

Missionaries, Cartwright, and Spalding: the development of baseball in nineteenth-century Hawaii.

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

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Missionaries, Cartwright, and Spalding

The Development of Baseball in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii

Frank Ardolino

The most extensive and reliable records available for the study of the development of baseball in nineteenth-century Hawaii are the contemporary accounts of games played between 1867 and 1890 as recorded in the local newspapers and Punahou School's newspapers and tally book. These records provide the dates and scores of the games; the names of the teams, players, and fields; and, occasionally, descriptions of the size of the crowds and the social events accompanying the games. In addition to these factual records, there is a short memoir written by W.R. Castle in 1924, which, while furnishing useful information about the early form of the game and its participants, is not as reliable. Finally, there are a number of modern journalistic articles on nineteenth-century baseball in Hawaii that, because they lack historical support for many of their "facts," often perpetuate myths, misconceptions, and misinformation.

What exists then is a crazy quilt of bits and pieces of factual information coupled with a fallible memoir and journalistic nostalgia. This essay will attempt to provide a cohesive treatment of the development of baseball in nineteenth-century Hawaii that will transcend the limitations of the records. However, it must be recognized from the outset that I will remain conjectural in those areas where gaps, ambiguities, inconsistencies, and improbabilities in the records prove insoluble.

To write this type of essay requires relating the records, such as they are, to the history of the period. With this method, it is possible to posit three influences on the development of baseball in Hawaii: (1) the coming of the Congregational missionaries in 1820 and their establishment of Punahou School, which became the center for the teaching and playing of baseball; (2) the arrival of New York baseball pioneer Alexander Cartwright in 1849 and his role as promoter of the game in the schools and community; and (3) the visit of the around-the-world baseball tour conducted by Albert Goodwill [End Page 27] Spalding in 1888. Although these influences will be treated as separate categories, they are in fact closely related and continuous, spanning the seventy years from 1820 to 1890, the period that is the major focus of this essay.

One common thread among them is that they were exerted upon Hawaii by foreigners who visited or settled in the remote island kingdom. A second common element is created by the nexus between the missionaries, Punahou School, and baseball. The missionaries established Punahou to educate their children and to foster the creation of a new society in Hawaii dedicated to Protestantism and the American values of capitalism, competition, and progressivism. Their children learned these values and in the process developed baseball as a major recreational expression of them. After the graduates entered society, they engineered the political and economic changes that ultimately led to the annexation of Hawaii in 1898. Ironically, when the Spalding baseball tour attempted to play two games in Honolulu on Sunday, November 25, 1888, they were prevented from doing so by the blue laws, which had been created by the original missionaries and were now enforced by their descendants, who were primarily responsible for the development of baseball and the invitation to Spalding to play in Hawaii.

Missionaries, Punahou, And Cartwright

The United Church of Christ sent more than 100 missionaries to Hawaii between 1820 and 1850. When the first missionary families arrived in the Islands, which at this time had a native population of about 140,000, their mission consisted of three aims: religion, education, and printing.¹ As the *Instructions of the Foreign Missions to the Sandwich Islands* declared:

You are to aim at... covering those islands with schools and churches;... raising up the... people to an elevated state of Christian civilization;... [to] obtain an adequate knowledge of the language of the people; to make them acquainted with letters; to give them...

Missionaries, Cartwright, and Spalding

The Development of Baseball in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii

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