

JOSEPH THEROUX

Genius Displayed: Jules Tavernier

ON DECEMBER 23, 1884, Jules Tavernier stepped onto the wharf in Honolulu. The *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported on Christmas Eve:

Amongst the passengers by the Alameda was Mons. Jules Tavernier, the celebrated French painter, whose works have attracted so much attention in Europe and America. Mons. Tavernier visits these islands for “studies,” and hopes to visit the other islands of the group during his stay.¹

Tavernier would make his name in the Islands for his oil and pastel landscapes of the volcano, yet the same issue of the *Advertiser* announced that the *Wasþ* in San Francisco was already publishing “a grand and realistic picture of the burning lake at Kilauea . . . done in fourteen colors.” He had done his first view of the volcano never having seen it.²

EARLY LIFE

All biographical notes on his early life rely on a statement³ issued by Tavernier himself in 1887 and reproduced in his obituary: that he was born in Paris in April 1844, raised in Paris and London, and educated from 1861 till 1864 at the studio of Felix-Joseph Barrias of the Ecole

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des Beaux Arts. He joined the *Companie des Marche* as a field artist in the Franco-Prussian War. On the day the armistice was signed, February 3, 1871, he returned to England and was employed for a time for the *London Graphic*, working with one Allen Mesom as his engraver.⁴

His American years are more reliably documented. In 1872 he immigrated to New York with Mesom and worked for *Leslie's Illustrated Paper*, *Harper's Weekly*, and others papers. He was sent out West, accompanied by the artist Paul Frenzeny, working for *Harper's* for a year, beginning in the summer of 1873. Their travels took them through Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming Colorado, Utah, and finally, California, sketching the plains and Indians, buffalo and trains. Both sketched, but Tavernier was the color specialist. Their *Harper's* illustrations frequently filled an entire page, for which they were paid \$75.00, and sometimes were spread out gloriously over two pages, which paid double. In 1874, they published many studies, including Tavernier's *Sioux Sun Dance*, and the following year his *Shooting Antelopes from a Railroad Tram in Colorado*. The artists would draw their sketches on wood using a mirror (they sometimes reversed the Ns in their names), before sending them to the engraver.⁵

He made his way to San Francisco, and there had a shouting match with Frenzeny, apparently over money. It ended their partnership.⁶ Jules Tavernier found himself proposing to a girl he met there named Lizzie Fulton. They were married on February 24, 1877.⁷ The marriage wouldn't last ten years.

In San Francisco, he also met the painter Joseph Dwight Strong and they soon were sharing a studio at 728 Montgomery Street. Strong, the son of a New England missionary of the same name who had preached at Honolulu's Fort Street Church in the 1850s, had recently returned from several years of art study in Munich. Strong was courting a local girl named Isobel "Belle" Osbourne, whose mother, Fanny, meanwhile, was being wooed by an unknown Scottish writer named Robert Louis Stevenson.

Belle said that Jules "was shorter than his wife, and wore the moustache and imperial made fashionable by Napoleon the Third, [and] always spoke with an accent though he had been many years in America."⁸ Lizzie, she said, was "tall, dark with an aquiline nose and fine

eyes, [and] wore her curly hair cropped short in a fashion very unusual then but most becoming."⁹

Perhaps to disguise the disparity in their height, Jules composed a dual portrait *In Wildwood Glen* with Lizzie perched in a tree holding a Japanese parasol, while the adoring artist gazed up at her, his easel and paintbox on the ground.

Belle went on, "Though Jules was a most amiable person, and Lizzie good nature itself, the two of them had a continual quarrel that would burst out unexpectedly in the most surprising way." When she "would remind him of their debts, Jules would explode into fury and the battle raged."¹⁰

Volatile, explosive, and "peppery," were some of the words used to describe Tavernier. Once, a disagreement with a patron over a com-



FIG. 1. The only known photograph of Jules Tavernier, right, at the Old Jail at Monterey, California, ca. 1881. Jules Simoneau, left, owned a restaurant (located in the old jail) and helped many struggling artists and writers. From Anne B. Fisher. *No More a Stranger: Monterey and Robert Louis Stevenson*, Stanford University Press, 1946. p. 227.

missioned work culminated with Tavernier pulling a knife and slashing his own work.¹¹ He later maintained that he only “kicked his foot through it.” The patron, though, referred to him as “that crazy Frenchman.”¹²

In San Francisco Jules and Joe organized the first Author’s Carnival, to raise money for local charities. They were also among the prime movers behind the Bohemian Club, which hosted, among others, Oscar Wilde, during his cross-country speaking tour.

TO HAWAI‘I

In October 1882, the Strongs, along with their son Austin, moved to Hawai‘i. Joe had a commission to paint landscapes for another JDS, the shipping magnate John D. Spreckels, son of the Sugar King Claus Spreckles. For a year the Strongs wrote to the Taverniers, urging them to come to the Islands.

In 1883 Tavernier was making some money with his oils of Western life, even with a couple of impressions of the volcano based on photographs.¹³ But his income couldn’t keep up with his bills. He was always using commissions to buy whiskey or items like dueling pistols or peacocks for studio props.¹⁴ In early November he wrote to the Strongs that he was planning a visit.¹⁵

Tavernier left San Francisco on December 15, boarding the *Alameda* at three in the afternoon. He left his wife Lizzie there, escaping creditors as well as a rocky marriage. The voyage to Honolulu took nearly eight days. He came to Hawai‘i with a well-established reputation, having exhibited his work at the National Academy of New York, as well as in New Orleans and Sacramento. His work was in collections worldwide, yet it would be his Hawai‘i work that would make his reputation. The Strongs greeted Tavernier at the wharf.

TAVERNIER AND STRONG

Joe and Jules had a remarkable friendship. They were the classic “boon companions.” Though nine years older than Joe, and with a greater reputation and much-published body of work to his name, Jules shared Joe’s love of art, of course, but more than that, they enjoyed setting off with easels and working outside all day, feeling the

freedom that dark European studios had not afforded them. After a day of intense sketching and painting, they would then spend the evening drinking and carousing, as both were prodigious imbibers. In addition to sharing a studio, they held joint exhibitions and boosted each other's work. But while Jules was sometimes an angry drunk, they never argued but once. Both grew big beards and painted and sang. They worked together as closely as Tavernier had done with Frenzeny and Mesom, but on their own canvases.

On his second day in Hawai'i, Christmas Eve, Jules decided he needed to add to his paintbox.¹⁶ Joe took him to the best art supply house in the Kingdom, King Brothers, on Hotel Street, which carried a wide range of artist materials, as well as providing framing, packing and shipping services. They also acted as agents for artists and exhibited their work in a well-lit gallery.¹⁷ Jules picked out four red sable brushes, eight bristle brushes, as well as seven tubes of assorted oil colors. He returned the day after Christmas and bought French charcoal sticks and a box of watercolors. Before the month was out he was back for canvas and stretchers and several tubes of white oil paint.¹⁸

He and Joe decided to form The Palette Club to attract the interest of the public in their work.¹⁹ To reporters they pontificated on the philosophy of the French Impressionists and disparaged the traditions of the Munich Academy. They stressed light and color, rather than the "indoor landscapes" of studio work, and historical paintings based on photographic-like work in the classical traditions. And though both had been schooled in this tradition, their Hawai'i work was much more like the French Impressionists than their European instructors like Piloty and Wagner. They spoke, instead of Duveneck and Dielman (other American artists who had studied in Europe) and encouraged buyers to visit their Nu'uaniu studio. They made extra money, giving instruction in painting techniques to "several ladies."²⁰

Tavernier at first shared the studio with Joe at Nu'uaniu and then at the Government House (now Ali'iōlani Hale) garret. He later rented a studio in a building in the McInerney Block, over Walter C. Peacock's liquor store, on Merchant Street. (Still later, he moved into rooms at 110 King Street, above the Spreckels Bank.) He became friendly with Peacock, who would display his paintings in his window. Another artist friend arrived, Felix Ollert, who had also worked for *Harper's* in

New York. Ollert was an accomplished engraver as well as a concert pianist who performed occasionally at the Honolulu Opera House.²¹

Tavernier easily convinced Joe to visit the Big Island. There was so much to see and paint—volcanoes, pastures and ranches, tropical forests, snow-capped mountains, lava fields, banana and sugar plantations, rivers and waterfalls, the place Mark Twain had said you could “nibble a snowball . . . and see . . . tufted coco palms.”²² Twain had complained that Cook had dismally named the place the Sandwich Islands when he should have called them the Rainbow Islands.

So, soon after New Year’s Day 1885, they booked tickets for the island of Hawai‘i. They left on January 6 on the inter-island steamer *Kinau*.²³ They stopped first at the Kona side, where they sketched the impressive *heiau* at Kawaihae.²⁴ They traveled around Hilo where they painted Rainbow Falls and the Wailuku River. Then they made for the volcano called Kilauea, whose sulphurous smell, Twain had reported, was “not unpleasant to a sinner.”²⁵ They were followed around by a young man who watched them paint. His name was D. Howard Hitchcock, soon to make his name as one of Hawai‘i’s leading artists. “When I met him in Hilo with Joe Strong . . . it was the first time I had seen a real artist . . . Like a parasite I followed Tavernier and Strong to Kilauea to watch them at their painting.”²⁶

When they returned to Honolulu they set to work at the Nu‘uanu studio for the rest of the month and throughout February. They went to Chinatown and the immigration depot to sketch workers as they disembarked. They sketched *sumo* matches at the depot, black and white studies for planned oils and to sell to *Harper’s*. At night they painted Diamond Head and fishermen by torchlight. At the end of March they had a joint exhibition.²⁷

In early March, King David Kalākaua summoned Strong to the palace. Along with various government ministers, including Walter Murray Gibson, and R.G. Irwin, the King explained that he wanted a painting for the Emperor of Japan, showing industrious Japanese plantation workers. An impressive painting would also help recruit laborers in Japan. The commission resulted in one of Strong’s most accomplished and well-known works, *Japanese Laborers at Sprecklesville Plantation*.

The *Advertiser* reported on March 4 that “the artists Tavernier and Strong took their departure yesterday by the *Kinau* for a flying visit

to Maui."²⁸ They went to the plantation at Spreckelsville, near Wailuku, and did sketches. They also visited and painted the volcano at Haleakalā.²⁹ They returned five days later on Saturday, March 7, on the *Likelike*.³⁰

On March 10 they visited King Brothers again and Jules bought a new easel and a maul stick (or *mahl*, the bridge that steadies the artist's hand). Over the next couple of weeks, he replenished his supply of paint tubes, canvas and stretchers, varnish, turpentine and siccative courtroy (a chemical that reduces the drying time of oils).³¹ He was also looking for a color to approximate the fiery lava. He settled on rose madder, that orangy red color that resembles blood. Over the next couple of years he would buy an array of the usual primary colors, with a few special colors like vermilion or Van Dyke brown added, but rose madder was the special color he selected most often. He eventually bought a dozen tubes of it. Sometimes he was able to pay cash for his materials, but many of his purchases were on credit.³²

In July Tavernier exhibited some new volcano pictures at his studio: *View of the New Lake of Fire by Moonlight* and *Bird's-eye View of the Crater*. The newspaper reporter stated that "[t]he effects of coloring and light and shade are simply wonderful." But there was some rift between the two artists; that month Tavernier left the shared studio and "moved to a room over Irwin & Co.'s bank."³³

IN HILO

In September 1885, Jules Tavernier apparently suffered an asthma attack. He left for the Big Island a week later, saying he wanted to go for his health and to continue painting the volcano. It's difficult to imagine that breathing the sulphurous fumes would help his respiratory condition. In fact Tavernier was again escaping his creditors. He would be gone several months, painting and running up more bills. He rented a studio near Hilo's bay front, above Jimmie Hill's store. He became friendly with Charles Arnold, the chief road supervisor for the island of Hawai'i,³⁴ who had a house on Pleasant Street (now Ululani Street)³⁵ just back of downtown, overlooking the Wailuku River.³⁶ In October he was making sketches for a book about the Islands to be written by Horace Wright, a *Harper's* reporter. It was

to be called *The Rainbow Land, An Artist's Rambles Through the Hawaiian Islands*.³⁷ The project, however, came to nothing.

In early November, Jules' wife, Lizzie Tavernier, and her sister arrived in Honolulu from San Francisco, and on November 8 they departed for Hilo. Tavernier had rented a house on the Volcano Road, between Hilo and Volcano Village. There he did a series of paintings that Whistler would have approved of, volcanic explosions against a night sky, lava flowing like a river, the seething cauldron of the crater lake. It was among the finest work he had ever done. But his home life and drinking were still chaotic. The marital disputes were becoming more violent. Once, visiting Arnold in Hilo, there was an uproar in the parlor. Belle Strong wrote in a private letter, "There they had a terrific quarrel, and . . . Charlie Arnold rushed in and wrestled a knife out of Jules' hand in time to save Mrs. T." She added, "JT owes everybody in Hawaii and Hilo . . ."³⁸ The story never made it into Belle's memoir. Soon after, Lizzie Tavernier left the islands, returning with her sister to San Francisco.³⁹ The marriage was over.

That same November Tavernier had two volcano studies exhibited at King Brothers gallery. "The larger one is a horizontal composition, showing the general view of Kilauea, weird and wonderful in the moonlight; the other is a view of Halemaumau at night, equally vivid and clever . . ."⁴⁰

Joe Strong had placed an ad in the Honolulu City Directory. That December Tavernier followed suit and placed a newspaper ad that ran for a few weeks:



FIG. 2. Announcement for Tavernier's studio, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, December 1, 1885.

Near Christmas 1885, a year after his arrival, and soon after Lizzie's departure, he complained of asthma and a new problem: "acute rheumatism in the right arm." The pain was so great that he found painting "very painful and at times impossible." In addition, the Hilo weather was getting to him. It was "simply atrocious," he said, "wet, windy and icy cold." But he was determined to continue painting when he felt better.⁴²

One clear winter morning in 1886, finding Mauna Kea covered in snow, Tavernier climbed down the embankment of the Wailuku River directly opposite Charlie Arnold's house, and sat on a rock beneath what is now the Wainaku Street bridge. He sketched the rocks in the river, the hillside on the left, the rock shelf that jutted into the river from the right. The composition included small figures, but mainly draws your eye up to a glorious depiction of the "white mountain" in the distance. He did the final version in pastels. Critic David Forbes described the "dramatic beauty of this tropical mountain landscape" and its "sheer mastery of composition and his handling of the pastels."⁴³ Art historian H. M. Luquiens called it, "the best of his landscapes I have seen," and thought it better than his volcano landscapes, but was under the impression that it was an oil.⁴⁴ It is now part of the collection of the Honolulu Academy of Arts.

THE CREDITORS' AUCTION

In mid-February 1886, Tavernier asked King Brothers to ship over some furniture, including an easel, a set of table and chairs, and other items.⁴⁵ To pay some of his bills with King, he exchanged several volcano paintings. He figured they were square.

In March 1886, Tavernier's San Francisco creditors—and perhaps Lizzie—were auctioning off his studio and its contents. "The entire inventory," he read in the *Advertiser*, "of sketches, . . . utensils, curios, bric-a-brac and art rubbish . . . was sold . . . [A] small study of Indian heads . . . started at 25 cents [and finally went for] \$27 . . ." That was the highest amount paid. "A portfolio of sketches [brought] \$9. The sale aggregated over \$1000. The prices generally were considered by artists ridiculously low."⁴⁶

THE CYCLORAMA

Since his first visit to the volcano, Tavernier envisioned a grand cyclorama depicting the erupting crater, which would make him some real money. People would pay admission and stand in the center of it and view 360 degrees of volcanic landscape. He began his project in mid-summer 1886 in Hilo. He erected a massive canvas, fully eleven feet high and ninety feet long. Working on the floor of a warehouse, he sketched out the features of the landscape, the volcano and Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. It took in “all points of the compass.” He worked on it intermittently, “and seemed indifferent to the hour of day or night.” He calculated that it cost him \$2,000.00 in canvas and paint. The last few weeks he worked solely on getting the colors right, barely adjusting the outlines of the figures. He completed it in mid-October 1886 and it was put on exhibition at the only large circular venue Hilo could offer, the Beckwith Skating Rink building.⁴⁷ It was called “wonderful, beautiful [and] grand . . . Hawaii’s Wonder,”⁴⁸ exhibited in Maui and Honolulu,⁴⁹ and then sent on to San Francisco. He had a four-page broadside printed up, which included a biographical sketch, advertisements, and laudatory quotes.⁵⁰ There were plans to exhibit it there, as well as in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and London, but a contract was never struck, and Tavernier was afraid that—even though it had been photographed and copy-righted in Washington, DC—the image would be reproduced by others. He also said that he could do another, even better. But he never attempted one of the dimensions of *The Great Panorama of Kilauea*. After sitting in the nation’s capitol, it was claimed by a creditor and stowed “in a garret in the State of Maine.” It has never been recovered.⁵¹

In 1887, he was completing one of his largest volcano studies—apart from the Panorama—nine-foot by five-foot behemoth depicting Halema‘uma‘u by moonlight. He was working on another showing the crater, “just before sunset.” The *Advertiser* reported in September, that his work, “will doubtless be the means of drawing an ever-increasing stream of tourists.”⁵² One view of Kilauea was titled *The Last Glow* and described by the *Advertiser* as “a perfect poem on canvas,” in which the volcano fires are abating in the evening.⁵³ He also did quiet

landscapes of the Wailuku River and Hilo Bay,⁵⁴ as well as street scenes of downtown Hilo. Samuel Parker and other notables of Honolulu society purchased his volcano studies.⁵⁵ He also worked in pastel. One such fiery volcano pastel is on permanent display at the Volcano House at Kilauea.

In addition to his oils, Tavernier used a variety of media, including watercolors, charcoal, crayon pastilles, pastels and India ink. He also worked on a variety of surfaces, trying for different effects. In addition to the usual canvas—both on boards and stretched—he used different textures of paper (academy and tinted), cardboard, strawboard and wood. On one occasion, he had King Brothers prepare some *koa* panels for him to paint on.⁵⁶

THE KING BROTHERS LAWSUIT

In September, 1887, King Brothers sent him a bill for \$275.95, totals for art supplies and services over the previous three years. Tavernier ignored it. He recalled paying \$60.00 in cash in his first year. Later, he gave them three volcano paintings, two worth \$75.00 and a larger one worth \$175.00. He had also given them a six-dollar frame for the attorney (later judge) James Monsarrat. What more did they want? He had forgotten that his total bill with them had been exactly \$666.95.

A five-page lawsuit was filed in the Supreme Court. It was accompanied by an accounts list of seven pages. His lawyer, Francis M. Hatch, replied to the court, stating his client “denies the truth of all the allegations.” The case was to be heard in the January 1888 session.

Supreme Court Justice Lawrence McCully scrawled a note on the suit, “Let process of Attachment issue as prayed for on filing an approval bond in the sum of three hundred dollars.” (That is, the sum sued for plus court costs.)

At noon on October 4, the court marshal John Kaulukou went to Tavernier’s Honolulu studio with a “garnishee summons” and “attach[ed] the property of said defendant and also 3 oil painting [sic] of the volcano views from the said Garnishee . . .” Included in the lawsuit was another man, “the said Garnishee.” King Brothers

asserted that Tavernier's "goods and effects . . . are concealed in the hands of L. J. Levey, so that they cannot be found to be attached or levied . . ." ⁵⁷ Levey was a local auctioneer and appraiser.

When confronted with the summons and the detailed accounts King Brothers had submitted, Tavernier was forced to admit their accuracy. He agreed to have the pictures sold. Where had the \$300.00 come from? In mid-October the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* carried a small item in the "Local and General" column, "Mr. Louis J. Levey sells a number of pictures by Tavernier today." ⁵⁸ It raised enough to satisfy the plaintiffs and on November 3rd Tavernier and King Brothers signed a document that discontinued the suit. ⁵⁹

TAVERNIER AND HITCHCOCK

In March 1888, he was completing another "three Volcano pictures," as well as "a view of the Pali." Another, "a view of Kilauea in full blast . . . one of Mr. Tavernier's best, and will [be] present[ed] to the Emperor of Japan." He had recently sold "a general view of the Volcano showing Mauna Kea in the background," as well as "seven sketches of views between Hilo and Volcano to a tourist . . . which should help to advertise the Islands." ⁶⁰

He traveled between Hilo and Honolulu throughout that year, teaching and drinking and producing beautiful work. He sometimes visited young Howard Hitchcock's studio and on occasion would allow the young painter to complete his sketches. Once, Hitchcock did a complete copy of *Sunset at Kilauea*, signing it "Jules Tavernier by HH." He was surprised when Tavernier "became furious and went off in a rage." ⁶¹

LAST MONTHS

On January 24, 1889, Robert Louis Stevenson arrived in Honolulu. He was no longer the obscure scribbler they had known in Oakland, but the world famous author of *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. And though he dressed like a bohemian, with red sashes and flowing curls, he had earned enough money to be conservative in his views on public decorum and public drinking. He wanted the Strong's

to behave. He also wanted them to stop associating with the drunkard Jules Tavernier.

Louis and Fanny had taken a dislike to the Frenchman, and Belle began snubbing him, too. "When I passed him on the street I looked the other way." When they met one day in a Honolulu drug store, Jules pleaded with her to talk to him. "He was lonely and desperately unhappy . . . [w]ith tears shining in his eyes he begged me to say we would be friends again." But she turned away and used words she would ever after regret: "I am Lizzie's friend."⁶²

In April 1889, Colonel Z.S. Spaulding, a Kaua'i sugar planter, bought a good-sized Tavernier (20 inches x 36 inches) volcano in oils and planned to hang it at the Paris Exhibition. At the same time the artist was doing some black and white studies of the volcano for publication in *Le Monde* to coincide with the Great Exhibition.⁶³

Still struggling to pay off debts, Tavernier would sometimes duplicate earlier successes if a buyer was at hand, even if it meant reproducing much earlier work. The last painting he was known to have worked on was such a piece. He began it during his last visit to Hilo and completed it at his Honolulu studio above Walter Peacock's store. It was called *Sunset in Wyoming* and depicted "groups of Indians with their campfires and wigwams."⁶⁴

In May, 1889, when Robert Louis Stevenson applied for a permit to visit the leprosarium on Moloka'i, Joe brought his father-in-law to see Dr. Nathaniel B. Emerson (1839–1915), then President of the Board of Health. Emerson had seen Joe's work and in 1887 had commissioned a portrait of himself. Joe had done a fine likeness in oil, though perhaps there had been delays. In any event, while he may have been happy with the likeness, he did not think much of the painter. He wrote in his diary that evening: "Stevenson to have his letter. Came to the office today with Joe Strong, who was as usual—DRUNK . . ."⁶⁵

No historian has pointed out why Joe had been drinking that particular day.

It was May 18th. That same morning his friend Jules Tavernier had been found dead in his room on King Street. He was 44 years old. Belle Strong later reported in her memoir that Tavernier had been "shot through the heart"⁶⁶ and over the years readers assumed that he

had been murdered or had committed suicide. After all, no autopsy had been conducted. But the truth was more commonplace, at least according to doctors who were quoted in the papers.

Dr. George Trousseau, a prominent Honolulu physician and surgeon, declared that no autopsy was necessary, adding that the cause of death had been "excessive use of alcoholic drinks." Joe Strong would serve as a pallbearer that afternoon at St. Andrew's Church, along with their friends Peacock, Wright, and Ollert.⁶⁷

As an indigent, and without family, Tavernier's remains were placed off to the side at O'ahu Cemetery on Nu'uaniu Avenue, in a plot designated for seamen and other transients who died far from home. The area of the cemetery is known as the Strangers' Lots.⁶⁸

The Stevensons departed Hawaii a few weeks later, taking Joe and leaving Belle and son Austin. Joe would never set foot on the Islands again, but they would all settle for a time in Samoa, where Stevenson would be buried.

The following year, the Bohemian Club of San Francisco shipped over a nine-foot granite obelisk. It arrived December 3, 1890, aboard the *Consuelo*,⁶⁹ the same ship that had brought the Strongs to Hawaii in 1882. It was placed over Tavernier's grave, against the cemetery wall, just off the main street and gate. Wreaths and bouquets arrived from friends and admirers when a graveside service was held on the 21st.⁷⁰ The stone is inscribed:

IN MEMORY OF
JULES TAVERNIER
ARTIST
BY THE MEMBERS OF
THE BOHEMIAN CLUB

There is no biography of Tavernier, and basic facts of his life are difficult to come by, and many are misleading. The first study of any sort was a paper delivered in 1940 by H. M. Luquiens, the head of the University of Hawaii's art department, to the Social Science Association of Honolulu.⁷¹ Yet most of it was based on that broadside Tavernier had printed in 1887, as well as anecdotes from Belle Strong's

colorful but unreliable memoir. A 1996 article in *Honolulu* magazine drew on these and introduced new misconceptions.⁷² Eugen Neuhaus, an artist and critic, in his *History and Ideals of American Art*, calls Tavernier merely a “western painter,” ignoring his Hawaiian work.⁷³

David Forbes called him simply “the best painter of the period in Hawai‘i,” the portrayer of “spectacular images” and the artist whose “personal interpretations of the volcano became firmly implanted in the minds of his audience who found it difficult to think of volcano paintings without having one of his dramatic night scenes come to mind.”⁷⁴



FIG. 3. Sketch of Jules Tavernier from the *San Francisco Sunday Call*, April 6, 1911.

The *Advertiser* gave a more generous summation when it predicted a month after his death:

There is no doubt that the pictures of the late Jules Tavernier will increase in value, as his works represent a school of art that is not of a common kind; and the subjects are always interesting and valuable in proportion to the genius displayed."⁷⁵

NOTES

¹ *PCA* 24 Dec. 1884.

² *PCA* 11 Nov. 1884.

³ Autobiographical sketch, part of the broadside "Tavernier's Volcano Panorama. Honolulu, H.I. Jan. 1887," AH.

⁴ "Jules Tavernier—Sudden Death of the Celebrated Artist and Painter," *PCA* 20 May, 1889.

⁵ Rober Taft, "Pictorial record of the Old West 1. Frenzeny and Tavernier," *Kansas State Historical Society* (14 Feb. 1946) 1–35. This otherwise reliable article states that Joseph Strong was "a brother-in-law of Robert Louis Stevenson" (p. 30). Of course, while he was technically Stevenson's "step-son-in-law," RLS often called him his "son-in-law."

⁶ Hjalmarson, Birgitta, *Artful Players, Artistic Life in Early San Francisco* (Los Angeles: Balcony Press, [1999]) 52.

⁷ *San Francisco Call*, 25 Feb. 1877, p. 7, c. 8.

⁸ Field, Isobel, *This Life I've Loved* (New York: Longsmans, Green and Co., 1937) 126.

⁹ Field, *This Life* 126

¹⁰ Field, *This Life* 140

¹¹ Hjalmarson, *Artful Players* 49.

¹² *PCA* 20 May 1889.

¹³ *PCA* 11 Nov. 1884.

¹⁴ Field, *This Life* 141.

¹⁵ *PCA* 11 Nov. 1884.

¹⁶ This paintbox actually turned up, along with two sketches, in Hitchcock's Honolulu studio in 1939. Its present whereabouts is unknown. *HA* 16 Aug. 1939.

¹⁷ *PCA* 22 Oct. 1885.

¹⁸ King Bros. vs. Jules Tavernier, Law Division, Case #2547, First Circuit Court Records, AH.

¹⁹ *PCA* 6 Jan. 1885.

²⁰ *PCA* 20 May 1889.

²¹ *PCA* 20 Apr. 1889.

²² A. Grove Day, *Mark Twain's Letters from Hawaii* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1975) 201.

- ²³ *PCA* 7 Jan. 1885.
- ²⁴ *PCA* 7 Apr. 1885.
- ²⁵ Day, *Mark Twain's Letters*, 297.
- ²⁶ *HA* 16 Aug. 1939.
- ²⁷ *PCA* 2 Apr. 1885.
- ²⁸ *PCA* 4 Mar. 1885.
- ²⁹ *PCA* 26 Aug. 1885.
- ³⁰ *PCA* 9 Mar. 1885.
- ³¹ King vs. JT.
- ³² King vs. JT
- ³³ *PCA* 25 July 1885.
- ³⁴ *PCA* 3 Nov. 1885, and obituary *PCA* 25 Sept. 1890.
- ³⁵ Pleasant Street. In 1909, most Hilo street names were changed to Hawaiian names. Information courtesy of the staff of the Lyman House Museum, Hilo, Hawai'i. One of the few exceptions is Furneaux Lane, named for the Hilo-based painter Charles Furneaux, originally from Melrose, MA. An apartment house now stands at the site of Arnold's house.
- ³⁶ *PCA* 12 Oct. 1885.
- ³⁷ *HG* 25 Aug. 1885.
- ³⁸ Letters from Joseph Dwight Strong and Isobel Strong to Charles Warren Stoddard; from the Charles Warren Stoddard Collection, reference HM 37959-3165, originals at the Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; Isobel Strong to Stoddard, 4 Feb. 1886.
- ³⁹ Charles Warren Stoddard Collection, Huntington Library.
- ⁴⁰ *PCA* 4 Nov. 1885.
- ⁴¹ *PCA* 1 Dec. 1885.
- ⁴² *PCA* 22 Dec. 1885.
- ⁴³ Forbes, David, *Encounters with Paradise: Views of Hawaii and its People, 1778-1941* (Honolulu: Honolulu Academy of Arts, 1992) 195.
- ⁴⁴ H. M. Luquiens, "Jules Tavernier," *Honolulu Academy of Arts Annual Bulletin* 2 (1940), 29.
- ⁴⁵ King vs. JT
- ⁴⁶ *PCA* 23 Mar. 1886.
- ⁴⁷ *PCA* 25 Oct. 1886.
- ⁴⁸ *PCA* "Hawaii's Wonder—Jules Tavernier's Great Panorama of Kilauea," 21 June 1889.
- ⁴⁹ *PCA* 22 June 1887.
- ⁵⁰ "Tavernier's Volcano Panorama. Honolulu, H.I. Jan. 1887, W. H. Stone, Manager." Broadside, AH.
- ⁵¹ *PCA* 21 June 1889.
- ⁵² *PCA* 23 Sept. 1887.
- ⁵³ *PCA* 25 June 1886.
- ⁵⁴ *PCA* 30 Mar. 1886.
- ⁵⁵ *PCA* 3 Nov. 1885.
- ⁵⁶ King vs. JT.

- ⁵⁷ King vs. JT.
- ⁵⁸ *PCA* 18 Oct. 1887.
- ⁵⁹ King vs. JT.
- ⁶⁰ *PCA* 5 Mar. 1888.
- ⁶¹ Forbes, 183.
- ⁶² Field, *This Life*, 248.
- ⁶³ *PCA* 13 Apr. 1889.
- ⁶⁴ *PCA* 14 June 1889.
- ⁶⁵ Kent, Harold W., *Dr. Hyde and Mr. Stevenson* (Rutland and Tokyo: Tuttle and Co., 1973) 256.
- ⁶⁶ Field, *This Life*, 248.
- ⁶⁷ *PCA* 20 May 1889.
- ⁶⁸ "Jules Tavernier" reference card and "Strangers Lots Map" p. 156, Records File, Oahu Cemetery Office, Honolulu.
- ⁶⁹ *PCA* 4 Dec. 1890; "Monument to Famed Island Painter Stands in Nuuanu After 50 Years," *HA*, 13 Dec. 1940. When Nuʻuanu Avenue was straightened in 1917, the outer wall of the cemetery was moved in, along with several graves. Tavernier's grave was one of those moved. This seems to be the reason his grave stone abuts the wall. See *PCA* 2 Dec. 1917.
- ⁷⁰ *PCA* 20 Dec. 1890.
- ⁷¹ Luquiens, 25–31; Huc Mazelet Luquiens was an artist as well as the head of the art department at the University of Hawai'i in the 1930s and 40s; obituary, *HA* 11 May 1961.
- ⁷² Steven Mair, "Jules Tavernier: Hawai'i's First Real Painter," *Honolulu Magazine* 93 (Nov. 1996) 81–84. Errors include, but are not limited to, people's names (he calls Isobel Strong Field "Isobel Fields Strong" and H. Howard Hitchcock "Howard Hitchcock"); he thought that the Taverniers came to Hawaii together; they did not; that Lizzie Tavernier lived for some time in Honolulu and was, with her husband "an integral part of high society." As bohemians they were not in "high society." The article repeats the story—that originated with Neuhaus—that people with unpaid debts were not allowed to leave the Islands, and thus Tavernier was unable to depart with his wife. No evidence is given for either assertion. In fact, the King Brothers lawsuit suggests that he had made good on much of his debt. Maier, like Luquiens, generally tends to exaggerate Furneaux's influence, and diminish Strong's.
- ⁷³ [Karl] Eugen Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford California: Stanford UP, 1931); cited in Luquiens, 26.
- ⁷⁴ Forbes, *Encounters in Paradise*, 178.
- ⁷⁵ *PCA* "Tavernier Pictures," 14 June 1889.