

ハワイ経済と私的利益——ハワイと砂糖産業に関するマーク・トウェインの著作、および彼の私的収益方法の分析——

The Hawaiian Economy and Personal Profit: An Analysis of Mark Twain's Writings on Hawaii and the Sugar Industry and How He Personally Profited

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Americans have always valued money and admired those who had it, and Mark Twain was no exception. Early in life, he recognized the advantages and prestige money could bring. His personal quest for wealth began with a lucrative berth as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi, and the time spent prospecting in Nevada and California proves that he, like thousands of others, presumed wealth could simply be plucked from the earth. Even as a young man, Twain was determined to get rich; however, the process by which he eventually accomplished this turned out to be vastly different from those early efforts.

When Mark Twain embarked on the journey that would take him to Hawaii on March 7, 1866, he was at a financial low point. The posting from the Sacramento Daily *Union* was not just an opportunity to strike out on another adventure, but seems to have been a respite from the financial limbo in which he found himself. Blaming his brother Orion for refusing to sell the family's Tennessee land to a man who wanted to plant a vineyard, Twain regarded the Hawaii trip as a time of "poverty & exile" during which he was forced to drift "about the outskirts of the world, battling for bread" (*Letters Vol. I*, 341-2). The *Union* had hired Twain to write a series of travel letters, in part documenting the economic benefits that the Hawaii sugar trade held for California. Twain published twenty-five letters in the *Union*, yet those letters represent a small portion of both the Sandwich Island output and the profit derived from the journey. To understand how Twain used this assignment to find his own path to financial success, this article will investigate the economic situation in Hawaii by examining

his letters to the Sacramento Daily *Union*, and then discuss how Twain profited from the journey.

The Letters to the Sacramento Daily *Union*

At this time, Twain was a veteran reporter, yet he did much more than just report local news. He offered his reading public social commentary, fiction, hoaxes, parodies, satire, and humor. Perhaps, in an attempt to live up to his reputation as a humorist, Twain began the first Sandwich Island letter on an entertaining note. In it, he detailed the effects of the rough voyage on the passengers and painted colorful portraits of whiskey-guzzling old salts.¹ With the second letter however, the opinions that would become relevant to the agenda of his employer began to appear. Twain argued in favor of regular steamer transport between San Francisco and Honolulu. Perhaps onboard sources had convinced him that reliable transportation, like the *Ajax*, on which he sailed to the Islands, was essential to more stable economic relations. He wrote,

the main argument in favor of a line of fast steamers is this: They would soon populate these islands with Americans, and loosen that French and English grip which is gradually closing around them. . . .

But if California can send capitalists down here in seven or eight days time and take them back in nine or ten, she can fill these islands full of Americans and regain her lost foothold. (12)

Twain's use of the word "capitalists" above reveals that he is not speaking about casual travelers or even immigrants. A steamship would guarantee a schedule, so "capitalists" could efficiently go about their business of making money. In the "Third Letter to the *Union*," Twain revived this call for dependable transportation. Once a steamship service was established, he declared:

business men and capitalists would run down here by the steamer when they knew the sea voyage could be ciphered down to days and hours before starting—and a short number of days at that. And with the influx of capital would come population, and then I could not ride over mile after mile of fertile soil (as I did yesterday) without seeing half a dozen human habitations. (21)

Although Twain would later describe the beauties of Hawaii, at the beginning of the journey he regarded the idle, fertile land that could be turned into dollars as wasted. Hawaii needed foreign investment to stimulate the expanding sugar industry, but just as importantly it needed people willing to do the work. Unfortunately, Hawaiians did not seem enthusiastic about laboring for wages, perhaps because most of the profits would go to the “capitalists.”

Since the Native population had been ravaged by diseases that came ashore with Captain James Cook in 1778, Hawaii’s survival depended on a rebound in population, whether through internal growth or immigration. To this end, King Kamehameha IV, upon ascending the throne on January 11, 1855, extended a welcome to foreigners with a caveat attached:

I therefore say to the foreigner that he is welcome. He is welcome to our shores—welcome so long as he comes with the laudable motive of promoting his own interests and at the same time respecting those of his neighbor. But if he comes here with no more exalted motive than that of building up his own interests at the expense of the native—to seek our confidence only to betray it—with no higher ambition than that of overthrowing our Government, and introducing anarchy, confusion and bloodshed—then he is most unwelcome! (*Speeches of His Majesty Kamehameha IV. To the Hawaiian Legislature* 8)

Kamehameha IV had passed away before Twain arrived, yet the need for a reliable work force remained a persistent social problem. His successor, King Kamehameha V, also sought alternatives to attract immigrant labor. On December 30, 1864, Kamehameha V created a Bureau of Immigration to oversee “the importation of a sufficient number of foreign laborers to

supply the wants of planters and others; . . .” as well as to adopt “such measures and regulations as may be deemed expedient, to promote and encourage the introduction of free immigrants from abroad” (*Laws of His Majesty, Kamehameha V., King of the Hawaiian Islands* 60).

Hawaii needed a sustainable native population to insure the future independence of the Kingdom, while at the same time it required immigrants, contract laborers, and investors to maintain a commercial base that would make the Kingdom economically viable.

Dwindling numbers alone do not explain why the Hawaiians were not a tractable labor force. Arriving just a year after the traditional system of government was overthrown in 1819, the American missionaries guided Hawaii into the modern world. The missionaries educated the people and spread Christianity and Western ideas throughout the kingdom. On this, Twain wrote that after making the natives “permanently miserable by telling them how beautiful and how blissful a place heaven is, and how nearly impossible it is to get there . . .”, the missionaries showed the natives “what rapture it is to work all day long for fifty cents to buy food for next day with, as compared with fishing for pastime and lolling in the shade through eternal summer, and eating of the bounty that nobody labored to provide but nature” (“Sixth Letter to the *Union*” 53). Did the missionaries have ulterior motives in civilizing the natives and bringing them into the Christian fold? Carol MacLennan contends that even if they did not at first, eventually their agenda changed as “the closing of the Hawaiian mission in 1860 left the previously supported missionaries in search of new means of income. Plantation documents from the 1860s bear several familiar missionary names as investors and managers . . .” (100). That some of the largest sugar plantations were owned or controlled by the missionaries or their progeny suggests that the religious had more earthly concerns. The financial maneuverings of the missionaries had given rise to a popular saying: The missionaries “came to do good and did well” (Siler 24). In his *Notebooks & Journals*, Twain made an entry suggesting that the missionary influence not only spread through the economy, but also penetrated far into the Islands’ political structure. He commented that, “Under

Universal suffrage, Missionaries used vote [*sic*] their flocks for certain man, & then sit at home & control him. One member said out loud in open <ne> house, he controlled eleven votes (a majority) in the House” (115). Although, Twain supported the American missionaries and believed that they were a positive influence in the Islands, he often commented on their secular interests.

Cultural differences between the Native Hawaiians and the immigrant whites had the potential of leading one race to dominate the other. From his obituary, it is clear that Kamehameha III despaired about this. The King had been worried that a growing trend towards republicanism could degrade the power and prestige of his Office “and place the islands in subjection to white men. That the subjection of the islands to white men, would lead to the extinction of the native race” (*Kamehameha IV*10).

Stories about native indolence certainly contained a bit of truth, especially when viewed by those who believed in the Protestant Work Ethic, and this tendency may have impeded the economic progress of the nation. Kamehameha IV upbraided his subjects’ for their unwillingness to labor for their own gain. The King chastised his subjects:

You say commonly, everything a foreigner touches he turns into money. But the fact is that if you worked and persevered as the foreigners do, then you would grow rich like them. There are three essentials to success in cultivating the soil. The first is a place to cultivate—the second, the hands to work with—and the third, perseverance. You have all your patches granted you by law; your hands are not tied either by natural or artificial bonds—but as cultivators you do not succeed, because you have no perseverance. (28-9)

Even though Twain joked about native indolence in his letters, he, like King Kamehameha IV quoted above, realized that Yankee industriousness would transform the islands. That transformation might not prove beneficial to the Natives Hawaiians, but it could provide a bonanza for those with the proper motivation or a stake.

Capitalists would bring the means to finance industries. However, as we have already seen, capitalists were only one part of the equation required for success: Labor was the other. And Twain's protracted discussion of the economics of daily life in Honolulu attempted to attract a different breed of immigrant. With his main reading public in California, Twain could have been targeting those who had gone West in hopes of finding wealth, but had arrived too late and found that a life laboring in another man's mine was not the dream that had lured them far from home.

Twain's "Fifth Letter to the *Union*," discusses the comforts and costs of living in Honolulu. After disclosing that a man could set himself up in a furnished room for five to seven dollars a week, and have board for an additional ten dollars, he then scrutinized the indulgences that a man might crave (36).² Twain writes:

Board, lodging, clean clothes, furnished room, coal oil or whale oil lamp . . . —next you want water, fruit, tobacco and cigars, and possibly wines and liquors—and then you are "fixed," and ready to live in Honolulu. (37).

Was Twain soliciting "single" male adventurers? Commenting on Twain's *Union* letters and later letters to the *Alta California*, Larzer Ziff claims that, "Twain addressed a western and predominantly male audience, both in actual fact and also in the rhetoric he employed" (35). Clean clothes, room, board, cigars, wine and liquor were minimal life comforts for a nineteenth-century man. Such things may not have always been available to a prospector in California or Nevada, yet Twain makes it clear that these luxuries were easily obtainable in Honolulu. Although he does not list job opportunities that an American expatriate might find waiting for him, once a man understood the costs involved, he could decide whether or not to seek his own prospects. There might not be gold lying around for fortuitous wealth, but Twain implies that American industry and determination would prosper in this fertile environment. One benefit being that talent and ability, although a definite advantage, were not prerequisites for success. A person's nationality counted for a lot. Gavan Daws explored this

idea: “A man who had never carried much weight in his home country was lucky to stumble upon an inconsequential place like the Hawaiian kingdom where a mere announcement of nationality could make up the difference” (106). After all, there were numerous foreigners who already claimed a portion of Hawaii’s wealth. The sugar planters, foreign nobles in the Cabinet, newspapermen, and men of commerce were cases in point. Hawaii needed able bodies, and for Twain, the more Americans, the better.

Twain half seriously entertained an opportunity for himself in Hawaii. It was not love that turned his head, but money, the yearning for and lack thereof. In a May 4, 1866 letter from Maui to his mother and his sister Pamela, Twain wrote about a “date” he had had with a young lady. Because of an injury to his leg, the couple did not go out as planned. Twain wrote of the evening: “I had a jolly time—played cribbage nearly all night. If I were worth even \$5,000 I would try to marry that plantation—but as it is, I resign myself to a long & useful bachelordom as cheerfully as I may” (*Letters Vol. I 337*). Letters home took a different tone than writings for the public, but the wording of marrying the plantation, rather than the girl, confirms the economic mind-set of the man. In their discussion of Twain and Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx, Catherine Carlstroem, Gabriel Brahm, and Forrest G. Robinson write that for Twain: “Money is magical and nearly omnipotent. No wonder he covets vast fortunes. . . . Money perverts relationships and usurps our identities” (120). Twain realized that even love had a price tag.

Twain described Honolulu as a comfortable and reasonably priced place to live, yet it is necessary to consider to whom had Twain been talking with to get so much information, and how did he come up with so many economic proposals in such a short time? The introductions he had received from West Coast friends guaranteed he would not suffer for a lack of contacts. A letter written to his mother and sister two days prior to his departure from San Francisco confirms this: “I only decided to-day to go, & they [West Coast friends] have already sent me letters of introduction to everybody down there worth knowing . . .” (*Letters Vol. I 333*). Twain soon had an extensive network of contacts among the influential expatriate Americans,³ who,

Walter Francis Frear claimed, “were dominant in finance and industry, religion and education” (35). Shortly after arriving in Honolulu, Twain frequented the office of Henry Martyn Whitney, the founder of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, an English-language newspaper. He befriended businessmen as well, like Charley Richards, a ship chandler and merchant. By April 3, he had been invited by James McBride, the American Minister to Hawaii, to dine with the King’s Chamberlain, David Kalakaua, and had made plans with McBride to visit the King the next day at his palace (*Notebooks & Journals* 230 n. 127). If conversations and contacts did not provide enough material, Twain located other sources. Some he found in books at the lending library of a local minister, Samuel C. Damon, and he even reprinted an excerpt from Damon’s publication for seafaring men, called *The Friend*, in his reports to the *Union*. Since these reports aimed to benefit America, the American expatriates must have appreciated a sympathetic media outlet, and they may even have provided Twain with information to aid their cause in the Islands.

There was money being made in Hawaii, and Twain may have expected a windfall to blow his way. Discussing Twain’s reluctance to pursue a book deal in 1867, Peter Krass asserts that, “Money would always be his [Twain’s] primary focus” (47). With this in mind, it is necessary to consider if Twain profited from his support of the Hawaiian sugar trade. Twain was aware of the value of information and equated information with money. In a May 7, 1866 letter to his childhood friend, William Bowen, Twain included a long, discursive tale about a “Hannibal” acquaintance, who he incorrectly claimed they both knew. Despite his apology, Twain attempted to justify the rambling. He explained, besides that story “I haven’t anything else to write about—except the islands, & that is cash, you know, & goes in the ‘Union’” (*Letters Vol. I* 340). Twain was no stranger to either protecting his information or distorting it for profit.

While on the staff of the Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, Twain was not above providing “reportorial and editorial favors” in exchange for kickbacks in the form of “feet” in silver mines. A positive report on a claim could cause a steep rise in the price of those “feet”

and benefit all who had “feet” to sell (Krass 40). This apparent lack of scruples was not something of which Twain was ashamed. Instead, he appears to have regarded it as business as usual. In a February 16, 1863 letter home, he explained his preoccupation with mining stock prices: “I take an absorbing delight in the stock market. I love to watch the prices go up. My time will come after a while, & then I’ll rob somebody. I pick up a foot or two occasionally for lying about somebody’s mine” (*Letters Vol. I* 245).

Twain did demand and receive a \$300 bonus for his June 25, 1866 scoop in the “Fifteenth Letter to the *Union*,” which documented the burning of the *U.S.S. Hornet* at sea and the survival of fifteen men, including some crew members and passengers, after a forty-three-day journey across the Pacific in an open boat (Fatout 33-4). Other than this additional payment, Twain does not appear to have profited directly from his trip to Hawaii. In fact, he may not have anticipated any extra payment for the *Hornet* article, either. One of the last entries in his *Notebooks & Journals* from that journey is the computation (25 x 20 = 500), obviously an accounting of what the *Union* would owe him upon settlement of accounts for twenty-five letters at twenty dollars each (237). Although there is no mention of additional monies paid, Twain did accept favors. In a June 21, 1866 letter to his mother and sister, Twain wrote about his visit to the Volcano House on Hawaii Island: “I staid at the Volcano about a week & witnessed the greatest eruption that has occurred for years. I lived well there. They charge \$4 a day for board & a dollar or two extra for guides & horses. I had a pretty good time. They didn’t charge me anything” (343). The ever-resilient Twain would find a way to profit from his Island sojourn after he returned to the West Coast in August. Yet before Twain could turn that experience into money, he needed to report on the industry that had been the bedrock of the Hawaiian economy, as well as the one that would form its future: Whaling and Sugar.

Sandwich Island Business Reports

Honolulu was built on the whaling industry. The presence of the whaling fleet and the mercantile establishments that outfitted the ships had made Honolulu's economic survival possible. According to Twain, whaling was the lifeblood of the city. He explained:

The whaling trade of the north seas—which is by no means insignificant—centers in Honolulu. Shorn of it this town would die—its business men would leave and its real estate would become valueless, at least as city property, though Honolulu might flourish afterwards as a fine sugar plantation, the soil being rich and scarcely needing irrigation. (“Tenth Letter to the *Union*” 87)

In just two sentences, Twain encapsulates the economy of Hawaii's past and future. Twain devoted two *Union* letters to whaling, and erroneously prophesied a return to the heyday of the industry. Since 1853, the annual yield of oil and bone had been decreasing, then the 1859 advent of the oil industry in Pennsylvania and the Civil War dealt whaling a fatal blow (McNamara). Twain humorously analyzed the whaling industry's influence on Hawaiian culture, but when he turned to discussions of the industry's economic impact he left humor behind. Twain argued that the whaling trade should be relocated to San Francisco, as this was the logical center for the industry. San Francisco's main drawback, according to Twain, was that disgruntled crews could press charges against a captain and “pull” him into court, which he defined as an “arrest of Capt by seamen for ill treatment” (*Notebooks & Journals* 186). Twain asserted that this legal loophole was the main reason that captains and ship owners, preferred to use Lahaina on Maui, and Honolulu as their resupplying ports. At the end of the “Tenth Letter to the *Union*,” Twain included a section entitled “An Attempt at a Solution,” in which he came across as an advocate for American business, and offered San Francisco advice to attract this profitable trade to her shores (93-5).

The wild mix of economics, culture, history, politics, travel tales, and plain fun that suffuse his Sandwich Island letters reveal how Twain crafted his writing. Twain

comprehended what the public wanted, and he balanced the serious economic discussions with humorous commentary to appeal to a wider readership. Even if Twain had missed the obituaries on whaling, he sagely ascertained that sugar was the future of Hawaii. Sugar was destined to revitalize Hawaii's economy, and though that industry could not, like whaling, be physically transported to San Francisco, Twain believed Hawaiian sugar should be.

From the beginning, sugar in Hawaii was mainly an American venture, but it had needed the catalyst of land reform to kick-start. Sugar required vast tracts of arable land and a huge influx of foreign capital to succeed. The Land Reform Movement, known as *The Great Mahele* (1848), enacted as law during the reign of Kamehameha III and engineered by a missionary-turned-advisor, Dr. Gerrit P. Judd, opened up the transfer of sovereign lands to both Hawaiians and foreigners, and this proved to expedite foreign control of Hawaii. David Malo, a nineteenth-century Native Hawaiian historian, used a local metaphor to explain this process:

If a big wave comes in . . . large and unfamiliar fishes will come from the dark ocean, and when they see the small fishes of the shallows they will eat them up. . . . The white man's ships have arrived with clever men from the big countries . . . they know our people are few in number and our country is small, they will devour us. (Qtd. in Daws 106)

Like indigenous peoples everywhere, Hawaiians suffered from contact with foreigners of European ancestry. Julia Flynn Siler discusses a reason why Hawaiian commoners were unsuccessful in benefiting from the land reforms meant to help them. She writes, "the concept of private ownership of land was foreign to the Hawaiians, who lacked a word in their language for it" (19). Since even the language failed to describe the concept, the people must surely have been unable to grasp the idea. Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa explores the problem of land division from the viewpoint of Native Hawaiians.

The general theory of the *Mahele* was to share and divide the communal interests in the ‘*Aina* [land]. It was and is a difficult thing for Hawaiians to understand. ‘*Aina* is something that all Hawaiians need to live. How can it be divided for exclusive use? It is like dividing the air that we all breathe, or the water we must all drink. (210)

By the time Twain arrived in 1866, the Hawaiians had already lost much of their land to sugar planters. Twain did not believe that the Natives were entirely innocent, even if they were at a disadvantage. In *Following the Equator* (1897), Twain conjectured that,

native peoples living beyond the reach of Western civilization, whether in Hawaii, the American states, Australia, or India, are naturally subject to the impulse of greed, but enjoy shelter from the excesses of the market economy so long as they remain outside the orbit of its alienating mechanisms. As missionaries, settlers, and imperialists import the notion of private property, they simultaneously alter economies and human identity. (Qtd. in, Robinson, Brahm, and Carlstroem 112)

Hawaiians may have been vulnerable to the changes that foreigners brought to the Islands, yet for Twain, those changes represented progress, and “progress” he spelled—“sugar.” In his “Eighteenth Letter to the *Union*” Twain gave his readers a prologue to the Island’s economy in a section entitled, “The Famous Orange and Coffee Region,” in which he briefly compared the coffee, orange and sugar industries, and intimated that the economic future depended on sugar. His next letter opened with a short primer on how sugar was grown on Hawaii Island. In both of these letters, Twain eased into the topic that would dominate his “Twenty-third Letter to the *Union*.” By supplying basic knowledge and facts in the two earlier letters, Twain made his readers conversant with the industry. He carefully slipped those details in between descriptions of cultural oddities, legends and the history of Hawaii Island. In this way, Twain introduced the sugar business without overwhelming an uninitiated reader. This meticulously sculpted prose shows Twain understood his reading audience, and knew how to capture their interest.

Twain must have known that the melodramatic introduction to the letter titled, “The High Chief of Sugardom” would appeal to his audience. He wrote,

I have visited Haleakala, Kilauea, Wailuku Valley, the Petrified Cataracts, the Pathway of the Great Hog God—in a word, I have visited all the principal wonders of the island [*sic*], and now I come to speak of one which, in its importance to America, surpasses them all. (257)

Anyone who had followed Twain this far on his Hawaiian sojourn would not have been able to stop reading here. After the assertion mentioned above, Twain predicted that Hawaii would succeed or fail with the sugar industry, and that success would prove beneficial for America if San Francisco established a monopoly and contracted for the entire sugar crop. Few West Coast residents would have dismissed the rants of this economic jingoist. His reading public would have been susceptible to the boast that California’s influence would spread across the Pacific to include, not only Hawaii, but also China and the wealth of the Orient. Twain was either caught up in his own narrative, or he really believed what he wrote. Should the Pacific Mail Steamship Company ply the Pacific and the transcontinental railroad link the coasts, California’s, and especially San Francisco’s, successes were assured.⁴ The “Twenty-third Letter to the *Union*,” climaxed thus:

California has got the world where it must pay tribute to her. She is about to be appointed to preside over almost the exclusive trade of 450,000,000 people—the almost exclusive trade of the most opulent land on earth. It is the land where the fabled Aladdin’s lamp lies buried—and she is the new Aladdin who shall seize it from its obscurity and summon the genie and command him to crown her with power and greatness, and bring to her feet the hoarded treasures of the earth! (274)

This letter was published on September 26, well after his homecoming on August 13, 1866. Twain’s return to San Francisco was not a happy occasion for the now unemployed reporter. Although he was to collect \$800 from the *Union*, Twain had to plan his next financial

move (Fatout 34). His letters from Hawaii had been immensely popular, so Twain could probably have landed a position to write for any West Coast newspaper. Yet even with his money running out he dreaded doing what he had already done. Frear states that even though Twain “was down and out—no job, little money and that dwindling, life generally in repellent contrast to that in his recently-left blissful Eden . . . He could not bring himself to consider resumption of ill-paid reportorial drudgery, even should an opening offer. Contrarywise he had grand schemes for indulging his growing wanderlust . . .” (164). The Hawaii journey was behind him, but he was not ready to let go of the topic. Hawaii was to provide him with a windfall after all. He would continue to profit from the voyage to Hawaii by mounting the lecture platform.

The Sandwich Island Lecture

Mark Twain is most remembered as a “writer,” but “showman” might actually better describe the man. Twain was not only a performer on stage, but also one with a pen in hand. Everything about him, from the southern drawl to the signature white suit and unruly hair of old age, projected a calculated image of a man who was very much aware of his public. From his earliest days as a reporter on the West Coast, Twain had used the media to his advantage; therefore, the transformation to a “showman” who became skilled at manipulating a new medium—the lecture platform—may have been a natural transition. His appearance on stage with the debut of his “Sandwich Island Lecture” on October 2, 1866 at Maguire’s Academy of Music in San Francisco was the beginning of the process by which he would fine tune his public image.

Twain’s fame as a reporter preceded him on stage, yet for many West Coast residents, he would have been recognizable mainly as a byline. Photographs were a rarity in newspapers of the times, which usually relied on etchings for their printed images. Even though Twain ascended the lecture platform as a writer, he soon learned that he was so much more than just words on a page. To make the presentation of the public man successful, Twain had to create a

memorable stage presence in order to leave an impression that would endure after the words had been spoken. Fatout speculates that Twain's message was less important than the spectacle:

much, perhaps most, of the effect depended not upon matter but upon manner.

Pleasantries that seem commonplace in print, flights of fancy that seem trite may well have been side-splitting and impressive when spoken by Mark Twain. The hilarity of his audience implies that he was funny to look at, and that the way he said things was funny. Deliberately he bid for laughter, then and thereafter. . . . Manner was the secret of his success. (42)

Twain's performance techniques were not contrived, rather they seem to have evolved out of his writing style. Commenting on the style of humor that Twain had succeeded with in the publication of "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" (1865), Randall Knoper states that Twain began his lecturing career by "moving his deadpan to the podium in his talks on the Sandwich Islands, which further consolidated his popularity" (55). Twain apparently did speak as he wrote, and perhaps that naturalness accounted for his success on the lecture circuit. A contemporary reviewer wrote of his November 10, 1869 Boston lecture, "the platform manner of Mr. Clemens is the exact reflection in speech of his peculiar style of composition. The fun of both is genuine enough . . ." (Qtd. in Frear 443). A majority of the reviews written about Twain's Sandwich Island lectures concerned themselves with the style of the performer and the laughter it provoked as much as with the message. Twain was a skilled entertainer, and Noah Brooks, editor of the *Alta California*, recalled Twain's earlier performances in an 1898 article in *The Century Magazine*.

Mark Twain's method as a lecturer was distinctly unique and novel. His slow, deliberate drawl, the anxious and perturbed expression of his visage, the apparently painful effort with which he framed his sentences, and, above all, the surprise that spread over his face when the audience roared with delight or rapturously applauded the finer passages

of his word-painting, were unlike anything of the kind they had ever known. All this was original; it was Mark Twain. (Qtd. in Henderson 53)

Twain adopted the performer persona primarily for economic gain, but that persona was an integral part of the man. Commenting on Twain's methods during the period in which he wrote *Roughing It* (1872), Ben Tarnoff suggests that,

Both onstage and in print, he [Twain] worked best in short bursts, stringing anecdotes together without much thought for the overall shape. This elastic structure gave him room to wander, to improvise, to probe those serendipitous places inaccessible to more formal writers . . . (207-8).

And this improvisational technique may have required exposure to both the lecture platform and the print media to develop as it did.

That first lecture tour took place from the October 2, 1866 debut to December 10 of the same year, and Twain presented variations of the lecture fifteen times throughout California and Nevada. After this road trip, he returned to the coast and held five more lectures in the San Francisco area. Newspaper accounts confirm the lecturer was very well received and his fame spread as his pocket filled. Even though the exact take from these lectures is not known, Twain's financial situation improved significantly in two months on the circuit. In his *Autobiography*, he looked back: "I lectured in all the principal Californian towns and in Nevada, then lectured once or twice more in San Francisco, then retired from the field rich—for me—and laid out a plan to sail westward from San Francisco and go around the world" (227).

Granted, the stage presence of Mark Twain added to the draw, but the message had to be equally important. This may be why he repeatedly edited and rewrote the lecture. Twain realized that if he were to succeed on the stage, the message was instrumental in keeping the halls filled.

In the course of his career, Twain presented his lecture on the Sandwich Islands at least forty-eight times, and he adapted the content for individual audiences (Frear 426). Fragments of his lectures at the Mark Twain Project at the University of California, Berkeley, reveal that Twain heavily edited the lectures and eventually distanced himself from excessive political and business commentary that had been central to his *Union* letters. Twain still had strong views of the value Hawaii held for both the U.S. and California, but he must have reached the conclusion that such topics did not belong in a humorous lecture. He saved political and economic commentary for timely newspaper articles, such as when Charles Coffin Harris went to Washington D.C. as the King's envoy to lobby for a Reciprocity Treaty in 1867, and also when King Kamehameha V died at the end of 1872 (Frear 465-6, 489-500). Local Hawaiian topics, humorous exposés on the culture of Native Hawaiians, the clash between traditional customs and “modern” Hawaii, unflattering portrayals of an American expatriate “Nobleman,” and the “word paintings” of the tropical beauty became the focus of the Sandwich Island lecture. A brief examination of the program for his New York debut at the Cooper Institute on May 6, 1867 will show how Twain arranged the content for this important east coast audience.

This lecture program contained thirty-eight topics on which he would speak. Of those, six dealt with geography, geology, and climate, twenty investigated the humorous customs or conditions of Native Hawaiians, four more touched on the King, the royalty or his government, and the remainder mentioned the missionaries, white residents, whaling dialect, and Horace Greeley. Only one topic hinted of politics, and even that was cloaked in humor. Topic number 31 was: “Kanakadom as a really useful and valuable companion purchase to our ornamental Russian Possessions” (Frear 454-5). The purchase of Alaska would have been a major news event in the months prior to the New York lecture, and Twain's referencing this event further verifies how Twain adapted his lectures to the times.⁵ Realizing that the *Union* mission was over, Twain generally steered away from business and political topics in his lectures. Current events like the Alaskan purchase, however, were incorporated into the material if the humor could be maintained. Nearly a year before he had launched his Sandwich Island lecture,

Twain was cognizant of the route he would travel through the literary world, and he wrote of this to Orion. In an October 1865 letter, Twain admitted that he “had a ‘call’ to literature, of a low order—*i.e.* humorous. It is nothing to be proud of, but it is my strongest suit . . .” (*Letters Vol. I* 322). Mark Twain had been astute enough to realize where he was heading, but had not known that he had to go to through Hawaii to get there.

Conclusion

When Twain made the trip to Hawaii, he must have sensed that there was money to be made. While touring the Islands, Twain did not seem to be bothered by financial hardships. The harsh economic reality of his personal finances did not affect him until after he returned to San Francisco in August. The five-year journey to the West Coast appears to have been an exasperating quest for money, and from the outset, Twain made it clear he would surmount any obstacle between him and his goal. An April 1862 letter to Orion confirms this:

I shall never look upon Ma’s face again, or Pamela’s, or get married, or revisit the “Banner State,” until I am a rich man—so you can easily see that when you stand between me and my fortune (the one which I shall make, as surely as Fate itself,) you stand between me and *home*, friends, and all that I care for—and by the Lord God! you must clear the track, you know! (*Letters Vol. I* 195).

During that Western sojourn, Mark Twain suffered numerous setbacks as he wandered from occupation to occupation, then newspaper to newspaper, but he finally got on the right path to financial independence by making a detour through Hawaii.

Notes

¹All references to the *Union* letters are taken from *Mark Twain’s Letters from Hawaii* edited by A. Grove Day.

²A cost of living comparison between Honolulu and San Francisco can be made by examining the *San Francisco Business Directory and Mercantile Guide for 1864-65 (1864)* and Twain’s writings on Hawaii. This Guide can be viewed online at the American Libraries Internet Archive. <<https://archive.org/details/sanfranciscbusi186465sanf>>.

³Although, there are various estimates on the population of Hawaii at this time, according to <<http://www.ohadatabook.com/T01-01-11.pdf>>, non-native Hawaiians accounted for 6.7% of the population and totaled 4,194 at the time of Twain's visit in 1866. This was a sharp increase from 2,816 and representing 4.0% of the total population in 1860. Within the same six years, the population of native Hawaiians had continued to fall to 58,765, a drop of 8,219.

⁴Twain's predictions for California's prosperity did not occur as he had anticipated. By the Panic of 1873, the golden days of the 1860s had already disappeared. See Tarnoff page 245.

⁵The U.S. Department of State website on the purchase of Alaska stated that the Senate approved the purchase on April 9, 1867 and the President signed the treaty with Russia on May 28, 1867. <<http://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/alaska-purchase>>.

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