

# John Dewey's Visits to Hawai'i

*Hunter McEwan*

John Dewey visited Hawai'i on three separate occasions. Of all three trips, by far the most important, as far as Dewey's influence on education in Hawai'i is concerned, was in 1899 when he came with his wife, Alice Chipman Dewey, to help launch the University Extension program in Honolulu. Dewey gave two sets of extension lectures. The first set, entitled "The Life of the Child," was composed of five lectures; the second was a set of four lectures on the topic of nineteenth century thought. The Deweys' second trip was a very brief one—twenty years later, in 1919, during a brief stopover on their way to Japan and thence to China. It is possible that they made a similar stop on their return, in 1921, but there is no evidence of this in the Dewey correspondence.<sup>1</sup>

The final visit took place in 1951 when Dewey was ninety-one years old and in poor health. Indeed, Dewey's health appears to have been one of the main reasons for his visit, in which he was accompanied by his second wife, Roberta Lowitz Grant, and their two adopted children, Adrienne and John Jr.

## The First Visit

On August 1, 1899, Dewey and his wife Alice Chipman Dewey, arrived from San Francisco on the SS *America Maru*<sup>2</sup> after a record crossing of five days, nine hours, and fifty-nine minutes.<sup>3</sup> By this time in his career, Dewey was beginning to achieve prominence as an educator and there was considerable interest being taken at the national level in his laboratory school. His arrival in Hawai'i was announced with great fanfare and considerable anticipation of what his presence could bring in establishing university-level education in the islands. Dewey's principal purpose was to help launch the university extension movement, but he was also in Hawai'i to visit with his friends, the Castles, who had done so much to support his laboratory school at the University of Chicago, and who were keen to promote his ideas among local educators. The *Hawaiian Star* announced him as a man possessed of an "aggressive spirit" who was

one of the foremost "university extensionists...a man of great executive ability...just the man to set up a structure already started and push it forward."<sup>4</sup> Dewey's celebrity as an educator and lecturer, it was opined, would attract a wide audience, and the teachers who were attending summer school in the same building would especially benefit from his ideas on the life of the child. In order to accommodate the teachers, therefore, the Honolulu High School extension classes were held on Tuesday and Friday evenings and designed to be continuous with the teachers' summer school.

Dewey was preceded as an extension lecturer by Henry W. Rolfe who had arrived in Honolulu in April, 1899, to teach the first set of university extension courses. Rolfe's visit overlapped with the Deweys' stay by about one week and the two men seemed to know and like each other well.<sup>5</sup> Rolfe was a professor of English literature at the University of Chicago and a "bright and brilliant lecturer."<sup>6</sup> Rolfe's first extension talks were very popular and well attended, notably the first one which attracted a large and diverse group composed of eager students and prominent persons. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported that "among the listeners were those to whom the discourse brought fond recollections of happy days; and there were many to whom a university education had been denied and who were anxious to take advantage of what is proving an admirable substitute."<sup>7</sup> Rolfe's first university extension course certainly attracted some illustrious persons. One group represented the University Club—an all-male club whose members included President Dole, Minister Mott-Smith, Chief Justice Judd, Judge Frear, and Professor Hosmer of Oahu College, who were there to lend their *imprimatur* to Rolfe's course.

The University Club, established in 1896 on the model of prestigious mens' clubs of the period, was a select assembly of Hawai'i-based university graduates.<sup>8</sup> Generally its function appears to have been devoted to bi-annual banquets, to which were added the diversion of after-dinner speeches; but shortly after Dewey's arrived the club



Mary Tenney Castle, 1907 (Wikimedia Commons)

agreed to oversee the work of university extension in the islands. Another group in attendance at Rolfe's talk were representatives of the Castle family such as Mary Tenney Castle, William Castle and his wife, and Harriet (Castle) Coleman, who was making such important contributions to philanthropic work in Hawai'i and who had been instrumental in obtaining Rolfe and Dewey through her family connections with Helen and George Herbert Mead of the University of Chicago.

The University Extension movement was first developed in England in the 1860s by James Stuart, Professor of Engineering at Cambridge University. Walter Bittner writes in his history of the extension movement that, "As a result of the pioneer work of Professor Stuart of Cambridge...several universities took up his lecture method with growing success."<sup>9</sup> A similar approach was adopted in the United States "and in the years of 1888 to 1892 showed a rapid development. From then on the movement declined until about 1906, when new methods were adopted and a slow systematic growth set in."<sup>10</sup>

Dewey was familiar with the extension movement through his association with Jane Addams at Hull House. Jane Addams believed strongly that university extension was integral to the work that she was doing at

Hull House: "Settlement is a protest against a restricted view of education (and) in line with this declaration, Hull House in the very beginning opened what we called College Extension Classes with a faculty finally numbering thirty-five college men and women."<sup>11</sup> Thus, "Hull House became one of the early university extension centers, first in connection with an independent society and later with the University of Chicago."<sup>12</sup> Dewey was an eager participant in the extension movement and among its first supporters. In 1894, he gave a series of extension lectures there on social psychology and other topics and followed through with regularity in future years.<sup>13</sup>

As the second extension lecturer in Hawai'i, Dewey agreed to give two sets of five lectures over a period of five weeks from August 15 to September 15. The lectures were to be given at eight o'clock on Tuesday and Friday evenings. The first series would be on the Life of the Child; the second, on Movements in Nineteenth Century Thought. In an effort to circulate Dewey's ideas more widely, the lectures were summarized in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, one of the major Honolulu newspapers.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Dewey, in order to prepare his audience for his lectures, provided a synopsis of each talk along with a set of questions and exercises. These synopses provided a preview of the talk and were usually published on the same day that the talk was delivered. The summaries, taken from notes written up by an attendee, were published on the day following the talk.



Honolulu High School, formerly Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani's residence, Hale Keoua (Wikimedia Commons upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a2/Keoua\_Hale6.jpg)

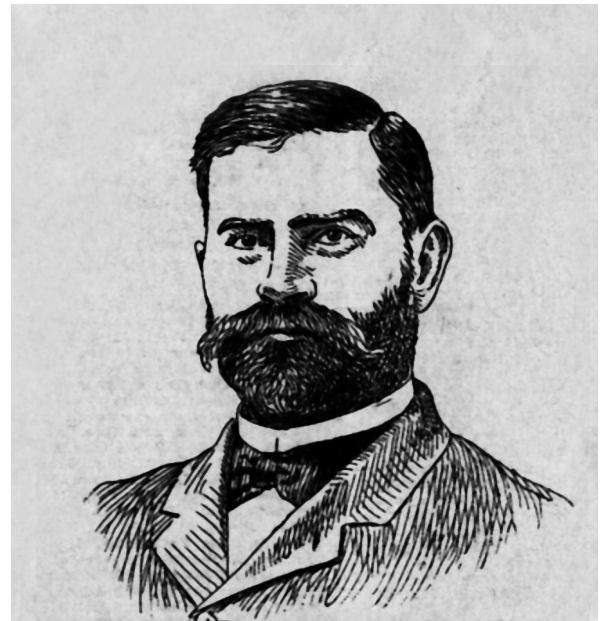
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Dewey delivered all of his lectures at Honolulu High School—a venerable Victorian pile that had been built on Emma Street as the principal O‘ahu residence of Princess Ruth Ke‘elikolani. Hale Keoua, as it was known, was completed in 1883, and designed, it was said, to outdo Iolani Palace in size and grandeur. Unfortunately, the Princess was unable to enjoy its accommodations for long as she died shortly after its opening. In any case, she preferred to reside at her home, Hulihe‘e Palace, on the Big Island rather than O‘ahu. In 1895 the Legislature appropriated funds to purchase the building and convert it to a high school.<sup>15</sup>

The high school was also home to the summer school for teachers organized by the Inspector General of Schools, Henry S. Townsend.<sup>16</sup> The summer school classes were held during the day; Dewey delivered his lectures in the evening, and this arrangement allowed him to participate occasionally in the work of the summer school, as well as allowing the teachers who were attending the summer school to benefit from his lectures.

These summer schools were an important innovation initiated by Townsend to advance progressive educational ideas in Hawai‘i. Benjamin Wist describes Townsend as “a visionary”—a man who “did much to lay the foundations for progressive education in Hawaii.”<sup>17</sup> Townsend was clearly impressed by Dewey’s presence and delighted to have him visit the summer school—“He was our Great High Priest and what he said had a tendency to be accepted without further consideration.”<sup>18</sup>

Townsend advanced progressive education in Hawai‘i in two important ways. First, he published a journal, *The Progressive Educator*, that he distributed to Hawai‘i teachers free of charge.<sup>19</sup> The journal had an instructional purpose and provided its readers with lots of useful teaching ideas and lessons plans. Secondly, he organized a series of summer schools between 1896 and 1899 that brought well known educators from the mainland to share their ideas with local teachers. F. B. Dressler of the Los Angeles State Normal School attended in 1896; Elmer Brown of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1897; Colonel Francis Parker and his wife from Cook County Normal School, in 1898. And in 1899, following on the successful visit of the Parkers during the previous year, Miss Flora J. Cooke and Miss Zonia Baber of the Cook County Normal School arrived on the *America Maru*, along with the Deweys. Although Dewey did not participate directly in the work of the summer



Henry S. Townsend (*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, August 5, 1896, p. 1)

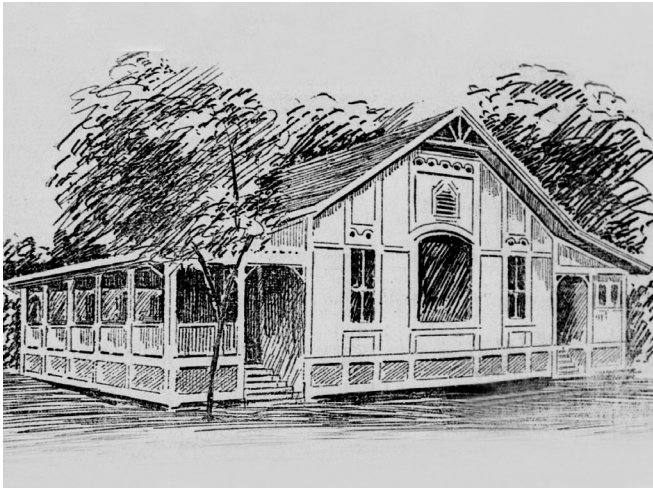
school, he did take an interest in what was happening and visited on several occasions.<sup>20</sup>

The summer schools were extremely successful in introducing teachers to the new progressive philosophy and as one newspaper editorial declared “although attendance at the Summer School was entirely voluntary, the average enrollment exceeded the number of teachers employed in the public schools; and the influence of this contact with great minds cannot soon pass away. Through such influences the point of view of many teachers was changed.”<sup>21</sup>

Dewey’s extension lectures were viewed as another way of promoting new ideas in education. By 1899, Dewey’s reputation as a philosopher, psychologist, and educator was considerable and his ideas and the application of these ideas at the University of Chicago Laboratory School were gathering increasing interest among educators nationally. Prior to his visit to Hawai‘i, Dewey had been invited to give lectures in California at Berkeley and at Stanford. And during his stay, he was putting the final touches to his most popular work, *The School and Society*,<sup>22</sup> from which much of the substance of his lectures on the life of the child were drawn. Shortly after his Hawai‘i sojourn he was elected president of the American Psychological Society.

But it is undoubtedly the Castle family connection that was the chief influence in attracting the Deweys to the





Henry and Dorothy Castle Memorial Free Kindergarten (*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, December 2, 1899, p. 3)

islands. John and Alice Dewey knew the Castles through their friendship with George Herbert Mead who was married to Helen Castle, and this connection had brought Alice Dewey to the islands in 1892.<sup>23</sup> They would also have known Henry Northrup Castle, who died so tragically with his young daughter, Dorothy, in 1895 when the boat they were traveling in sank in the North Sea. Also of note is the fact that Mary Tenney Castle had been a generous contributor to Dewey's lab school.

This connection certainly came into play in arranging for Dewey to give the extension lectures. The *Hawaiian Star* attributes the work of university extension in Hawai'i to the work of "Mrs. Meade (nee Helen Castle), wife of Professor Meade of Chicago; Mrs F. M. Day, and Mrs Ethel Wing Castle...and, at the present time Mrs. Day, who is visiting in the states, is actually engaged in consultation with many of the foremost of educators upon the subject."<sup>24</sup>

But the Castles had another reason to arrange for Dewey to visit—the proposed kindergarten intended as a memorial to Henry and Dorothy Castle who had tragically drowned in the North Sea when their ship, the *Elbe*, sank in a storm. In August 1898, Dewey had written a young teacher at Colonel Parker's Cook County Normal School, Flora Cooke, to ask her if she would be willing to take charge of the school and start it up. It appears, however, that Cooke was not interested in an extended stay in Hawai'i, though she would be free to come over with Miss Zonia Baber to help out with Townsend's summer school.<sup>25</sup> In Flora Cooke's stead, Dewey secured the services of Florence

La Victoire as the Memorial Kindergarten director.<sup>26</sup>

The Henry and Dorothy Castle Memorial Free Kindergarten was formally opened on November 13, 1899 in a building on the old Castle Homestead on King Street. The Castle family had moved from there in March 1899 to a new property in Mānoa Valley that they christened Puuhonua or "place of refuge."

In making this move the Castle family gave thought to what they wanted to do with the old property. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported that

Mrs Castle and her children felt they wanted the homestead to go on with its missionary work as in years past. As the different needs of the community were being considered, appeals came in from time to time which showed the growing necessities for a home for the homeless children of the foreign population. After consideration of these appeals it was finally decided that when the time came to give up the family residence it should be devoted for a home for those children made eligible for it.<sup>27</sup>

Adjacent to the main house on King Street, Mary Castle had built a "commodious kindergarten building upon the eastern part of the premises," which was constructed around the time of Dewey's visit.

The Dewey's were accommodated during their stay in a cottage at the Castle's new homestead in Mānoa;<sup>28</sup> at first in one cottage and then, when the Rolfe's returned to the mainland, in the one that they had been staying in. Dewey describes the property, called Puuhonua, thus: "Just where the new Castle house stands was an old temple and fort—the 'Sentinel on the Hillside' they called it, and the Castles are thinking of calling their place that—in Hawaiian, of course...Part of the old temple wall is still standing between the house we are now living in and the one we were living in before—this (the temple) is right in sight of Waikiki and the old fishing places, and they say they used to come up here and sacrifice and then when the priest said he could see the fishes, they would start for the shore."<sup>29</sup> The property is just below Tantalus and Dewey refers to the harvest tradition of rolling sweet potatoes down the hill.

Mānoa had just begun to be developed at this point. In a letter to his children, Dewey explained that "it is a

new thing for people to live in the hills and away from the ocean, although it is much cooler and cooler in every way.”<sup>30</sup> However, the distance occasioned a long commute to the high school on Emma Street. “If we don’t get a ride with the Castles downtown, we walk down a mile and there is a street car which runs every once in a while—they have only horses here, one line of track, with side switches to pass, and it is slow work getting about.”<sup>31</sup> On September 12, on the day that coincided with his final lecture, the Deweys moved from the Mānoa cottage closer to downtown to a home on Vineyard Street belonging to a Mrs. Dodge.<sup>32</sup> No reason is given for the move, but the new location would have involved less traveling to and fro and offered the convenience of being closer to town.

Earlier, in giving consideration to their trip to Hawai‘i, the Deweys had decided to leave their four children (Fred aged 12; Evelyn, 10; Gordon, 3; and Lucy, 19 months) with a friend, Lucy Moore in Santa Barbara.<sup>33</sup> They would be apart from the children roughly from July 26 when they left San Francisco to September 24 when they were scheduled to return—a total of eight weeks and four days. As it turned out, their return was delayed a further two weeks. Their ship, *SS America Maru*, bound for San Francisco, did not arrive as scheduled due to a coal fire in the ship’s hold, and it had to return to Yokohama.<sup>34</sup> Flora Cooke was also affected by this delay and the three of them did not get to leave Honolulu until they had booked passage on another ship, *The Peking*, which didn’t leave for San Francisco until October 2. The Deweys correspondence indicates that they felt that they had stayed too long in Hawai‘i, that they missed their children terribly, and they undoubtedly felt uneasy at being so far away from them and for such a long time. Alice Dewey was particularly distressed by the separation and wrote in a letter to the children: “It is just a month this morning since we left S.F., and I should really like to be back there today. No letters have come from you at all since the first one. We are not having a good time here as we did in Cal. and that with not hearing from you has made life rather blue.”<sup>35</sup>

Considering their obvious distress at the separation, what were the Deweys’ reasons for making the trip? It is likely that they had intended initially to bring the children with them, but had decided against the idea nearer the time of the trip and after having accepted the invitation to lecture. Alice Dewey certainly implied in a letter to Flora

Cooke in September 1898 that the children would be with them: “Mrs Mead writes from Honolulu...If you can get Miss Cook (sic) you will have the eternal blessings of Mrs. Coleman and the rest of us. Evelyn says, ‘Oh I hope Miss Cook will come,’ and Fred makes like exclamation.”<sup>36</sup>

In spite of their misgivings about leaving the children, Dewey was keen to get university extension going in Hawai‘i as there was strong support for it in the community. In addition, the Castles were in the process of setting up the Memorial Kindergarden, and they had approached Dewey to find an experienced teacher to start up the school. Dewey obviously had an interest in getting the school properly established at the outset.

But another reason for the trip would simply be the same as many people who choose to come to Hawai‘i—to enjoy the beach and the many attractions of the islands. The Deweys appear to have maintained an active schedule. They visited schools; they took a trip to Kilauea volcano on the island of Hawai‘i; they were taken out on an outrigger canoe off Waikiki; they went on a picnic by horseback up the Ko’olaus, visited the Bishop Museum—on two occasions, at least—and were taken to the Chinese Theatre in Honolulu.

Dewey’s first official duty in Honolulu was on Monday, August 7, as one of the speakers at an event (the newspapers referred to it as a “rally”) at Honolulu High School that was intended as the official launch of the university extension movement in Hawai‘i. The evening was rainy but the *Gazette* reported that it in “no way dampened the enthusiasm nor lessened the interest of those who are anxious to see the extension system placed on a firm footing on these Islands.”<sup>37</sup> Professor Rolfe gave a brief history of the extension movement from its “inauspicious beginnings in Britain” to its promise in expanding educational opportunities to those whom “educational opportunities had passed by.” The report added that Dewey “who will take charge of the (extension) work here and who is one of the greatest extensionists, spoke on the manifold advantages of the system.”<sup>38</sup> Others who spoke at the meeting included, Henry Townsend (Inspector General of Schools),<sup>39</sup> Professor Scott, and the Education Minister, Mott-Smith. “The manner of carrying on local university extension work was discussed, and it was finally decided to entrust the matter to the University Club, under whose auspices the work is to be conducted in the future.”<sup>40</sup> It was hoped that Dewey’s talk would “quicken the interest in University

Extension.” The same article announced that Dewey would go to Hawai‘i the following week—from August 8 to August 13—to visit the volcano.

On Tuesday, August 8, John and Alice Dewey embarked on the SS *Kinau* to Hilo. These were popular trips arranged by the Wilder’s Steamship Company.<sup>41</sup> The ship left Hononolulu on Tuesday around noon, calling in at ports on the way—Lahaina, Mākena, Māhukona, Kawaihae, and Laupāhoehoe—before arriving at Hilo on the following evening. This arrangement “allow(ed) tourists to secure a good night’s rest in Hilo before starting on their journey to Kilauea.”

The journey is described in some detail in *The Tourists’ Guide through the Hawaiian Islands*<sup>42</sup>:

The volcano being the objective point in the tourist’s program all plans are made with this in view. Generally Wilson’s livery stables are prepared with the necessary vehicles and animals to start at short notice and without limit as to the number of passengers either in buggy hack, omnibus, or on horseback as the parties prefer. Name the hour when you will be ready and the conveyance will be at your door. It is much pleasanter to start early, say eight o’clock in the morning, the air being then cooler than later on. In the afternoon it is more apt to be showery in passing through the woods. But as regards rain the tourist must be prepared to encounter it without notice at any hour of the day or night while he is in the Hilo district.

An hour or two is allowed at the Half Way House for lunch rest and sightseeing in the neighboring settlement, and the coach starts on to finish the remaining fifteen miles of the journey. The road which we are now traveling over has all been constructed during the past few years by the Hawaiian Government at a cost of about one hundred thousand dollars. Formerly there was only a bridle path which led through swamp and bogs over rough lava boulders and clinkers making the journey one of great discomfort and for ladies almost impracticable. The rise between Hilo and the volcano is 4,100 feet, but so well is the new road graded that it is difficult for the traveler to perceive any rise or fall in it. It is macadamized throughout and well-made with a steam roller so that it sheds the rain which daily falls... The coach arrives at the Volcano Hotel between 3 and 4 o’clock p.m. after what usually proves a pleasant and not tiresome journey. (Whitney, 1895)

In a letter to his children, Dewey gave an interesting account of the visit to the Halema‘uma‘u crater:

The crater that is active, Kilawea (sic), isn’t really a mountain at all. It is all a table land up there (4,000 feet high, while the three big mountains are from ten to fourteen thousand feet), and then there is this big hole which you come on suddenly, nine miles around and so pretty nearly 3 across (I guess, for it seems almost circular) with walls from 100 to four or five hundred feet high. You go down into these—quite an easy trail from the hotel—go about two thirds of the way across, over lava, and then you come to another hole in the big hole—maybe a quarter of a mile across. I don’t know how deep. It is all covered with clouds of smoke (smells like a sulphur match when it happens to blow towards you) down down down. Sometimes it blows away so you can see fine, but not often enough and it didn’t for us. The lava we walked over was the flow which came out (of another hole, now filled up) only four years ago, and which filled up all the big crater to the depth of sixty feet. If it should do it again, there are one or two places where I should think it would come pretty near to running over and spilling out. There was a little break in the crust a few hundred feet away from the small active crater with a ladder it. We climbed down 10 or 12 feet and found ourselves in a little room with a temperature of about 150 degrees I should think. It was dry heat and not uncomfortable. Not far from there we walked over lava so hot it hisses when you spit on it and I stuck a stick down a crack about six inches and it was soon blazing. But that’s the only volcano fire I saw.<sup>43</sup>

The Deweys made the return trip on the *Kinau*, which left Hilo at 6:00 pm. on Friday, August 11, arriving in Honolulu on the evening of Saturday, August 12.

Monday, August 14, was the first day of summer school. Dewey did not attend. A short opening ceremony was held with speeches from President Dole and Inspector General Townsend. One hundred and fifty teachers from all over the islands attended. Flora Cooke gave a short talk on the subject of “concentration in primary work;” Zonia Baber “took up the subject of clay modeling and geography.”<sup>44</sup>

Dewey gave his first lecture in the series, *The Life of the Child*, on the following day, Tuesday, August 15.<sup>45</sup> Each lecture was held at 8:00 pm to accommodate the audience—7:30 being considered too early for the teachers after their full day of work at the summer school. His topic

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for this first lecture was child study—a topic he had written on and that provided a psychological grounding for his ideas on child development.<sup>46</sup> Initial plans were for him to give ten lectures—five on the life of the child and five on movements of thought in the Nineteenth Century. However, it appears that he rearranged his schedule towards the end and gave only four lectures on Nineteenth Century thought. It is not clear why Dewey “changed the order of the remaining lectures.”<sup>47</sup> In a letter to his children written on September 2, Dewey refers to a conversation with William Castle in which the latter suggested condensing the final lectures so that he and Dewey could view the recent eruption of Mauna Loa.<sup>48</sup> However, there is no evidence in the papers or in the letters that he took the trip. The shorter schedule may have been due simply to the fact that the summer school had ended on Thursday, August 31—the day before he began his second lecture series—and the audience would likely have been much smaller. The topic may also have been too specialized for general interest and, as a result, the size of the audience would have dwindled towards the end.

Prior to delivering a lecture, as was his habit, Dewey would distribute a synopsis outlining the main points, and these were published in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, usually on the same day as the talk. On the day following a lecture, a summary was published, probably from notes taken by an audience member.

The following is a schedule of the talks:

### The Life of the Child

<b>Tuesday, August 15</b>	A Study of the Child
<b>Friday, August 18</b>	Early Childhood: Play, and Imagination
<b>Tuesday, August 22</b>	Later Childhood: Interest and Attention
<b>Friday, August 25</b>	Adolescence and Emotions
<b>Tuesday, August 29</b>	General principles of growth

### Movements in Nineteenth Century Thought

<b>Friday, September 1</b>	Influence of Rousseau on French Political History and Literature.
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**Tuesday, September 5** Goethe and Schiller and the Ethics of Culture and Art

**Friday, September 8.** The Influence of Scientific Thought

**Tuesday, September 12** The Ethics of Social Welfare

This schedule allowed plenty of time for other kinds of activities and afforded the opportunity for the Deweys to play tourist. On August 16, the Deweys visited Flora Cooke and Zonia Baber who were staying at the beach: “We went in bathing at the same time; there has been a great deal of wind so the surf was fine. We are going out canoeing in the surf with a native to manage the boat someday soon. You have to go in your bathing suits.”<sup>49</sup> On another occasion they climbed Punchbowl; and on another, on horseback, they picnicked on Tantalus with Miss Carrie Castle: “We could see through one of the valleys to the other side of the island in one place and just about ten parallel ridges of mountains off in the other.”<sup>50</sup>

On August 19, they went to the high school on Emma Street to hear Miss Cooke and Miss Baber and in the afternoon all four were given a tour of Kamehameha Schools.<sup>51</sup> Alice Dewey, in a letter to her children, provides a detailed and approving account of the work of the students, both boys and girls:

This is a very large property which was left by one of the queens to educate Hawaiian boys and girls. Mr Perry who lives here at Mrs Castles has been the teacher of manual training there for five years. He took us about and so did Mr. Thompson the principal and Mr. Sigdwick who teaches agriculture. The Hawaiian young people care much more for what they can learn to do than for what they can learn out of books and here the boys have many things to do. The girls are separate from the boys and do all their work by themselves and they have not so many things to do. But the house they live in has beautiful rooms and is beautifully situated on high ground where they can overlook both the sea and the mountains and also the town. The boys do all the work even the cooking or at least most of it, and the girls do all theirs including the washing and ironing. And the houses are perfectly kept. I saw some fine sewing which the girls had done, and many sheets and men's clothes and other garments which the boys had made in the tailor shop.



Dr. and Mrs. Dewey at Waikiki Beach, August, 1899. The two young women standing together are probably Zonia Baber and Flora Cooke. (John Dewey Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale)

Her letter goes into further detail about the plants being grown there, the fertility of the soil, and the fact that some of the land produced three crops a year. They planned a second visit once the school year started up on September 4: "Their buildings are many of them beautiful and they have so much land that Mr Thompson said that if it increased much more in value that in 25 years they would have more money than they could use. The children pay 42 dollars a year apiece and that covers all their expenses."<sup>52</sup>

On September 12, the public school year started and the Deweys were able to visit several schools. In a newspaper report Dewey declared himself favorably impressed by what he had seen and interested to learn about the work of the teachers "in giving instruction to classes in which the nationalities are so mixed." He thought the existing conditions made the schools of Honolulu an interesting study.<sup>53</sup>

The letters suggest that they were quite active during their stay in the islands and that they were keen to visit schools, meet people, and familiarize themselves with Hawai'i and its diverse cultures. One event of interest, which was reported in the papers, is that they went "slumming" in Chinatown.<sup>54</sup> Slum tourism was a practice that developed in the nineteenth century where people would visit the less fortunate poor in order to see the conditions in

which they lived. Visitors on slumming trips were perhaps driven by a philanthropic desire to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants; although it was criticized in some quarters as voyeuristic. The *Hawaiian Star* article reported that slumming is "frequently done by members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and students of sociology." In the case of Dewey, who was accompanied by his wife and the summer school teachers, Zonia Baber and Flora Cooke, as well as some "local friends," the aim seems to have been sociological—driven by a desire to understand the conditions of people living in Chinatown, which at this time was horribly overcrowded. The party was safely conducted on their way by Deputy Marshal Chillingworth, first along the length of Pauahi Street, then to visit "the confirmed opium fiends at the Tong Hing Society," and finally to look into the cells at the police station. It is clear from Dewey's remarks, quoted in the paper, that he had done this sort of thing previously, in San Francisco and Chicago, perhaps, or New York City as he compared the police work in Honolulu favorably to that conducted in other cities.<sup>55</sup>

On September 19, the Deweys and Flora Cooke were scheduled to depart Honolulu for San Francisco on the steamer *America Maru*; but, as mentioned earlier, the ship



had been forced to return to Yokohama to put out a coal fire that had started in its cargo bay. The delay caused them considerable distress. They eventually shipped out on the SS *Peking* on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Nothing survives in the correspondence about this period and little was reported in the papers until a brief report in the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* on October 3, 1899 to the effect that “Dr. and Mrs. John Dewey finally got away on the *City of Peking* yesterday afternoon.”<sup>56</sup> It is likely, however, that during this period, Dewey was keen to get back to his scholarly work and the preparation for publication of *School and Society*, which was first published in November, 1899, shortly after their return.

### John Dewey's Second Visit

John Dewey's second visit to Hawai'i was in 1919. He was accompanied by his wife, Alice, and their adopted son, Sabino.<sup>57</sup> It was very brief—a stopover for less than a day on the Deweys' voyage to Japan and China. Their purpose was to drop off Sabino, who was twenty-one and who had declared, at the last minute, that he wanted to join them on their trip as far as Honolulu. Dewey was bemused by this sudden decision, but his opinion quickly changed from disapproval to approval when he realized that “the adventurous desire was so strong in his breast that it didn't seem right to head him off.”<sup>58</sup> Dewey arranged for Ermine Cross, who was the director of the Henry and Dorothy Castle Memorial Free Kindergarten to watch over him during his visit. Sabino found work at the College of Hawai'i, as the university was called at that time. There is little else to report of the visit except that the Deweys were entertained by friends and made a short trip to the Pali Lookout before returning to their ship in time for its departure in the evening.<sup>59</sup>

### John Dewey's Third Visit

Dewey made a final visit to Hawai'i in 1951 with his second wife, Roberta Lowitz Grant Dewey, and their two adopted children, Adrienne and John Junior. Dewey was ninety-one years old and in poor health. Indeed, a hoped-for improvement in his health and sought-after abatement of his respiratory symptoms appears to have been the main reason for their trip. The Deweys arrived on the liner *President Wilson* for “an extended stay” on Thursday, January 18. They were greeted by a “large and distinguished

committee” that included Samuel N. Castle of the Honolulu Rapid Transit Co., and a number of officials from the University of Hawai'i.<sup>60</sup>

The Deweys stayed at the Halekulani Hotel. It was not, at that time, the acclaimed five-star hotel of today. Dewey describes it in a letter to Arthur Bentley as a group of cottages. They were accommodated in one with a sitting room, two bedrooms, and bath “in a sort of park of palms and hibiscus, there being a common dining room—all on the Pacific Ocean beach.”<sup>61</sup> However, the location was ideal as the cottage that they were in was so close to the ocean “the children get plenty of swimming,” and Dewey was hopeful that the sunshine would provide the looked-for “recuperative results.”<sup>62</sup>

In spite of his health problems, Dewey did not appear to devote too much of his time to soaking up the sun on Waikiki Beach. He worked on a new edition of *Experience and Education* to be published by Beacon Press.<sup>63</sup> He devoted time to the composition of an article for the first East-West Philosopher's Conference that was to be held in Honolulu in April 1951. In this paper, “On Philosophical Synthesis,” Dewey sought to break down the dualism between an East and a West and advocated that the two have to be synthesized.<sup>64</sup>



John Dewey and Roberta Lowitz Dewey with their children, Adrienne and John Junior. Halekulani Hotel, January 1951 (John Dewey Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale)

It appears that the Deweys were also interested in buying property in Hawai'i, especially if the sunshine and sea air could achieve the "miracle" of recovery in his health.<sup>65</sup> They took a look at some properties in the region of Diamond Head; however, they found that the homes were all on a single level and too close to the damp ground—conditions that exacerbated rather than improved Dewey's respiratory problems, which also appeared to be affected by the dampness of the rainy season.

The Deweys found no shortage of people willing to show them the sights, host them at their homes, or take them to local restaurants. One week after the Deweys' arrival, Robert Clopton, professor of the history and philosophy of education in the College of Education at the University of Hawai'i, wrote to Dewey in the hope that he could drop by the hotel for a meeting.<sup>66</sup> Clopton was delighted when the Deweys responded in the affirmative, and the families were soon on friendly terms. They invited the Deweys to the Willows, a restaurant close to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, on one occasion and to their home on another.<sup>67</sup>

Although there is no evidence in the letters and newspapers that Dewey visited schools during his stay, it is certain that he did have time and energy to visit a few. For example, Dewey's visit to Hanahauoli School, recorded by Sophie Judd Cooke, must have taken place during his 1951 visit. We also know that Adrienne and John Jr. continued their schooling at Punahou during their visit, so it is highly likely that John and Alice Dewey made a visit, if only to arrange for their children's attendance. In gratitude, Roberta Dewey sent the Punahou Scholarship Fund \$50.00 "as a token of appreciation for (their) six-weeks' experience at Punahou."<sup>68</sup> This is also the time, as word-of-mouth testimony has it, when Dewey would have paid a visit to the new Castle Memorial Kindergarten, an institution that he had played an important role in helping to found. The school had been relocated in 1941 from King Street to a new building specially designed for young children to be educated along progressive lines in the vicinity of the College of Education at University and Dole Avenues.<sup>69</sup>

In spite of his hope that the sunshine and sea air would bring about an improvement in Dewey's health, it appears that the humidity, especially at night, brought on coughing fits, and his health grew steadily worse rather than better.<sup>70</sup> On February 25, the Deweys returned by ship to

Los Angeles and thence to Arizona where they hoped the arid climate would be easier on Dewey's lungs. Gradually, Dewey's health declined. In May 1952, he developed pneumonia, and his condition slowly deteriorated. He died at his home in New York City at 7:00 p.m. on June 1, 1952.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The *Advertiser* reported or misreported thirty years later that his second visit was "on route home from China." The *Advertiser*, Friday, January 19, 1951, p. 5. If so, it was one without fanfare and was not reported in the press at the time.
- <sup>2</sup> The SS *America Maru* was a 6,070 ton passenger-cargo ship built at the Swan and Hunter yard in Newcastle, England. It was launched in March 1898. It was suspected of carrying rats that carried bubonic plague to Honolulu, resulting in the October, 1899 outbreak in Chinatown that killed forty people. In January 1900, in an effort to control the outbreak authorities set fire to infected building, but winds swept the flames to other buildings and the fire ran out of control. Later, the *America Maru* was converted to a hospital ship and then (1943) to a Japanese troop transport ship. It was eventually sunk in 1944 by the USS *Nautilus* with 43 survivors out of 642 on board.
- <sup>3</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, Aug. 4, 1899, p. 1.

- <sup>4</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, Aug. 5, 1899, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> "Tuesday we went down to the Doric and saw the Rolfe's off...they are very nice people indeed." Dewey to Dewey Children, 8/18/1899. Letter 00376.
- <sup>6</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (PCA), April 11, 1899, p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> PCA, April 4, 1899, p.1.
- <sup>8</sup> The University Club is no longer in existence. It merged with the Pacific Club in 1918.
- <sup>9</sup> Bittner, W. (1920, p. 14).
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Addams, J. (1911, p. 428).
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 429.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid. p. 435.
- <sup>14</sup> The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* was at that time owned by Lorrin A. Thurston.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Evening Bulletin*, August 20, 1895, p. 3, reported that the cost to the State was \$17,000.
- <sup>16</sup> Townsend served as Inspector General of Schools from 1896 to 1899 (Wist, 1940, pp. 138–139).
- <sup>17</sup> Wist, (1940, p. 136)
- <sup>18</sup> "In the midst of this term, we also had the very great privilege of the presence of Dr. Dewey himself, not only on the lecture platform but in our daily discussions. He was our Great High Priest, and what he said had a tendency to be accepted without further consideration." Townsend, H.S. (1936, p. 81).
- <sup>19</sup> Wist, (1940, p. 136).
- <sup>20</sup> "This morning we went down town again to hear Miss Cooke and Miss Baber at the summer school..." Alice Dewey to Dewey Children. 8/19/1899. (Letter 00401).
- <sup>21</sup> PCA, August 3, 1901, p. 1
- <sup>22</sup> In April 1899, Dewey gave three lectures on the University Laboratory School to parents and other interested persons. These lectures and a report, "Three Years of the University Laboratory School," formed the first issue of *The School and Society* which was first published in November, 1899. Dewey's talks in Honolulu drew on these lectures, but also on other material. For example, content of lectures 2-5 is similar to that published in John Dewey, *The Middle Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 175–221.
- <sup>23</sup> "Mrs Dewey has departed on a sudden visit to Honolulu Hawaiian Islands & won't be back till July sometime" Letter from John Dewey to Thomas Davidson, 4/23/1892 (00467).
- <sup>24</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, December 14, 1898, p. 1
- <sup>25</sup> The Castle family in Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands, are going to establish a memorial Kindergarten for members of their family lost at sea. They have asked us to get a teacher, & to have her in our school, one year, getting the lines of work started before going out there. Letter from Dewey to Flora Cooke 9/1/1898 (00612)
- <sup>26</sup> Florence La Victoire's tenure at the Castle Memorial Kindergarten was not a happy one and she left after she had concluded her first year under contract as director. Writing to Alice Dewey in December, 1899, she confessed that she found the experience "one big disappointment." The children were in a "horrible physical condition," their heads "covered in sores" because of lice, and the school closed temporarily because of plague in Honolulu. However, she found that by far the greatest hardship was "the keen interest" taken in her personal affairs by the Castle family:
- "Mrs Coleman also felt called upon to take me to task in regard to one of the men of my acquaintance and to ask what his intentions might be." (00406). La Victoire was replaced after one year by Cora Panebaker who in turn had to retire due to illness. Ermine Cross then served as Director of the Memorial School from 1902 to 1926. A. L. Castle, (2002) *A Century of Philanthropy*, p. 49.
- <sup>27</sup> PCA, Nov. 17, 1899, p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup> The estate was 8.16 acres purchased at auction on May 12, 1898 for \$6,250.
- <sup>29</sup> Dewey letter to his children 8/17/1899 (00376)
- <sup>30</sup> The Castle house was in the words of Rob and Vicars "a stimulus to three waves of urbanization in Mānoa Valley—in 1900, 1924, and 1941." By its pioneer presence other larger homes were attracted. P. Robb and L. Vicars, *Mānoa's "Puuhonua": The Castle Home, 1900–1941*.
- <sup>31</sup> Dewey letter to his children 8/17/1899 (00376)
- <sup>32</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, Sept. 5. 1899, p. 5.
- <sup>33</sup> "late in July, Lucy Moore and another friend, Annie Stevens, took all four Dewey youngsters into their care in Santa Barbara, allowing their parents to go to Honolulu on August 1." (Martin. 2002, p. 202).
- <sup>34</sup> A coal fire was discovered on No. 2 hold three days out from Yokohama (reported in the *Gazette* on Oct 10, p. 5).
- <sup>35</sup> Alice Dewey to her children. August 26, 1899. (00401)
- <sup>36</sup> (00634)
- <sup>37</sup> The *Gazette*, August 8, 1899, p. 5.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid. p. 5.
- <sup>39</sup> Townsend had recently returned from Los Angeles where he had been attending the convention of the National Educational Association. Although Hawai'i's delegation was not officially recognized because of the status of Hawai'i as a Territory and not a State, there was considerable interest in the Hawai'i delegation and their headquarters were "deluged... with people seeking information." (*Gazette*, August 4, 1899).
- <sup>40</sup> *Hawaiian Gazette*, August 8, 1899, p. 5.
- <sup>41</sup> A contemporary flyer for the Wilders Steam Co. advertises round trip tickets to Hilo for fifty dollars.
- <sup>42</sup> Henry M. Whitney, (1895).
- <sup>43</sup> Dewey to his Children. August 7, 1899. (00375).
- <sup>44</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, August 14 1899, p. 1.
- <sup>45</sup> Dr. Dewey had quite a large audience at the high school building last evening to hear his first University Extension lecture. Nearly all the teachers of the summer school were noticed in the house. *The Hawaiian Star*, Wednesday, August 16 1899, p. 8 On Dewey's own estimate there were about 100 to 125 people in attendance (Letter 00376).
- <sup>46</sup> See John Dewey, *The Early Works*, 1882–1898. Vol 5. Ed. Boydston. pp. 204–222.
- <sup>47</sup> PCA, Sept. 9, 1899, p. 5.
- <sup>48</sup> A flank eruption of Mauna Loa began on July 1, 1899. It ended on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. William Tufts Brigham. *The Volcanoes of Kilauea and Mauna Loa on the Island of Hawai'i*, 1909, pp. 196–199.
- <sup>49</sup> Ltr. 00376.
- <sup>50</sup> Dewey to his children 9/1/1899. (Ltr. 06584).
- <sup>51</sup> The boys' school was opened in 18eighty-seven and the girls' school in 1894.
- <sup>52</sup> Ltr. 00401.



<sup>53</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, Sept. 19, 1899, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *The Hawaiian Star*, Sept. 18, 1899, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Chinese Tong societies were established to provide mutual aid and social support to Chinese workers throughout Hawai'i and California

<sup>56</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, October 3, 1899, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> The Dewey's adopted Sabino in Italy 1905. They were in mourning for their son, Gordon, who had died in September, 1904 from Typhoid fever. Sabino was around the same age. Martin (2002, p. 235)

<sup>58</sup> Dewey to Evelyn, Jane, and Lucy Dewey. 1/20/1919. (03859).

<sup>59</sup> *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, Jan. 30, 1919, p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> *The Star Bulletin*, Thursday, January 18, year?, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Letter 15893.

<sup>62</sup> Ltr to Arthur F Bentley 1/18.51.

<sup>63</sup> Ltr 15892 to Bentley on Jan 18. 1951

<sup>64</sup> Writing to Dewey's widow, Roberta, in 1965, Charles Moore, Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i refers to "the valuable paper which your husband wrote while he was in Hawai'i back in 1951." Ltr19138. Moore to Roberta Dewey. 2/10/65

<sup>65</sup> Ltr. 19138. Charles Moore to Roberta Dewey. 02/10/65. "I am sure you know how sad I have been over the years that we were not able to find accommodations which would be suitable for you and Professor Dewey, so that you could stay in Hawaii. I had a feeling that you would both have been very happy here and much more comfortable than in many places in America. I have always felt that, somehow or other, we in Hawaii did not meet the opportunity adequately by enabling you to find just what you wanted as a home. A tragedy of Professor Dewey's death shortly after that time made this feeling of failure very serious in our minds—and it still is."

<sup>66</sup> Robert W. Clopton and Tsuin-Chen Ou edited John Dewey's lectures in China. Clopton discovered that Dewey's had not kept his notes for the lectures and that the only version of his lectures in China were those that had been translated into Chinese and published in Chinese newspapers. Clopton and Ou worked on retranslating the lectures into English. Clopton and Ou (1973).

<sup>67</sup> See Clopton's article in this issue.

<sup>68</sup> *Punahou Lokalian*, March 1951, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> The building was completed in 1941, just before Pearl Harbor, with a gift of \$300,000 from the Samuel M. and Mary Castle Foundation for the building of a Kindergarten teacher training center. "\$100,000 was allocated for the construction of the facility and \$20,000 was designated annually over a 10-year period to support the program under the University's Teachers College" (Kobayashi, 1983).

<sup>70</sup> "After we arrived in Los Angeles, the pain which John experienced in Honolulu increased to such extent that I took him to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles where they found that his hernia had twisted and was causing the constant pain he had. They operated and we have just come here where he is convalescing and mending rapidly." Roberta Dewey to Northrup Castle, April 16, 1951. (Ltr. 12550).

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