I. A Brief History of the Hawai'ian Islands

A. "Discovery"

The Hawai'ian archipelago is a chain of eight major islands plus reefs and shoals extending southeast-northwest, from Hawai'i, the "Big Island," to Kure Island--a distance of 1,600 miles. Exclusive of Midway Islands, which remain under U.S. Navy administration and have long been an important airplane base, the seven inhabited islands are at the southeast end of the archipelago. Extending from the northwest to the southeast, they are Ni'ihau, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, Maui, and Hawai'i. Kaho'olawe, a small island south of Lāna'i, is uninhabited and used as a target area by the U.S. Navy and Air Force. The Hawai'ian Islands were formed by volcanic action, the major ones being basaltic volcanic domes.

The Hawai'ian Islands were originally settled by peoples given the general name of Polynesians, who came from the Marquesas and Society islands by canoe over a long period of time, beginning probably at least as early as the eighth century A.D. Emigrants later came in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from Tahiti. Although Spanish galleons sailing between Mexico and the Philippines might have been aware of this group of islands, not until 1778 did the first European, the British explorer Capt. James Cook, "discover" the islands on his third expedition to the Pacific, in search of a sea passage joining the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. He named them the Sandwich Islands in honor of his patron, the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the [British] Admiralty. Returning the next year, Cook was killed in a skirmish with a group of native Hawai'ians on the "Big Island" of Hawai'i.

At the time of Cook's discovery, the individual islands or parts of islands were ruled by various high chiefs, who constantly quarreled among themselves for supremacy. Finally a particularly capable chief on the island of Hawai'i, named Kamehameha, eventually conquered all the islands and brought them under his ordered and prosperous rule by 1810. (Although he did not invade the islands of Kaua'i and Ni'ihau, their king accepted Kamehameha as his sovereign.) Except for a few minor and unsuccessful revolts, there were no more wars in Hawai'i. Kamehameha

devoted the next few years to organizing his government and building up the islands' resources, and the single unified kingdom thrived during his stable reign. During that time many Europeans, and a few Americans, lived in Hawai'i. Indeed white men had helped Kamehameha in his conquest to a great extent, providing him with guns, artillery, and ships.

Kamehameha I ruled from 1795 to 1819 and was referred to as "the Napoleon of the Pacific."[1] He is most commonly referred to, however, as Kamehameha The Great, because of his achievements in uniting a nation and keeping it together in the face of disruptive foreign and domestic elements. Upon his death, the King's heir, Liholiho, became Kamehameha II.

B. Arrival of Protestant Missionaries

On June 27, 1810, in Bradford, Massachusetts, an American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was instituted, whose object was "to devise, adopt, and prosecute ways and means for propogating the gospel among those who are destitute of the Knowledge of Christianity."[2] Its members belonged to the Congregational and Presbyterian churches.

When American Protestant missionaries came to Hawaii in 1820, they encountered the old Hawaiian religion, which included four primary gods and several lesser ones. Despite its support by Kamehameha the Great, the Hawaiian religion had been growing weaker for some time due to the influence of foreigners, as well as the natives tiring of the sacrifices and oppression imposed by priests. The kapu or taboo system was an extremely important part of this religion and prescribed numerous prohibitions, such as forbidding men and women from eating together and

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1. Omer Englebert, The Hero of Molokai: Father Damien, Apostle of the Lepers (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), p. 58.

2. Father Reginald Yzendoorn, History of the Catholic Mission in the Hawaiian Islands (Honolulu, T.H.: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Ltd., 1927), p. 21.

women from eating specific foods such as bananas, pork, coconuts, or certain fish. Two of Kamehameha the Great's widows, however, were instrumental in overthrowing the kapu system. These two women persuaded Liholiho to abolish the old kapu and the old religion. Throughout the islands images of the old gods were destroyed, heiau demolished, and the people forbidden by royal decree to worship the old gods. Hawai'i thus became a fertile field for American evangelism and the planting of new religions. Although the old patterns of domestic and religious life were disrupted, it was years before a new pattern, based on Christian mores, was established.

King Kamehameha II permitted the missionaries to settle and work in Hawai'i for a year, and during that time they zealously established and operated schools on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and Maui. New arrivals from Massachusetts achieved further admirable results--establishing a Hawai'ian alphabet, introducing a written Hawai'ian language, and publishing several Hawai'ian word lists and religious booklets in Hawai'ian. Pleased with their successes and gradual acceptance by many of the chiefs, the Protestants were unwilling to permit competition from other quarters. Some dissension arose, therefore, in 1827 when the first Catholic missionaries arrived and attempted to counterbalance the influence of the New Englanders.

C. Arrival of Catholic Missionaries and Others

In 1825 the Seminary for Foreign Missions in Paris entrusted the Hawai'ian Mission to the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, an order founded in 1800 and sometimes referred to as the Picpus Brothers after the street in Paris on which the mother house was located. The brothers found their presence in Hawai'i in 1827 to be unwelcome; the chiefs, influenced by the Protestant missionaries, were reluctant to admit Catholics to Hawai'i. Eventually granted a tract of land for their mission by Kamehameha III (Kamehameha II had died of measles in London in 1824), the Catholics settled in to learn the language. In 1831, however, persecution of the Catholics began, with the connivance of the

Protestant mission. The Prefect Apostolic of Hawai'i was banished. The brothers who remained endeavored during this time to console and encourage the faithful Hawai'ians who still gathered at the mission for daily prayers. In mid-1835, the arrival of more Boston missionaries initiated a new persecution of Catholics on Oahu. In Honolulu harsh and cruel punishments were meted out to Catholic Hawai'ians who refused to attend Protestant prayer meetings. Hundreds were imprisoned and forced to hard labor. In December 1837, by royal ordinance, the Catholic faith was rejected and Calvinist tenets became the state religion. Only with the arrival of a French frigate in the Honolulu harbor in 1839 and the subsequent demand to halt all persecution under threat of war were orders given by the king and chiefs to end all punishments based on religious beliefs and to liberate all Catholic prisoners.

The first written constitution of the kingdom, published in 1840, contained a clause on religious toleration. The way was then cleared for inauguration of a full-scale apostolate throughout the islands, although open hostility between Protestants and Catholics continued. By 1840 Catholics numbered 2,000, and five years later the islands were elevated to a Vicariate Apostolic of which Bishop Louis Maigret was placed in charge. By Brother Damien's arrival in Hawai'i in 1864, there were already forty Catholic missionaries in the field. Little by little the relations between Catholic priests and Protestant ministers became friendlier, and, as a consequence, Catholic relations with the king and chiefs also improved. Now the work of extension could begin. The Hawaiian Evangelical Association was organized in 1854, superseding the Sandwich Islands Mission, and in 1863 the association broadened its membership to include native Hawai'ian clergy. Mormon missionaries arrived in the islands in the 1850s, and Episcopalians in the 1860s. The Hawai'ian kingdom thus became a predominately Christian nation, watched over closely by missionaries--the only foreigners in the early days who concerned themselves solely with the fate of the Hawai'ians.

D. A New Era Begins

Up to the time of Cook's arrival in the Hawai'ian Islands, centuries of nearly complete isolation had evolved a pattern of Hawai'ian

social and cultural life shaped from internal forces. By the mid-nineteenth century, economic and social change was rapid and prompted primarily by external forces. Only a few years after Cook's visit, the Sandwich Islands became a convenient port in which foreign ships could rest and obtain supplies during the long trans-Pacific voyage involved in bearing sea otter skins between the northwest coast of America and Canton, China. Soon a variety of exploring vessels, whaling ships, and general trading ships anchored off the coast, and a friendly and profitable relationship developed between the seamen and the Hawai'ians. Firearms and ammunition were given to the chiefs for use during their frequent civil wars and sailors enjoyed in return fresh water, sweet potatoes, pork, and the charms of the island women.

It was not long before several of these seafaring visitors decided to live onshore, and this number grew steadily. These new residents ranged from runaway sailors and escaped prisoners to men of education and practical knowledge. The latter were in great demand by the chiefs as instructors in war, advisors, and managers of estates. Held in high esteem, they became quite wealthy and prominent. Very few of the foreigners, however, made any attempt to educate the natives or teach them the intricacies of Western culture, probably to ensure the stability of their own positions.

Although at first primarily Europeans and Americans, foreign residents included Chinese by 1794, and before long Hawai'i was assuming her role as the melting pot of the Pacific. Foreign contacts brought many positive results, such as new ideas; new domestic animals, plants, fruits, and vegetables; and items of European manufacture, such as tools and utensils. In addition they created a variety of new problems, involving religious conflicts, land titles, trade, and credit. The most detrimental effect of foreign influence was the introduction of venereal and other diseases to the islands. Having no immunity to them, thousands of Hawai'ians became afflicted with venereal disease and succumbed to smallpox, measles, and whooping cough.