THE KING'S FINAL JOURNEY: AMERICAN PRESS COVERAGE OF KING KALĀKAUA'S LAST VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES, 1890–1891

Douglas V. Askman
Hawai'i Pacific University

King Kalākaua of Hawai'i undertook several overseas trips during his reign. The last was to California in 1890. It was there that the king died in January 1891. This article explores American press coverage of Kalākaua's last journey. It examines the enormous amount of attention that California newspapers paid to the king's travels in the state with much of the reporting being extremely positive. This was similar to coverage of Kalākaua's previous trips to the United States. Following the monarch's death, papers across America reflected on his reign. This analysis, although not entirely complimentary, reflects the great success that Kalākaua had in creating a positive impression of both the Hawaiian monarchy and the Hawaiian kingdom during his rule.

Introduction

King Kalākaua of Hawai'i took four trips to the United States. The first was in 1860 prior to his accession to the throne. The last three were during his reign as king: a state visit in 1874 and 1875, two visits made during his world tour in 1881, and a final trip in 1890. Indeed, it was on this last journey that Kalākaua died in San Francisco, California, in January 1891. This article focuses on American press coverage of the third and final of the overseas trips taken by Kalākaua as king. Stories about the monarch were most frequently found in California newspapers as Kalākaua traveled there after departing Hawai'i near the end of 1890. Following his death, there was more expansive

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press coverage of the sovereign throughout the United States, including assessments of his entire reign. Although these newspaper accounts of his travels were almost always written without a byline, as was customary at the time, they provide insights into American press and popular perceptions of the king and his trip.

Kalākaua was not the first Hawaiian monarch to travel abroad. In 1823, Kamehameha II left for Great Britain on a diplomatic mission to meet with the British sovereign George IV. There, the Hawaiian king and his entourage were treated well. Kamanamaikalani Beamer explains in his 2014 study *No Mākou ka Mana* that "though the aliʻi were in a European country thousands of miles away from their tropical home, their royalty was recognized by the British king."[1] The British government assigned the son of a viscount working in the Foreign Office to attend to the king and his retinue. Although this official complained in racist language in his correspondence about serving the Hawaiian royal party, he did his duty. Kamehameha II was treated royally, and Beamer notes that "in this particular instance, class had trumped race."[2]

A bit more than half a century after Kamehameha II left for Britain, Kalākaua embarked on the first of three overseas trips as monarch. These journeys, all of which included the United States, spanned the entirety of the king's reign with the first taking place only months after his accession to the throne and the last beginning just weeks before his death. Concerning his 1881 world tour, Beamer points out that "Kalākaua was welcomed and entertained by the rulers and highest government officials of all of the countries and colonies he visited."[3] Indeed, several themes in the press coverage of the king's travels are consistent throughout his reign.[4] The first is the enormous amount of attention Kalākaua received in American newspapers during his trips. On his final journey, which was of a private nature, reporting prior to the king's sudden decline in health tended to focus on newspapers in California, where Kalākaua was visiting. Nevertheless, papers across the United States reported extensively on the monarch's death and funeral in San Francisco.

A second theme that pervades reporting on the sovereign's travels is the strongly positive nature of the attention Kalākaua often received in the press. Although this praise was not universal, especially in light of the racism that was pervasive in newspapers of the time, the admiration shown to the king was often effusive. On Kalākaua's last trip, this was especially impressive, as the sovereign's domestic political fortunes had eroded in his final years. While this was at times noted by the media, the luster of the king's personality and his popularity remained high on his last journey. In Tiffany Lani Ing's recent book on perceptions of Kalākaua, she observes that as "they had on all previous visits, the people of California honored and entertained him. Indeed, their affection remained constant throughout his reign, even as his

opponents in Hawai'i increasingly attacked or mocked him."[5] Nevertheless, despite the assaults made by the king's enemies at home, Ing writes that "Hawai'i's newspapers did, however, report on his every move in California and recorded the people's fondness for him there at his arrival, during his activities, and through to his final illness and funeral services at Trinity Church in San Francisco."[6]

One area of press coverage that the king's 1890 trip afforded was a final assessment. Many newspapers across the United States gave such an appraisal after Kalākaua's death. Despite the strongly complimentary reporting that followed the king's travels through California beginning with his arrival in San Francisco in December and continuing until his death and funeral in January 1891, the overall media estimation of Kalākaua's reign was more mixed.

San Francisco

On November 29, 1890, American papers announced that Kalākaua was on his way to the United States. It was reported that the king had departed Honolulu on November 25 on an American naval ship, the USS *Charleston* (Fig. 1). The purpose of the trip was not stated, although it was pointed out that the king would be traveling only to California.[7] The following day, American papers revealed that Kalākaua was visiting in order to improve his health and would be arriving in San Francisco on December 5.[8] However, by the evening of December 3, the *Charleston* was already sighted off San Francisco. Nevertheless, due to windy conditions, the ship did not enter the port until the following day.[9]

On Kalākaua's previous trips to the United States as king, information about the monarch and his kingdom was published in the American press sometime before his arrival. However, in 1890, newspapers were not aware of the visit until the king had already departed Hawai'i. This was not unexpected since the trip was private in nature. On the day of Kalākaua's arrival, the *Morning Call* of San Francisco wrote that the sovereign "simply comes to this country for rest and recreation. His visit has nothing whatever of a political complexion."[10]

Similarly to his previous journeys, the American press gave its readers background about the king and Hawai'i when he arrived. For example, the *Call* discussed the monarch's lineage and mentioned his wife, Queen Kapi'olani. The San Francisco paper then pointed out the sovereign's previous visits to the United States and also included an image of the king. The *Arizona Republican* of Phoenix wrote that Kalākaua was "Received With All Royal Honors" on reaching California. The king, who was accompanied by his chamberlain, George W. Macfarlane, and his aide-de-camp, Robert Hoapili Baker, departed

FIGURE 1. **Kalākaua, Seated, on Board the USS *Charleston* Bound for San Francisco. To the Left is His Chamberlain, George W. Macfarlane. To the Right is Robert Hoapili Baker, His Aide-de-Camp. 1890. Source: AH.**

the *Charleston* on a barge and on landing was greeted with a cannon salute from the ship, having already received several salutes when he entered San Francisco Harbor.[11]

As with his earlier visits to the United States, Kalākaua received an enormously positive welcome. At the wharf, the monarch was met by David Allison McKinley, the Hawaiian consul general in San Francisco and brother of future American president William McKinley, then a member of the House of Representatives from Ohio.[12] An army general and a battalion of cavalry were also present to honor the king. In addition, Kalākaua was greeted by an enormous crowd of cheering spectators on landing. He acknowledged the onlookers by bowing to both sides as he exited the barge. The royal party went by carriage to their accommodations at the luxurious Palace Hotel on New Montgomery Street. There a reception was held for the king. Although the visit was not an official one, the reception was, nevertheless, attended by California governor Robert Waterman and San Francisco mayor Edward B. Pond. Reflecting the enthusiasm of the press for the monarch, the *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* published a brief comment on Kalākaua's arrival titled "Long Live the King." The paper noted that although the king was in San Francisco, it was hoped that he would also travel to the state capital of Sacramento, which he had visited in 1881.[13]

The *Record-Union*'s interest in the monarch was echoed by the *Call* in San Francisco, which began a story about Kalākaua's arrival with "A King is here!" After Kalākaua reached the Palace Hotel, a reporter from the *Call* interviewed him. The king explained the purpose of his trip. "I am visiting California simply for the benefit of my health, which has been rather poor of late. My being here has no political or business significance. I shall remain here probably some two months, and will visit the main points of interest all along the Coast." Kalākaua was optimistic about his health and concluded, "Since I left Honolulu I am feeling very much better, and think I shall return home in perfect health."[14]

Since the king's last visit to the United States in 1881, not only had his health declined, but so too had his political fortunes. In 1887, a small white elite had forced Kalākaua to sign a new constitution that greatly reduced the power of the monarchy and the Hawaiian people. The *Call* discussed the new constitution in its coverage of the king's arrival. Although it acknowledged that Kalākaua's powers had been significantly diminished, it nevertheless portrayed the sovereign positively. "He is an intelligent, fair-minded man, who tries to do right in the difficult situation which it has been his lot to fill." Although political conflicts had weakened the king, the *Call* concluded that "no act has ever been laid to his charge which has told against his character, or impaired the loyal affection which his people have borne him during the sixteen years that he has filled the throne."[15]

Although Kalākaua's visit to California was of a private nature, the king's itinerary received a considerable amount of press and popular attention,

just as it had during his previous journeys to the United States. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that while in that city, "every movement of the King was an object of public interest."[16] Three days after landing in California, the *Call* published an article titled "A Busy Day for the King." Describing the events of December 6, the paper wrote that the San Francisco climate had "improved wonderfully" Kalākaua's health. The monarch spent much of the day receiving prominent visitors at the Palace Hotel. During the morning and afternoon, the steady stream of guests included a former governor, a general, and a congressional delegation visiting San Francisco, including a senator and two representatives. In the evening, a military delegation in full dress uniforms visited the king and invited him to review a brigade of the California National Guard. Kalākaua accepted the invitation. The *Call* also noted that on the day after the king's arrival, he had awarded the Royal Order of Kalākaua to Admiral George Brown, the commander of the *Charleston*, along with two of his subordinates. On Sunday, December 7, Kalākaua attended Episcopal services at Trinity Church, where a large crowd gathered to see the king. Later in the day, the royal party visited the famed Cliff House restaurant.[17]

While Kalākaua announced publicly that his visit to California was for health reasons, soon after his arrival, the American press reported that the king had a hidden purpose to sell Hawai'i to the United States. The rumor attracted enough attention that the kingdom's diplomatic representative to the United States, H. A. P. Carter, who was in the American capital, told the *Evening Star* of Washington, DC, that the rumor was preposterous. Carter explained to the paper that "Hawaii is a constitutional monarchy, and the king could no more sell it than the governor of Massachusetts could barter off that state."[18] Although the assertion that Kalākaua planned to sell his country was ridiculous, Chamberlain Macfarlane claimed after the monarch's death that the trip to America was undertaken for the purpose of making adjustments to the Reciprocity Treaty between Hawai'i and the United States.[19]

On December 9, Kalākaua received a delegation at the Palace Hotel representing San Francisco's African American residents, including various clergymen, one of whom gave a speech welcoming the king. The following evening, Kalākaua was the guest of honor at a banquet at the prestigious Pacific Union Club. However, a planned tour of the campus of what is today the University of California, Berkeley, on December 11 did not take place as scheduled.[20]

On December 12, the king attended two large events, the military review to which he had been invited followed by a charity ball. The military review included almost 1,000 soldiers of the California National Guard. After the parade, the military commanders were presented to Kalākaua. As he prepared to leave, an enormous group of spectators gathered. In fact, the *Call* reported

that as he left, "the King and suite could hardly move through the throng, so densely did it crowd upon them to obtain a view of him."[21]

The charity event was held at the hall of the Society of California Pioneers to benefit the Woman's Exchange Movement, an organization that helped "needy gentlewomen in earning a livelihood." At the ball, an elaborate chair was reserved for the monarch with the Hawaiian and American flags placed above. Over them was the word "Aloha" spelled out in yellow and white chrysanthemums. At approximately 10:00 Kalākaua arrived to the music of the Hawaiian national anthem and was escorted to his seat. Follow a reception, the king was treated to dinner and dancing.[22]

On Sunday, December 14, the royal suite attended services at Grace Episcopal Cathedral followed by a yacht ride on San Francisco Bay. Although a private event, the *Call* wrote that several hundred people gathered at Fisherman's Wharf to get a glimpse of the king heading out onto the water. During the cruise, the winds became so calm that the boat became stationary, and a tug was required to bring the royal party back to shore.[23]

Reflecting Kalākaua's interest in military technology, later in the week, the king made a lengthy visit to the Union Iron Works, where he inspected various stages of naval ship production.[24] On December 20, the monarch attended two sporting events: a football game and a baseball game. The football match, the proceeds of which were given to charity, was between the officers of the *Charleston*, which had carried the king to California, and the San Francisco football club. The *Call* described Kalākaua as a fan of sports and wrote that the competition was "the first instance on record of royalty being present at an American athletic game."[25] The baseball game on December 20 was also a charity event with the earnings going to benefit orphaned children. Due to the king's presence, "curiosity brought out hundreds of people who take no interest in the national game." Kalākaua was present for several innings and was seated in a box that was draped with the Hawaiian and American flags.[26]

On Christmas Day, the *Call* ran a detailed and extremely positive story about the king focusing on his life and reign. Despite the loss of much of his power in 1887, the paper praised Kalākaua's political motives and skills. "As a ruler King Kalakaua has always shown a wise tendency toward liberal views on all subjects relating to the government of his kingdom." The author continued by highlighting the monarch's popularity at home. "His Majesty is idolized by his native subjects, and is very popular with the foreigners residing in his dominions. His departure was marked by the expression of much loyalty and devotion on the part of the Hawaiian inhabitants." The *Call* dismissed the rumors that Kalākaua had traveled to the United States in order to sell his kingdom. Rather, the daily concluded that he was "very loyal to his country, rejoices in her prosperity and loves her independence."[27]

FIGURE 2. **The Hotel del Coronado, Where Kalākaua Stayed While in San Diego. ca. 1892. Source: LOC.**

As to the king's personal qualities, the San Francisco paper was equally complimentary. Kalākaua was described as "a tall, robust man, having a splendid physique, and appearing to be in perfect health." The monarch's intellectual skills were also noted with the *Call* pointing out that he not only knew English but was familiar with French, German, and Spanish as well. Kalākaua's creative achievements were highlighted. "He composed the beautiful Hawaiian national anthem, and is the author of 'The Legends of Hawaii,' a book which has a large sale, and has elicited much praise from the critics." In addition, the king's reputation as an athlete, musician, and gracious host was described by the paper.[28]

Southern California and the Return to San Francisco

Two days after Christmas, the royal party left San Francisco for Southern California by train, arriving at Los Angeles on December 28. However, the king's presence in the city was very brief, as the group was headed to San Diego. On reaching Los Angeles, Kalākaua was greeted by a delegation including the mayor. The mayor presented the monarch to a crowd of 500 spectators at the rail station after a large number of those present rushed to the train to get a glimpse of the king. Those who were unable to get close urged the mayor to encourage Kalākaua to make an appearance, and the king emerged, announcing that he

FIGURE 3. **The Raymond Hotel Where Kalākaua Stayed While in South Pasadena. ca. 1890. Source: Security Pacific National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.**

would stop back in Los Angeles on his return to San Francisco. As the monarch left the station, the crowd cheered him.[29]

On the day before New Year's Eve, the king was the guest of honor at a Masonic dinner in San Diego. As a high-ranking Freemason himself, Kalākaua also participated in a Masonic ceremony after the meal. The following day, the royal party visited the Sweetwater Dam east of San Diego and made stops along the border between California and Mexico. While in the San Diego area, the king stayed at the luxurious Hotel del Coronado, a resort that had opened in 1888 and was owned by a son of Claus Spreckels (Fig. 2). The elder Spreckels, whose relationship with the monarch was at times turbulent, was a German-born American industrialist who was deeply involved in the Hawaiian sugar industry and Hawaiian politics.[30]

From San Diego, Kalākaua returned to Los Angeles, stopping for one night at the grand Raymond Hotel in South Pasadena in the San Gabriel Valley (Fig. 3). On the way back to Los Angeles, the king also made a stop in Riverside, where he heard a performance by the Austrian-born American soprano Emma Juch. On January 2, 1891, Kalākaua heard Juch sing again in Los Angeles. This performance of Georges Bizet's *Carmen* was given especially for the king, and at the end of the first act, Juch approached the monarch and was given a bouquet

of flowers "in the center of which [was] nestled a diamond brooch of beautiful design."[31]

On the day of the king's arrival back in Los Angeles, he was greeted at the train station by the mayor of the city and various military officials. From the station, the royal suite was taken to the Hollenbeck Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, where the king had lunch before being driven around the city for a tour. In the evening, a reception for Kalākaua was held at the city hall. According to the *Los Angeles Herald*, the event drew an enormous crowd, and "for two hours [the king] shook hands with the passing throng. He was greeted by between five and six thousand persons." This was more than 10 percent of the entire population of the city of Los Angeles. Following the reception, the royal party traveled to the exclusive California Club for a banquet. In attendance were the mayor, many military officials, and other prominent citizens. The mayor gave a speech welcoming the king, emphasizing Kalākaua's hospitality. Another speaker, James J. Ayers, who had resided in Hawai'i, noted the similarity in the climates of Hawai'i and Southern California. Ayers, a newspaperman and delegate to the 1878–1879 California constitutional convention, attested to the hospitality of the Hawaiian people and ended his speech with a phase in Hawaiian. Kalākaua translated the phrase, taken from the Bible, as "If your friend have thirst, give him drink." A general representing the U.S. Army also spoke and "dwelt upon the respect and esteem in which King Kalākaua was held by every one who deserved the name of American citizen." Two members of the royal party, George W. MacFarlane and Robert Hoapili Baker, also gave comments with Baker speaking in Hawaiian.[32] Before leaving Los Angeles, the *Herald* reported that the royal party also visited an optician where they were fitted for glasses.[33]

On January 4, the *Herald* reflected on Kalākaua's time in Los Angeles, giving a complimentary view of the king. The paper concluded that the monarch had been well received in the city, writing that he "has been treated with distinguished courtesy, has been shown the sights, has been banqueted and bidden God-speed. All this is as it should be." The *Herald* added that the "King of Hawaii has always been the friend of Americans, and the citizens of the United States have ever found a hospitable welcome in his domains. He has left an agreeable impression amongst our people."[34]

The same day, the royal suite arrived in Santa Barbara as they made their way back north. Kalākaua was met at the Carpinteria train station east of Santa Barbara by a committee named by the Santa Barbara city council. The group escorted the king to the Santa Barbara station, where several thousand spectators were gathered. Kalākaua was brought to the landmark Arlington Hotel, where a reception was held for him and the mayor gave words of welcome. A copy of the mayor's speech was also presented to the king. Various events in the

Santa Barbara area were planned for the royal party, and it was anticipated that they would stay for three nights in the city. Kalākaua also had plans to visit the state capital, Sacramento, and attend the governor's inaugural ball. However, it was in Santa Barbara that Kalākaua's health took a turn for the worse.[35]

The *Record-Union* published a note from the king's chamberlain dated January 6 indicating that Kalākaua still intended to travel to Sacramento and attend the ball "if health permits." However, MacFarlane also suggested that other scheduled royal activities in the capital would be canceled for health reasons. By January 8, Kalākaua had reached San Francisco. The *Herald* wrote that the "king caught cold at Santa Barbara, and is now in poor health."[36] Nevertheless, the monarch was well enough to discuss his trip to Southern California. He told a reporter concerning his experiences in Los Angeles and San Diego, "'I was much impressed with the spirit of enterprise displayed by the people there. I predict a great future for both places, particularly San Diego.'" Kalākaua also suggested establishing commercial relationships between Hawai'i and both Southern California cities.[37]

Final Days

The king never made it to Sacramento. On January 10, the *Herald* reported that the royal party had not taken the special train prepared to bring them to Sacramento the previous day "on account of indisposition."[38] However, three days later, the *Call* wrote that the king was to be installed as a Shriner the following evening in San Francisco. Indeed, the Shriners prepared a special souvenir notice for Kalākaua's induction. Seven by ten inches in size, the front depicted an image of the Kīlauea Volcano, a planation, the USS *Charleston*, and the strait entering San Francisco Bay. The reverse included the Hawaiian coat of arms.[39]

On January 12, while the king was resting at the Palace Hotel, a phonograph was brought into the king's room. Chamberlain MacFarlane explained the device to Kalākaua and asked him to speak into the machine. At the time, it was not thought that the monarch's condition was that serious, and the recording was suggested as a way to preserve his voice for future generations. From his bed, Kalākaua spoke in Hawaiian into the phonograph for almost an hour. After making the recording, the king was exhausted and indicated that he would finish the project when he was feeling better. The recording was never completed. However, the day after Kalākaua's death, a wax cylinder containing the king's voice that had not yet been played was presented to Robert H. Baker to bring back to Hawai'i. The *Chronicle* reported that the recording might be utilized for the royal funeral ceremonies in Honolulu.[40]

Although the king was still unwell, he felt able to attend a dinner with friends at a hotel on January 13, and the following evening, he participated in the

Shriners installation ceremony as planned against the advice of his doctors. By January 17, it was reported that Kalākaua was seriously ill. MacFarlane gave an interview to the press to address the king's condition. The chamberlain revealed that the monarch had been sick since leaving Santa Barbara and was suffering from a relapse of a kidney condition from which he had suffered before he left Hawai'i. As a result, MacFarlane said that Kalākaua had temporarily canceled all of his commitments. Nevertheless, the king's doctors believed that he would soon recover. The chamberlain concluded his press interview by maintaining that Kalākaua would return to Honolulu on the *Charleston* around the end of January when his health improved.[41]

Very quickly, the monarch's condition deteriorated, and on January 19, the *Call* ran a story titled "The Hawaiian King's Condition Said to Be Serious." The paper reported that Kalākaua was very sick and was bedridden at the Palace Hotel under constant doctor's care. According to the author, the king might not survive. An Associated Press story from the same day included information provided by Chamberlain MacFarlane. The chamberlain reported that Kalākaua's health had taken a dramatic turn for the worse on the morning of January 19 and that he was in and out of consciousness. Kalākaua was unable to eat solids, and his doctors met several times that day to discuss his declining condition, consulting with several well-known San Francisco physicians. On the evening of January 19, Admiral Brown, the commander of the *Charleston,* contacted the Navy Department in Washington to update the American government on the king's situation. Around midnight, Consul General McKinley, the Hawaiian diplomatic representative in San Francisco, announced to the press that Kalākaua would not survive. The king being an Episcopalian, an Episcopal priest was called to the Palace Hotel to administer last rites.[42]

The *Call* reported on January 20 that Kalākaua had exhausted himself in Southern California and that a doctor who accompanied him back to San Francisco had urged the king to rest and not attend any public events. The monarch took the doctor's advice for a few days but then seemed to recover strongly. As a result, Kalākaua attended the Shriners' induction ceremony but became suddenly ill while there.[43]

While American press coverage of most of the king's last trip to the United States received limited attention outside of California, especially as the journey was private in nature, news of his death was reported widely across the country. On January 21, the first headline on the front page of the *Republican* read "Death of Kalakaua." The paper wrote that the king had died at 2:30 p.m. on January 20 of Bright's disease, a term then used for a certain type of kidney malady. In attendance during his final hours were Kalākaua's doctors, Chamberlain MacFarlane, Aide-de-Camp Baker, Consul General McKinley,

Admiral Brown, Claus Spreckels, Charles Reed Bishop (who was the widower of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop), and several others. These included two servants, a Hawaiian male youth named Kahikina, and a girl named Kalua from the present-day nation of Kiribati. An hour before he died, MacFarlane asked the king if he recognized him, but there was no response. Bible passages were read for almost an hour, and those present were grief stricken. The monarch's bed was turned so that his feet faced in the direction of Hawai'i. At 2:30, a doctor announced to those present that Kalākaua had died. Flowers were placed on his chest, and a white covering was positioned over his body. Following the king's death, flags on public buildings in San Francisco were ordered to half-staff, and the Hawaiian royal standard flying over the Palace Hotel was taken down. The *Record-Union* noted that Kalākaua was the first monarch to die in the United States.[44]

Assessment of the King in the American Press Following His Death

The day after Kalākaua's death, H. A. P. Carter, the diplomatic representative of Hawai'i to the United States, spoke to the *Star* in Washington, DC, about the kingdom's future. Carter explained that there would be no unrest in Hawai'i following the monarch's death and that his sister and heir, Princess Lili'uokalani, who was serving as regent during her brother's absence, would succeed to the throne as the new ruler. On the same day, the *Star* also published various informational vignettes on the king's illness, his reign, the royal succession, and the geography, economy, demographics, and government of Hawai'i.[45]

The *Record-Union* also published a synopsis of Kalākaua's reign after the king's death. Its analysis was complimentary but did mention that the monarch faced political opposition and that his powers were eventually curtailed. "Kalākaua began his reign with high purpose, and inaugurated his rule by many wise and beneficent acts. His aim was to elevate the people by education, strengthen their relations with foreign nations, build up local industries, and induce desirable immigration. To a great extent he succeeded." The paper also referenced the king's international journeys. "By travel in many lands he expanded his views of government, and showed a sincere desire to introduce reforms." The article ended by noting Kalākaua's friendly relations with the United States.[46]

The *Herald* echoed the positive assessment presented by the *Record-Union* with an article titled "Death of a Good King." "The dead king was a man of culture and wide observation. He was liberal in his views, and pursued a steadfast policy in the interest and prosperity of his people." The writer concluded that Kalākaua "leaves the islands in incomparably better condition than they were when he ascended the throne." Indeed, the paper surmised that the Hawaiian

monarch far outranked the intelligence of the average ruler in Europe. "Measured by the mental calibre of the average European sovereign, the dead king of the Hawaiian Islands was a Hyperion to a satyr."[47]

The *Morning Appeal* of Carson City, Nevada, focused on Kalākaua's exceptional qualities in its brief assessment of the king. "With the death of Kalākaua passes away one of the most unconventional Monarchs that ever lived." The paper asserted that the king was without pretense and "loved most of all to lay aside the baubles of royalty and mingle in full concourse with his people." The *Appeal* added that it was his unassuming nature that made him popular during his time in San Francisco and drew organizations to request his presence to promote charity. The author maintained that it was these acts of generosity that "best showed the kindly side of his nature and will ever be gratefully remembered by Americans. He went to his long home followed by more sorrow at his death than many a King of more pretentious titles and larger territory."[48]

The *Deseret Evening News* of Salt Lake City, Utah, provided a Mormon perspective on Kalākaua's reign following his death. "A number of our [Mormon] Elders made his acquaintance while engaged in missionary work in his kingdom. They describe him as a genial, kind hearted and liberal minded man." The paper added that he "contended for the widest religious toleration, and in conformity with that view insisted that all should have the same privileges." Although the *Evening News* acknowledged the political turbulence of the monarch's last years, it concluded that "quite a number of residents of Utah will cherish a kindly remembrance of King Kalākaua in whom there was nothing of the nature of the tyrant, he being kindly and sympathetic to an unusual degree."[49]

Not all American papers, however, presented as flattering a view of the king. For example, the *Evening Bulletin* of Marysville, Kentucky, wrote after Kalākaua's death that he was a "hard drinker and a slave to other appetites." The *Bulletin* also disparaged the size of the Hawaiian kingdom's population, writing that the monarch was "little more than the mayor of a little city so far as the number of his subjects is concerned." The journal also noted that there were counties in Texas twice the size of Hawai'i.[50] The same day, the *Evening World* of New York City claimed that Kalākaua was "an easy-going, pleasure-loving monarch, who was accustomed to live in excess of his income."[51] From the same city, the *Sun* claimed that the king was a spendthrift who expended large sums on a royal palace and coronation and whose government borrowed heavily to cover costs.[52] Reflecting the racism in the United States during this period, the *Times* of Richmond, Virginia, acknowledged that the king had been the object of ridicule due to his "general democratic bearing, the smallness of his kingdom, and the color of his skin."[53]

Several journals presented a mixed view of the monarch. For example, the *New-York Daily Tribune* wrote that Kalākaua was popular in California and that he "seemed like an old friend to many Californians."[54] The *Tribune* went on, however, to claim that the ruler was not strong in character and was often unduly under the influence of others. The *Pittsburg Daily Dispatch* included in its coverage of the king's death an interview conducted with John H. Kimball, a Maine resident who had lived in the islands for a number of years and had been a Hawaiian government doctor. Kimball stated, in response to negative assessments of Kalākaua, that he was in fact "a well-educated, polished, and worthy gentleman, worthy of every consideration at the hands of the best American people."[55] Nevertheless, Kimball accused the king of financial mismanagement and of being a heavy drinker.

The wide variety of American press appraisals of Kalākaua and his reign was even appreciated in the media. At the end of January, the *Anaconda Standard* of Anaconda, Montana, wrote that "estimates of the character of the late King Kalakaua differ so much that historians are liable to get confused."[56] A little more than a week later, based on information from the *San Francisco Examiner*, the Montana paper ran a lengthy story on the monarch with the heading "Was He Jekyll Or Hyde?" The analysis, which contained spurious information, focused almost entirely on Kalākaua's efforts to revive traditional Hawaiian culture. While these were presented by the paper in a negative light, the title of the article reflected the considerably varying and at times contradictory evaluations of the king in American newspapers following his death.[57]

The King's Funeral

The day after Kalākaua's death, Minister H. A. P. Carter in Washington informed the American government that the king had died. President Benjamin Harrison sent his condolences to Carter through Secretary of State James G. Blaine. President Harrison also ordered that both the American army and navy would give full military honors to the Hawaiian monarch and participate in his funeral in San Francisco. In addition, the president commanded that the *Charleston* would return Kalākaua's remains to Honolulu.[58]

The same day, the mayor of San Francisco and the board of supervisors met to discuss the details of the king's funeral, which would take place the following day, January 22. Admiral Brown of the *Charleston* had overall supervision of the event, and General John Gibbon, Commander of the Military Division of the Pacific, was designated as grand marshal for the procession. The funeral was scheduled to be conducted at Trinity Episcopal Church, where the king had attended services several times after his arrival in California. Many dignitaries

were invited to the funeral, including political officials, envoys of thirty different countries, judges, representatives of the Masons, and business leaders. Two dozen individuals were named as pallbearers, half of them honorary, including two former governors of California, a former mayor of San Francisco, a former US senator from California, two justices of the California Supreme Court, and Masonic representatives. The day after Kalākaua's death, the Superior Court in San Francisco and the California Senate in Sacramento also adjourned out of respect for the king. At 4:00 p.m. that day, the general public was allowed to pay their respects at Kalākaua's coffin in Trinity Church. The *Call* reported that "a vast concourse of people were in attendance."[59]

All federal, state, and city offices in San Francisco were to be closed for the king's funeral on January 22. Well before the service began, thousands of members of the public had assembled around the streets in the vicinity of Trinity Church. In the church itself, the area around the altar was decorated with Hawaiian and American flags. Gas jets were placed in front of the flags, forming the shape of a crown. Floral memorials from various individuals and organizations also filled the church. The funeral began with a procession that was accompanied by the ringing of the church bells and the playing of a funeral march by Beethoven on the church organ. Included in the procession were clergy followed by a military honor guard in front of Kalākaua's coffin. Masonic representatives were also among the dignitaries. The coffin was covered in the Hawaiian flag and flowers. At the foot of the bier was a floral arrangement of the word "Aloha." During the service, selections from the Bible were read, and a sermon was given. Various music was also played, including the popular eighteenth-century hymn "Rock of Ages."[60]

From the church, the funeral procession, which encompassed some 1,600 participants, proceeded to the harbor. The monarch's coffin was placed in a hearse behind an enormous contingent of hundreds of soldiers from the US military, including cavalry, artillery, and the National Guard of California. The king's suite and officials from the federal, state, and city governments also participated along with representatives of various private organizations. Reportedly, an astounding 100,000 members of the public came to view the procession. This number was approximately one-third of the entire population at the time of San Francisco, then the largest city in California. All commercial enterprises along the procession route were closed "as a spontaneous expression of respect on the part of the business community." When the king's casket reached the waterfront, it was received by Admiral Brown and loaded onto a tender that brought the remains to the *Charleston* anchored several hundred yards away. As the *Charleston* sailed toward the Pacific Ocean, minute guns were discharged from the military installations at Fort Alcatraz and the San Francisco Presidio.[61]

The *Call* wrote of the significance of the funeral. "It is safe to say, in fact, that no funeral in San Francisco ever attracted more universal attention or was conducted with more pomp and splendor." The paper wrote that more people gathered at the waterfront to view the king's coffin depart for the *Charleston* than had gathered there for the visit of former president Ulysses S. Grant in 1879 or President Rutherford B. Hayes's arrival in 1880, when he became the first sitting American president to travel to the West Coast. The *Call* concluded that "the people of Hawaii may well feel proud of the splendid tribute paid to their dead monarch."[62] The *Tribune* added that nothing "was left undone by Federal, State, or city authorities to show respect for the dead monarch, and a stranger arriving in the city, and noticing the hundreds of flags at half-mast and the closed stores along the line of the procession, would have imagined that the city was burying one of its leading citizens."[63] The *Examiner* printed twenty columns on the funeral, which the *Morning Appeal* claimed was "the heaviest obsequies work ever printed in a daily paper."[64]

Aftermath

Many American papers noted that no regular ship service to Hawai'i would leave San Francisco until January 27, five days after the departure of the *Charleston*. As a result, residents of Hawai'i would not learn of the death of the king until the *Charleston* reached Honolulu. It was also reported that the day after Kalākaua's death, a ship from Hawai'i had arrived in San Francisco. From the ship came news that Honolulu was preparing itself for the monarch's return, decorating the city and making plans for a parade.[65]

Interest in Kalākaua continued in the American press for some time after his death. For example, almost three weeks after the monarch's demise, the *Morning Journal and Courier* of New Haven, Connecticut, reported that "they are still telling stories in San Francisco of King Kalakaua, and the last one credits him with being an accomplished linguist." The paper wrote that the Hawaiian ruler had some knowledge of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and several other languages.[66] On February 9, the *Standard* observed that the king "was a very notable man. A great deal has been written and published about him since and before his death."[67] The following day, the *Call* informed its readers that a committee of the San Francisco board of supervisors that had been tasked by the mayor to compose resolutions in Kalākaua's honor had finished its work. These resolutions were ordered to be entered into the official record and to be sent to the Hawaiian government.[68]

The day after the king's funeral on February 15 in Honolulu, the *Morning Journal* published news from Hawai'i that had just reached San Francisco. The paper reported the *Charleston* had sailed into Honolulu on January 29,

FIGURE 4. **Kalākaua's Remains Being Brought Ashore from the *Charleston* in Honolulu Harbor. 1891. Source: AH.**

a week after departing California. Unaware of the king's death until the ship's arrival, the decorations erected in the city welcoming Kalākaua home were torn down. Crowds gathered at the harbor (Fig. 4). Queen Kapiʻolani and the king's sister Liliʻuokalani were grief stricken when the monarch's coffin reached ʻIolani Palace. Several days later, a large group gathered at Kaumakapili Church in Honolulu, and "a series of resolutions were adopted expressing the gratitude of the Hawaiians to the United States and to Admiral Brown . . . for the 'unbounded courtesy and kind attentions' offered to the king, both before and after his death."[69]

On the same day, the *Herald* carried on its front page the headline "Hawaii in Tears." From Associated Press reports, the Los Angeles paper wrote of the arrival of the king's remains. "Never since the death of Queen Emma [widow of Kamehameha IV] has such a national display of sorrow been manifest as was shown from the firing of the first gun [of the ships in Honolulu harbor and the shore batteries], until the remains of the late monarch were laid in state in the throne room of the palace."[70] News of the *Charleston*'s arrival into Honolulu was also carried on the front page of the *Record-Union*.[71] The *Call* gave extensive and

detailed coverage as well on its opening page to the reaction in Hawai'i to the sovereign's return. The San Francisco daily declared that the "announcement of the death of the King fell upon the populace like a clap of thunder from the skies."[72]

Almost two months after his death, occasional stories about Kalākaua continued to appear in the American press, indicating a persistence of interest in the king's life. On March 14, the *Waterbury Evening Democrat* in Waterbury, Connecticut, ran a story titled "Kalakaua's Love of Sport," based on reporting from the *San Francisco Post* and focusing on the monarch's interest in boating. A few days later, the *Herald* via the Associated Press gave an account of the king's will that was also circulated in other papers.[73] Further articles published in March included a comparison between Kalākaua and Kamehameha II, who also died abroad, not in the United States but Great Britain, and the disclosure that Kalākaua had a life insurance policy with Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York.[74]

Even the assessment of the king by the American press continued well into March. On March 15, the *Indianapolis Journal* included an article that contained excerpts written by Reverend J. Sanders Reed that were printed in the *New York Post*. Reed was a former resident of Indianapolis who had moved to San Francisco and "ministered to his Majesty in his last hours." Reed reacted strongly to coverage in the American papers that painted Kalākaua as of questionable reputation. While the *Journal* surmised that the king was a carouser who gambled to excess, the paper gave details of Reed's defense of the monarch. Reed asserted that "Kalākaua was a man of many Christian graces and great nobility of soul." The reverend concluded that "To say that he had virtue and graces, was cultured, refined, charitable, generous, sympathetic, a believer in prayer and the sacraments, is to say that he knew something of the struggles and the victories of heroic spirits."[75]

Conclusion

American press coverage of Kalākaua's final trip was consistent with the other overseas journeys he made as king both to the United States and to other nations around the world. Newspapers were interested in reporting about the Hawaiian monarch. They followed his movements carefully and described them often in detail. The attention he received from journalists was matched by the interest shown by the public. This is most evidently demonstrated by the enormous turnout for Kalākaua's funeral in San Francisco. While it might be argued that the funeral of a head of state, even from a foreign country, would have drawn a large crowd, the presence of approximately one-third of the population of California's largest city at the royal obsequies speaks to Kalākaua's popularity and charisma.

Not only was media interest in the king's last trip extensive, it was often but not entirely very positive. This widespread complimentary reporting clearly reflects Kalākaua's skill in promoting not only the Hawaiian monarchy but the Hawaiian kingdom as well on the international stage. This ability spanned the monarch's entire reign and is demonstrated by press coverage of all of his overseas trips as king. On Kalākaua's last journey, his personal appeal remained largely intact despite the political turmoil in Hawai'i during the closing years of his rule. Based on a description given in a California newspaper, Tiffany Lani Ing remarks in *Reclaiming Kalākaua*, "Even in his last few days, this is how Kalākaua struck his contemporaries—as an inquisitive and observant man, always learning from the successes of other nations, kingdoms, and principalities and always looking to benefit his country."[76]

Following his death, however, the overall American media assessment of the monarch's time on the throne was more mixed than coverage of the king's visit, death, and funeral. While some appraisals were strongly complimentary, others were largely negative. Nevertheless, the continuity, consistency, and prevalence of praise for Kalākaua in newspapers across the United States from his first visit as a new sovereign in 1874 to his death in San Francisco some sixteen years later is significant. Indeed, as a person of color who represented a small nation in the Pacific to have such an enduring and often positive presence in the American press is a testament to Kalākaua's success as a diplomat and spokesman for the Hawaiian kingdom.

NOTES

1. Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana: Liberating the nation* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014), 91.

2. Beamer, 93.

3. Beamer, 176.

4. For analyses of American press coverage of Kalākaua's previous overseas trips, see Douglas V. Askman, A royal traveler: American press coverage of King Kalākaua's 1881 trip around the world, *Hawaiian Journal of History* 51 (2017), and Douglas V. Askman, Our royal guest: American press coverage of King Kalākaua's visit to the United States, 1874–1875," in *Hawaiian Journal of History* 54 (2020).

5. Tiffany Lani Ing, *Reclaiming Kalākaua: Nineteenth-century perspectives on a Hawaiian sovereign* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019), 186.

6. Ing, 186.

7. *Arizona Republican* (Phoenix, AZ), November 29, 1890, 1, and *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, CA), November 29, 1890, 2.

8. *Republican*, November 30, 1890, 1. The purpose of the king's visit was also confirmed on his arrival by his chamberlain and traveling companion, George W. Macfarlane. See *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* (Sacramento, CA), December 5, 1890, 1.

9. *Republican*, December 4, 1890, 1.

10. *Morning Call* (San Francisco, CA), December 4, 1890, 2.

11. *Republican*, December 5, 1890, 1, and *Record-Union*, December 5, 1890, 1.

12. David Allison McKinley was the oldest brother of William McKinley. Before he became president, William McKinley authored the Tariff Act of 1890, known as the McKinley Tariff, while a member of Congress. This legislation had a devastating effect on the Hawaiian sugar industry. David McKinley was an American diplomatic representative to Hawai'i for several years until 1885. He was then appointed by Kalākaua as the Hawaiian kingdom consul general at San Francisco, a position he held until his death in 1892. Ironically, like the king, David McKinley died at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco (*San Francisco Chronicle* [San Francisco, CA], September 19, 1892, 10).

13. *Republic*an, December 5, 1890, 1, and *Record-Union*, December 5, 1890, 3.

14. *Call*, December 5, 1890, 2.

15. *Call*, December 5, 1890, 4.

16. *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 21, 1891, 10.

17. *Call*, December 7, 1890, 2, and December 8, 1890, 4.

18. *Evening Star* (Washington, DC), December 8, 1890, 5. For an article detailing the rumor, see, for example, the *Evening Journal* (Wilmington, DE), December 8, 1890, 1.

19. *Dalles Daily Chronicle* (The Dalles, OR), January 27, 1891, 1.

20. *Call*, December 10, 1890, 1; December 11, 1890, 2; December 12, 1890, 7; and December 13, 1890, 7.

21. *Call*, December 13, 1890, 8.

22. *Call*, December 13, 1890, 2.

23. *Call*, December 15, 1890, 4.

24. *Call*, December 16, 1890, 7.

25. *Call,* December 20, 1890, 2.

26. *Record-Union*, December 21, 1890, 4.

27. *Call*, December 25, 1890, 13.

28. *Call*, December 25, 1890, 13.

29. *Journal*, December 27, 1890, 4; *Republican*, December 29, 1890, 1; and *Herald*, December 29, 1890, 5.

30. *Call*, December 31, 1890, 8, and *Record-Union*, January 1, 1891, 4. Claus Spreckels began his involvement in the Hawaiian sugar industry in the 1870s and was for a number of years closely associated financially and politically with Kalākaua. By 1886, the relationship between Spreckels and the king had soured, and the two men became opponents.

31. *Call*, January 3, 1891, 8.

32. *Herald*, January 4, 1891, 7.

33. *Herald*, January 4, 1891, 10.

34. *Herald*, January 4, 1891, 4.

35. *Republican*, January 5, 1891, 4, and *Record-Union*, January 6, 1891, 3.

36. *Record-Union*, January 8, 1891, 3.

37. *Herald*, January 9, 1891, 1.

38. *Herald*, January 10, 1891, 1.

39. *Call*, January 13, 1891, 3.

40. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle, WA), January 24, 1891, 2 (from the *Chronicle*).

41. *Call*, January 15, 1891, 7, and *Record-Union (Sunday Union)*, January 18, 1891, 1.

42. *Call*, January 19, 1891, 8; *Republican*, January 20, 1891, 1; and *Record-Union*, January 20, 1891, 1.

43. *Call*, January 20, 1891, 2, and January 21, 1891, 1.

44. *Republican*, January 21, 1891, 1; *Waterbury Evening Democrat* (Waterbury, CT), January 21, 1891, 1; *Star*, January 21, 1891, 6; *Record-Union*, January 22, 1891, 1; and *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 21, 1891, 10. For a detailed analysis of the king's sickness and death, taking into account his specific medical condition, see John F. Mcdermott, Zita Cup Choy, and Anthony P. S. Guerrero, "The last illness and death of Hawai'i's King Kalākaua: A new historical/clinical perspective," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 49 (2015).

45. *Star*, January 21, 1891, 5–6.

46. *Record-Union*, January 21, 1891, 2.

47. *Herald*, January 21, 1891, 4.

48. *Morning Appeal* (Carson City, NV), January 22, 1891, 2.

49. *Deseret Evening News* (Salt Lake City, UT), January 21, 1891, 4.

50. *Evening Bulletin* (Marysville, KY), January 21, 1891, 1.

51. *Evening World* (New York, NY), January 21, 1891, 2.

52. *Sun* (New York, NY), January 21, 1891, 1.

53. *Times* (Richmond, VA), January 22, 1891, 2.

54. *New-York Tribune* (New York, NY), January 25, 1891, 24.

55. *Pittsburg Daily Dispatch* (Pittsburgh, PA), January 25, 1891, 9.

56. *Anaconda Standard* (Anaconda, MT), January 30, 1891, 2.

57. *Standard*, February 9, 1891, 9.

58. *Morning Journal and Courier* (New Haven, CT), January 22, 1891, 3.

59. *Record-Union*, January 22, 1891, 1, 5; *Call*, January 22, 1891, 1, 7; *Star*, January 23, 1891, 6; and *Post-Intelligencer*, January 23, 1891, 3.

60. *Call*, January 22, 1891, 1, and January 23, 1891, 1; *Star*, January 23, 1891, 6; and *Courier*, January 23, 1891, 3.

61. *Star*, January 23, 1891, 6.

62. *Call*, January 23, 1891, 1.

63. *Tribune*, January 25, 1891, 24.

64. *Appeal*, February 19, 1891, 2.

65. *Post-Intelligencer*, January 21, 1891, 8, and *Wichita Daily Eagle* (Wichita, KS), January 21, 1891, 1, and January 22, 1891, 1.

66. *Courier*, February 6, 1891, 1.

67. *Standard*, February 9, 1891, 1.

68. *Call*, February 10, 1891, 2.

69. *Courier*, February 16, 1891, 3.

70. *Herald*, February 16, 1891, 1.

71. *Record-Union*, February 16, 1891, 1.

72. *Call*, February 16, 1891, 1.

73. *Democrat*, March 14, 1891, 1; *World*, March 5, 1891, 3; and *Herald*, March 18, 1891, 2. See also *Dispatch*, March 18, 1891, 4, and *Post-Intelligencer*, March 18, 1891, 2.

74. *Madison Daily Leader* (Madison, SD), March 5, 1891, 2, and *Santa Fe Daily New Mexican* (Santa Fe, NM), March 24, 1891, 4.

75. *Indianapolis Journal* (Indianapolis, IN), March 15, 1891, 12.

76. Ing, *Kalākaua*, 187.