

Collarbone and the Social Evil

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Years ago a midwestern university coed wrote to the editor of this journal for information about "the relationships of sailors and native women in early Hawaii." Statistics were impossible, and any other sort of response seemed so obvious that the query, though repeated, went unanswered.

Certain explicit activities at or near the core of such relationships drew official attention soon after the spread of Christianity in Hawaii made lust suspect. The third law of Kauikeaouli in 1835 dealt with various kinds of "illicit connections"—adultery, fornication, prostitution and rape—and specified fines ranging from ten to fifty dollars for differing offenses.¹

By this time whalers were a prominent feature of island life. Men from the ships were not known for their strong moral fiber, and this contributed to a much-expanded "Law Respecting Lewdness" in 1841.² The British Commission government of 1843 shocked the local population with a decree that no male or female should be imprisoned for fornication unless committed in the open streets. According to the Rev. S. C. Damon, this magnetized Honolulu, drawing to the city ". . . scores and hundreds of simple-minded and unwary females from the other Islands."³

With the return of native rule, more conventional standards prevailed, and the containment of sex proceeded along familiar lines. In the latter 1840s fornication and thievery were the leading objects of police concern. The former was indeed so exasperating that early in 1847 a proposed law against adultery (*moe kolohe*) recommended near drowning and banishment for the second offense, and hanging for the third. The *Sandwich Island News*, operating its big needle as usual, commented that the result would be to send the whole native population (to say nothing of the privy council itself) to foreign parts within a month, and their return would be to a general gallows.⁴

The same journal maintained that not a native craft touched Honolulu during shipping seasons that was not crowded with Hawaiian women from other islands; hundreds and thousands were gathered semi-annually for well-known purposes, only to return to their "polluted kennels" after a few

With special acknowledgment to Douglas Lewis Toney.

weeks to spread disease. Of the estimated \$120,000 that visiting sailors yearly pumped into the economy, somewhere between \$86,000 and \$98,000 went to local ladies of pleasure.⁵

R. C. Wyllie, the minister of foreign relations, had his own pet scheme for turning off the faucet; for years he repeatedly presented a bill to discourage prostitution by regulating the passage of young females visiting seaports or going from one island to another. But in 1854 a select committee reported that such a measure would be impossible to enforce.⁶

Years of haggling divided the citizenry into two groups. One, representing those of the highest moral eminence, stood rock-hard against any compromise with the "social evil"; the other, more pragmatic, was quite willing to settle for regulation and a degree of control.

The pragmatists won. Their instrument was an "Act to Mitigate the Evils and Diseases Arising from Prostitution," approved on August 24, 1860. It provided for the registering and periodic physical examination of "every common prostitute in and around the city of Honolulu . . ." ⁷ The *Polynesian* had this to say:

. . . the law standing alone, without collateral measures, may not produce the full beneficial effects expected from it. But it is a great step in the right direction, and as such we hail it—the direction to save rather than to crush. It is the second great political victory over that rigidly righteous party in the State who, with the best intentions in the world upon the soul of the savage, yet had the most singular ideas of mercy on his perishing body.⁸

At year's end Sheriff John H. Brown and Dr. Robert McKibbin, Jr., made their first reports on the law's operation: 257 women (149 of them married, and twenty of these living with their husbands) had registered. The youngest were twelve, and only eleven were past thirty. Both the sheriff and the doctor considered overall results satisfactory, considering the implacable opposition of church leaders. Honolulu's principal streets had experienced greater order and decorum during the late shipping season than at any time since the town became a port for recruiting ships. McKibbin introduced a note on infant mortality: The registered women had produced 170 living children, 115 of whom had died.⁹

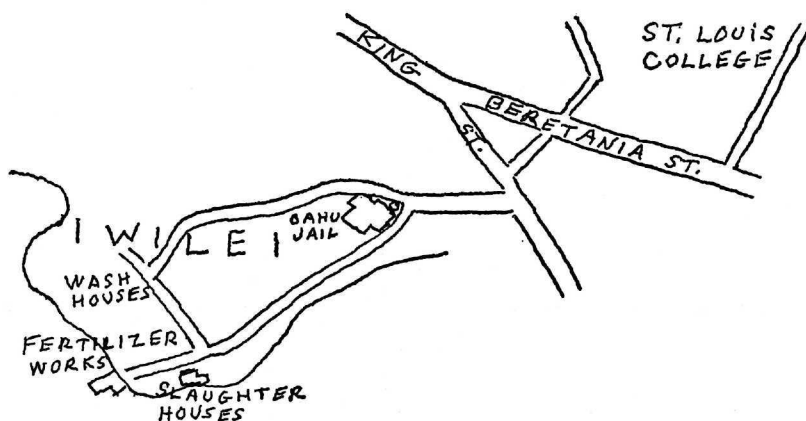
As the years passed, government met problems in administering the Act to Mitigate. It learned to be very cautious about having women entered on the register as common prostitutes. It also gave care to the matter of jailing violators, trying to steer between the Scylla of *habeas corpus* and the Charybdis of suits for false imprisonment.¹⁰ Whatever its shortcomings, the Act to Mitigate had a long life, being included in the Revised Laws of Hawaii for 1905.¹¹

By the turn of the century, however, it was coming under heavy fire from those who believed that it encouraged—if it did not institutionalize—the oldest profession. In 1901 Attorney-General E. P. Dole tried to straddle the issue by maintaining that if the Act to Mitigate was necessary in 1860, it was still so, and that the law represented ". . . an honest attempt, whether wise or unwise."¹² He did insist that it was administered honestly and in good faith.

In its defense he mentioned that at the recent session of the legislature an organization of respectable Hawaiian women had petitioned against the act's repeal and issued a circular to the public, claiming that the partial protection afforded by the law was necessary to the Hawaiian race's survival.

The rising clamor against prostitution had geographical as well as ideological aspects. For in a corner of the city a vice district flaunted itself in the faces of those who frowned upon the sale of sexual favors. This was Iwilei (collarbone), sadly out of joint with the rest of Honolulu's anatomy.

As the nineteenth century neared its end, Iwilei appeared thus on the map: (sketch not to scale).¹³



It sheltered a modest resident population, mostly Hawaiians of the laboring class, with a sprinkling of Chinese and others. Industry was represented by wash and slaughter houses, a fertilizer plant, the government laundry and the Honolulu Soap Works.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the combined efforts of the latter businesses were unable to cleanse the district's reputation, indelibly stained by the neighboring houses of prostitution.

These durable enterprises owed their vitality, not to any peculiar concupiscence of Honoluluans, but to circumstance. The decline of whaling thinned the ranks of sailors prowling downtown streets in search of commercial love, but later developments more than made up the loss. The growing plantation system demanded thousands of imported field workers. Drifting to the city, they formed and swelled old Chinatown. It was an overwhelmingly male society in the early days, and prostitution flourished. Then at century's close the United States began its Pacific adventures. These brought additional thousands of unattached soldiers and sailors, some just passing through, some stationed in the islands.

Iwilei was ready to receive them. The idea behind this enclave—that of confining ladies of pleasure to a restricted area—was at least as old as the Republic of Hawaii. At that time St. Louis College sat mauka of Beretania St., bordering the ewa bank of Nuuanu Stream. The Bishop of Honolulu shuddered

on hearing that police regulations were to be issued which would pen lewd women near that Catholic seat of learning. He generated a petition of residents asking that “. . . some other quarter be designated for the transaction of such business.”¹⁵

But Iwilei thrived, with the tolerance of the authorities and in direct violation of laws against disorderly houses, adultery, fornication, procuring, and common nuisance. To those who accused government of connivance, the answer was that it had never leased any property for the purpose of prostitution, that no official (as far as known) owned or controlled any property used for that purpose, and that no department or bureau got any revenue from such activities.¹⁶

This was the situation when, in February of 1901, the Rev. Abram E. Cory of the Honolulu Christian Church preached a sermon on this question: “Shall the Citizens of Honolulu Tolerate Iwilei?” To him at least the answer was obvious; he put together the bits and pieces and found that they spelled OUTRAGE. Later his congregation applied a jackhammer to the shell of public indifference by printing and distributing an expanded version.¹⁷ At about the same time the city’s ministerial union broadcast hundreds of circulars which asked their recipients to list, among other things, their suggestions for the abatement of vice and the snuffing out of Iwilei’s red light.¹⁸

All of this publicity focused on an area where, from four in the afternoon until two in the morning, some 145 women, aged twelve and up, daily plied their vocation.¹⁹ Officially registered were one American, one British, eleven French, and 131 Japanese women.²⁰ They were supposedly segregated in a district so secluded that no one who did not go there to visit them, came in contact with them. Not so, said Cory: Although a grand jury had said the general conditions, management and supervision were as good as could be expected, the police let the women come and go freely. They practiced their arts in other precincts of the city, and in some cases acted as children’s nurses.²¹ Their patrons included boys under age; terrible crimes were committed by the women’s “owners” when income fell below expectations; the women themselves were practically slaves, and some former occupants of Iwilei had chosen suicide rather than return.²²

Cory summarized (and tried to demolish) the reasons advanced in the defense of the district: (1) it was better to segregate the evil than to break it up and scatter it over the city; (2) it was necessary as a sanitary measure; (3) without such a place, soldiers would ruin the purity of the city; (4) closing the houses would endanger pure womanhood and the home; (5) a distinction should be made between crime and vice; (6) businessmen couldn’t afford the loss of Iwilei.²³ He bore down on (6): “Masters” would lose at least \$5.00 a night on each woman, and sometimes much more. Owners of the building used would lose some \$23,000 a year (at \$12.00 to \$15.00 a month for each inmate). Cabmen and hack drivers would lose fares. Cory estimated a minimum take of \$214,000 a year (143 women working 300 nights at \$5.00); of this sum, \$32,000 would go for rent and expenses, and \$75,000 for the support of the women and their masters. Would the remaining \$107,000 benefit Honolulu?

No, because most of it passed through the hands of Asiatic merchants and ended up in Japan, he said.²⁴

Results followed. *The Friend* noted in July 1901:

By the order of the Executive, the concentration of shame at Iwilei has been removed. It remains to be seen whether any reasonable efforts of the police will avail to stamp out the abomination, or whether the pollution will only be scattered broadcast throughout the city. . . . We are now to see what can be done to suppress it. It can hardly be doubted that in any large American city a majority of the voters are in favor of regulation rather than of suppression. Therefore the law is constantly violated, with the tacit consent of the police. Will it be so here?²⁵

The answer was yes. The "concentration of shame" proved to have remarkable staying power—so much so that in November 1904, government instituted a plan to segregate known prostitutes within a small locality in Iwilei and to provide for "sanitary inspection" of women and the issuing of weekly certificates of health. Under this scheme, diseased women would be required to take treatment and to quit the business until cured.* Those who complied with regulations got unspoken assurance that they would not be molested as long as they observed a fair degree of order and decency.²⁶ This really did go beyond "tacit consent."

A Honolulu Civic Federation, with members from all walks of life, appeared in January 1905, after a call for a public meeting. This organization zeroed in on Iwilei with a report blasting the idea of segregation. There were only two arguments favoring it: (1) it would be better to have even a part of the known prostitutes in one place, and: (2) a weekly health inspection would tend to cut venereal disease. In opposition, the Federation maintained that: (1) only a small portion of Honolulu's public prostitutes could be made to live in Iwilei; (2) clandestine prostitution would remain uncontrolled; (3) there was no lock-hospital for confining and treating diseased women, and; (4) there were no legal means to make women live in Iwilei, to require treatment of disease, or to prevent any woman, even though diseased, from continuing business.²⁷

At the end of its report, the Federation made recommendations: (1) repeal the Act to Mitigate, which was of undetermined constitutionality; (2) execute the other simple, effective laws dealing with prostitution; (3) recognize that there was no legal support for any system of segregation whatsoever; (4) place any measures dealing with venereal disease under the control of the board of health; (5) avoid any special tax on prostitutes, direct or indirect; (6) forbid government to supervise, regulate, or in any other way sanction prostitution; (7) make sex education available in home, high school and college, and; (8) abandon the Iwilei "experiment."²⁸

* To refer to one as "cured" in 1904 was more an expression of hope than a statement of fact. Use of silver nitrate to prevent gonococcal blindness in newborn babies began in the 1880s. Mercury was prescribed for syphilis; unfortunately, its only value seems to have been the relief of symptoms. There was no effective remedy for this disease until 1910, when Ehrlich presented salvarsan ("606") to a libidinous world (*Theodor Rosebury, Microbes and Morals (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), p. 213*).

But Iwilei lurched on through clouds of controversy. Time brought the spring of 1908, and to Honolulu the prospect of entertaining Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet. Remembering that sailors sometimes proved to be moral midgets, the Ministerial Union, the Civic Federation, and others launched a tooth-and-nail fight to close the red-light district forthwith. The Law and Order Committee of the Federation circulated protests and petitions. Tons of literature were imported and distributed. The Rev. Mr. E. W. Thwing and Mr. Theodore Richards were observed touring Iwilei in manifestly inadequate disguises.²⁹ The committee sent letters to Board of Health President L. E. Pinkham and Sheriff C. P. Iaukea demanding immediate closure and enforcement of law. Pinkham replied that his board was interested in disease, not prostitution, and that it would act on any case of incompetent examination by a licensed physician.³⁰

On April Fool's Day Honolulu learned that both the federal and the territorial grand juries had been casting speculative eyes on Collarbone. But reformers' hopes crumbled when neither took action.³¹ The attack now centered on the board of health. The Civic Federation suggested that the board cooperated with prostitutes and encouraged the social evil; that conditions were much the same as in 1905; and that federal and territorial laws were constantly violated.³²

An embarrassed board now tried to find out just what its policy was. At least three years had gone since Iwilei had figured in its deliberations. What came to light was this: Dr. J. S. B. Pratt, operating under Pinkham's direction, was in charge of a red-light patrol. And under Pratt functioned an agent, one M. I. Silva. About mid-1907 there went into effect a card system requiring periodic examination and health certification of prostitutes; police cooperated in a follow-up check, arresting under the vagrancy act those ladies unable to produce proof of purity. All this had been done under the personal direction of Pinkham, president of the board since April 1904.^{33*}

Thwing brought in another citizens' petition as the board pondered its position. On April 6 this group rejected Pinkham's deeds and voted to wash its hands of the "Iwilei filth."³⁴

Vice fighters meanwhile tried another gambit; they pressed U.S. District Attorney R. W. Breckons to enforce the federal Edmunds Law. That canny official replied that he would do so if he had community backing; he had already sent a letter to the Attorney General in Washington announcing his policy of non-intervention. Shocked reformers read Attorney General Bonaparte's rejoinder: The Edmunds Act should not be used in a purely local matter.³⁵

The issue was now involved in a bitter struggle over the reappointment of Pinkham as board of health president (he lost). The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* daily crucified him while urging Iwilei's demise; the *Evening*

* It seems likely that Pinkham was involved in the November 1904, plan to set up a segregated, inspected district. His views were well known, and on the above date he had held office for some seven months.

Bulletin adopted an opposite course, sneering at hypocritical do-gooders and their schemes.

When the board of health bowed out, the latter journal predicted gloomily: Iwilei was now wide open, no longer under control; were it to be broken up, its denizens would scatter over town; eventually a relieved citizenry would welcome its return. Anyhow, the red-light district would remain unless—an improbable thing—the sheriff closed it.³⁶

Three days later he closed it. At eight p.m. on April 7, 1908, Iaukea and Chief of Detectives Albert Taylor drove through the area, past Oahu Prison and the pineapple works, where there used to be a number of “resorts” until the sheriff moved them farther along to keep them out of sight of youngsters going to labor in the cannery. Stunned surprise greeted the visit, although some appeared to have got wind of it, as several houses were closed and dark. The ladies—possibly 150 or more—got the word: further infractions would bring arrests and strenuous prosecution. Half a dozen French, a Swiss, a German, and an American seemed most affected; the American promptly led a discussion about getting a good lawyer. Japanese, greatly in the majority, made no demonstration. Most of the perhaps fifty “visitors” were sailors from ships in port. Robbed of other diversions, some of them retired to a saloon, where they reviewed the evening’s events in highly critical terms.³⁷

Iaukea explained his action to the press: The only ones who had communicated with him officially were those who wanted the law enforced. No one protested; none of the businessmen or commercial interests reported to be against the closing had said anything. Now he would enforce the law everywhere, arresting all owners of disorderly houses when identified.³⁸

The hapless sheriff had misjudged; rockets of indignation split Honolulu skies, illuminating the stony path he was destined to tread. “A little more of this morality business,” fumed the *Evening Bulletin*, “and Honolulu’s visions of the glories of the Fleet will go glimmering.”³⁹ In the Chamber of Commerce, F. W. Macfarlane seconded this view: Honolulu wanted the men and the ships, and too much palaver about Iwilei might cut the town off their itinerary. No fuss was raised when warships of other nations called; Uncle Sam’s boys appeared to be especially favored by concern for their moral health.⁴⁰

And what vile outrage was this? Here at the corner of Fort and Hotel Streets a soldier from the transports approached a lei-seller. He exposed himself and made immoral advances, yelling that Iwilei’s suppression should not thwart his lust. The police escorted him back to his ship.⁴¹

In court three Puerto Rican women, formerly Collarbone’s marrow, appeared on charges of fornication. With them came an equal number of men, two being known pimps. This crafty sextet asked to be married, in order to avoid prosecution—a maneuver which the judge found without merit.⁴²

Was vice creeping like a dark stain throughout the city? A police officer was reported as saying that no prostitutes were out of business; that more Japanese women than ever before were in it; that old Iwilei inmates were laboring in

bath houses, hotels, barbershops, and in the backs of stores, daily persuading more women to join them. Arrests had been made on Beretania between Nuuanu and Fort. Officers were investigating a Portuguese hackman alleged to be helping several Hawaiian girls along the downward trail.⁴³

Iaukea's fellow Hawaiians, among others, petitioned him for redress. A letter of taxpayers and residents begged for police regulations to restrict Honolulu prostitutes to one locality, removed from business and residential sections, in some out-of-the-way place. Thousands of prurient soldiers, sailors and tourists, plus the overwhelmingly masculine local population, menaced the town's females with their carnal desires. A Hawaiian complained that since the closing of Iwilei, soldiers and sailors had been hanging about his place, making overtures to women of the family; many others had told him of similar experiences. On May 20 the sheriff got the widely-circulated petition with more than 1,000 signatures, most of whites, Hawaiians and Japanese.⁴⁴

The reformers were, of course, delighted. The Ministerial Union voted to continue and enlarge its committee on Iwilei. It promised to stay with Iaukea to the end. Thwing and C. H. Dickey wrote him that there was no real gain in the protection, largely of Orientals, in carrying on an unlawful business that enriched some of the very worst men in the community.⁴⁵ The Oahu (Church) Association likewise pledged its support.⁴⁶ In the interim, Iwilei's erstwhile businesswomen sought other pastures; some gave up prostitution, some went to the mainland, and a number transferred their activities to Hilo—a town which, one hopes, was properly appreciative.

On May 4 a new report appeared: The Ministerial Union decided that front-page headlines were something of a liability; it directed Thwing's social evil committee to work strictly under cover and to keep out of the newspapers. This injunction was violated within twenty-four hours, when a "prominent" man invited the attention of the postoffice to a disturbing Thwing—a circular on Iwilei which, the *Evening Bulletin* maintained, riled Honolulu's commercial bodies.⁴⁷

Almost a month earlier the sheriff had thrown out hints that enforcing the law might bring embarrassing publicity to some well-known men connected with Collarbone as property owners, lessees, or agents. These were to be notified of their involvement; meanwhile, special officers were to take the names of the women and their visitors, and to collect all evidence available. This huffing and puffing went on for three months; Iaukea periodically warned of serious results to follow—an example being, according to his information, the loss of \$10,000 monthly to the business community.⁴⁸

Not the least of the surprises came with the news that one member of the Ministerial Union itself owned property used for immoral purposes. Nevertheless, Iaukea forged ahead. On July 6 he issued his orders to cease and desist; thoughtfully, he gave a grace period in which to get things cleaned up, and even admitted that legal delays might prevent closing for some time. His target date was that on which the Great White Fleet should arrive. The sheriff made a personal inspection of Iwilei on the evening of Wednesday, July 10.

To his chagrin, he found only one house closed. Thereupon he set a Saturday night deadline, after which complaints would be issued.⁴⁹

The red-light district had been shut down from April 7 to June 15. On the latter date, the women themselves moved back in and opened up shop on their own account. They were still at it when the Great White Fleet hove into sight in mid-July. "White" described the paint on the ships, not the morals of their crews; during the week-long visit, Iwilei ran wide open. It closed again temporarily on July 22.⁵⁰

All along Iaukea had aimed his attack at property owners, saying that to arrest the prostitutes would be useless. Nevertheless, his first step after issuing the notices to owners and agents was to nab ten Japanese prostitutes. The sheriff proved to be an excellent seer; the whole batch of defendants was discharged by the court, leading Iaukea to say that he would bring in both men and women in the future.⁵¹

By now the sheriff himself was under hot assault. On July 11 it was disclosed that this functionary had borrowed \$100 from one Rikichi Isoi, a leading Iwilei dive-keeper who had cleverly reassigned his lease to other Japanese to escape the law. From then on the *Evening Bulletin* relentlessly mined for pay dirt in the form of a resignation.⁵²

Isoi was a sort of junior grade vice lord operating six houses with forty-eight rooms. Not all of these were occupied by prostitutes; mixed in among them were a number of laborers' families whose democratic views permitted such an arrangement. The brothel owner charged that the sheriff had demanded \$1,500 for permission to reopen his houses, while the latter maintained that this was a trap laid for Isoi. Eventually the whole mess was investigated by the Honolulu Board of Supervisors and the territorial grand jury. Both came out where they went in; no criminal complaint was filed against Iaukea, nor was Isoi indicted. In the election that fall the sheriff, failing party nomination, ran to defeat as an independent.⁵³

Just what was meant by "open" and "shut" during this time is not as clear as one might think. Iaukea was reported to have described himself as not personally against the red-light district, but as the agent of community opinion. On one occasion he said his aim was ". . . not to have it open the way it was before." Later he gave his own idea of "open": women standing in the doorways, calling to prospective customers.⁵⁴ It would be difficult to quarrel with that definition.

The soil of vice nourishes hardy plants. In short order victory slipped from the grasp of the reformers. Iwilei again went on its lewd way as lascivious lads lurked among its muddy lanes.

Some five years passed before another scythe mowed the rank growth of immorality down near the waterfront. This instrument was fashioned by a group not readily called to mind in such a context—the immigration authorities. With deportation on their minds, they descended on Iwilei on the nights of September 29 and 30, 1913. These sweeps, plus an extra four a.m. raid, affected all but three women, who claimed to be Americans. Of ninety-one prostitutes and pimps sought, thirty-seven were actually arrested; the others

fled but were being followed up. Those collared in the quiet sally were led to autos and lodged in the immigration station.⁵⁵ Eventually all aliens were deported; the Japanese disappeared entirely, and a visit some time after turned up only ten French and two Puerto Rican women, all of them living in detached cottages with fair sanitary arrangements. There were no Hawaiian women present, though two of the "French" were apparently Americans.⁵⁶

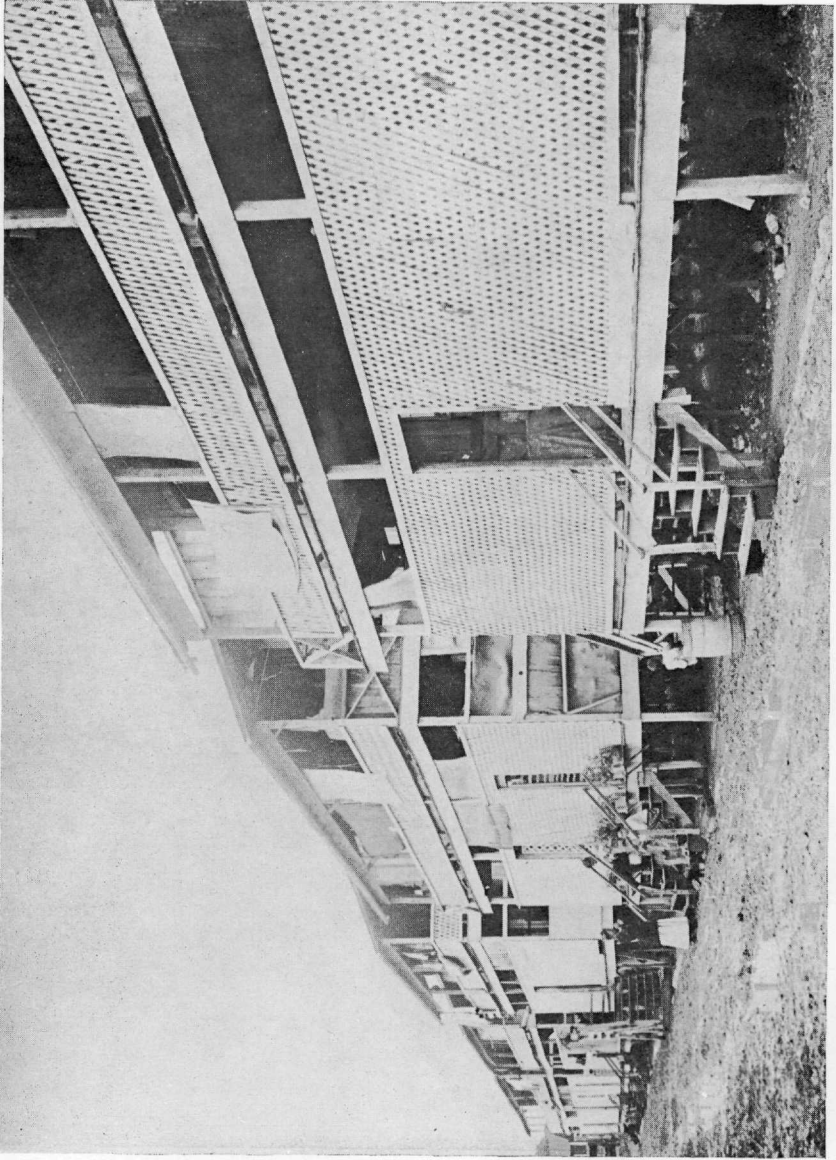
A thorough study of Iwilei made just before the immigration raid concluded that prostitution was centered to a slight degree only in this district. The number of "inmates" varied from fifty-two to 188. Comparatively few of the women lived there; most rented rooms for the night and worked in good weather and when the number of troop transports or strangers favored business.⁵⁷

Iwilei itself was dirty, dingy, muddy and ill-kept. The "houses" were poorly-lighted shacks without sanitary conveniences. At one time visitors found them occupied by eighty-two Japanese, fourteen Puerto Rican, six French, and five American women. Open vice and disorder were rare, though an occasional bold crime erupted.⁵⁸ Women living in or frequenting the district were supposed to have a venereal disease clearance from a physician, the certificate to be inspected weekly by police. But apparently this was disregarded to the point of being a farce. Military authorities maintained that from seventy-five to ninety per cent of their venereal disease cases came from Iwilei contacts.⁵⁹ Honolulu then hosted some 8,000 soldiers and marines ". . . whose training [did] not tend to foster habits of chastity. . ."⁶⁰ Even so, a special investigator reported that at least ninety per cent of army and navy officers stationed in Hawaii privately said that a segregated sex district on Oahu was necessary. However this might be, most customers rode to their health hazards in hacks; autos were too expensive.⁶¹

As noted, Japanese women dominated Iwilei (Chinese and Koreans were not in public prostitution, and there were few Filipinas in the territory). They were numerous in the population, and the Japanese had highly developed commercial vice. Some of the practitioners had been brought in as picture brides by men who wanted to exploit them; another large proportion included those whose husbands compelled them to earn money by prostitution and took the proceeds. At times Japanese women turned to prostitution because of financial stress, when out of work, or between jobs. Otherwise, they led lives of "exemplary chastity." Apparently there was easy social reinstatement for those who had abandoned harlotry.⁶²

The white women of Iwilei groused (and apparently with good cause) that clandestine prostitution in other parts of town was ruining their trade. A social survey found that the greater part of illicit sex took place in houses of assignation, tenements, parks, open spaces, and by means of hacks and autos. Counting only the most prominent, there were sixteen houses clustered around the city center, and three others in Waikiki. Business was brisk. Some

In 1911 Ray Jerome Baker photographed this row of Iwilei pleasure palaces. He also captured the obliging prostitute and friend who appear on the other side of the page. Bernice P. Bishop Museum collection.





houses sold liquor and experienced police raids; other "safe houses" operated quietly. The number of detached cottages used for prostitution was rising. Rents were from ten to twenty dollars a month, the trade was safe and lucrative, and such spots thrived with automobile and hack connections.⁶³

It was in this aspect of the "social evil" that many Hawaiian women were involved. They were naturally "... complaisant, kindly, warm-hearted, and trustful." These easy victims attached small stigma to sexual intercourse, and illegitimate children were no reproach. Therefore, prostitution did not destroy them socially.⁶⁴

The system under which Iwilei carried on was called "reglementation." This combined segregation with venereal disease inspection and control. A study made in 1913 was as critical as the Civic Federation's survey of 1905: (1) reglementation was illegal; (2) it deprived only women of liberty; (3) it made the government a procurer; (4) it commercialized vice; (5) it did not safeguard other women; (6) it burdened and debauched the police; (7) it created a crime center; (8) segregation did not segregate; (9) regulation did not stem venereal disease.⁶⁵ The one more or less bright spot in the whole business was that there appeared to be no evidence of police graft.⁶⁶

Despite all, Iwilei staggered on. John William Waldron, a Honolulu businessman and onetime member of the board of prison inspectors of the first judicial circuit, visited the red-light district one night in its later career. This is his report:

On the evening of October 26th last, upon the permission of Sheriff Rose, I accompanied Capt. McDuffie, Chief of Honolulu Detective Force, and his Deputy, John R. Kellett, on one of their weekly rounds on official inspection of the "Red Light" District in Iwilei. The place is easily reached by the road which leads from King Street in front of the Oahu Penitentiary and is located Ewa-Makai within a short distance of the same. The exact location is readily known from the large number of automobiles parked on either side of the street and the groups of men, here and there, with quite a number of others coming and going. This thoroughfare is lined on either side by places of rest and amusement, such as billiard rooms, restaurants, soda water emporiums, etc. (there are no saloons). The place is patrolled by the police and the provost guards.

Leading off this busy thoroughfare are the quarters of the "Red Light" District proper, consisting of many small cottages, built in single and double form, most of them quite new, perhaps not more than six or eight months old, in which the women reside. From these narrow streets, or lanes, many others, still narrower, lead cross lots and else wise, creating a veritable maze and rendering it easy for a stranger to lose his way.

We reached the District about 8 o'clock, much too early, I learned, to note the larger crowd of visitors to be seen later on.

The Chief sends his Deputy in advance, armed with a stout stick, with which he gives two distinct thumps on each door as a signal, well known to the inmates, that the Inspector is on his official rounds. Immediately the girls appear in the doors, or at the open windows, with the doctor's certificate in their hands. This being the subject of the inspection. Once a week these girls are subject to a medical examination conducted by a Japanese doctor, usually on Sunday, I believe, either at his office on Nuuanu Street or at the cottages themselves, for which the girls pay varying fees. The doctor's name is affixed to the certificate with the date of the examination and a statement to the effect that the party, whose name and number appear thereon, is free from venereal disease and 'safe to do business'.

When the Chief approaches, with his electric flash light, the girls seem all attention and anxious to have the ordeal over without any questioning on the part of the officer.

In fact, there was little of this. They all seemed to stand in fear of the Chief who, as he passed along the line, made no remarks except in two or three cases in which the women were not at their own quarters. These quarters were all well lighted, clean and neat, with pictures on the wall and a carpet on the floor, i.e., in the newer and more attractive cottages, some of which have three to four rooms, while others, of course, in the older section are not so pretentious, in fact, the Porto Ricans and Japanese occupy rooms more like those of plantation camps. In one of the more gaily decorated apartments, through the open door a pennant was in plain evidence and in letters of gold on a background of black velvet, was inscribed:

'AIN'T IT HELL TO BE POOR!'

The inmates were attired, for the most part, in tawdry outfit, short skirts to the knees, gaily colored hose and garters, with high-heeled slippers, cheap ribbons and lace galore, with faces well powdered, cheeks painted, hair done up in a fantastic style, an effort being made to appear as young and girlish as possible, so that an uninitiated observer would imagine some of them to be much under the legal age when, perhaps, they had crossed the thirtieth mark, or more.

Many sat, till the Chief arrived, near open windows, breasts exposed, leaning out in whispered conversation with men standing near. In one case this conversation was loud and boisterous. Three soldiers were in parlance with one woman who was holding her own in the use of words and oaths too unspeakably obscene and grossly vile to be repeated or written down. I rather thought that they were all more or less under the influence of liquor, especially the men who were in army uniform.

There were some cases in which a woman not only had her own certificate but that of the woman next door whose door was closed and curtains drawn, evidently in the act of entertaining a guest. All the apartments have back doors through which the departing guests pass quickly into more dimly lighted lanes or alleys. The front room of the apartment is usually for reception purposes, with a chamber in the rear and a bed in plain sight.

The quarters are all well lighted and cleanly kept, seemingly in good sanitary condition. There were not many visitors in evidence, possibly not more than one hundred all told and fully seventy-five per cent were soldiers or sailors with a few Orientals, especially Japanese in small groups looking on, rather than making any advances. During the round which we made of the quarters, we did not chance to see many entering as guests. Of course, the inmates had been warned that the Chief was coming and so were obliged to be on hand at the open doors or windows. In no case did the officers enter rooms or address the women. The flash light on the face of the woman for recognition purposes and then on the certificate was all that was necessary. The only cases in which the Chief addressed the woman were those in which he absolutely refused to inspect if they were not in their own quarters and to these he administered a stern rebuke. Upon inquiry I learned that the army and navy patrol assists the city police who are regularly quartered by the sheriff in order to maintain order. Bloody fights and drunken brawls frequently take place on Saturday nights and 'pay days' when the women are sometimes obliged to bolt doors, bar windows, extinguish lights and hide for safety.

The rents paid by the women to the parties owning the cottages (the newer ones all built on the same general plan as though owned by one party or corporation) vary. Some pay as high as \$45 a month, while the poorer and older apartments would not, of course, command so much.

'Pimps' were not in evidence, though it is said that they abound and prosper, the poor girls bearing the burden of their support and 'high jinks' as well as their own expenses.

In all the Chief inspected 110 certificates the larger majority being so-called white women, though there were twenty-five or more Japanese, six or eight Filipinas or Porto Ricans, and two Hawaiians. Among the whites there was a sprinkling of French and Norwegian girls, so I learned from the police. The Inspection lasted forty-five minutes and we were back at the Police Station at 9 o'clock.⁸⁷

History owes Waldron thanks—for now, at last, Iwilei's lurid sun was setting. Late in 1916 a territorial grand jury returned indictments, and on the morning of December 3, readers of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* found themselves starting at this example of journalistic prose: "Scarlet Women Admit Shame in Open Court." Twenty-four hours earlier, 108 prostitutes had crowded into Circuit Judge Clarence Ashford's room in response to bench warrants. There were no attorneys, no protests. Everybody pleaded guilty, and everybody got a thirteen-month suspended sentence. Only one woman seemed to feel any remorse; the whole affair was a show for the 100 or so leering male spectators. Not among the latter were ten of thirteen alleged pimps still in Oahu prison, unable to raise \$2,000 bond.

The women could hardly have been flattered by a newspaper comment that "The glory of the evil night became the bedraggled hussy of day"; even harsher was the judgment of the less comely: "Only the astigmatic effects of liquor could account for their being able to make a living at their loathsome trade."⁶⁸

Chief of Detectives McDuffie had failed. He wanted to extend Iwilei's life so that the women could earn enough to pay their passages to California by the first of the year. But on Saturday night, December 2, the district was shut down tight, and no attention greeted those who came knocking at the darkened doors. A few phonographs wailed; here and there soldiers of the Twenty-fifth played craps.⁶⁹

After the trial the women were free to return to Iwilei if they quit prostitution. It was not an attractive prospect; right after sentencing they streamed down to steamship offices and booked accommodations for the coast. Many bought tickets for San Francisco, a city soon to benefit from their professional endeavors.⁷⁰ Their pimps were not left behind to mourn fortune's flight. Nine of the original thirteen departed for San Francisco on the *Manoa* on December 5; the other four sailed on the *Niagara* later that week. These worthies had pulled a final caper: Two out on bond visited those in jail, and tried to toss the inmates opium pills done up in a package of cigarettes.⁷¹

Not all of the women left, however. Within a day or two an ominous report filtered to U.S. District Attorney S. C. Huber: Many of the prostitutes were fanning out into residential sections. Rumor had it that several were trying to buy a \$6,000 house in Manoa.⁷²

Was Iwilei really dead? Not quite. In April 1917, the legislature weighed a vice abatement bill. It failed to pass. This signaled action. Some old-time operators, together with newcomers, opened up business in the cribs. The night of Saturday, May 5, was filled with lights and laughter as a solid turnout of visitors toured the area. But about two-thirty Sunday morning, McDuffie and his men swooped in on a surprise raid. Two men and eight women were arrested.⁷³ This was it; the Iwilei of old was gone forever. Maugham wrote

“Rain,” his little masterpiece and best-known story.* And Collarbone was back in place.

* *Maugham's note*: “A prostitute flying from Honolulu after a raid, lands at Pago Pago. There lands there also a missionary and his wife. Also the narrator. All are obliged to stay there owing to an outbreak of measles. The missionary finding out her profession persecutes her. He reduces her to misery, shame, and repentance. . . . He induces the governor to order her return to Honolulu. One morning he is found with his throat cut by his own hand and she is once more radiant and self-possessed. . . .” (Quoted in Richard A. Cordell, *Somerset Maugham, A Writer for All Seasons* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 172).

NOTES

- ¹ *Laws of the Sandwich Islands* . . . (Oahu: Mission Press, 1835), pp. 5, 6.
- ² Lorrin A. Thurston, ed., *The Fundamental Law of Hawaii* (Honolulu: The Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd., 1904), pp. 96-101.
- ³ *Advocate and Friend* (Extra), July 31, 1843, p. 37.
- ⁴ R. A. Greer, “Honolulu in 1847,” *Hawaiian Journal of History*, 4 (1970), p. 79.
- ⁵ R. A. Greer, “A Sketch of Ke-Kua-Nohu, 1845-1850 . . .,” *Hawaiian Journal of History*, 2 (1968), pp. 7, 8.
- ⁶ FO & Ex, 1854. Broadside.
- ⁷ *Laws of His Majesty Kamehameha IV* . . . 1860 (Honolulu: 1860), pp. 33, 34.
- ⁸ Aug. 25, 1860.
- ⁹ P, Jan. 5, 1861.
- ¹⁰ W. L. Moehonua to Robert McKibbin, Jr., April 26, 1875. IDLB, XII, pp. 698, 699.
- ¹¹ Pp. 1311-1313. In 1892 the execution of the law was transferred from the Sheriff to the Board of Health. (*Ibid.*, p. 1313).
- ¹² Letter to Acting Governor Henry E. Cooper, June 3, 1901. Executive File, AH.
- ¹³ *Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands*. M. D. Monsarrat, Surveyor, 1897.
- ¹⁴ See *Husted's Directory and Hand-Book of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands* . . . (San Francisco: F. M. Husted, 1896).
- ¹⁵ FO & Ex, Document No. 48.
- ¹⁶ Dole to Cooper, June 3, 1901.
- ¹⁷ Abram E. Cory, *Shall the Citizens of Honolulu Tolerate Iwilei?* (Honolulu: Honolulu Christian Church, n.d.). Cited hereafter as Cory.
- ¹⁸ Filed in M28, Coleman, Harriet Castle, Letters, 1878-1915. AH.
- ¹⁹ Cory, pp. 2, 5.
- ²⁰ Dole to Cooper, June 3, 1901.
- ²¹ Cory, p. 6.
- ²² *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-11.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- ²⁵ P. 109.
- ²⁶ Honolulu Civic Federation of the Territory of Hawaii, *Report in Reference to Proposed Government Regulation of the Social Evil* (Honolulu: Gazette Publishing Co., April 1905), pp. 3, 4.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*

- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.
- ²⁹ *Evening Bulletin*, April 1, 1908, p. 1, c. 1. Hereafter cited as EB. All issues cited through Note 54 are for 1908.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ EB, p. 5, c. 4; April 4, p. 4, c. 6.
- ³² EB, April 2, p. 7, c. 4; PCA, April 2, p. 6, c. 3.
- ³³ EB, April 7, p. 1, c. 1; April 8, p. 4, c. 1 and 5; EB, April 2, p. 7, c. 4.
- ³⁴ EB, April 3, p. 1, c. 6; April 7, p. 3, c. 3; PCA, April 7, p. 1, c. 1.
- ³⁵ EB, April 6, p. 2; April 28, p. 6, c. 7; April 29, p. 4, c. 3.
- ³⁶ EB, April 3, p. 1, c. 6; April 7, p. 3, c. 3; April 4, p. 4, c. 6.
- ³⁷ PCA, April 8, p. 1, c. 1.
- ³⁸ EB, April 8, p. 1, c. 3.
- ³⁹ EB, April 8, p. 4, c. 1.
- ⁴⁰ PCA, April 8, p. 3, c. 5.
- ⁴¹ EB, April 11, p. 6, c. 5.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ EB, April 13, p. 4, c. 4.
- ⁴⁴ EB, May 15 and 20, p. 1, c. 3.
- ⁴⁵ EB, April 9, p. 1, c. 4.
- ⁴⁶ PCA, April 13, p. 2, c. 2.
- ⁴⁷ EB, May 4, p. 1, c. 3; May 5, p. 1, c. 4.
- ⁴⁸ EB, April 9, p. 1, c. 6; June 18, p. 6, c. 7; June 26, p. 1, c. 2; July 6, p. 1, c. 6.
- ⁴⁹ EB, July 6, p. 1, c. 6; July 8, p. 1, c. 5; July 10, p. 1, c. 1.
- ⁵⁰ EB, Aug. 29, p. 11, c. 6.
- ⁵¹ EB, July 18, p. 5, c. 5; July 23, p. 2, c. 4.
- ⁵² EB, July 18, p. 5, c. 5.
- ⁵³ EB, Aug. 3, p. 1, c. 1; Aug. 4, p. 1, c. 6; Aug. 6, p. 1, c. 1; Aug. 7, p. 1, c. 1 and 4; Aug. 11, p. 4, c. 2; Aug. 24, p. 1, c. 6; Aug. 27, p. 1, c. 1, 3, 4. This source printed full minutes of the investigations, continuing in issues from the end of August through Sept. 7; Sept. 28, p. 4, c. 1.
- ⁵⁴ EB, June 18, p. 6, c. 7; June 26, p. 1, c. 2; Aug. 3, p. 1, c. 1; Sept. 7, p. 7, c. 2.
- ⁵⁵ PCA, Oct. 1, 1913, p. 1, c. 1.
- ⁵⁶ Board of Trustees of the Kaulani Home for Girls, *Report of Committee on the Social Evil: Honolulu Social Survey, May 1914* (Honolulu: 1914), p. 5.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 14.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-26.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- ⁶⁷ Original filed in HHS. Reproduced by permission.
- ⁶⁸ PCA, Dec. 3, 1916, p. 9, c. 7; HSB, Dec. 2, 1916.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁷¹ PCA, Dec. 5, 1916, p. 7, c. 3.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ PCA, May 7, 1917, p. 6, c. 3.