

# ALATAU TAMCHIBOULAC ATKINSON (1848-1906)

By Marianne J E Simpson

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“Convinced that circumstances had inevitably linked the destiny of Hawaii with that of the United States of America, he wrought, in season and out of season, to make the political alliance secure and permanent. Abandoning for the time his duties as school master he took up the editorial pen and through the medium of journalism did master work for annexation. *To him more than to any other one man it is due that, during the long period of waiting which followed the first enthusiastic hopes of annexation, the determination to unite Hawaii’s fortunes with those of America, never faltered.*”<sup>1</sup> (our emphasis).



Such was written of Alatau<sup>2</sup> Tamchiboulac Atkinson at the time of his death in 1906. Alatau Atkinson, a name well known in Honolulu for almost 40 years, left his mark on the evolution of modern Hawaii, both with respect to its annexation to the United States and the forging of an education system in which English was the single medium of instruction. With this international language, he helped prepare the island nation to enter into meaningful exchange with the rapidly advancing world beyond. This is his story.

Alatau was born on 16 November 1848 in Kapal, in present-day Kazakhstan to English parents, Thomas Witlam and his wife Lucy Atkinson. Thomas, an architect and artist, had obtained a passport from the Czar of Russia which gave him open access to all parts of the Czar’s dominions. Although there are conjectures concerning the reasons for the journey, one outcome is indisputable: it generated several hundred works of art, many of which were subsequently exhibited in London and two of which are today displayed in the dining rooms of the Royal Geographic Society in London.

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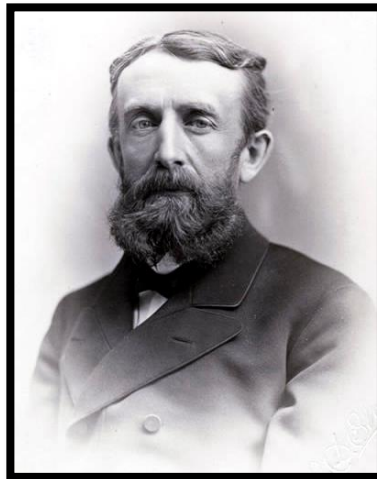
<sup>1</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 30 April 1906

<sup>2</sup> Written in Russian as “Алатау” and, so, pronounced as “Alataoo”.

Alatau was born nine months into a journey which would take the family down into the Kazakh Steppes, to Siberia and to the very border of China. His birth was premature, which was attributed by the doctor to the fact that Lucy had spent every day of the preceding months on horseback. Lucy later wrote that, had he been born into a native *yurt* (rather than the timber cottage that Thomas managed to procure), they would both undoubtedly have died. However, wonderfully, he survived and early became accustomed to the icy mountain streams in which his mother bathed him and being held close in her encircling arms while the hovering eagles swooped in search of prey.

After travelling tens of thousands of miles across Siberia, Central Asia and Mongolia, the family arrived back in St Petersburg just before Christmas 1853 and they are recorded as being in St Petersburg in 1854, while England and Russia were meanwhile fighting each other in the Crimea. (The Czar placed the English settlement in St Petersburg under his personal protection throughout the period.)

We have attestation of their presence because Andrew Dickson White, who subsequently became one of the co-founders of Cornell University in the United States, met Alatau and his parents in St Petersburg at that time, recording that "He [Thomas] had brought back many portfolios of sketches, and his charming wife had treasured up a great fund of anecdotes of people and adventure, so that I seemed for a time to know Siberia as if I had lived there...The Atkinsons had also brought back their only child, a son born on the Siberian steppe, a wonderfully bright youngster..."<sup>3</sup> That Alatau made a lasting impression on Dr White is shown by the following item from *The Hawaiian Star* (December 9, 1911): "...For about fifty years Dr White had tried to find [Alatau] but without result...The rumour was that the young fellow had gone into the navy in after years and so Dr White often but vainly enquired after him at British naval depots..."



Andrew Dickson White

One of Alatau's obituaries stated that he did not arrive in England until he was ten years of age, which confirms that he arrived in 1858. In the 1861 census of England he and his parents are recorded as living in Brompton, West London. Before the end of that year, Thomas was dead. We are given a rare insight into Alatau, the boy, when his mother described Thomas' death in a letter to a friend<sup>4</sup>:

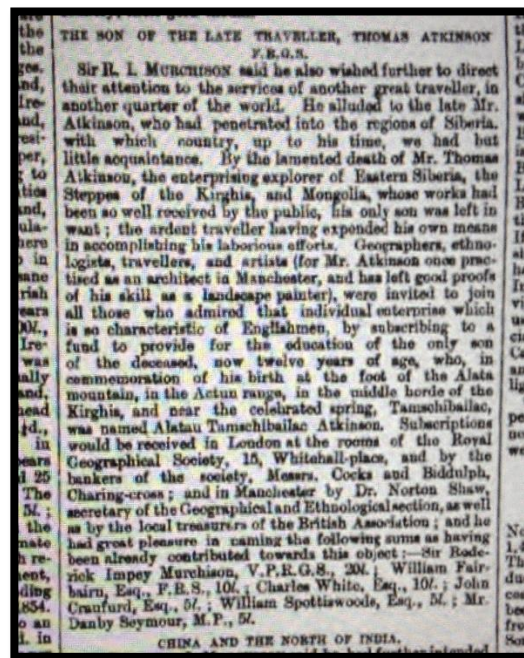
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<sup>3</sup> "The Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White", p. 464.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Revd. Charles Spencer Stanhope, 4 September 1861

“Poor Alatau – my heart bled to see my child – he and his father were such good friends. I was obliged to put my own sorrow on one side to comfort my child. You have never seen him, he is so tender hearted, so loving and affectionate, such a good obedient boy; though I say it, he is a noble little fellow.”

Lucy and Alatau were left virtually penniless following Thomas’ death.<sup>5</sup> Lucy was encouraged by her friends to write a book of her experiences, published in 1863 as *Recollections of Tartar Steppes*, which work was rewarded by a British government pension, and a number of eminent gentlemen joined together to pay for Alatau to complete his education at the prestigious Rugby School. Although it could be surmised that this generous act was a testament to the esteem in which Thomas (who also published two books about their journey) was held, it is probably more a tribute to Lucy, partly because of her undoubted personal qualities but also because, on Thomas’ death, she and the public discovered that he had married her bigamously.<sup>6</sup>



A public subscription supported by fellows of the RGS was raised to send Alatau to Rugby School

We can only imagine what a jolt the transfer to school must have been to Alatau. Speaking Russian equally as fluently as English and only four years in the country, during which time it is believed that he was educated at home by his mother, then suddenly thrust into the hurly burly of a boys’ boarding school. Not to mention the burden of his name – inherited from the region where he was born, the Alatau mountains and the Tamchiboulac spring, with which his parents had become captivated. In a surviving letter, his mother writes that he had just left for school and she hoped he would do well there!

As his later life showed, Alatau embraced learning, so it may be surmised he did not disappoint. Upon leaving Rugby, he returned to Russia in 1867 (briefly) as secretary of the Turko-Russian boundary commission. This four-man commission was set up by the Russian government to devise a new way to

<sup>5</sup> They did however retain two rings that the Czar had presented to Thomas Atkinson as a token of his appreciation.

<sup>6</sup> His first wife, Rebecca Mercer, whom he had married in 1819, died in London in 1872.

administer the Kazakh Steppe and the newly conquered Turkoman territories. It completed its work in July 1867.<sup>7</sup>

It would appear that, in returning to Russia, Alatau was already probing a life and career beyond English shores. However, the Russian venture was to be neither extended nor repeated. Perhaps he discovered that diplomacy was not to his liking or perhaps he came to understand that he was more English than he realized. As he married six months after the commission completed its work, the views (or attractions!) of his future wife may also have been a factor. Whatever the reason, Alatau returned to England where he soon found employment as a writer for the *Newcastle Courant* newspaper and, from there, still seeking his vocation, moved to Durham Grammar School as a teacher.



**Durham School**

In January 1868 he married Miss Annie Humble, daughter of Stephen Humble, a well-known portrait painter, and his wife, Sarah Ann<sup>8</sup>. The marriage took place in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Humble's home town. Alatau and Annie's first child, Zoe, was born at the end of that year. The following year he left England – as far as we know, never to see the country or his mother again – and the little family made their way to Hawaii, via Panama and San Francisco. In the days before the opening of the Panama Canal, this would not have been a straightforward journey, requiring a ship to the Isthmus of Panama, then train or horse travel over the Isthmus, then a second ship from the Pacific side of Panama up to San Francisco, and finally the last leg across the Pacific. One can imagine the anticipation as the end of their journey drew near!

Alatau's move to the other side of the world should not be construed as a break with his mother. Far from it. It is known that, as a young child, his parents had destined him for the Royal Navy<sup>9</sup> and it would appear that, at great personal sacrifice, Lucy encouraged him to leave England to forge a better future, much as she had done in Russia and her brother, Matthew, had done with equal success in Australia. Indeed, that she remained vitally interested in everything that concerned his life is seen from an item in *The Hawaiian Gazette* where some unidentified Hawaiian friends of Alatau visiting England in 1888 took the opportunity to visit Lucy and wrote, "Here the charming hostess is none other than the mother of

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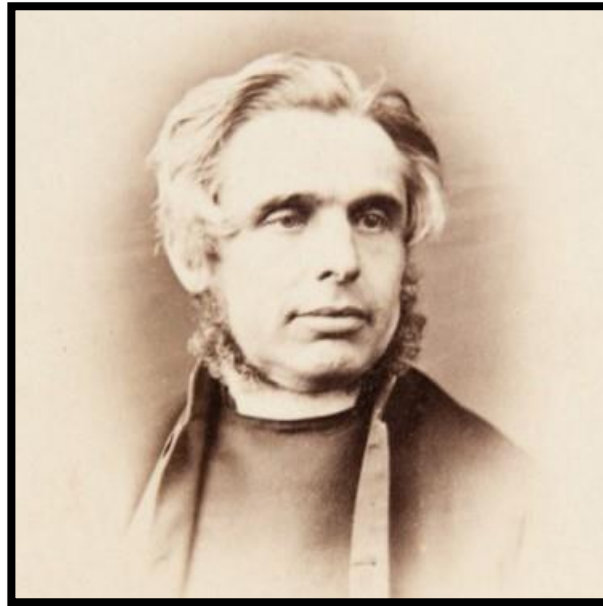
<sup>7</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Nick Fielding for this information.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Humble died in 1858 and, in the 1861 census, Annie is found living with her mother, four sisters and brother in a household which included a number of boarders. Annie's occupation appears as Sales Assistant.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Dickson White, *op. cit.*

our well known friend Mr. A. T. Atkinson. Really we were in a home atmosphere, where Island politics and interests were dear to everyone present.”<sup>10</sup>

Acknowledging the above, why did Alatau however choose Hawaii? In 1867 the first Anglican Bishop of Honolulu, Thomas Nettleship Staley, made a journey to England for the purpose of promoting the Anglican mission in Hawaii and, while there, he published his book, *Five Years' Church Work in the Kingdom of Hawaii*. Alatau obviously heard of the venture – probably from Staley himself - and his enthusiasm was fired.



**Bishop Thomas Nettleship Staley**

When Alatau arrived in Honolulu, he took up the position of Master at St Alban’s Missionary School. Under the supervision of Bishop Staley, this school had opened at the entrance of the Pauoa Valley on 12 January 1863 for *haole* (white) boys. Three years before Alatau’s arrival, Bishop Staley had described the school as follows:

“The buildings now consist of a large house eighty feet long which provides a school-room, dining-room and dormitories for the boys; a residence for the warden, washing and bath houses, and a college chapel.

“The situation is cool and pleasant. The winds from the mountains blow over it, and being on high ground it overlooks the city, bay, and harbour of Honolulu, and the shipping entering and leaving the port. There are daily choral services in the college chapel, with frequent celebrations of the blessed sacrament. The boys are all musically inclined, and take a great interest in singing...There are about thirty pupils (boarders) and a few day scholars...The college has...gained the confidence of the king, the government, and the inhabitants of the country...”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 6 March 1888

<sup>11</sup> Ibbotson, Revd. E., “*The Church in Hawaii*” in “*Mission Life*”, 1 October 1866.



St Alban's Collegiate Grammar School in 1864

In 1870 Alatau re-opened the school, with the following advertisement appearing in *The Hawaiian Gazette* on 24 August:

*English School, Pauoa Valley Road*  
*A.T. Atkinson, Master, Late of Rugby and Durham Schools, England,*  
*announces that he has re-opened his School, and is now receiving pupils.*  
*Subjects studied – English, French, Mathematics, Classics. Extra subjects – Music, Chemistry, Natural*  
*Philosophy and Mechanical Drawing.*  
*Terms per Quarter – Boarders..... \$40.00*  
*Day pupils.....\$14.00*

When Bishop Staley returned to Hawaii, he encountered “a See, so stormy” (there was dissension between the Presbyterian Congregationalism of the American evangelical missionaries and Bishop Staley’s Anglo-Catholicism) that he was obliged to retire in May 1870.<sup>12</sup> It would appear that the reference to the school’s re-opening was an indication that Alatau had now taken on the school in his own name.

Three months earlier, the school enrolment had been published as comprising 15 boys. In October, it was re-advertised under the leadership of: Rev. C. G. Williamson as Visitor and Alatau T. Atkinson as Principal and, by December, the school was promoted under the name of St Alban’s Collegiate Grammar School. By 1872, the Reverend Williamson was no longer involved and Alatau was able to employ an assistant.

Alatau clearly had not only academic gifts but also musical gifts because, on 18 January 1873, *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* included the following notice: “Mr. A. T. Atkinson has been engaged as organist at Kawaiaha’o Church”. This church, the oldest on the island of O’ahu, completed in 1842, is made up of 14,000 coral slabs, each weighing about 1,000 pounds, which Hawaiian divers chiseled out of Honolulu’s underwater reef. In late February 1874 Alatau, as choirmaster, was a participant in a very moving service - the funeral of the 39 year old King Lunalilo. This took place at the Iolani Palace, where the invited

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<sup>12</sup> Kuykendall, Ralph S., *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1854-1874, Twenty critical years*, University of Hawaii Press, 1953.



guests included the Cabinet ministers of the deceased and new kings, judges of the Supreme Court, Governors of the different islands, the Legislative Assembly, the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and France and the “captains of the warships in port”. The service was conducted in the Hawaiian language. As reported in *The Hawaiian Gazette*: “The chanting and singing were beautifully executed, and those best qualified to judge remarked that no finer music was ever heard here than at the funeral service of Lunalilo.”<sup>13</sup>

The newspaper went on to describe the funeral procession through the city: “A little in advance of [the hearse] were ranged the *Kahili* bearers, seventy-two in number, each bearing one of these gaudy [sic] emblems of royalty. These *Kahilis* are all made of feathers, and in size vary from four to six feet in length and twelve to twenty inches in diameter, and include almost every color, black, white, red, crimson, purple, green, blue and variegated shades. Some were made from the feathers of peacocks, tropical birds and parrots, others from feathers brought from the guano islands, but the finest were made of the small bright red and yellow feathers of the rare mountain birds of Hawaii. It was a fine sight to see these brilliant plumes borne on lofty poles and swaying in the breeze...It is estimated that there were about fifteen hundred persons in the procession, between four and five hundred of whom were from the four warships in port.”



Royal *Kahilis* made from feathers in the Bishop Museum, Honolulu

Interestingly, with the succession of a new King, there was a new heir, Prince William Pitt Leleiohoku, who had been educated at St Alban’s. He was not, however, destined to ascend the throne, dying in 1877 at the early age of 23.

In November 1876 we are given an insight into an extracurricular aspect of school life when, as reported in *The Hawaiian Gazette*, Alatau arranged for “the scholars of St. Alban’s College, with their parents and friends” to be entertained at a picnic at Waikiki. In 1876 St Alban’s had 34 boys and one girl (whom we may confidently assert was Zoe Atkinson!), which indicates a successful operation. If further evidence were needed, a glowing report on the school was published in *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* which stated, inter alia, “Among the many educational establishments on these islands for the instruction and training of the young, none deserves more to be noticed for its efficiency than St Alban’s College...it is

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<sup>13</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 4 March 1874

under the personal supervision and control of men whose profession is thorough school education, combined with school discipline and, while such men are heart and soul in their work – it is of vast importance that this college is well sustained...When a subject of study is handled in the manner it was at the late examination at St. Alban's College, it proves not a mechanical learning but an intelligent understanding of the subject".<sup>14</sup>

The 1870s were a happy and productive period for Alatau and Annie as they put down roots in their adopted country and added to their family. Their first son, Alatau Leonard Charles (known as "Jack") was born in September 1871, to be followed by three girls, Edith Kapiolani (known as "Lani"), May Kathleen born in 1874 and Ethel May (known as "Molly") born in 1875. The family was completed by two boys, Robert Witlam, born in 1877, and Kenneth Robinson, born in 1885. By the 1890s, the Atkinson name was regularly appearing in the press, no longer just on account of Alatau but also on account of his wife and children as they in turn became active participants in Honolulu's social, cultural, sporting and scholastic calendar.



Alatau and Annie Atkinson with their children and spouses at home in 1900

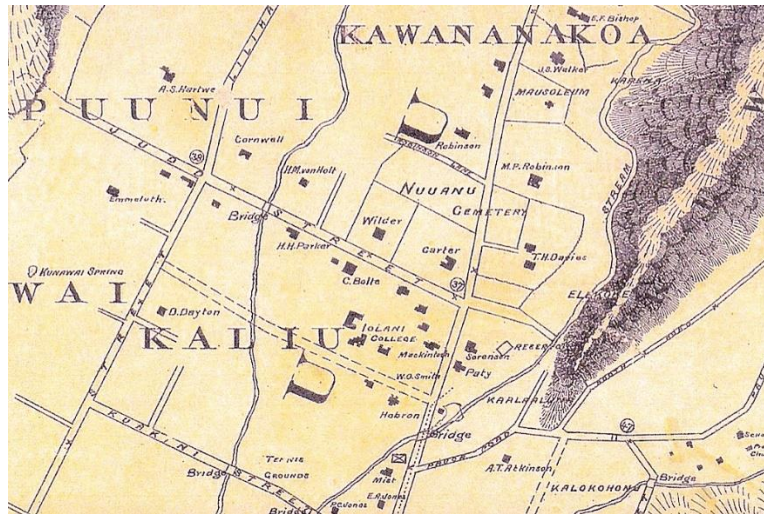
In March 1878 it was announced that Alatau had been appointed by the Board of Education, Principal of the Fort Street High School (later re-named President William McKinley High School) with his incumbency to begin on 1 April. *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* described it as "the leading public school of the city". The author of *"The Story of Hawaii and its Builders"* states that, through Alatau's work at Fort Street, "scores of prominent men in Hawaii today acknowledge their heavy debt to the distinguished educator".<sup>15</sup> In 1879 the school had 160 students.

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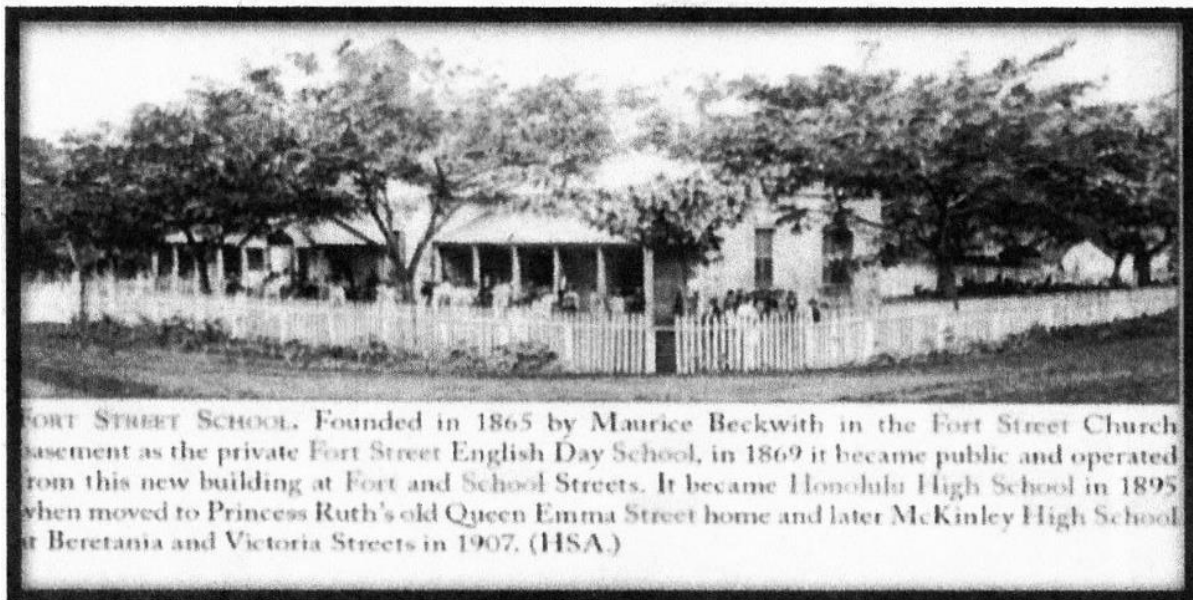
<sup>14</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 24 June 1876

<sup>15</sup> G F Nellis (ed), *The Story of Hawaii and its Builders*, 1925





An early map of Honolulu showing Alatau's home and also Iolani College.



Fort Street School in Honolulu

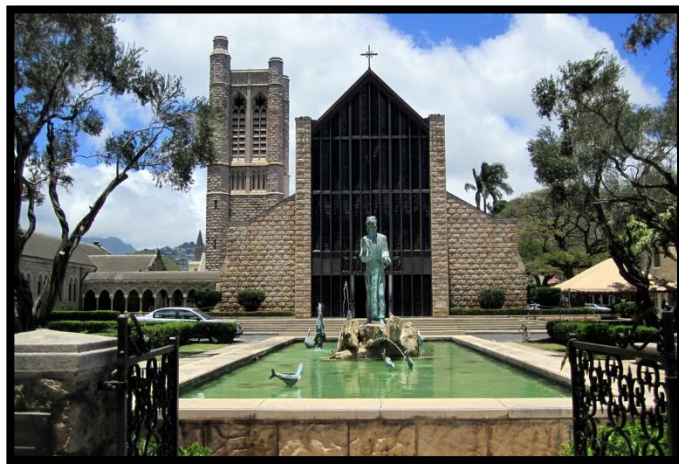
On 7 August 1880 Alatau appears in the shipping lists as travelling via San Francisco to New York. He was back in Hawaii by 11 September, having "secured the services of Mr. Cone, a graduate in honors of one of the Eastern universities. Mr. Atkinson made good use of his vacation in visiting the various great educational establishments of San Francisco and has made many valuable notes."<sup>16</sup>

As stated above, Alatau was gifted musically and, in 1881, participated in an amateur performance of *HMS Pinafore* in which it was reported that "The Boatswain of Mr. Atkinson was a good illustration of the warrant officers of Captain Marryatt's navy: a gruff Bos'n Chucks, ever ready to pipe all hands to

<sup>16</sup> *Saturday Press*, 11 September 1880

grog, or quarters. Certainly we could not recognize our accomplished brother Editor in the grey old salt, who out-jacked the Jacks in the swing of his gait, and the hitch of his pants.”

*The Hawaiian Gazette* added, “Mr. Atkinson as the Boatswain, was an inspiration throughout the play and contributed greatly to the abandon of jollity, which is its great feature. His solo, “For he is an Englishman” was very taking...”.<sup>17</sup> In March 1881, Alatau was elected Vice-President of the Amateur Musical Society and thereafter his name – and sometimes also that of Mrs. Atkinson – appeared regularly as participants in musical productions, some of them taking place at the Honolulu Opera House. Alatau’s skill on the organ was clearly of a high order because, from early 1882 he was noted in the press as participating in a series of organ recitals in St. Andrew’s Cathedral. In 1890 he and his daughter Lani both appeared as “members of the choir of the second English speaking congregation” of the Cathedral.



St Andrew’s Cathedral, Honolulu

Alatau was clearly impressed by activity from the Mauna Loa Volcano in 1881 because he wrote an article describing the recent lava flow that it had generated, which was published in *The Illustrated London News*.<sup>18</sup> In 1888 he also witnessed another of Hawaii’s volcanos, Kilauea, expressing himself “delighted with the exhibition of fireworks Pele [had] prepared”. Interestingly, his father before him had also spoken at the Geological Society of London about volcanoes but, in his case, the volcanoes of central Asia!

In 1881 Alatau is reported as playing a significant role in the establishment of a Teachers’ Association of the Hawaiian Islands. The *Saturday Press* reported the following: “In response to the call published in the Press last week, a meeting of teachers was held at the Lyceum on Tuesday evening. Rev. W. L. Jones was chosen Chairman and Mr. A. T. Atkinson, Secretary.”<sup>19</sup> It was voted to form a Teachers’ Association of the Hawaiian Islands, and a constitution was adopted “to be printed and sent to every teacher, with the hope that everyone will join the organization. A Committee of Arrangements was appointed to call a convention...”. At the convention which took place the following January, Alatau lectured on a method

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<sup>17</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 25 May 1881

<sup>18</sup> *The Illustrated London News*, 19 November 1881

<sup>19</sup> *The Saturday Press*, 12 November 1881

of teaching History. That History was a subject close to his heart is shown by the fact that he spoke about various periods throughout history in public lectures.

Another insight into Alatau's life is gleaned from an item in *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* which reported on the success of a "loan exhibition" organised in aid of the building fund for the Honolulu Library and Reading Room: "The surprisingly large collection of paintings and engravings...is the first thing that attracts attention. Among them are a number of the works of local amateurs [including]...Mr. A. T. Atkinson" and a little further on, "On the Ewa side of this part room is the collection of gems and jewellery [including] a ruby and diamond ring given to Mr. A. T. Atkinson by the present Emperor of Russia".<sup>20</sup> Although it is unknown whether any of Alatau's artworks survive, it is pleasing to note that he had inherited his father's artistic bent, and the ring, which was actually given to his father by Tsar Alexander II, remained in the family until the early 1950s.

No.	Articles.	Loaned by
698.	Venetian Shell Ornaments,	Mrs. A. F. Judd
699.	Roman Gold Locket and Chain.	" " "
700.	Etruscan set, Pin and Earrings,	" " "
701.	Coral Pin, Earrings, Studs, Sleeve Buttons, Coronet,	" " "
702.	Japanese Cornelian Necklace,	" " "
703.	Genoa Gold Bracelet,	" " "
704.	Kapiolani Bracelet from Hawaii,	" " "
705.	Shell Necklace Kanai,	" " "
706.	Storks Beak Bracelet,	" " "
707.	Ancient Silver Box,	" " "
708.	Epergne,	" " "
709.	Japanese Bracelet,	H. R. H. Likelike
710.	Cross of Green Stone from New Zealand,	H. R. H. Likelike
711.	Sleeve Buttons and Pin, Incrustated Stone, Speciality of Florence,	A. Marques
712.	1 Set of Cairn-gorum Jewellery,	Mrs. J. S. Webb
713.	Jade Stone, the Seal of Li Hung Chong, Chinese Prime Minister,	Miss M. Collins
714.	Wedding Watch, with a Wedding Scene embossed on the Cover, dating about 1760.	W. H. Purvis
716.	Broach of Hair,	" "
716.	Rubis and Diamond Ring, presented to T. W. Atkinson by Alexander III of Russia,	A. T. Atkinson
717.	2 Cases Plaster Mouldings of Gems.	A. J. Cartwright
<b>Lace and Embroidery.</b>		
740.	Meshin Lace,	Mrs. W. L. Green
741.	Duchess Lace,	" " "
742.	Point de Venice Lace,	H. R. Macfarlane
743.	Lace,	Cornwall
744.	White Applique Shawl,	W. F. Allen
745.	Irish Lace Fichu,	S. H. Dowsett
746.	Black Chantilly Fichu,	" " "
747.	White Lace Dress,	" " "
748.	Lace Veil,	H. A. Parmelee

Catalogue from the Honolulu Library loan exhibition listing the ring given to Thomas Atkinson by Tsar Alexander II

In January 1881, drawing upon his previous journalistic experience and while retaining his position at Fort Street School, Alatau also became editor of the *Hawaiian Gazette*, and public opinion was thenceforth to be largely shaped by his own convictions. Alatau held the unequivocal view that English needed to become the *lingua franca* in Hawaii and that Hawaii's future lay in annexation by the United States. His view was formed from observations of the Hawaiian Islands as he experienced them, which was very different from the Hawaii that Captain James Cook had found a century earlier when the Islands were ruled by local chieftains and the combined population has been estimated at 300,000. The islands were gradually united in the 1780s and 1790s (the last annexation occurring in 1810) due to

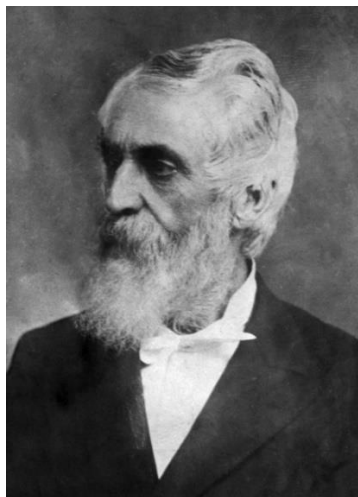
<sup>20</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 13 May 1882

successive conquests by Kamehameha, subsequently called the Great, who established the Royal House of Kamehameha.

After Cook's arrival, the region was visited by European explorers, traders and whalers. These visitors introduced diseases to which the native peoples had little resistance. By 1820 Eurasian diseases, famine and wars among the chiefs had killed more than half of the native population and, by 1876, the population had further declined to 53,900. At the 1896 census, the population comprised 31,019 Hawaiians, 8,485 part-Hawaiians, 3,086 Americans, 2,250 British, 1,432 German, 15,191 Portuguese, 24,407 Japanese, 21,616 Chinese and other nationalities 1,534<sup>21</sup>.

Alatau's promotion of annexation did not resonate in the corridors of power and, in May 1883, he was removed from his position as principal of the Fort Street School. *The Saturday Press* reported the following:

"Mr. A. T. Atkinson, principal of the Fort Street School, has been notified by the board of education that his services will not be required after the 15<sup>th</sup> of next month. The letter of dismissal was received on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant. No reason for the action was assigned. A formal, curt "notice to quit" was served upon the victim of the board's displeasure...The board of education have waited some time to work their vengeance [sic] on Mr. Atkinson...The present board came into power as successors of a board, who refused to oust Mr. Atkinson at the dictation of the present president of the board...Mr. Atkinson must long have known that his exposure of official malfeasance would cost him his official head. But he had the courage of his convictions and preferred to lose a well paid position rather than keep silence about the follies and double-dealing of the corrupt administration which the president of the present board of education so scandalously represents. Mr. Gibson [Walter Murray Gibson, adviser to the King] dare not meet Mr. Atkinson in honourable controversy...The cowardly policy of injuring Mr. Atkinson's income is typical. It is meant to bulldoze everyone in official employ, to silence criticism of ministerial conduct, to foster sleepy acquiescence in the power of two distrusted men and to pave the way for a subservient legislature and more bad laws.



Walter Murray Gibson, referred to by Alatau in his satirical writings as 'Nosebig'

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<sup>21</sup> *Report of the General Superintendent of the Census 1896*

“There are those whose obliquity of moral vision is equal to the task of seeing only justifiable self-protection in Mr. Gibson’s action. Those ultra-charitable folk take the ground that every man must look out for number one, and that when Mr. Gibson is hit he has a perfect right to strike back. Perfectly logical argument this; but those who hold this doctrine must not lose sight of one important fact; Mr. Atkinson is right, Mr. Gibson is wrong; the former is an honest man, working for the public good; the latter is a schemer, working for his own base ends. There is no relation of life in which Mr. Atkinson has not won the respect and esteem of at least a portion of the community...May the hour come swiftly when the moral sense of all the people will demand of their chief ruler that his advisers shall be able and reputable, or that he will give way to someone who will do as the sovereign people demand. In this new order of things educated and intelligent native Hawaiians will be glad to unite with the taxpaying foreigners; and if such a union may be brought about, the personal rule of bad men in this kingdom will totter on its last legs...Then, and not till then, can there be hope of genuine reform in Hawaiian affairs.”<sup>22</sup>

On the same page, the *Saturday Press* reproduced a letter from “a father” which included:

“I am not sure of figures, but I believe that five or more years ago, one master, one assistant and perhaps thirty to forty pupils constituted Fort Street School. There are now some two hundred and odd pupils, a principal who does his work ably and conscientiously...but this one man has wrecked the whole concern – the creation it may be said – of the dismissed principal...”.

A week later, *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, which Walter Gibson had bought in 1880, replying to comment by *The Hawaiian Gazette*, published the following:

“...should the comments of that journal (*The Hawaiian Gazette*) reach the eye of anyone outside this Kingdom, it were well that they should know that the Fort Street School is a Government institution and consequently Mr. Atkinson is a Government employee. He was permitted by the Government to pursue other vocations in addition to that of school master – during other than school hours. Amongst other lucrative occupations, he engaged in that of editing a newspaper, to wit, *The Hawaiian Gazette*. At that time [January 1881] and for some sixteen or seventeen months afterwards, his particular “chums” held the Government reins...A change came o’er the scene and his friends were ignominiously ousted in the early part of the Session of 1882. Since May 1882 to the present Mr. Alatau T. Atkinson, the Government schoolmaster drawing a salary of \$2,000 per annum, has never ceased to avail himself of every possible opportunity to vilify...His Majesty, the Royal Family and His Majesty’s Ministers...{signed] Pater Familias”.<sup>23</sup>

What lay behind these claims? King Kalakaua who was elected to the throne in 1874 was nicknamed “the Merrie Monarch” for his passion for music, parties and the finest food and drinks. He built the present day Iolani Palace at a cost of \$350,000 – an unheard of sum for the time. His spending habits and gambling losses put the government continually into debt and, as he sought to supply the deficit, his decisions were largely influenced by the advice of Walter Murray Gibson.

Gibson, who had arrived on the island of Lanai as a Mormon missionary and been subsequently excommunicated for defrauding the Hawaiian members of his church, had used his success in agriculture to move to Honolulu where he became known through his newspaper, *Nuhou*, and eventually in 1882 became Prime Minister. His theme was to elevate the power of native Hawaiians,

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<sup>22</sup> *The Saturday Press*, 26 May 1883

<sup>23</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 2 June 1883

assuming that he was their natural leader and would be their “father”. In the process, however, he supported the wealthy sugar plantation owner, Claus Spreckels, by using chicanery to sell bonds to Spreckels such that in a short while the Hawaiian government was essentially owned by that man.

On 16 June 1883 the *Saturday Press* reported “the breaking of Mr. Atkinson’s connection with Fort-street School”: “Examinations were held of the various classes under that gentleman’s personal charge. The exercises were attended by a large number of parents, anxious to express their sorrow at the termination of Mr. Atkinson’s principalship. The examinations showed the progress made under his able and conscientious tuition. Prizes, Mr. Atkinson’s own gifts, were distributed. On behalf of the other pupils Master...Gregg presented Mr. Atkinson with a magnificent folio edition of Shakespeare, and a table-stand. The subscriptions amounted to fully \$75. In reply, Mr. Atkinson attempted to make a few remarks, but failed through emotion...When the school broke up there was scarcely a dry eye in the room.”

Perhaps, not surprisingly, we read on 25 August, again in the *Saturday Press*, the following: “Mr. A. T. Atkinson has gone to Maui for health, for recreation and to increase his stock of knowledge.” Most definitely penned by a sympathetic hand who knew him well! But, before that, Alatau’s new plans had been formed, explained by the following:

“The fiat which allowed Mr. Atkinson the privilege of withdrawing from his position as principal of Fort street school had no sooner been promulgated than many of the parents who had children under his charge, withdrew them also from the school and tendered Mr. Atkinson their sympathy and assistance if he would establish a private school. From the inducements offered, Mr. Atkinson has decided to open a school on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, at the rooms formerly occupied and known as St. Alban’s College, and parents who may desire to place their children under his instruction are referred to Mr. Atkinson’s advertisement...”<sup>24</sup>

Two months later, it was reported that enrolments at St. Alban’s College had been increasing so rapidly that Mr. Atkinson had found it necessary to engage another assistant.

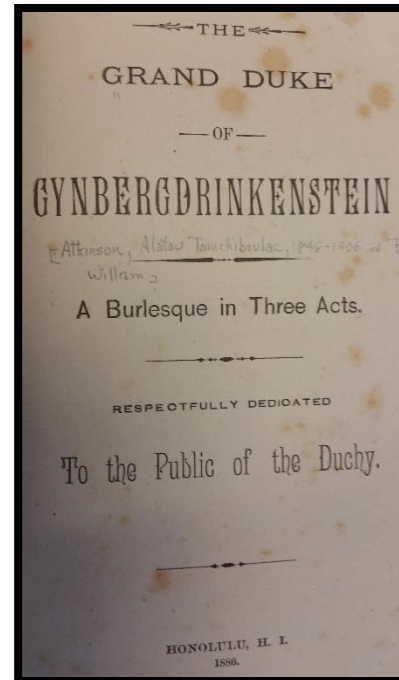
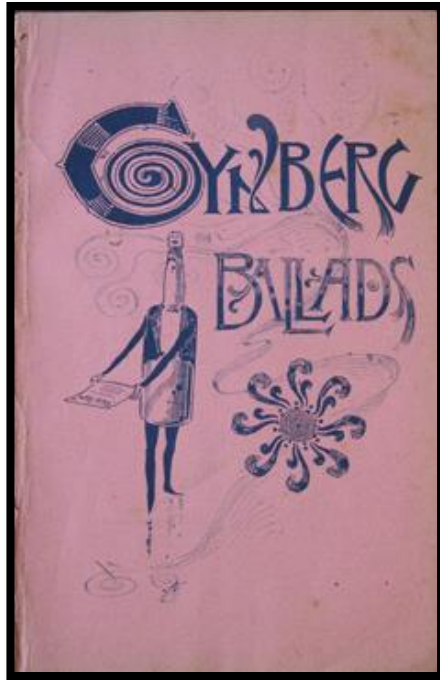
Alatau, however, continued as editor of *The Hawaiian Gazette* and, separately, in 1886 and 1887, published the two most famous satirical pamphlets of the Kalakaua era, *The Grand Duke of Gynbergrinkenstein* and *The Gynberg Ballads*. Referring to the first, the *Hawaiian Gazette* commented: “One of the most amusing pieces of satire upon the affairs of this kingdom was issued on Saturday morning (4 December). The satire takes the form of a three-act burlesque...and is respectfully dedicated to the public of the Duchy. The points made are delicately put. There is plenty of fun but it is perfectly good natured fun, and even those satirized must laugh. The author whoever it [sic] may be, has certainly a good knowledge of Hawaiian Affairs. He treats these as the German principalities were treated in Offenbach’s Grand Duchess, but without the exaggeration. It shows how utterly absurd the affairs of this kingdom are.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 22 August 1883

<sup>25</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 7 December 1886





Pages from Alatau's two satirical pamphlets attacking the King and his corrupt administration

The clear purpose of these satires was to convince the populace that the administration of the kingdom was not only corrupt and unworthy of trust, but also ridiculous.

The charges found public expression, and mounted: that the King and his ministers were guilty of incompetence, extravagance and maladministration; that the King had interfered in the elections and exercised improper influence over the Legislature<sup>26</sup>; that there had been "unscrupulous attempts to arouse in the native mind a feeling of jealousy and hostility to foreigners"; that there had been "a perfectly criminal relaxation" of the laws relating to leprosy, thereby endangering lives; and that there had been shameful neglect of roads, harbours and other public works.<sup>27</sup>

*The Hawaiian Gazette* reported that:

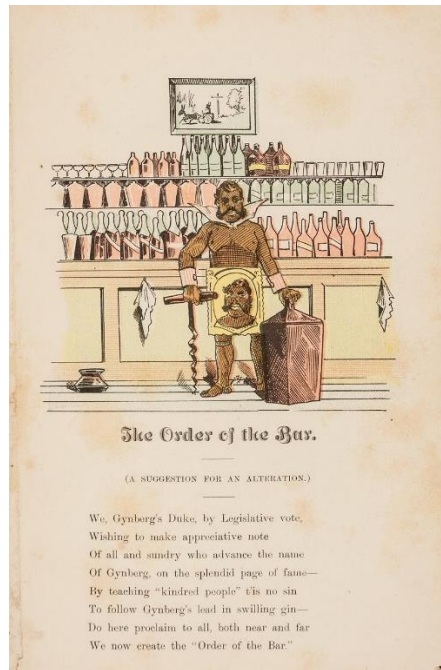
"one of the most significant, as well as the most hopeful signs of the times, is the drawing together of all classes of the community, of the thinkers and the workers. All seem to be united upon one great point and that is that an end must come to the present era of extravagance, corruption and incompetence."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The election of 1886 saw the country districts flooded with cheap gin, chiefly provided by King Kalakaua who paid for it by franking other liquor through the Custom House free of duty. This so-called "election gin" was dispensed in exchange for votes for legislative candidates loyal to the king.

<sup>27</sup> Kuykendall, Ralph S., *The Hawaiian Kingdom, op. cit.*

<sup>28</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 5 April 1887



**A page from *The Gynberg Ballads***

The importation of opium had been made illegal in Hawaii in 1874. However, in the 1886 session of the Legislature, a member of the Royal Ticket introduced a bill, at the instigation of the king, to license the sale of opium and to sell a licence for a fixed sum. Although opposed by the *haoles* of the Independent Party, the bill was passed. The king then sold the licence to import opium to a Chinese merchant for \$71,000 but failed to give the merchant the licence. He then charged a second Chinese merchant the same fee and, when the first merchant asked for a refund of the fee he had paid, the king refused. *The Hawaiian Gazette* published this story on 17 May.

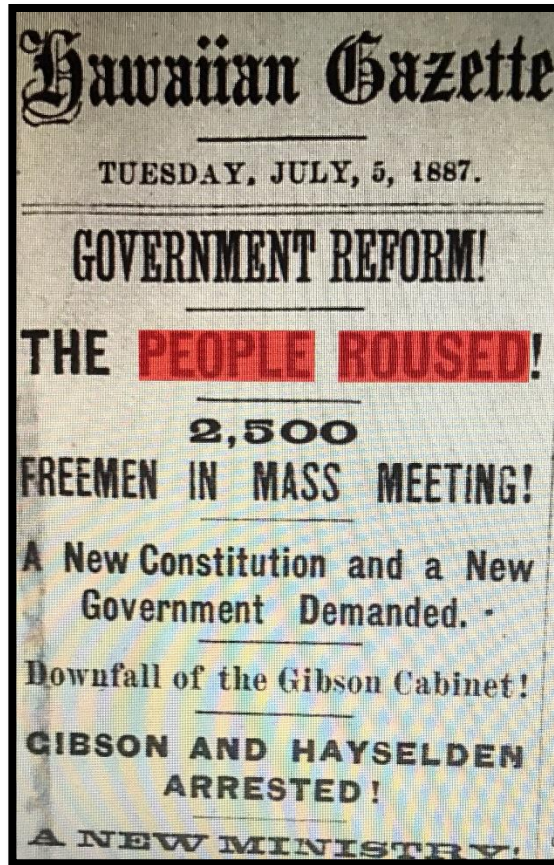
As discontent rose, *The Hawaiian Gazette* continued to hammer the point:

"The letters ... which have appeared in these columns, show how thoroughly aroused the taxpayers and respectable men of this community are, and how determined they are that the present regime of rascality, knavery and debauchery should be brought to an end.

"These letters and others... speak in no uncertain tone...The country has been ruled so villainously, the people have been so systematically plundered and insulted that they have made up their minds to endure no longer. The day of grace has long since passed and it is now a patent fact that the rulers of this nation are utterly unfit for the positions that they hold; unfit, not through lack of ability, but unfit because they have been proved at the bar of public opinion to be venal and perjured; from the throne downwards, with a very few honorable exceptions, the whole machinery of government is rotten, corrupt and filthy, and the sooner an end is made of it the better."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 7 June 1887



Under Alatau's editorship the *Hawaiian Gazette* was uncompromising in its support for annexation

The body which ultimately contributed the most to bringing down the Gibson regime was produced by the Hawaiian League, assisted by an armed militia, the Honolulu Rifles. The Hawaiian League, established in early 1887, was a secret organization formed for the purpose of demanding reform in the government and a limitation of the powers of the king so that he would reign but not rule as he had been doing in recent years. Within the League, there developed a radical wing and a conservative wing. The radicals favoured abolition of the monarchy and the setting up of a republic; some wished to go further and seek annexation to the United States. The conservatives favoured retention of the monarchy, but wanted a change of ministry and a drastic revision of the constitution of the kingdom. Alatau was one of the first 14 members of the League<sup>30</sup>.

After days of increasing unrest, on 30 June businesses came to a halt and a packed public meeting was held in the armoury of the Honolulu Rifles.<sup>31</sup> The upshot of the meeting was that members of the League were confirmed to demand that King Kalakaua dismiss his cabinet and that a new constitution be written. The next day, 1 July, a shipment of arms was discovered (although later found to be smooth-bore hunting guns for scaring birds) and the Honolulu Rifles took control and arrested Walter Gibson.

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<sup>30</sup> Kuykendall, *op.cit.*

<sup>31</sup> The Honolulu Rifles company preceded the Hawaiian League (its officers received their commissions from the King) but, by 1887, it had become the League's military arm.

Over the next week a group of lawyers led by Lorrin A. Thurston, drafted a new constitution which severely curtailed the power of the King (the so-called “Bayonet Constitution”) and which he, on advice, accepted. Under this new constitution, candidates and voters for the House of Nobles had to own property worth \$3,000, which disenfranchised two-thirds of native Hawaiians from electing representatives of their upper house. Also, voters were required to be of Hawaiian or European descent, which excluded the rapidly growing ethnic Chinese and Japanese communities. Alatau is nowhere mentioned as a participant in the drafting of this constitution.

He indeed had other preoccupations, being called to defend, at this time of high tension, a charge of libel for an article that appeared in his paper on 1 July. As recounted in *The Daily Herald*, F. S. Pratt, Registrar of Public Accounts, claimed that he had been defamed by an article published in *The Hawaiian Gazette* on that date, which stated that he had carried away public documents in a hack and that he had public documents in his possession covering “shady jobs” of the past. Mr Pratt stated that the article charging him with stealing such documents was untrue in every particular. When Alatau was called to the stand, he stated that he had no involvement in the writing of the article and no knowledge of it before its publication.<sup>32</sup>

A witness from *The Hawaiian Gazette* office testified: “Atkinson was at office till about 8.30 that morning; Whitney (H.M. Whitney, his deputy-ed) came to office shortly after 9; Atkinson prepared report of meeting and the editorials; Whitney was shown all the news items, including the article complained of; that article was based on flying rumours about the streets; Whitney said let it go in; an article prepared by Atkinson was crowded out for want of room; Atkinson came back to office about 4 o’clock or a little after.”

In consequence of this and further collaborative evidence, Mr. Dole, for the Defence, stated that he “did not know why Mr. Atkinson should be singled out for criminal prosecution...when there were more responsible persons to be proceeded against” and that “Defendant should not be punished for another man’s sins”. The judge said that, if the jury believed that Mr. Atkinson did not have any knowledge of the offensive article before its appearance, they should find a verdict for the defendant. This ruling was made reluctantly because he felt that an editor should be held responsible for what appeared in his paper. After two minutes’ deliberation, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.<sup>33</sup>

In the wake of the new order, it was officially announced in August that the Board of Education had appointed Alatau as Inspector General of Education. At the same time, “the closing exercises at St. Alban’s College, under direction of Mr. Atkinson, Principal” were reported and, on 30 July, he took his farewell from *The Hawaiian Gazette*. As recounted in the edition of 2 August: “The whole proceedings were conducted so quietly on the part of the employees that Mr Atkinson had not the most remote idea of the *impending danger* [sic]...but maintained his usual cheerful disposition until called into the composing room and publicly arraigned before them all, receiving his sentence as becometh a gentleman who knows how to submit gracefully to the inevitable. To say that Mr. Atkinson was surprised is putting it mildly – he was completely taken aback – and it was some moments before he recovered his speech. Mr. Atkinson then thanked the employees for their thoughtfulness...He should always esteem this souvenir as an additional evidence of the friendly feeling which existed between

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<sup>32</sup> *The Daily Herald*, 23 July 1887

<sup>33</sup> This seeming failure on Alatau’s part to provide for an adequate reporting structure was again to be an issue in 1905.

them during his editorial career." It is noteworthy that the first person to sign the letter of appreciation was Mr. H. M. Whitney.

In his new position, Alatau's responsibilities were to visit the schools, examine them, report upon their proficiency, give advice and instruction to teachers, report upon the condition of school-houses and school property and examine the accounts of school agents.<sup>34</sup> After 1887, Alatau's name frequently appears in the Shipping column of the Hawaiian press, either departing from or returning to Honolulu, as he continually criss-crossed the Hawaiian Islands in the discharge of his duties. That these journeys were not without some peril can be seen from the below:

"The terrific storm that raged through Saturday night doubtless made anxious feelings possess the minds of those who had friends on board of steamers due on or before morning.

"Early Sunday afternoon a representative of *The Hawaiian Gazette* was informed by the Bell Telephone Central that the steamer "*Kinau*" was anchored on the other side of Diamond Head. Next instant one of the passengers announced himself through the telephone, stating that several others with himself had landed in a boat.

"Those who thus came ashore were Sir William Wiseman, Bart., commander of H.B.M.S. Caroline, Hon. W. G. Irwin, Mr. A. T. Atkinson, Inspector-General of Schools...Just after leaving the vessel the sea was found to be so strong that the passengers had to help pull, double-banking the oars, otherwise it would have been impossible to bring the boat to the beach, a distance of a quarter mile or so. Messrs. Irwin, Atkinson and Hewett are named as athletic helpers of the boatmen in this emergency. Landing was effected at a cove just underneath Coco Head. The party had then to climb quite a distance up a steep cliff, and walk about four miles to the signal station."<sup>35</sup>

A further insight into the ambit of Alatau's activities is also provided by *The Daily Bulletin* in the following:

"Mr. A. T. Atkinson, Inspector-General of Schools, returned on the "*Kinau*" from a tour of inspection through the districts of Hilo, Puna, Kau, North and South Kona. The general condition of the schools was good. One day Mr. Atkinson started from Honokohau at 4 o'clock in the morning for Makalawena. After examining the school there he was in the saddle until 7 o'clock in the evening. During the past three months and a half Mr. A. [sic] has only spent 10 days in Honolulu".<sup>36</sup>

Early in 1888, *The Hawaiian Gazette* reported the proceedings of the Teachers' Institute, which had been in session for the previous week. Included in the report:

"While the country is scarcely able to afford a permanent school for the training of teachers, the system just inaugurated will fill a great deficiency in the educational service of the country. As to the nature of the instruction imparted, the keynote struck by Mr. Atkinson in his opening address – that the English language should be at once the basis and the framework of educational science in our schools – will be universally acknowledged to be the right one for the conditions obtaining in this kingdom, if a healthy national system is to be consolidated out of the heterogeneous elements composing the population."<sup>37</sup>

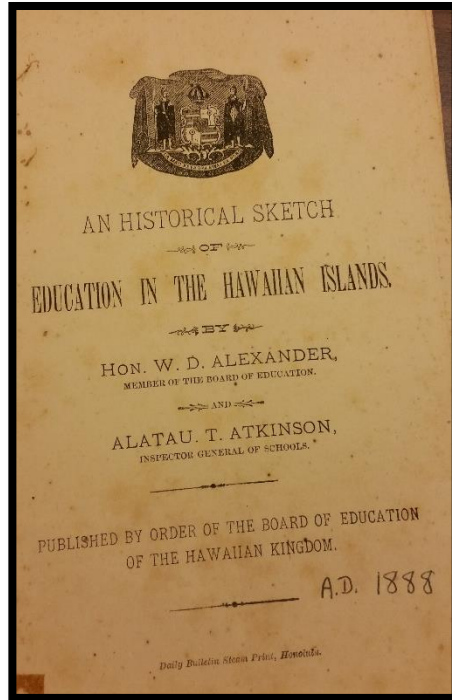
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<sup>34</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 27 August 1889

<sup>35</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 7 February 1888, Supplement

<sup>36</sup> *The Daily Bulletin*, 30 May 1889

<sup>37</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 24 April 1888



**A pamphlet written by Alatau on the Hawaiian education system**

That Alatau was proud of the advances in education in Hawaii can be gathered from the way he assembled the education component of the Hawaiian contribution to the International Exposition held in Paris in 1889. "Besides school books and apparatus used in our schools, there will be specimens of work done by pupils in school hours, under both foreign and native teachers, such as exercises in arithmetic, algebra, composition etc., all showing incidentally the quality of penmanship, which in many cases is very superior...The photographer's art is enlisted...several frames containing pictures of school houses and groups of foreign and native teachers and of pupils will be filled...As there are ten nationalities on the rolls of Fort Street School, a representative group of its pupils is a study in itself."<sup>38</sup>

On 14 January 1893, King Kalakaua's successor, Queen Lili'uokalani, announced her intention to promulgate a new constitution which would restore actual rule to her as sovereign and restore to all citizens the privilege of franchise and candidacy. That afternoon, leaders of the reform party organised themselves into a "Committee of Safety", comprising nine men of American descent, one Scot, one Tasmanian and two Germans. Together, they approved a motion by Lorrin A. Thurston to form and declare a provisional government with the sole purpose of securing Hawaii's annexation to the United States. In this, they were also motivated by the effect on the Hawaiian economy of the McKinley Tariff Act of 1890, which had cancelled foreign tariffs on the American sugar trade and so effectively removed the previous favoured status of Hawaiian sugar<sup>39</sup>; if Hawaii were to be annexed by the United States, it would receive the same sugar bounties as domestic producers.

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<sup>38</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 5 February 1889

<sup>39</sup> Created by the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875.





Queen Liliuokalani, the last Queen of Hawaii.

The coup efforts were supported by the American minister to Hawaii and the invasion of U.S. Marines who came ashore at the request of the conspirators on the afternoon of 16 January and whose presence effectively intimidated royalist defenders. On 17 January, the Committee of Safety proclaimed the provisional government and occupied, without difficulty, the government building. In all of this, Thurston, at least, was convinced that the Hawaiians were an enfeebled and dying race, incapable of rule, and that had the committee not taken the bold step of revolution, Lili'uokalani was ready to give her kingdom to the British.

Within 48 hours of the overthrow, every government with a diplomatic presence in Hawaii recognised this Government, including the United States where President Harrison, who was supportive of annexation, was however in the last days of his incumbency<sup>40</sup>. Hawaii was not at this time annexed by the United States because Harrison's successor, Grover Cleveland, did not share his views. President Cleveland's address to Congress was unequivocal:

"The military demonstration upon the soil of Honolulu was of itself an act of war; unless made either with the consent of the government of Hawaii or for the bona fide purpose of protecting the imperilled lives and property of citizens of the United States. But there is no pretence of any such consent on the part of the government of the queen...the existing government, instead of requesting the presence of an armed force, protested against it. There is as little basis for the pretence that forces were landed for the security of American life and property. If so, they would have been stationed in the vicinity of such property and so as to protect it, instead of at a distance and so as to command the Hawaiian Government Building and palace...When these armed men were landed, the city of Honolulu was in its customary orderly and peaceful condition..."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Harrison's term of office ended on 4 March 1893.

<sup>41</sup> [www.hawaii-nation.org/cleveland.html](http://www.hawaii-nation.org/cleveland.html)

President Cleveland ordered Lili'uokalani's restoration to the throne with the proviso that she grant full amnesty to those who had participated in her overthrow. The Committee of Safety would not agree to this and, knowing that there would be no annexation until Grover Cleveland's term of office ended but needing a more permanent government, on 4 July 1894, proclaimed a "Republic of Hawaii". Nineteen delegates of the Provisional Government and 18 elected delegates drafted a new constitution for the Republic. Alatau was not among their number.

Rather, his inspectorial responsibilities continued to require his frequent absence from Honolulu. That eight years of constant travel took a toll is clear from the circumstances of his resignation, which was announced *The Hawaiian Gazette* on 10 December 1895:

"On the first of January A. T. Atkinson will relinquish his position as Inspector-General of Schools...The cause of Mr. Atkinson's retirement is set forth in the following letter, written October 29th:

*To the President and Members of the Board of Education:*

*I find myself compelled to ask you to relieve me of my current position as Inspector-General of Schools. I am no longer physically fitted for its duties. I have felt this for a long time. If I can serve the Board in some capacity where I shall be able to remain in Honolulu or very rarely be sent away, I shall be happy to do so.*

*I think I may say for my work during the past eight years, that I found the schools in poor condition and that I leave them far better than they were when I took charge. Of this record I am proud.*

*Thanking you for the uniform kindness and confidence shown to me during my term of office, I remain,*

*Yours faithfully,  
Alatau T. Atkinson,  
Inspector-General of Schools"*

*The Hawaiian Gazette* also reported:

"At a meeting of the Board, held November 14<sup>th</sup>, the following resolutions were passed:

**Resolved** – that the Board of Education accepts, with regret, the resignation...tendered by Mr. A. T. Atkinson of his office of Inspector-General of Schools, and that the same shall take effect on 31<sup>st</sup> of December of the present year.

**Resolved** – that this Board place on record its high appreciation of his eminent services to the cause of education during the past eight years, and of the untiring energy, executive ability and good judgment which he has shown in the discharge of his office."<sup>42</sup>

*The Independent* wrote:

"The retiring official can look back on his work with pride...we are selfish enough to hope that he will go back to his old calling as a journalist. In that field he has always been a foeman worthy of our steel – and we miss him sorely."<sup>43</sup>

In June it was announced that Alatau had been appointed Superintendent of the 1896 Census which revealed the statistics quoted earlier.

In January 1897 Alatau took up his new post as editor of the *Hawaiian Star*. In a Salutatory, dated 11 January he wrote as follows:

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<sup>42</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 10 December 1895

<sup>43</sup> *The Independent*, 9 December 1895

“In taking the editorial chair of *The Star* the present editor feels deeply his responsibility. He will try to be honest and true to the principles of good government and will do everything in his power to foster the growing industries of the country. To represent faithfully, if incompletely, the best thought, the highest aspiration of this community and its common needs, rather than its antagonisms, shall be the aim of *The Star* ....In full confidence that the changes which have come over the political fortunes of Hawaii are for the best and that eventually they will be so regarded, even by those who have taken them with bitterness of spirit, and that annexation to the United States of America is the most desirable thing to strive for, the present editor once more makes his bow to a public for which he has written more or less since 1880.”

This was immediately followed by the following:

“ANNEXATION – PURE AND SIMPLE

The policy of this paper under its present management may be at once laid down. It will advocate the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands to the United States in season and out of season. There is no other great issue before us. It is either annexation or a feeble state that is any body’s meat...we lack for size of population...No state of such small size can go on indefinitely as an independent state...

“Now it seems a very fair proposition that we should strive to protect ourselves. If our position is such that we are any body’s meat, why let us decide whose meat we shall be...We want to become a part of a great nation, whose laws, whose religion, whose family ties, whose aspirations are like our own...

From the position of the United States, Hawaii is as important as the Janiculum was to Rome, and all can remember Macaulay’s lines:

*“The bridge must straight go down,*

*For since Janiculum is lost, naught else can save the town.”*

The Hawaiian Islands are the outpost of Western civilization in the Pacific...Can it be possible that the United States will leave an outlying fort unassisted? For the battle of the Eastern and the Western civilizations is sure to come, and come much quicker than many people foresee [sic]. Where will the United States be if they leave so strong an outpost at the mercy of an enemy? Held in other hands Hawaii would be a constant menace to the commerce of the United States in time of war. Held by the United States the practical command of the Pacific is obtained.”<sup>44</sup>

In light of subsequent history, prophetic words indeed!

In April 1897 negotiations were opened for a political union with the United States which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Washington on 16 June that year. The Treaty was then forwarded to the United States and Hawaiian Senates for ratification; the Hawaiian Senate unanimously ratified it on 9

September 1897. Eleven days later, at this pivotal moment, the editor of *The Hawaiian Star* wrote:

“Hawaii is ready for annexation...All that can be done on this side has been done. It remains now with the United States...to consider whether all the material progress, all the social progress, all the religious progress made on these Islands should be lost. Whether the advantages to the Great Republic should be thrown to the winds. Without annexation the system of government and the civilization so carefully and laboriously raised on these Islands will collapse. Left to themselves these Islands must drift under the dominion of the Asiaticism.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 11 January 1896

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 20 September 1897

In May 1897 the Press of Hawaii hosted members of the Press from Japan at a gala banquet. Alatau was the toastmaster and was reported as saying in part that:

“the gathering was an extraordinary one from the fact that it was the first time in the history of the press in Honolulu that the members had organized for the purpose of entertaining foreigners of the same profession...It was memorable, also, from the fact that representatives of so many nationalities had assembled to do honor to men from the Far East. It was a demonstration of the cordiality which exists between members of the press in Honolulu even though they may be of widely different political and social opinions... After paying a high compliment to the guests he announced the first toast “The Emperor of Japan” - drunk in silence”<sup>46</sup> and followed by the playing of the Japanese national anthem. At the elections held in September for the House of Representatives, there was only one ticket for the island of O’ahu, the American Union Party. The party’s “platform of principles” included the following:

- The political union of Hawaii with the United States.
- Opposition to the employment of Asiatic labour upon any public works, or of prison labour.
- A more speedy improvement of harbours and wharf facilities to meet the demands of rapidly increasing commerce.
- The addition to the population by assisting the emigration of farmers, labourers and artisans from the United States.
- The extension and improvement of the public school system (while commending “notable results” attained)
- Proper sewerage of Honolulu
- The establishment of a “public park in Asia” and a legislative act, making the Waikiki beach property a part of the Kapiolani Park with all of the land to be open for the use of the public.
- Improvement of inadequate transport facilities by the installation of an “electric street railway line” for Honolulu and its suburbs.
- Extension of illumination of public streets and buildings.<sup>47</sup>

Alatau was unanimously endorsed as a candidate representing the American Union Party and subsequently elected on that ticket to represent the Fourth District. The session began on 16 February 1898 and concluded on 7 July. When the session opened, final ratification of the union by the U.S. Congress was still pending (the official transfer of power from the Republic to the United States took place on 12 August).

The 1898 session was accordingly the last session of the Hawaiian Legislature, acting for a sovereign country. The session opened with an address from the Acting President which included the following: “Owing to the intimate relations existing between the Republic and the United States of America, great care should be exercised that no action be taken which might interfere with the scope of the Treaty above referred to, nor in any way jeopardize the present satisfactory relations, nor hinder the future presentation of the Treaty, should it fail at the present time to receive the approval of the Senate of the United States, where it is now pending.”<sup>48</sup>

In this statement perhaps lies the reason for Alatau’s submitting himself for election to this particular session. When the goal to which he had dedicated his life’s work was so close, he would do all he could to ensure its achievement. The matters dealt with by the 1898 session included: Japanese immigration

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<sup>46</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 18 May 1897

<sup>47</sup> *The Independent*, 16 September 1897

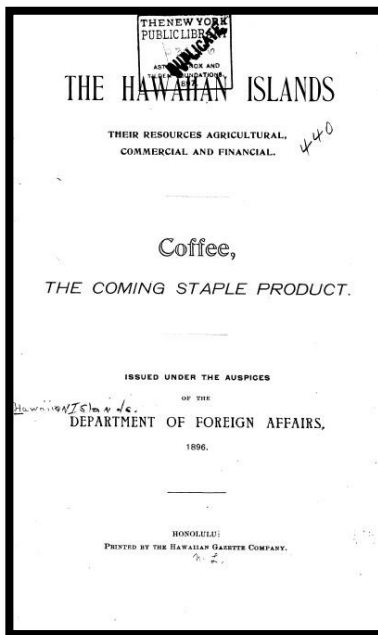
<sup>48</sup> Roster Legislatures of Hawaii, 1841-1918 (on openlibrary.org), p.240

(recent immigrants had been found unsuitable and returned to Japan), public improvements (including more school buildings), land policy (expeditious subdivision of public lands suitable for settlement), forestry, industrial and reform schools, cable communications and registration of vessels. The matters concerning education could, of course, also have contributed to Alatau's decision to be involved.

Following annexation, on 16 August 1899 Alatau received notice of his appointment as Special Agent in charge of the United States 1900 census of the Territory of Hawaii. He was directed to proceed to Washington for discussions and further instructions, which he did in early September. In late September, the Washington newspaper *The Evening Star* reported in a frontpage article "a talk with Mr. A. T. Atkinson", which included the following:

"The prosperity of the Hawaiian Islands was never greater than at this time...Men with a fair amount of capital will find opportunities for its profitable utilization... We look forward with the utmost confidence to a brilliant future for the Hawaiian Islands under the control of the United States. All that the country needed for its development was to have an assured, strong government, in which the people could have confidence, and which would guarantee the safety of property and investments".

Alatau was also reported to state that the population of the islands in 1896 was 110,600 and was now estimated to be 135,000, due, he said, to the benefits following the annexation. It is suggested that Alatau's production of a pamphlet in 1896, called "*The Hawaiian Islands: Their Resources, Agricultural, Commercial and Financial*", written to encourage investment in Hawaiian industries, would have contributed to this outcome.



Alatau's pamphlet on Hawaii's industries

On 25 October, *The Hawaiian Star* reported his visit to Washington: "Special Census Agent Alatau T. Atkinson is expected to return by the "*Gaelic*". In Washington he had an extended interview with President McKinley... [who] displayed not only great interest in the Islands, but a keen knowledge of them.

“Mr. Atkinson has also had the honor of meeting Admiral Dewey<sup>49</sup>, Admiral Schley, Admiral Walker, General Carpenter...He was one of the special guests on the platform when Dewey received his sword.”<sup>50</sup>

*The Hawaiian Star*<sup>51</sup> reported Alatau’s return to Honolulu as follows:

“PREPARATIONS FOR THE CENSUS COMPLETE

“Enumeration Here will be by Race and not by Color as it is on the Mainland.

“Alatau T. Atkinson, United States Special Agent-in-Chief to take the census of the Hawaiian Islands, returned by the “*Gaelic*” this morning from Washington.

“The preparation for the Hawaiian census,” Mr Atkinson said, “is practically complete. The officials of the census bureau devoted a great deal of attention to the subject of my work, and facilitated it as much as possible...In enumerating the population there will be no classification of “coloured” people, but the people of the islands will be classed as of the various “races” to which they belong...One of the most important features of the census in the Islands as I look at it, and one which was given the greatest consideration was the decision to enumerate by race and not by colour. On the mainland the enumeration will be by colour. I insisted, however, that there was no colour line here and that enumeration by race was not only the most scientific but the method that harmonized with our social and political ideas and conditions. But it was with difficulty I secured this arrangement, the enumeration by colour being so firmly fixed by custom in the United States...

“Mr. Atkinson spent twenty-seven days in Washington, this itself giving some indication of the thoroughness with which the census matter was gone into by the Census Bureau. From Chicago he came to San Francisco on the fastest train that ever crossed the Continent. It left Chicago at 6.30 p.m. October 19 and arrived in San Francisco at 11.15 a.m. October 22.”

In June 1900, Sanford Dole became the first Governor of the United States Territory of Hawaii<sup>52</sup>.

Alongside his inaugural address, the *Hawaiian Star* printed an ‘*Admission Day Song*’ penned by Alatau, which included the following verses:

“With rosy morn we enter on  
Our glorious birth-right, gift of fate,  
Our aspirations centre on  
The hope that we’ll become a state.  
A proud position now is ours,  
The Great Republic’s youngest child;  
This birth morn we will crown with flowers,  
We’ll hail the day with cheering wild!

...

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<sup>49</sup> Admiral George Dewey was so honoured because on 1 May 1898 his fleet of ships (one of which had been supplied with munitions - transferred from the steamer *Mohican* - in Hawaii) was successful in sinking or capturing the entire Spanish Pacific fleet, for the loss of one American life, at the Battle of Manila Bay. This encounter was part of a wider battle front which resulted in Spain ceding to the United States all its colonies outside Africa, including the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico. When General Dewey returned to the USA in 1899, he received a hero’s welcome. On 3 October that year he was presented with a special sword by President McKinley in a ceremony at the Capitol Building. The presentation of the sword was followed by a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue.

<sup>50</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 25 October 1899

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 31 October 1899

<sup>52</sup> He was previously President of the Republic of Hawaii.



A primrose path before us lies,  
A path of safety, honour, peace,  
The Great Republic bids us rise,  
Our freedom claim, our wealth increase.”<sup>53</sup>

In the same month it was announced that the Governor had appointed Alatau to the new position of Inspector-General of Public Instruction<sup>54</sup>, which position he held until the year before his death. In accepting the position, Alatau retired from editorship of *The Hawaiian Star*. A month later the *Evening Bulletin* reported that “under Mr. Atkinson’s supervision the Education headquarters have been remodelled in keeping with the vigorous administration of the department which the new era demands. Opening from the main corridors of the Judiciary building on one side and from the secretary’s office on the Queen street side, is the Superintendent’s office. This being a large apartment will also be the board room for the meeting of the Commissioners...”<sup>55</sup>

In November 1902 a notice appeared in the *Hawaiian Star* that Alatau and his family, after living more than 30 years in one house on Pauoa Road, had removed downtown to Bates Street. In earlier years at least, the condition of Pauoa Road had been far from satisfactory and Alatau would have made many difficult trips along it, probably on horseback. Whether road improvement and public transport had since supplied the need is not known. His son-in-law, R. C. L. Perkins, once humorously remarked, “I certainly liked the old Hawaii best when the side-walks (or at least many of them) were made of raised boards, often with holes in them through which one might put one’s foot, and the street cars were drawn by mules.”<sup>56</sup>

Towards the end of 1903 it was announced that Secretary George Carter was to be the next governor of the Territory of Hawaii. Upon hearing this news, Alatau tendered his resignation, stating that, as his position was one filled by the governor with the approval and consent of the Senate, he felt it proper to tender his resignation, in order that Carter, as governor, might be free to fill the office to his own satisfaction.<sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> The Republican Central Committee subsequently recommended to Governor Carter, that Alatau be re-appointed<sup>59</sup> and he was recommissioned. In his new role, Alatau was involved more than ever with administration issues, as opposed to purely education issues, and the press regularly published advertisements from his office seeking tenders for the erection of school buildings etc.

On 11 November 1904, *The Evening Bulletin* reported on investigations being conducted by a Territorial Grand Jury. The report stated that, amongst other investigations, “For the last three or four weeks the Grand Jury has had the Department of Public Instruction under investigation and it is said that their inquiries are likely to result in a recommendation that the teachers be restored to their original salaries, which were reduced by the Legislature in special session for the sake of economy.” It was remembered that when the Grand Jury had previously recommended that the courts be again equipped with

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<sup>53</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 14 June 1900

<sup>54</sup> This position replaced that of Minister of Public Instruction, under the Republic of Hawaii.

<sup>55</sup> *Evening Bulletin*, 14 July 1900

<sup>56</sup> Quoted by Evenhuis, N. L., “*Barefoot on Lava*”, p.41

<sup>57</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 2 November 1903

<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, Governor Carter had once been a pupil at St. Alban’s College.

<sup>59</sup> *The Independent*, 23 November 1903

interpreters, dropped for economy's sake, Governor Carter had remarked that it should perhaps look at the situation in schools because that department had suffered the most in the way of retrenchment and "yet no wail of anguish had come from that direction". In subsequently visiting the schools, the Grand Jury had not confined its inquiry to salary matters.

On 17 March 1905 *The Hawaiian Gazette* reported on a meeting of a committee of the Legislature in the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. As well as Alatau and the committee – comprising two Senators and four Representatives - also present were an attorney for the Superintendent and three of the Education Commissioners. At this meeting the Grand Jury report was read, together with the joint resolution calling for an investigation. Representative Lilikalani said the report was filled with generalities and many recommendations and that the charges seemed to centre on certain schools and methods of instruction but not definite charges. There were recommendations about schoolbooks and the *modus operandi* of the office.

Also, the report recommended that the Legislature enact laws to encourage teachers. Senator Hayselden said he believed there were certain charges which, in fairness, should be probed. The report said in one place that the Superintendent manifested indifference towards the schools. Alatau confirmed that he supported a full investigation and it was agreed to call for the members of the Grand Jury and the witnesses to present themselves before the Committee.

On the same day, Alatau received a letter from the Governor stating that it had been understood from the beginning that if, at any time, the Governor should become dissatisfied with the administration of the Education Department, he would communicate that to Alatau and expect him to act accordingly. The Governor stated that he felt that time had now come. In reply, Alatau asked that he be allowed to remain until he and his Department were cleared of the charges. The below is, in part, his letter to the Governor:

*"Referring to our conversation...it would be unjust to the officials of my Department were I to bow to your request for my resignation. Certain vague statements have been made concerning my Department and a Committee of the Legislature, after a partial hearing behind closed doors, where I was unrepresented and permitted no opportunity to defend my Department, has made a certain report. Under these circumstances I request that a full, free, fair, open and impartial investigation of these matters be had."*<sup>60</sup>

The Governor responded by appointing Attorney A. F. Judd to conduct a full and open investigation and, upon being so advised, Alatau tendered his resignation, to take effect upon the appointment of his successor. On 22 March it was reported<sup>61</sup> that Attorney Judd's investigation, as the personal representative of the Governor, of the Department of Public Instruction had begun. This investigation was to be public and would not be conducted as a court. If there were any hearsay testimony it would be heard "and considered for what it may be worth".

On 30 March Mr Judd submitted his report to the Governor. The next day *The Hawaiian Gazette* devoted several pages to the report.<sup>62</sup> In quoting the text of the report, the paper included the following comments which mostly vindicated Alatau's request for a full and open inquiry:

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<sup>60</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 21 March 1905

<sup>61</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 22 March 1905

<sup>62</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 31 March 1905

#### “MISAPPLICATION OF FUNDS

...concerning Mr. Atkinson and Dr. Rodgers [the Secretary], nothing has come to my attention which would even suggest the possibility of any breach of the trust reposed in them. Miss Davison [school agent] should be called upon by proper authority to explain the endorsements appearing on the back of voucher no. S473.

#### SUPERINTENDENT

A large part of the responsibility for the lack of method in the department must fall on the superintendent who, by the statute, is made the chief administrative officer of the department. I do not see how his duties as such officer can be construed so as to relieve him of this responsibility. He should have known, I take it, how Miss Davison was carrying on the repairs of the schools; that she was acting as the financial agent of many of the employees in her district; that teachers had not paid for books that they had received; that persons other than teachers were allowed credit for books, viz.: the Hawaiian News Company and Wall, Nichols & Company; that deeds to school lands were in the department safe that needed to be placed on record; that leases in the safe showed that persons were occupying school lands for which apparently no rentals were being received, and that no adequate rent roll existed. These criticisms of Mr. Atkinson reach only to the administrative side of his office in contradistinction to the educational side. Here I find nothing to condemn, and much to praise. The system of reports coming in regularly from the heads of each school, the school agents and the inspectors seem to adequately meet the situation. This method keeps the central office of the department fully apprised of the conditions in each school. Each such report presents the local situation from its own point of view. The health certificates now required of the teachers is an idea for which credit is due to Mr. Atkinson. The intimate knowledge of conditions all over the Islands which Mr. Atkinson enjoys as the result of his long service as Inspector General of Schools enables him, by means of this system, to keep in touch with all of the schools at once, preserving, as it were, a bird's eye view of the entire situation... Concerning the administrative side of the department, as shown in the office in Honolulu, I may, perhaps, characterize the situation as resembling that of a respectable old business house, that needs to be shaken up and modernised.”

The *Evening Bulletin* commented:

“Mr. Judd says in a little different language what the Bulletin has remarked and reiterated from time to time in connection with this very important Department of the Government...As far as Superintendent Atkinson is concerned, no one has ever said or believed that his dealings of a financial nature were under suspicion. If there were any irregularities of this kind in the Department they were the result of indifference of himself or other responsible officers...”

“Mr. Atkinson cannot evade the responsibility for details of mismanagement in the local office. His duties are largely administrative, and if each officer is to be his own independent “boss” of public instruction it would be better to divide the whole thing up and wipe out the head. At the same time, this report does not and we know of none who desires to rob Mr. Atkinson of the honour due him for good work done through a long service when the educational system of the islands was taking on the shape which finally gave it strong character.”<sup>63</sup>

The new superintendent<sup>64</sup> was installed on 5 April and Alatau wrote his last letter to the Governor, stating that he was pleased about the choice of appointment, that he had handed over the charge that

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<sup>63</sup> *The Evening Bulletin*, 31 March 1905

<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, Alatau's replacement, James Davis, tendered his resignation six months later (*The Hawaiian Gazette*, 20 October 1905).

day and that he thanked the Governor for “the very gentlemanly manner” in which he had treated him.<sup>65</sup>

As a postscript to his career, Alatau wrote to the Board of Education in December 1905 stating that the American Book Company had produced a new edition of Alatau’s book, “*Geography of Hawaii*” which was the text used in the schools, and asked the Board to ratify the same.<sup>66</sup>

But for Alatau, this was the end of his career. There followed a year of declining health, at the end of which he died of a haemorrhage in his home on Bates Street on 24 April 1906, survived by his wife and seven children. The funeral took place at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. On the day of the funeral, the Board of Education and all schools in Honolulu closed for half a day as a mark of respect and, on 23 July, the Board of Education presented his widow and family with a framed inscription expressing the Board’s sorrow and condolences. Alatau lies buried with Annie and their little grandson, Robert Perkins, in O’ahu Cemetery.



Alatau’s gravestone in Honolulu, where he is buried with his wife Annie and grandson Robert Perkins

One of the obituaries which appeared in *The Hawaiian Star*<sup>67</sup> when Alatau died, alluding to his outstanding contribution, stated the following:

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<sup>65</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 5 April 1905

<sup>66</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 1 December 1905

<sup>67</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 30 April 1906

“...no enumeration of the individual achievements of his career, however complete, and highly creditable as these are, would in any degree do justice to his life work, without a recognition and appreciation of the key-note to which all his endeavour was attuned – without a recognition of the prophetic ideal which he held throughout his career, of the vision of the Hawaii of the future which illumined his soul. It is high praise to say of a man that he made English the language of instruction in all the public schools in these islands; that he made the public school system a free school system; that he created the Normal School [for the training of teachers]...that he established industrial reformatory schools for juvenile offenders and that in innumerable ways he built up the school system of Hawaii... For such possibilities as he foresaw for Hawaii it was needful that she have a world language. No great destiny was possible for an isolated people speaking a little known tongue, having neither a literature nor a vocabulary of commerce or science...If Hawaii were to accomplish her high destiny, every faculty and gift of all her people must be given the best possible training and opportunity...To his mind the preparation which Hawaii needed for the high destiny he pictured could not be secured unless her school system was in touch with the outer world – felt the breath of progress going on elsewhere.”

Another, in *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*<sup>68</sup>, elaborated:

“It was no easy and well charted task which the friend we know began to shape, as the opportunity befell him, the modern system of Hawaiian schools. There was little to go by in the experience of other countries for here was a coming together of the races which might have been scattered at the tower of Babel. It was not to devise a way of teaching a European or an American. That were a light task indeed; but to determine how, without neglecting the Saxon heirs of civilization, to instruct the brown Polynesian, the Asiatic, the children of the tattooed races, the offspring of the Latins, the heirs of every kind of superstition and dire prejudice – that task needed a patient and a strong intelligence. But the young man whose spirit had so caught the fancy of the great American diplomatist and scholar grew as the task grew and was always equal to it.”

The *Mauai News* (Wailuku)<sup>69</sup> was explicit:

“The death of Alatau T. Atkinson removes one of the brightest minds in the islands and a man who did as much to shape the destiny of Hawaii as any one and raised the standard of education and made it what it is today. It was he who worked incessantly for the annexation of the islands and, as the editor of the leading papers of Honolulu, did more to mould public opinion than any other man in the Territory.”

The Japanese press was also fulsome in its acclaim of his contribution. The *Hawaii Shimpō* stated that, “Mr Atkinson worked among a population of a dozen races and, as distinguished from those who held the narrow view that only their own children should be given the benefits of free schooling, he always held that it was the duty of the state to educate all – to give all equal chance under the law. This is a high development of the greatest feature of American government. It carried the American doctrine of equality before the law into practice under conditions of greater difficulty than other communities have had to encounter... the Japanese especially appreciate the policy that gave them equal right in the schools and respect the memory of the man who did so much to bring it about.”<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> 25 April 1906

<sup>69</sup> 27 April 1906

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in *The Hawaiian Star*, 23 May 1906

And what kind of a man was Alatau? According to *The Hawaii Herald* (Hilo): “Brilliant far beyond his opportunities, he was in every sense a man who could not fail to leave his work wherever he may have travelled.”<sup>71</sup>

From *The Evening Bulletin*: “Constantly in public life...he encountered many of life’s open battles and they always found him unruffled and unprejudiced.”<sup>72</sup>

And from *The Hawaiian Star*, who knew him well: “No man was more loyal to honourable associates than Alatau T. Atkinson. Few men were younger in spirit than he [sic]...Out of these qualities of loyalty and elasticity of mind, responsive to the wholesome spirit of those about him, grew up warm attachments of comradeship...” and “Enthusiastically fond of Hawaii, he believed it possible for her to achieve a great and glorious destiny. To prepare her to achieve and fulfil that destiny was the animating ideal of his life. Into this ideal fits every incident of a round of achievements which, considered alone, would have made a worthy life work for any man. To that ideal he devoted great talents, an indomitable energy, an enthusiasm that never failed or faltered and a luminous zeal.”<sup>73</sup>

The editor of the *Hawaiian Shimpō* wrote, “Those who knew Mr. Atkinson saw in him a scholar and a thinker, an eloquent and powerful writer and a strong organizer, and more than this – they could not but feel in his presence, the influence of a true heart and a broad human charity and friendship.”

#### **ZOE LUCY SHERRARD ALATAU ATKINSON (1868-1940)**

Zoe was Alatau and Annie’s first child, born in England, and the only one whom her paternal grandmother, for whom she was named, is most likely to have seen, Zoe’s siblings all being born in Honolulu. There is record of Zoe undertaking a ship journey across the Pacific to San Francisco in January 1880, at the age of 11, unaccompanied by any member of her immediate family, which would suggest that she may have been taken by friends of her parents to visit her grandmother in England. In this respect, it is perhaps significant that Zoe was identified separately in her grandmother’s will from her siblings. She is recorded in the Hawaiian press of 30 November 1881 as returning (?) on the *City of New York* in the company of her mother.

Zoe followed in her father’s steps and also became a school teacher and headmistress of Pohukaina Girls’ School, adjacent to Iolani Palace. Her sister May also taught at the school, in 1892 being reported as “co-presiding over” the Primary rooms.

Zoe was an active socialite and, along with her sisters, received positive reviews for acting in various operas at the new Opera House in Honolulu. The girls’ attendance at social and sporting (tennis) events and events associated with their teaching careers were regularly reported in the newspapers. In 1891 Zoe was made the social organiser for Queen Lili’uokalani, in which role she organized royal receptions and galas which sometimes also included piano recitals by Zoe herself. At a State Ball in July 1892, *The Daily Bulletin* reported: “The dancing of the minuet was done correctly and with grace...Miss Zoe Atkinson...must be praised for the results of her coaching of the dancers in their several months’ practice”. Twelve days before her deposition, the Queen gave Zoe a gold bracelet inscribed *Aloha Oe*

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<sup>71</sup> *The Hawaiian Herald*, 26 April 1906

<sup>72</sup> *The Evening Bulletin*, 14 April 1906

<sup>73</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, 25 April 1906

*(Farewell to Thee)*, which gift started a fashion among young girls. Zoe's bracelet can today be seen in the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.



A friendship bracelet similar to the one given to Zoe by Queen Lili'uokalani

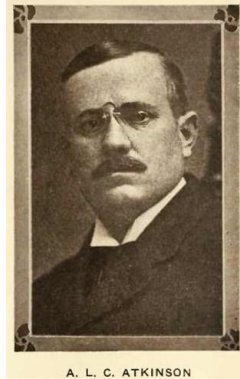
In October 1901 Zoe married at Waialua Robert Cyril L. Perkins, an English entomologist and naturalist, to whom she had first become engaged in 1896. Robert Perkins had come to Hawaii through his appointment in 1891 by a committee of the Royal Society and the British Association for the Advancement of Science to investigate the land fauna of the Hawaiian Islands. In this work he was engaged for almost ten years. Afterwards, between 1902 and 1904 he worked for the Agricultural Department of Hawaii, his special focus being the control of sugar cane pests and weeds. In 1913, he received the Linnean Society's gold medal for eminent services to zoology.

Zoe and Robert had four sons: Robert (who died in infancy), Richard, Charles and John. The family moved permanently to England in 1909, which was a considerable undertaking in view of the number of books and insects Robert had acquired plus all that Zoe owned, including royal gifts given her by the Queen. Added to this were the almost 2,500 thick wax discs which formed the family's collection of pre-electric phonographic records. Zoe died in Newton Abbott, England in 1940.

#### **ALATAU LEONARD CHARLES ("JACK") ATKINSON (1871-1927)**

Alatau – "Jack" – was born at Auwaiolumu, O'ahu (near the Makai end of Pauoa Valley) on 12 September 1871. At the age of 15, he dropped out of school, working for eight years as a clerk. In 1895, he resumed his education at the University of Michigan's law school. Graduating in 1898, he returned to the new Territory of Hawaii and secured a one year appointment as an assistant to the Territorial Attorney General. In 1900 he entered into a three-year law partnership with A. F. Judd. He served on many boards and commissions and, when bubonic plague struck the islands in 1900, worked in civil defence, during which time he was unfortunate to contract malaria. In 1914 he secured a home of his own, "Puuloa Ranch", located six miles from downtown Honolulu. Puuloa is an old name for the area near Pearl Harbour. Sadly, the ranch was burned down in 1922, resulting in the loss of many important family artefacts.





**ALC 'Jack' Atkinson**

During the monarchy period, Jack – like his father – preferred US annexation to alliance with Japan. In the early 1900s he supported using Hawaii's homestead law to encourage immigration of Americans to Hawaii. In this, he was in unanimity with labour unions that feared low wage competition but was opposed to the island's sugar planters who lobbied Washington for a Hawaii plantation labourer exemption from federal anti-Asian immigration rules.

In 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt named Republican George Carter as Governor of Hawaii. Carter had been Secretary of the Territory (Lieutenant Governor) and President Roosevelt appointed Jack to replace him in this position. Carter was regularly absent and Jack had very considerable experience as Acting Governor from 1903-1907. *The Hawaiian Gazette* summed up his contribution as follows:

"He has been an official to do things, and that with all his might, both within the jurisdiction of his own office and while acting in the Governor's stead. On four separate occasions, for considerable periods, he has been the Governor's substitute with a free hand. Every such time he has conducted public affairs not only vigorously but well. In both offices, with an energy seemingly inexhaustible, he has grasped the immediate duty of the hour and never rested until it had been fulfilled.

"Mr Atkinson has not been satisfied, however, with the discharge of merely routine obligations. He has reached out for opportunities of benefitting the community not specifically prescribed in the statutes, yet which the executive position enabled him to see and empowered him to take advantage of. An instance in point is Mr Atkinson's immediate catching of the civic improvement spirit, manifested about three years ago in the formation of district clubs, under the impulse of which he forthwith effected the transformation of many vacant areas and lots...from eyesores to become beautiful parks and playgrounds...

"In the larger field of broad public policy Secretary Atkinson, both in his own office and in that of the chief executive, has left the stamp of efficiency upon his record. The measure of success which has been achieved in the introduction of Europeans, capable of American citizenship upon due probation, for a stable labour supply domiciled upon the soil, is to a great extent due to his advocacy and efforts. In this business he ably turned to good account his membership in the Board of Immigration. Though fortified with the knowledge that the policy in question was approved, if not even largely directed by, President Roosevelt, a less courageous and determined man to press it forward here might have quailed before the manifest difficulties of the problem. Mr Atkinson also proved his possession of capacity for handling large matters of finance by the way he floated the latest issue of Territorial bonds."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 6 August 1907

Two weeks later, on his vacating of the office, Governor Carter paid Jack the following tribute: "...to your active mind is due the origin of not only some of the most important policies of administration, but in one case at least you have the distinction of developing a plan which has been adopted by the Federal government and is now national. Your popularity with all its classes and nationalities - rich and poor, young and old, has been the strongest bond between much of this community and the administration. But it is not due to these qualities alone that your record deserves commendation, but rather to your strong development of that quality shown to be the one most admired by man – a capacity for true friendship, and I desire that my last official act shall be a tribute to your loyalty to me under most trying circumstances. Had your strength of character been less, the bonds of our boyhood friendship would long since have been dissolved. But no matter how strained, no matter what calumnies, no matter what sacrifices it has required of you, your loyalty has never waived and, let the future bring what it may, this must ever be a pleasant memory and a source of gratification to us both."<sup>75</sup>

In 1909 Jack was appointed United States District Attorney for Hawaii, which was reported as a satisfying compensation for missing out on the Governorship.

On 21 October 1909 Jack was reported in the Hawaiian press as arriving in the Pacific Mail Steamship "*Siberia*", from Harbin, Manchuria (via Kobe and Yokohama, Japan). Accompanying him were approximately 200 Russian men and "sturdy women" carefully selected to work as agricultural labourers. Jack informed a reporter quayside that they could easily bring another ten thousand as they were very willing to come and were leaving horrible conditions. This was proved when, again, on 1 July 1910, Jack was reported as returning from a similar mission, in his capacity as "special agent representing the Territorial Immigration Bureau". It was reported that, when he stepped down from the ship concerned, "*Chiya Maru*", he immediately engaged in conversation with a group of Russians waiting at the other end of the quay. A week later *The Hawaiian Star* of 9 July bore the headline "Siberia wants our Atkinson". Apparently, Jack had been besieged by hundreds seeking to work in Hawaii.

Jack married Ina Taft (formerly Board member of the American Red Cross) on 31 December 1921 and died in Honolulu in May 1927, although he lived mostly in Chicago. Like his sister Zoe and brother Robert, he was a sufferer from diabetes. He had no children.

#### **ROBERT WITLAM ALATAU ATKINSON (1877-1939)**

Robert was Alatau and Annie's second son. He received his early education at Fort Street School, conducted by his father, and in 1893, shortly before the overthrow of the monarchy, entered the survey department of the Kingdom of Hawaii. In 1898 he joined the Hawaiian Trust Company from which he resigned to enter Harvard to undertake a specialist Engineering course. On returning to Hawaii in 1900, he became associated with B. F. Dillingham Co. Ltd., through which connection he and others, under the leadership of Walter F. Dillingham, established the Hawaiian Dredging Company Ltd. in 1902 (which still continues today as the Hawaiian Dredging and Construction Company, responsible for a great deal of hotel and infrastructure development in Hawaii).

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<sup>75</sup> *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 20 August 1907



**Robert Witlam Atkinson**

Almost all of the harbour improvements and reclamation projects undertaken in Hawaii in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were undertaken and completed by the Hawaiian Dredging Company. As stated in George F. Nellis' *The Story of Hawaii and its Builders*, "It is not too much to say that the physical appearance of Honolulu has been transformed by operations of the Hawaiian Dredging Company. One of its first undertakings was to fill in swamps at the foot of Nuuanu Street, making the land where the railway station and Aala Park now stand. In the past few years hundreds of acres have been added to the residential district of the city by the completion of the Waikiki reclamation project. Other noteworthy achievements have been the Pearl Harbour dry dock, completed in 1919 [and the] construction of the first deepwater channel into Pearl Harbour."

Pearl Harbour is a lagoon harbour west of Honolulu which, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was not used for large ships due to its shallow entrance. Following annexation of Hawaii by the United States in 1898, the U.S. naval representative in Hawaii established the "Naval Station, Honolulu" on 17 November 1899. On 13 May 1908 an Act was passed authorizing the enlargement and dredging of the Pearl Harbour channel and lochs "to admit the largest ships", the building of supply shops for the navy yard and the construction of a dry dock. This was the work in which Robert Atkinson was heavily engaged.

The Hawaiian Dredging Company's operation also included salvaging of wrecked ships which Robert Atkinson personally supervised. Included in salvaging successes were the floating of the United States submarine *F-4* from a depth of 300 feet in 1915 and the salvaging of the 8,000 ton Italian steamship "*Cuzco*" and the 10,000 ton British steamship "*Valdura*" which had gone on reefs off Honolulu and between Pearl Harbour and Honolulu, in 1919 and 1922, respectively.

Robert married twice, first to Helen Kitchen who died after ten years of marriage and then to her sister, Alice Kitchen, in 1919. His will, dated 1940, is contained in the Hawaiian Archives. He had no children and had intended to leave his property at Pearl Harbour to his niece, Helen Kinau Wilder, but the United States government requisitioned it.<sup>76</sup>

*(Photographs without citation of source have been derived from the internet.)*

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<sup>76</sup> Information from Mr. Paul Dahlquist

### **Christmas Bells**

Chime, Christmas bells, in old cathedral tower,  
O'er frozen field and snow wrapped vale,  
Chime, Christmas bells, though storms may darkly lower,  
Chime out to all the happy tale. Of Peace on Earth!  
Chime, Christmas bells, o'er southern sunlit shore,  
O'er wave-kissed isle and fern-clad hill,  
Chime, Christmas bells, and let your music soar On high.  
To man proclaim Christ's will For Peace on Earth.  
Chime, Christmas bells, proclaim the end of strife,  
Let love prevail, let faction cease.  
Chime, Christmas bells, arouse to higher life Our better selves.  
Proclaim sweet Peace, Aye, Peace on Earth!  
ALATAU T. ATKINSON  
{*The Hawaiian Gazette*, 24 December 1895)