounts of what occurred and point solely at Lt. Percival as the cause. Throughout the four months that the *Dolphin* was in Hawaii, Percival outwardly showed his disdain for the missionaries and their meddling with local laws. He believed that they overexerted their influence over the native population and had no right to do so. Percival apparently "lost no time expressing his regret at the existence of a law prohibiting females from visiting ships on an infamous errand."[11] Mad Jack, as Percival called himself, nevertheless, did spend time with the missionaries and the native chiefs, asking them to lift the tabu:

> He...insisted on the release of four prostitutes, then in the custody of the government for a violation of the law. This demand was repeatedly urged, until it was at last partially successful...The high chiefs were troubled by threats, which they understood the commander of the Dolphin to have uttered, that he would shoot Mr. Bingham should he appear as interpreter in the council of chiefs.[12]

This is the quintessential picture of rivalry between the sailors and missionaries. Bingham's life was threatened not only because of the law against prostitution, but also because of Percival's objection to influence he had over the local chiefs. Failure to release the jailed women sparked Percival's anger and he went as far as to say he would shoot Bingham should he remove negotiations with the native chiefs.

Despite the fact that Percival and the chiefs attempted to find common ground, tensions continued to rise and violence could not be avoided. On January 26, 1826,

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[11] Anderson, 66.
[12] Ibid.

Hiram Bingham was to preaching to a thousand native Hawaiians. The sailors had plans of their own for that day. Whether prompted directly by Percival or acting of their own accord, sailors in the port of Honolulu organized an attempt to have the ban on women removed. Physical confrontation started later that night and began when a handful of men entering the house of a chief, without permission, and demanding that the tabu on prostitution be lifted. The confrontation escalated and more sailors joined in. Soon the windows of the chief's house were broken and the gathering had turned into a mob. When they found that the laws would not be changed at their demands, the sailors moved toward Hiram Bingham's house. As they did so, their numbers grew until they were in excess of one hundred. Many of the members of the mob were armed with clubs and sticks and they arrived at Bingham's house before he did. It was only with the protection of the natives that Bingham was able to escape the mob and go into his house unharmed.[13]

As word spread about the gathering, the size of the crowd continued to grow and it became more violent. The mob began to yell and break windows and demand that their 'wives' be let aboard the ships. The mob lingered, but eventually saw that there would be nothing gained through this appeal and reluctantly disbanded. For years afterward, the members of the ABCFM maintained that the riot was the work of Percival and asked the Navy to reprimand him for it. Hiram Paulding, the first mate of the *Dolphin*, maintained that Percival had done no wrong. He noted, "Captain Percival, with some of the officers of the *Dolphin*, and captains of whaleships, promptly suppressed [the riot], and prevented

[13] The most concise versions of this story are found in Rufus Anderson and Hiram Paulding, *Journal of a Cruise of the* United States Schooner Dolphin *Among the Islands of the Pacific Ocean* and *A Visit to the Mulgrave Islands: In Pursuit of the Whaleship* Globe (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1970) and Thomas Haffernan.

serious outrage."[14] Elsewhere it was stated that, in reaction to the behavior of his men, Percival had "some of his men punished in the forenoon on Monday."[15] Ultimately, the riot ended with Bingham un-harmed by the mob and the sailors leaving his house with an unsuccessful appeal.

Despite Percival's maintenance that he was not involved with the riot, there is some evidence that he at least tacitly allowed the riot to occur. Peleg Stetson was the master of the New Bedford whaleship *Phoenix* which was moored in Honolulu. When questioned about the conduct of Lt. Percival, he maintained that Percival may have contributed to the creation of the mob. Stetson testified that he heard Percival say, "I shall send forty of my men ashore next Sunday; and I cannot vouch for their conduct."[16] This contrasts with Paulding's story of Percival being the one to break up the riot. There is no doubt that the riot that took place was over the tabu on prostitution, yet it is difficult to say whether the missionary accounts were accurate in blaming only Percival.

The missionaries highlighted the crew of the *Dolphin* as reasons to end drinking and prostitution in the Sandwich Islands. Letters flowed from Honolulu to the ABCFM members in Boston demanding the arrest of Percival. As a result of these pleas, the ABCFM and the Navy deposed sailors and questioned them about the events at Bingham's. The testimony of William Hawkins of the whaleship *Lark* implies that the whalemen made up a large portion of the mob. When questioned about the sailors who were involved, he noted that there were eleven ships in the harbor aside from the *Dolphin*; nine whaleships and two merchant vessels. Whaleships contained on average, twenty five to thirty men and when asked about which sailors took place in the riot,

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[14] Paulding, 226.
[15] Ibid.
[16] *Deposition of Peleg Stetson*, ABCFM.

Hawkins responded that "some of the *Dolphin*'s crew were engaged in [the riot] and there were some from most all other ships."[17] When pressed further by his interrogators, Hawkins further affirmed that the men from the *Dolphin* played only a small role in the uprising. From his whaleship alone, twenty-two men were ashore at the time of the riot. Hawkins' testimony is important because he puts hard numbers on those involved saying that there were two sailors from whaleships for every one from the *Dolphin.*[18] If this is true, then this shows the riot that was largely driven by the actions of whalemen.

Further evidence shows that naval sailors played only a small role in this riot. Because there was uncertainty about the length of time it would take the *Dolphin* to track down the remaining crew of the *Globe*, Percival was under strict orders from his superiors as to the number of men who were allowed to sail on the voyage:

> I have to direct that you lose no time in fitting [the Dolphin] for sea, and in receiving on board provisions and stores of every kind that she may require for six months, the crew to consist of not more than seventy, including every person on board. The crew of the Dolphin at this time consists of more men than she can stow provisions for to last six months; and it, being doubtful whether she can return short of that time, you will cause the crew to be reduced to not exceeding seventy.[19]

Historians and contemporaries alike frame this riot as being primarily caused by Percival's encouragement of his crew. However, careful exploration of the documentary evidence presents doubt as to how involved the crew of the *Dolphin* was . The skeleton crew mandated in the orders to sail started at seventy and only half of them would have been on shore at the time of the riot. Therefore, the maximum number of the *Dolphin*'s crew present at Bingham's house could not have exceeded thirty-five out of a mob of one hundred.

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[17] *Testimony of William Hawkins of New* Bedford ABCFM.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Commodore Hull to Percival, 14 August 1825, reprinted in Haffernan, *Mutiny on the* Globe.

Depositions and naval orders are not the only sources that affirm the importance of whalemen as part of the riot. Jeremiah Evarts, Secretary for the ABCFM, acknowledged the sheer numbers of the whalemen who visited the islands were a threat to the peaceful existence of the missionaries and native people:

> Several parts of these islands are becoming places of considerable resort for American whalers. It is very obvious that if 400 or 500 sailors meeting together in a place where no restraints of law and order are felt, should be left to the natural progress of all their worst passions without any salutary counter acting influences, deeds of violence and murder may be anticipated.[20]

The concerns of Evarts are clear in this passage. Left unchecked by law and Christian influence, Evarts worried that the ports of Honolulu and Lahaina would unwind and become full of murder and mayhem. The overwhelming numbers of whalemen who came to the islands left the native and foreign population subject to the demands of hundreds of sailors. The implications of whalemen being the center of the riot were far more significant than a riot that involved only naval personnel. A naval vessel was a novelty in the islands, but the whalefleet returned to the islands each year. Heightened tensions would make for a poor relationship between the missionaries and whalmen.

Beyond the finger pointing and cries of outrage lay the actual events of the riot and what caused them to occur. The primary reason for the riot was the issuance of a law that prohibited women from coming aboard vessels in port. The actions of the *Daniel* a year before and the *John Palmer* a year after show the intensity with which the maritime community resisted the laws. Sailors, whalemen, and naval seamen, expected that women would be allowed to visit their vessels. Part of the reason for the riot was because of the confusion among the sailors as to whether there was prohibition on women visiting ships. When asked if there was a tabu on women visiting ships during the time of the

[20] Jeremiah Evarts, draft letter, ABCFM.

riot, he responded, "Not that I ever heard of—And I don't think there was ever such a one, or else it would have been put in force."[21] This testimony would be easy to dismiss as Pickins simply playing ignorant in order to protect the actions of his fellow sailors. The line of questioning pushed Pickins to analyze the relationship between Hawaiian women and sailors. His responses, in part, reveal the fact that prostitution was taking place and it was a viable part of the economy. When asked how prostitution related to the sailors receiving pay from their captains, Pickins responded, "As soon as [the captains] paid [the sailors], they were always welcome to come [aboard]."[22] This testimony reveals a more complex picture of the Honolulu waterfront in the 1820s. The reality of women coming aboard vessels was as much about ability of whalemen to pay the women as it was about tabu. With such confusion in the enforcement of the laws, it is no wonder the sailors rioted.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to discover more about these riots through the perspective of the Hawaiian women that the sailors wished to have access to. Centuries of subjugating women through the use of the tabu system means the voice of commoners is difficult to find in the historical record. The observations of sailors, however, do reveal something of the social and economic lives of Hawaiian prostitutes. In reference to the way in which tabu and prostitution was intertwined, one observer noted:

> It was often the case that when girls did not come off [the shore], and inquires were made as to the cause of their absence, it was said that there were Taboos—which, in some cases, that they had not been duly paid, and their Fathers husbands and Brothers would not allow them to come off on that account.[23]

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[21] *Testimony of Benjamin Pickins*, 27 December, 1827, ABCFM.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

This is a rare glimpse into the way Hawaiian families functioned. Hawaiian women were largely controlled by the will of their male family members. In this account, failure to pay the women when they visited the ships meant that a tabu would be placed on them until the sailors money to pay them. The picture of young women being sent to ships by their fathers gives the reader reason to be sympathetic to Polynesian women. While this analysis does not directly involve conflict between whalemen and missionaries, it does show the complexity of prostitution and reveal how the Hawaiian women were impacted.

Even though life for Polynesian women was grim under the tabu system, their association with whalemen may have given them a bit of hope. Part of the problem with historical sources is that they place the western definition of prostitution upon Hawaiians. For the Hawaiian people, "sexual relations were not necessarily equated with social parings, mutual relationships, or even genealogical decent."[24] Hawaiians were free to experiment from a young age, a fact that the missionaries found particularly unacceptable. The culture of the Hawaiians did not look upon the women who went aboard ships poorly until the arrival of Christianity. Because sexuality was so prevalent in the Polynesian culture, the encounters that sailors had with Polynesian women may have made a bigger impression on them than on women.[25] For all of the discussion of Hawaiian sexuality and promiscuity by westerner visitors, they fail to mention that some sexual contact between whalemen and Polynesian women may have been born from admiration or even love. Relationships with whalemen became a way in which Polynesian women could show that they had agency beyond tabu and their families. A romantic encounter with a sailor may not only grant these women a sense of freedom, but

[24] Busch, *Whaling Will Never Do For Me*, 136.
[25] Ibid., 137.

gifts and the appearance of being a proper Victorian lady. When Benjamin Doane visited Honolulu, he noted an American merchant living there who had married a Hawaiian woman and had children with her.[26] Few women who were involved with sailors would have found marriage as an end result, but the point is made that Hawaiian women were influenced by western influence.

The second phase of the discussion of conflict has many of themes as were seen in these first three riots, but shows the rivalry between whalemen and missionaries changed over time. Even as native government forces became more organized and the laws of the Sandwich Islands became more stringent, whalemen, missionaries, and native Hawaiians continued to fight with one another over the legality prostitution and booze. Though more subtle and often less violent than the 1820s exchanges, the position of the whalemen remained constant. Whalemen demanded that they have access to prostitutes and alcohol in the short time they were allowed on shore. Often, this position was defended by their captains or boardinghouse owners who understood the plight of the whalemen. As the whalefishery grew, so did the numbers of ships arriving in the Sandwich Islands, and ultimately the number of sailors who came ashore. By the 1840s, their voice was loud and was often made public in its cry.

While the riots associated with the *Daniel*, the *John Palmer*, and the *Dolphin* took place over the issue of prostitution, alcohol consumption of the whalemen became the greatest obstacle to the missionary cause. It also became the new center of conflict with the whaling community. The conflict that categorized the 1830s and 1840s reflected the fact that the government began to be even more complex in its laws about prostitution, alcohol, and on whalemen. No longer was conflict simply a matter of miscommunication

[26] Doane, 119.

or the whalemens' ignorance of the Sandwich Islands laws. Rather, the second era of conflict stemmed from highly publicized laws.

One of the reasons for passage of laws having to do with alcohol was growing level of organization in the temperance movement. By 1844, the ASFS had "directed their pious benevolence" to Honolulu and erected a Seaman's Chapel that could accommodate two hundred people.[27] Along with the creation of the chapel was the hope that positive influence could be exerted on the whalemen and that they would abstain from drinking. . By the 1840s, the Hawaiian Total Abstinence Union was formed. Echoing the concerns of the temperance movement in the United States, the HTAU looked at hard alcohol as a major threat to the peaceful existence of the islands:

> The Collector of the Port [of Lahaina] had seized a quantity of gin and other spirituous liquors, which some persons had endeavored to smuggle on shore, in a whale boat, under cover of darkness of night...They were poisonous and unsafe, and ought to be put beyond the power of harming seaman or landsmen.[28]

This example shows that there was still tension between sailors and those in power. Gin was smuggled ashore in a whaleboat and the people who did so were, no doubt, whalemen. Yet, the commentary on the effects that gin may have is very telling. Using typical rhetoric of most abstinence societies, the author frames alcohol as poisonous and believes that it is the single largest factor in corrupting sailors and native Hawaiian.

Even though scrutinized by the local population, a whaleman still acted out his desire for female companionship and booze when his ship dropped anchor. As the number of sailors increased, so did the size of the towns in the Sandwich Islands. With this growth came the need to control the whalemen through the use of native laws. When sailors came ashore, the local newspapers published the laws pertaining to sailors on the back

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[27] *The Friend*, 1 August 1844.
[28] *The Friend*, 15 March 1845

page of every issue.[29] These included amounts of salable liquor, times for curfew of sailors, and amounts that fines were for not obeying the law:

> Spiritous or fermented liquors landed at any of the ports of these islands, are subject to the following duties, viz: rum, gin, brandy, whisky, & c., $ 5 per gallon; wines, (except claret,) liqueurs, cordials, & c., $1 per gallon.
> If any person commit an offense on shore, and the offender escape on board any vessel, it shall be the duty of the commanding officer of said vessel to surrender the suspected or culprit person to any officer of the police who demands his surrender on production of a legal warrant.
> All sailors found ashore at Lahaina, after the beating of the drum, or at Honolulu, after the ringing of the bell, are subject to apprehension and a fine of $2...Seamen are not allowed to be discharged at any of the ports of these islands excepting those of Lahaina and Honolulu.[30]

The strict nature of these laws implies the necessity for strict control over whalemen. Bringing wine and liquor to the Sandwich Islands, was not excluded altogether, but rather it was taxed in order to deter it from occurring with frequency.

Additionally, these laws claimed that the local government had jurisdiction over the punishment of sailors. Captain did not always feel it was their responsibility to keep their sailors disciplined while they were in port,. This was a source of heightened tension in Honolulu and Lahaina. In addition to the laws on liquor importation, there were curfews in both towns that forced seamen back to their ships at prescribed times. Failure to follow these rules meant that sailor would pay a fine and the government would take note. On 19 October 1844, a note in The *Polynesian*, newspaper commentated that there was "much noise at night from a neighborhood drinking ship, for the past week—[which] better stop or else."[31] The article leaves the reader only to wonder what was meant by th

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[29] See *The Polynesian*. The periodical was published weekly and the back page of each volume showed the classified ads along with the rules for sailors. Fines were listed as well. It shows with what the missionaries and the local authorities were most concerned: "$400 for taking on board any native...$60 on any captain that leaves on shore any of his men...$1 to $5 for hallooing or making noise in the streets at night, $6 for striking another in quarrel, $6 for drunkenness, $5 for fornication, $30 for adultery..."

[30] *The Polynesian* 19 May 1849.

[31] Ibid., 19 October 1844.

phrase "or else." Local officials would have fined the sailors at the very least, but unlike the earlier tensions between sailors and missionaries, these conflicts were categorized by written tensions rather than physical confrontation.

In 1844, Charles Wilkes traveled to Honolulu as part of a United States naval expedition to chart the islands of the Pacific. He carefully noted the geography, flora, and fauna of each island that he visited. Yet once he came to Honolulu, the tone with which he reported curiously changed. No longer did he speak about the lay of the land or the disposition of the native population. Rather, a source of negative influence upon the overall well-being of its people:

> That great licentiousness and vice exist there, is not to be denied; but to throw the blame of them on the missionaries, seems to me to be the height of injustice. I am well satisfied that the state of things would be much worse were it not for their watchfulness and exertions. The lower class of foreigners who are settled in these islands, are a serious bar to improvement in morals, being for the most part keepers of low taverns, sailors' boarding houses, and grog-shops. Every inducement that can allure sailors from their duty, and destroy their usefulness, is held out to them here. Such men must be obnoxious in any community, and that they are not able to make more disturbance than they do, supported as they are by those who ought to know better, is, I am satisfied, mainly owing to the attention and energy of the governor, and the watchfulness of the members of the mission over the natives.[32]

Here, Wilkes discusses the tension that existed between those adhering to temperance principles and those who were not. Here, he highlights the fact that there a tension between American missionaries and the foreign residents who catered to the demands of the whaling fleet. Elsewhere in the Pacific, like Bay of Islands, New Zealand, the same phenomenon occurred. Foreign residents, under-handed businessmen, and deserters created a waterfront that profited through the sale of alcohol and the exploitation of the

[32] Charles Anderson, 393.

sailor.[33] He maintains that the actions of the sailors in port needed to be closely watched or else they would become extreme.

Wilkes story goes further than to cite the bad influences in Honolulu. As his account continues, he further bolsters the idea of conflict and fear over drunkenness by referencing the men on his naval vessel:

> The intemperate use of intoxicating liquors appears by the evidence to have had a strong influence in inciting the men to the commission of their offenses; and the commander takes this public opportunity to express his abhorrence of the practice, and to state that in his opinion nothing can justify it, nor any act done in a moment of intoxication palliate the offense which is alike disgraceful to the individual, the navy, and the country. ...to induce those who witness the punishment to be inflicted, for offenses committed while under the influence of intoxicating spirits, to refrain from excessive use of them for the future.[34]

Wilkes issued this order because three of his men had gone ashore in Honolulu and neglected their duty by becoming intoxicated. The loathsome tone which he uses is clear and displays the fact that he disagreed with the access his men had to alcohol. Like the description of the British whaleship *Daniel* and the U.S. vessel *Dolphin*, Wilkes indicates that sailors often found nothing but trouble in the form of alcohol and prostitutes.

While the writings of Wilkes show how his temperance values were challenged by the reality of life in Honolulu, he was not alone in recording the tensions that existed between foreigners and the native authorities. The logbook of the whaleship *Morrison* reveals the fact that the Hawaiians still had to worry about the threat of outsiders using force against them. Despite more of the rhetoric that categorized the later conflicts in the Sandwich Islands, natives remained steadfast against the threats of outside governments. Although the native government had grown and stabilized since the time of the 1820s

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[33] See Kenney.
[34] Charles Anderson, 210-211.

incidents, a passage from the logbook of an 1840s whaleship called the *Morrison* shows that many of the same problems were still occurring:

> Difficulties were also frequently occurring between foreigners & the native authorities of which the consuls would take advantage to make unreasonable demands—In order to compel the king to compliance they would threaten to send home for vessels of war to some & take possession of the islands.[35]

Two decades of government development and western influence did little to sway foreigners from bullying the Hawaiian authorities. Foreigners would demand the cooperation of the king in order to gain preferential treatment toward their country. Rather than establishing normal diplomatic relations, foreign powers threatened the Hawaiian people with military force in order to obtain the desired laws. Whether access to women, alcohol, or preferential diplomatic treatment, the conflict that existed between Christianized Hawaiians and westerner visitors remained as an undercurrent in the story.

Even though this second era of conflict was not defined by physical conflict like the 1820s were, physical confrontation did occur between sailors and authorities. When crew members of the ship *Juno* were on shore in Honolulu in 1846, a conflict occurred that included sailors and native police. When the men from the *Juno* were on shore, a fight broke out between them and the native police force for an unknown reason. In the end, one of the sailors was severely beaten and the native chief of the Police named Blackwood was blamed for the beating. In this conflict, it was not the misconduct of the whalemen or sailors, but rather Blackwood who the sailors accused of acting out of order. Blackwood "had not only used no efforts to quell the riot...but had made use of inciting language to his policemen, calculated to increase it."[36] While the account does not say why the fight started, it does say that the police were spurred on by their chief and

[35] Logbook, *Morrison*, Log 343, MSM, 27 May 1845.
[36] *Sandwich Islands News*, 14 October 1846.

acted in a way that was harmful to sailors. After a quarter century of rivalry, the riots and opposition still occurred between sailors and locals. This incident, while violent, does not fit the model of violence characterized in earlier parts of this discussion. The rivalry here was not between sailors and the specific missionary in charge of a village. Rather this was an example of a random outburst that occurred between sailors and authorities whose differing views on shoreside activity were a continued source of tension.

Ultimately, the conflict between whalemen, missionaries and native Hawaiians took on variable forms and was impacted by perception of sailors, the establishment of western culture, and a misunderstanding of Hawaiian culture. In the 1820s, while the strength of the missionaries was most visible and the local government less organized, the struggle was categorized by violent conflict. Whether whalemen or naval personnel, the maritime community in the Sandwich Islands resisted the use of tabu to prevent prostitutes from visiting ships and the use of hard alcohol. Mad Jack Percival received the brunt of the blame for the riot that involved his men, but perhaps his involvement was one of benevolent intentions? Percival said "prostitution was a necessary evil" and that it prevented worse crimes from occurring.[37] Despite this, tensions continued to occur in Honolulu and Lahaina throughout the antebellum era. The work of temperance and benevolence groups did not stop drunken sailors from being a visible part of the Sandwich Islands waterfront community. In reaction to the negative influence sailors brought with them, Bingham and other influential missionaries encouraged the passing of laws regulating the behavior of sailors. To show their disapproval of these laws, sailors reacted in a variety of ways from violence to smuggling to verbal objection. After being

[37] Letter, Elisha Loomis to Samuel Southard, 14 August 1827, ABCFM.

at sea, hunting whales, and processing them for months on end, they simply wanted to enjoy the few days ashore where they were not tied to the lifestyle of the whaleship.

Chapter Six:

Compromise and Economic Benefit in the Sandwich Islands

If the first half of the discussion traces the social conflict that continually occurred between whalemen, missionaries, and Hawaiians, then the second half of the argument establishes why the whalemen were allowed to keep coming to the Sandwich Islands. Clearly the whalemen acted in a way that was objectionable to the missionaries and parts of the native population. Whalemen were known to stop visiting ports when the conditions there became unfavorable. In the early nineteenth century, the taxation and government control in New Zealand became so great the whaling fleet all but abandoned restocking there. In the 1840s, the Peruvian government became so concerned over the behavior of whalemen ashore that it closed the port of Callao to all American whaleships. The overriding reason the whalemen were not expelled from the Sandwich Islands is because the year-round Sandwich Islands population relied on the capital and wealth that the whalemen brought. The economic reliance on the whaling fleet became so great that the Hawaiian government not only sought to compromise some laws, but went as far as to make special concessions for whalemen. As the men were allowed to go ashore, the money that they spent helped to bolster and build western civilization in the Pacific Islands.[1]

As has been shown, the popular view of the common sailor was founded in the observations and perceptions by land dwellers. In reality, the primary literature of the Sandwich Islands presents a slightly different perspective on the value of Jack Tar ashore.

[1] For information on whalemen being excluded from ports, see Kenny, "Yankee Whalers in Bay of Islands." Also see *The Friend*, 1 January 1845. An article in this newspaper remarks on the closing of ports in Peru and the banning of the whaling fleet from visiting them.

If one looks past high-brow Victorian accounts and scathing reports by captains, a more complex story emerges about the interaction between Jack Tar and his land-dwelling cousins. Not all who noted the behavior of seamen reported them as a relentless lot of troublemakers. Rather, some observed well-behaved sailors bringing economic prosperity and positive influence to port towns. This was especially true in the Sandwich Islands as one newspaper article recalled:

> As many as 700 seamen have been ashore on liberty at once [in Honolulu], among whom good order has prevailed. This result is due not only to the good disposition of the parties themselves, and to the efforts of the native authorities, but in a great measure to the excellent influence exerted by the U.S. Vice Commercial Agent, who has shown himself both desirous and efficient in cooperating with all concerned in maintaining a proper discipline among the crews.[2]

Here, the whalemen are not referred to as a bunch of rowdy sailors fighting and drinking at every chance, but as men who exhibited some form of self-control. If even a small percentage of these sailors acted like the Jack Tar stereotype, then it would have been reported that anything but good order existed. This alternate interpretation of whalemen ashore presents a dilemma for how to properly frame the relationship between the transient whalemen and the permanent residents.

The relationship between whalemen and island residents was a multifaceted affair that involved cultural differences and mutual economic interest. Many outside observers were the first to point out the drunkenness of sailors, but they also gave the whaling fleet credit for supplying a large part of the wealth in the Sandwich Islands. Each port that allowed the whalemen to visit stood to obtain huge financial gains as the whalemen

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[2] *The Polynesian,* 10 May 1845. *The Polynesian, The Sandwich Islands Gazette,* and *The Friend* are all available in its original printed form at the Providence Public Library, Providence, Rhode Island. They are additionally available at the Mystic Seaport Museum and on microfilm at the New Bedford Free Public Library.

brought their share of the lays ashore. Frenchman Charles Varingy places this in the simplest of terms when he commented:

> [Honolulu] had been and still was at this period the rallying station for the entire whale fishing fleet, which from November to February came there each year for revictualing, repairing gear, and unloading the produce of the fisheries from one vessel to another. Two or three hundred whaling vessels, the great majority American, put into harbor there each winter. To these Honolulu owed its material prosperity. It was the whalers who brought fortunes to the merchants and grog shops and who, during each season, on departing, left behind them thousands of silver coins for the foreign population as a whole to live on during the remainder of the year.[3]

Varingy's commentary lays out the fact that the residents of Honolulu owed their prosperity to the visitation of the whalefleet. The very well-being of the foreign and native population depended on the whaling fleet spending money there. If the residents could stand the influx of sailors for a few weeks each year, they could live in relative peace and comfort for the rest.

The paradox of condemning the behavior of sailors while accepting the wealth that they brought defines the Sandwich Islands throughout the time period being discussed. Anywhere between 300 and 500 whaling vessels could come to the ports of the Sandwich Islands in a year and with them they brought capital in the form of whale oil to be transshipped and coins in the pockets of sailors. One estimate put the annual gross volume of business that the industry brought in at twelve million dollars, 249 vessels, and 7200 men. Another report stated, "The US Whaling fleet now consists of 650 vessels, totaling 200,000 tons, costing ready for sea, $20,000,000, and manned by 17,500 seamen."[4] With such a large amount of capital going through the trading houses of Honolulu and Lahaina, and the number of port fees and taxes going straight to the

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[3] Charles Varingy, *Fourteen Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981), 6.

[4] *The Polynesian*, 9 October 1844.

government and missionaries, it is no wonder that the behavior of whalers was largely ignored and the whalemen welcomed by the population.

One of the largest advocates for the whalemen was the newspaper *The Polynesian.* This newspaper which was produced by Sandwich Islands government and was published weekly, contained articles about the interaction of the government with foreign diplomats and with its own people. Additionally, it regularly made note of the whaling fleet. One appeal exclaimed:

> We welcome the whaling fleet to our ports, and hope they will find the means and facilities for recruiting, ample and satisfactory. Mutual benefit should characterize the intercourse between the ship and shore; and while the seafaring man recruits his health and strength, and procures the fruits and vegetables that shall invigorate and re-instate his wasted energies, the cultivator of those articles will also receive his equivalent, and business of every kind receive spur and impulse...We say again that we welcome the whaling fleet to our ports, and sincerely trust that order, sobriety, and quietness may characterize the shipping season.[5]

Sailors purchased goods and whaleships brought in oil, while the townspeople and natives sold manufactured goods and produce to the whalemen. Yet the always-present tone of temperance is laid into the wording of this welcoming appeal. Order, sobriety, and quietness are highlighted as virtues that would please the local population. The tension that led to conflict whalemen, missionaries, and the Hawaiian government was eased through the mutual benefit of commerce.

Although the stories of drunken whalemen are significant, they do not allow researchers to see the important economic factors that influenced the relationship. Temperance publications from the nineteenth century are littered with stories of Jack Tar and his inability to resist liquor.[6] Yet the people of Honolulu, an overtly religious bunch,

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[5] Ibid., 18 August 1849 and 25 January 1845.

[6] For examples of nineteenth-century temperance rhetoric, see the periodicals *The Friend, The Sailor's Magazine,* and *Godey's Lady's Book.*

outwardly welcomed the whaling fleet to its shores. Complaints overthe activities of whalemen, however, found their way to the local government. A newspaper report in 1844 showed concern for whalers attempting to sell goods to natives:

> Complaints have reached us in regard to peddling of goods from whale ships about the streets of Lahaina to the serious detriment of the business of the licensed tradesmen. It is said that musters are given to natives who hawk them about and in that manner dispose of a considerable quantity. We also hear that much liquor is secretly sold, and that Lahaina without a license is much worse off than if there were a licensed grogshop, which would put a stop to the unlawful and irresponsible vending of alcoholic drinks. If these things are so, measures should be taken to put a stop to both practices, and to do justice to the regular shop-keepers.[7]

The most saleable item that whalers brought to the islands was alcohol and it was one of the most popular goods that sailors peddled. Yet this appeal reveals a surprising concern from the government. Rather than focusing on the damage that alcohol would have on the moral welfare of citizens, the focus is on the unfair damage it caused local businessmen. The businesses that were being infringed upon paid taxes and bought licenses that benefited the local government, while the peddlers sold their goods without government knowledge. Additionally, this newspaper report makes an appeal to establish a grog-shop in Lahaina rather than allow irresponsible vending of alcoholic drinks. Government controlled consumption was better than widespread distribution at the hands of sailors. In the end, the newspaper dismissed the reports, saying that the black market sale of alcohol by sailors was not widespread and that local businesses need not worry about competition. The point was not to alienate the sailors by chastising their actions, but rather to keep the status quo.

The native and foreign population of Honolulu profited handsomely from the exchange of goods and capital with the whaling fleet. It is quite possible that sections of

[7] *The Polynesian*, 6 July 1845.

the Honolulu population went so far as to exploit the whalemen when they were ashore. Hiram Paulding, who visited Honolulu aboard the *Dolphin*, noted:

> There are from fifty to a hundred [foreign residents] permanently settled at Onavoora [Honolulu]; the least respectable of whom, maintain themselves by keeping shops for sailors, and practicing such chicaneries as are suggested by opportunities and the absence of law. The season for the whalers to visit the Islands is the time of their harvest, when, besides their gains from entertaining the seamen, they frequently prevail upon them to desert for the sake of the reward of their apprehension, or to strip them of what little money or clothes they may be possessed of.[8]

This scathing account shows Honolulu ripe with landsharks who were out to profit from the whalemen. Even after witnessing the mob of sailors threaten the local population, Paulding still viewed the sailors as innocent victims at the hands of the shore dwellers. In the context of Paulding's account, the way in which the local population exploited sailors was of far more concern than the uprising that the sailors created over prostitution.

While Paulding's account presents sailors as victims, it does reveal another way in which they directly impacted the lives of shore-dwellers. The issue of desertion and laws that addressed the issue became yet another way in which the local population and sailors were forced to interact. Not only were deserters to be returned to their ships, but in bounty hunter fashion, those who returned the sailors were to be paid a sum depending on where they were apprehended:

> for the apprehension of every such deserter, who shall be delivered over as aforesaid, the master, owner, or agent, shall pay to the person the sum of six dollars, if taken on the side of the island near which the vessel is anchored; but if taken on the opposite side of the Island, the sum shall be twelve Dollar; and if taken on any other Island, the reward shall be twenty four Dollars, and shall be a just charge against the wages of every such deserter.[9]

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[8] Paulding, 226.
[9] Ibid.

On a voyage where wages depended on the amount of whalebone and whale oil taken, desertion may have been a viable alternative to a small payday. Weary New England boys in search of adventure may well have thought Hawaii was a great place to jump ship. Nevertheless, the Hawaiian authorities demanded that the men returning these deserters be paid for their services and that masters or agents pay them. These guidelines reveal the fact that deserters were a social concern, but also that there was an economic value on returning them to their ship.

If the island population was willing to accommodate some of the practices of whalemen and profit from the return of deserters, then they were also willing to invest this revenue into the trends of westernization. As a result of becoming reliant on whalemen as a source of capital, there was an ever-growing fear that the whalemen would discontinue their use of the ports, taking their money with them.[10] One fear that arose was if money was taken away that the islands would revert to a state of uncivilized idolatry:

> But, even were the consumption much less, it is obvious that the prosperity of these islands has depended, and does depend *mainly* upon the whale-ships that annually flock to their ports; many of them coming twice a year. Were the whale fishery to fall off, as seems in some measure to be the case, or were the vessels engaged in it to abandon these islands for some others in this ocean, or for ports on the Main, the Sandwich Islands would relapse into their primitive insignificance.[11]

The author highlights the fear that the absence of whalers in the Sandwich Islands would cause the government to lose the progress it had worked so hard to establish. This progress was measured in the outward appearance of western culture. Churches, schools, clothing, and shops were all reflections of the arrival of western influence.

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[10] Kenney, 30-32.
[11] *The Polynesian,* 6 July, 1844.

In reaction to the fear that whalemen may leave the Sandwich Islands for other ports, during the 1840s, a constant dialogue appeared in the government writings and periodicals addressing ways to ensure the fleet stayed. The most visible way in which the Sandwich Islands government encouraged the whaling fleet to continue its visits was through special economic consideration and further leniency:

> The government seems to be aware of [the possibility of the whaling fleet going elsewhere]; for as I have shown in the notes to my Table of the 25th of March, published in the "Friend" of the 1st instant, there are exceptions in favor of whalers, both in the duties and port-dues. My only doubt is, whether these exceptions have been carried far enough. I incline to the belief that whale-ships should be exempted from all port-dues, and that the police regulations towards sailors ought to be the most liberal that the maintenance of public border will permit.[12]

This author worried that the lax rules that applied to whaling vessels were not lenient enough to encourage them to continue using the Sandwich Islands. While the many of laws were originally established to maintain a sense of Christian order and discipline, some felt that whalers should be exempt from them. The very laws that were meant to keep the sailors under the control of the local government were threatening to drive them away.

Even if the authorities in Honolulu allowed whalemen a certain degree of freedom, by the 1840s, Lahaina had become the preferred port for the American whaling fleet to refit. The close control of the American missionaries had forced the whalemen to seek a port other than Honolulu where they would be slightly less scrutinized by the missionaries and the native police.[13] Nonetheless, a riot that took place in Lahaina in

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[12] Ibid.

[13] *The Friend*, 1 May 1844. A graph is presenting the arrival of American vessels in the port of Honolulu. The busiest three year span was during the years 1832 and 1834 where the arrivals numbers 101, 89, and 93. By 1840 through 1842, the number was down to 41, 53, and 53. This is further verified by The Friend, 1 January 1845. The arrivals in Lahaina number 127 in the spring and 168 in the fall, while Honolulu was 13 and 45 respectively.

March of 1844 reveals not only that conflict still existed, but more importantly it reveals the economic leverage that the whaling fleet possessed. During this time, the government in Lahaina had been debating whether or not to allow new grog-shops to open. Having seen what happened in Honolulu in the 1820s, these residents simply sought to minimize the drunkenness among the whalemen and achieve a state of good order. It seems that the temperance-minded residents had good reason to fear the granting of grog-shop licenses as a riot took place between the whalemen and a force of natives. The account tells of a riot that can only be blamed on the actions of drunken sailors and is reminiscent of the 1820s:

> Yesterday and the day before have been celebrated for a riot—between two and three hundred drunken sailors, and five to eight hundred natives, in close combat. Yesterday they fought with clubs and stones—some fifty stones would be flying in the air at once. Several black eyes and bruised heads were the result. The police were overpowered,...and the sailors took the town. It is positively unsafe to live in Lahaina with the grog-shops, and I only wish that licensed vendors were in the center of such a mob as we had yesterday.[14]

While the actual numbers and the scale of the violence are debatable the author has some credibility in this regard. If nothing else, the unified force of sailors was powerful enough to overtake the native police force and do as they wished. The report in the newspaper attributes this action to the drunken behavior of the whalemen and maintains that the grog-shop owners are as much to blame. While this does sound like the riots in the previous chapter, it did take on a different tone because the missionaries were not directly targeted and the issue was alcohol, not prostitutes.

This account could fit into the previous discussion about conflict during the time period in question. However, this belongs in the discussion of economic compromise because of what occurred in the days after the riot. The reaction of the whaleship

[14] Ibid.

captains and the letter they sent to the local authorities, shows that Hawaiians and missionaries really had no choice but to be listen to the demands of the whaling fleet. The whaling masters presented a two-part argument to local authorities. In the first part, the captains blamed local authorities for the riot:

> It is absolutely necessary, for the preservation of the health of our crew, that they should have liberty on shore as much as possible,-being, as often the case, seven or eight months at sea, and it is our wish that liberty should not be abused; but we PROTEST against being held responsible for the conduct of our men, when the sale of ardent spirits, the prime, nay, SOLE CAUSE of their ill conduct is legally authorized by the authorities of these islands. Prevent the sale of ardent spirits, and we assure you that you will find our crews as peaceable and well behaved on shore, as we find them to be at sea.[15]

Perhaps no group would know about the needs of the whalemen more than their captains. After spending months at sea, captains sought to keep morale up by allowing their crews shore leave. The captains were quick to defend themselves for any wrong-doing in the wake of the riot, blaming those who sold the alcohol as the reason for the riot.

The second part of this letter reveals a much more forceful side to the concerns of the whaling fleet. The captains wasted little time in expressing the economic benefit that the whalemen brought to the port every year and they implied the consequence that would be felt of the whaling fleet left:

> We hereby protest, as before, to any punishment being inflicted upon our men, or against any damages that may accrue to the interests of our owners, for and by evils wrought by the use of ardent spirits sold by legal authority on this island; --assuring you, that if such a course is pursued we will not only refrain from visiting this port for supplies but will endeavor, by all honest means in our power, to prevent our countrymen from doing so.[16]

The argument presented is forceful and straightforward. The whaling captains knew how much the town of Lahaina relied on the money brought by whalemen. Without them the

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[15] *The Friend,* 4 April 1844.
[16] Ibid.

town would suffer a huge economic downslide. In order to ensure that this would continue captains asked that the whalemen be exonerated and allowed to behave as they wished. Clearly the whalemen won this battle, as they continued to visit the port of Lahaina and were allowed to act without being overly scrutinized.

The preferential treatment of sailors became a government concern as the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Sandwich Islands, Robert Wylie repeatedly urged the government and the citizens of Hawaii to welcome the whaling fleet. Whether influenced by the American missionaries or European advisors, the key was to keep the whaling fleet in the ports of the Sandwich Islands. Wylie also considered the movement of the fleet to Lahaina as an obstacle to the development of Honolulu. He warned the citizens of Honolulu to "seriously consider why whalers prefer the port of Lahaina to this port and to remove any disadvantages they may here labor under."[17] The movement of the whaling fleet from Honolulu to Lahaina made it difficult for the residents of Honolulu to make profits and Wylie urged them to consider change.

Although missionaries claimed that sailors acted as they did in the Sandwich Islands because of the isolated location, the United States government kept a close watch on the islands. One way in which American whalemen and missionaries were addressed was through diplomatic relations with Washington, D.C. The treaties and diplomatic papers of the United States reveal the necessity to accommodate whalemen and to acknowledge the influence of Protestant missionaries. The first half of the nineteenth century was dominated by informal American treaties that outlined the way in which the two nations would interact. For the Hawaiian rulers, the treaties were often negotiated through an American intermediary speaking on their behalf. The diplomacy demanded fair trade and

[17] *The Friend*, 2 December 1844.

respect for independence, but that also addressed specific social problems having to do with whalemen.

The earliest known treaty between the Hawaiians and the United States came in the wake of the *Dolphin* riot. In its aftermath, a separate United States Naval vessel under Thomas Ap Catesby Jones was instructed to go to the Sandwich Islands and ease some instability caused by American influence. In an attempt to normalize relations with the Hawaiian government, Jones outlined an informal treaty with the queen dowager Kaahumanu in December of 1826. The content of the treaty reveals just how important American business concerns were to both parties:

> The contracting parties being desirous to avail themselves of the bounties of Divine Providence, by promoting the commercial intercourse and friendship subsisting between the respective nations, for the better security of these desirable object, Their Majesties bind themselves to receive into their ports and Harbours all ships and all vessels of the United States; and to protect, to the uttermost of their capacity, all such ships and vessels, their cargoes, officers and crews.[18]

Though this treaty was not formally ratified by the United States Congress, it served as the major diplomatic framework between the United States and the Hawaiian government for the next quarter century. The primary concern of Jones was to protect the economic interest of those conducting business in the Sandwich Islands. The majority of ships and vessels that Jones refers to would have been whaleship or merchant ships used in the transshipment of whale oil and whalebone.

The wording of this treaty implies fair trade and non-preferential treatment that the United States would have expected from any friendly government. However, additional sections point out the major concerns the Sandwich Islands government had with Americans. The treaty stated that the Hawaiian government would protect American

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[18] Hunter Miller, ed., *Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America,* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), 270.

ships, crews and cargo, "so long as they shall behave themselves peacefully, and not infringe on the established laws of the land."[19] It is easy to see how this wording was placed in the treaty just months after the *Dolphin* riot undermined the newly enacted laws of the Sandwich Islands. The Hawaiian government was more than happy to welcome American ships and personnel, but demanded that they obey the laws of the Sandwich Islands.[20]

By the 1840s, the United States government was very aware of the growing economic interest in the islands. In a letter written in 1842, then Secretary of State, Daniel Webster highlighted the importance of economic intercourse between the Sandwich Islands and the United States:

> The advantages of your country to the navigators in the Pacific, and in particular to the numerous vessels and vast tonnage of the United States frequenting that sea, are fully estimated; and just acknowledgments are due to the Government and inhabitants of the islands for their numerous acts of hospitality to the citizens of the United States...Of the vessels which visit the islands, it is known that a great majority belong to the United States. The United States, therefore, are more interested in the fate of the islands, and of their Government, than any other nation can be.[21]

The vessels that Webster spoke of were the New England whaling vessels that brought oil and bone to port and the trading vessels that transshipped these commodities back the United States. The importance of the Sandwich Islands ports were not only for the whalemen but also for these transshipped goods that fueled American industry. Webster also highlights the numerous acts of hospitality that became the entire basis on which the whaling fleet was welcomed. Leniency and invitation were the catchphrases that encompassed Hawaiian-American interaction.

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[19] Ibid.

[20] It should be noted that desertion was a major factor in the in the treaty of 1826. Among the Articles that are outlined, there is one that specifically addressed the issue of deserted sailors and what should be done with them. The result of the treaty was that rewards were given for the return of deserted sailors.

[21] Miller, 601.

Official government correspondence continued throughout the middle of the nineteenth century. George Brown became the first Commissioner of the United States to the Sandwich Islands in March of 1843. Prior to this time, shipping agents and naval personnel were the only diplomatic representatives to had stepped foot in the Sandwich Islands. They served as intermediaries of trade, negotiators, and such. Upon Brown's appointment, Secretary of State Daniel Webster told Brown:

> Your attention is particularly requested to the nature of the fiscal regulations in force there, to their effects upon foreign commerce generally, and to the policy of the Government in regard to this subject...Regulations should be frequently changed, or there should be cause to apprehend the imposition of discriminating duties upon our navigation and trade. [22]

Free trade and economic interest were the largest concerns of the United States government in its dealings with the Sandwich Islands. The passages from the United States representative echo further highlight the demand that whalemen receive preferential treatment.

James Jackson Jarves became Brown's counterpart when he became the Commissioner representing the government of the Sandwich Islands. The use of foreign-born advisors has already been discussed and the Sandwich Islands government used an increasing number of Europeans and Americans in that capacity. Jarves had been the editor of the newspaper, *Polynesian*, and as such had created close ties with the Hawaiian government officials. Once assigned as the commissioner, Jarves sought to instill a policy of fair trade with between the two nations. He noted, "Such a policy is the most favourable, to all Great Maritime Nations, which have commercial interests, in the Pacific Ocean."[23] Jarves was not outwardly showing preferential treatment toward only

[22] Miller, 603.
[23] Miller, 607.

American whalemen, but to all maritime nations who could bring prosperity to the Sandwich Islands.

While the rhetoric seemed to show no favoritism, the lengths to which the Sandwich Islands government went to in wooing the whalemen, tell a slightly different story. Charles Eames later became the commissioner from the United States and tried to negotiate a permanent diplomatic relationship with the Hawaiian government. While the whalemen were the beneficiaries of preferential economic and social treatment, the United States government was also aware that the Protestant missionaries were highly influential. In an 1849 letter, Secretary of State James Buchanan highlighted the relationship of the Hawaiian government with the missionaries who were there:

> You are aware how greatly the Sandwich Islanders are indebted to the Christian missionaries resident among them for their progress in civilization. The zealous and disinterested labors of these missionaries have probably resulted in causing their advice and opinions upon other subjects than those relating to their calling to be respectfully listened to and to be perhaps decisive with the Hawaiian people and government. You will consequently by all honorable means cultivate the most friendly relations with the missionaries.[24]

Buchanan's approach was sensitive to the influence of the missionaries. This passage certainly highlights the amount of missionary influence over the native government. Within the discussion though, is commentary on the progress of civilization. While this could be counted in many ways, such as distribution of Bibles, the most obvious forms of civilization that were apparent to outsiders were the growth of the port cities of Honolulu and Lahaina and the number of Hawaiians who could be counted as Christian. While this affirms that missionaries claimed to be disinterested in the outcome of the politics and such, it is key to note that they were influential nonetheless.

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[24] Ibid., 611.

Ultimately, the official treaties that were signed between the United States and the Sandwich Islands reflect the concerns and the benefits sought by each nation. By 1849, there was still no an official treaty between the Untied States and the Sandwich Islands government. Whalemen continued to flock to the ports and the transshipment of goods became a large subsection of the economy. Both countries had largely followed the guidelines laid out by Jones in 1827, which afforded some control over whalemen ashore, but largely focused on mutual economic benefit. It was not until 1849 that a treaty was formally drafted. By this time, there was a much more complicated system of duties and taxes on imports existed in the islands. Article VII of the San Francisco Treaty, as this came to be known, highlights the economic discourse taking place:

> The whaleships of the United States shall have access to the ports of Hilo, Kealakekua, and Hanalei in the Sandwich Islands, for the purpose of refitment and refreshment, as well as the ports of Honolulu and Lahaina which are only ports of entry for all Merchant vessels, and in all the above named ports, they shall be permitted to trade or barter their supplies or goods.[25]

While merchant ships were confined to Honolulu and Lahaina only, whaleships had additional choices of where they could land. This was, in part, because of the logistics of having that many ships in one place, but it was also because of the accommodations set forth by the Sandwich Islanders. The Article goes on to say that they may trade their goods with the exception of hard alcohol. The concerns of the Christian-minded, Hawaiian government were never far from the surface.

Article VII of the San Francisco Treaty further displays the concerns of the United States government with the treatment of whalemen in the Sandwich Islands. It noted, "[whaleships] shall also be permitted to pass from port to port of the Sandwich Islands for the purpose of procuring refreshments, but they shall not discharge their seamen or

[25] Ibid., 615.

land their passengers in the said Islands" excepting in Honolulu or Lahaina.[26] This was, no doubt, a way to accommodate the fears of the Hawaiian government and ensure them the United States would cooperate in the treatment of sailors. The enforcement of curfews and limiting sailors to certain ports reflected Hawaiian fears while the allowances given to whalemen reflected economic gain.

In 1838, Benjamin Franklin Butler was the Attorney General of the United States. He had also been the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York when he met missionary William Richards. Richards, it should be remembered, was the victim of one of the violent, 1820s riots that threatened his life and the life of his family. After establishing a relationship with Butler, Richards sent a letter to him as an official correspondence in which he voiced the concerns of Kamehameha III. The letter outlined some of the diplomatic concerns of the Hawaiian king, but also noted the economic ones:

> The Sandwich Islands are now becoming of considerable importance in a variety of respects. The principal port, which is at Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, is vastly the best, and may almost be said to be the only Harbor within six or eight thousand miles...These islands have long been of great importance on account of the refreshments they have afforded to the multitude of ships engaged in the whale fishery.[27]

Between whaling captains, foreign merchants, and American diplomats, all of those involved in trade and economic development of the Sandwich Islands recognized the importance of whalemen. Here Richards looks beyond the terror that had been instilled in his wife by whalemen and he appeals to the Attorney General to make sure the United States government knows how important the whalefishery was to the Sandwich Islands. Because the voice of the king was sent via a missionary, this further shows just how

[26] Ibid., 616.
[27] Ibid., 611.

aware all parties were of the benefits of the whalefleet and how willing they were to accept them into the ports of the Sandwich Islands.

The development of the Sandwich Islands occurred on two seemingly divergent paths. On one side was the strict Christian, moral influence that became entrenched very soon after western contact. The missionaries from the ABCFM and the arrival of later benevolence-minded individuals created an American population concerned primarily with converting the native population, but who also considered bettering the lives of whalemen. On the other path were whalemen whose interaction with the Sandwich Islands came in the form of visitations to grog-shops and prostitutes. Even so, the immense wealth the American whaling fleet was bringing through the ports of the Sandwich Islands could not be overlooked. It is on this point that existence of parity and tolerance occurred. Despite the violence and outcry the whalemen could put forth, they were welcomed into the ports of the Sandwich Islands. Whether manifesting itself in appeals from government officials to be more conscious of the whalemen or in documents of American diplomats, all participants were apprised of the economic gain to be had by allowing the American whaling fleet to come ashore in the Sandwich Islands. Unlike the ports of Bay of Islands or Callao, which had expelled the whaling fleet over their reluctant to pay duties and propensity to cause mayhem, the behavior of the whalemen was tolerated and with that came the financial rewards that fueled the nineteenth-century development of the Sandwich Islands.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion

After spending twenty years in the Sandwich Islands working to convert the native population, Hiram Bingham returned to the United States. He had worked tirelessly to convert the souls of the idol-worshipping Hawaiians. He accomplished this by establishing a written language for the Hawaiian people, printing and distributing Bibles and tracts, creating schools and seminaries for the native population, and instructing them on the ways of Christ. Bingham was aided as well by a bit of luck, or blessed by the grace of God as he and the other missionaries looked at it. The collapse of the tabu system and the ensuing socio-political power vacuum made the Hawaiian people more receptive to the introduction of Christianity. The result was quick acceptance of the missionaries and huge success in converting the population. Bingham exceeded his charge far beyond the expectations of the members of the ABCFM and became synonymous with the success of the Sandwich Islands mission.

At Bingham's ordination in 1819, he was told to go out into the world and convert the heathen and bring to them Christianity and civilization. Years later, Bingham's life had come full circle and he gave the sermon at his son's—also Hiram—ordination to become a missionary. When the elder Bingham received his advice, the foreign mission enterprise was in its youth in America. Thirty-five years had done much for the missionary cause. Failures in the American West and in the utilization of native missionaries made the ABCFM constantly refine its tactics. But when Bingham spoke to his son in 1856, he spoke with nearly four decades of experience and reflected on the best and the worst of the missionary enterprise:

> Show yourself their affectionate *friend.* Win and secure their confidence, and never abuse or forfeit it. Gather around you the grey headed, the men and women of middle age, the young men and maidens, and the little children, at your cottage, or some other consecrated place,...and in the meekness of wisdom teach them the things of God's kingdom...Tell them of what Christ has done and suffered for the recovery and salvation of ruined souls. With a logic set on fire, show them God's *right to rule* them, his *readiness to save* them, and their *duty to obey* his voice.[1]

Bingham spoke to his son with the passion and reverence that had made him such a successful converter of souls. The missionaries' message is what ultimately helped the Hawaiian people to establish a government and constitution that were largely based on the Ten Commandments. The reason for saving the souls of the Hawaiians was to also benefit their own souls as they labored for God on earth and a reflection of disinterested benevolence. The Hawaiians capacity to absorb western culture manifested itself through the use of missionary and foreign advisors whose counsel may have reflected the will of God, but also a consideration for diplomacy and economic advancement.

Some of the most useful advice that Bingham gave to his son was about the influence of foreigners who came to the islands during the mission. Whether they came to trade, to re-supply, or to bring a new group of missionaries, the younger Bingham would be forced to interact with them. The expectations on each side might well be misinterpreted and the potential for disappointment high. It was here that Bingham really reflects on his own experience in the Sandwich Islands:

> Should foreign ships visit you in your long seclusion from civilized society, with what emotions will you conjecture their influence, or meet their commanders, officers, and crews. How intense will be your desire to find in them friends of humanity, friends of missionaries; friends of the erring aborigines—friends, who will not thwart but aid your plans for elevation, guiding, and saving the people for whom you toil and pray. Take kind interest in them, freely explain your object, and whether they are seeking the treasures or pleasures of earth or ocean, tell them where they may find and how [to] obtain the pearl of price untold, that

[1] Reprinted in *The Friend*, May 1857.

you may win them to Christ and his cause.[2]

In this passage, it is easy to hear Bingham reflect on the struggles he had with visiting seamen as they came ashore in the Sandwich Islands. He speaks of an intense desire to find friends of benevolence and the needs of his son to be conscious that not all would fully understand the missionary cause. The elder Bingham knew only too well that there were many who were not friends of the mission. Rowdy whalemen, jealous French Catholics, and Empire-building Brits all worked against Bingham at one time or another. In this, the best advice he gives to his son is to be honest and make the outsiders aware that the cause was that the undertaking was a righteous one and that they meant only to guide the native population. The greatest struggle that young Bingham would have would not be going to the islands or even converting the island population, but rather making everyone understand why they were engaged in such an endeavor.

Nineteenth century whalemen struggled in distant settings too. They were not struggling against the judgment of ship captains or travelers or priests, but against the elements and against the demands of industry. Years away from their family working on a whaling vessel wore away their self-control and moral voracity. Missionaries and travelers recorded the frustration vented as a result of this demanding enterprise. Seven months in the Arctic Ocean drove whalemen to seek escape once they reached shore. Some abandoned the enterprise altogether and deserted the ship. Others reluctantly tried to make their fortune by returning to sea for years at a time. Yet whalemen were as much known for seeking prostitutes and alcohol in ports around the world as they are for hunting these great beings. These exploits have been immortalized in shanties and in missionary and travelers' accounts. As a result, tensions always existed with locals

[2] Ibid.

populations who sought to find a way to co-exist with the whalemen. However, the amount of financial resources involved with the whaling fleet made them too important to alienate.

The result is that the nineteenth-century whaleman was viewed as a paradox. He was seen as lustful evil-doer and proper Christian youth. As a victim of exploitation and a weak-willed hedonist. As a brave soul atop the mast and a weakling in a grog-shop. As a carrier of American initiative and a disrupter of Christian progress. The economic wealth that whalemen brought, ultimately allowed onlookers to see the former part of the paradox and ignore the latter. Perhaps storyteller Mark Twain put it best: "In Honolulu, when your friend the whaler asks you to take a 'fid' with him, it is simple etiquette to say, 'Here's to eighteen hundred barrels, old salt!' But, 'Drink hearty!' is universal. That is the orthodox reply, the world over."[3] For Twain's whaleman, taking a drink did not mean getting drunk and causing social unrest. Rather, it meant toasting his economic prosperity and the success of the next whale voyage. As long as the success of the whaling fleet brought money to the Sandwich Islands, the missionaries and native government were able to look past the disruptive behavior and to say along with Twain, "Here's to eighteen hundred barrels."

[3] Mark Twain, 68.

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