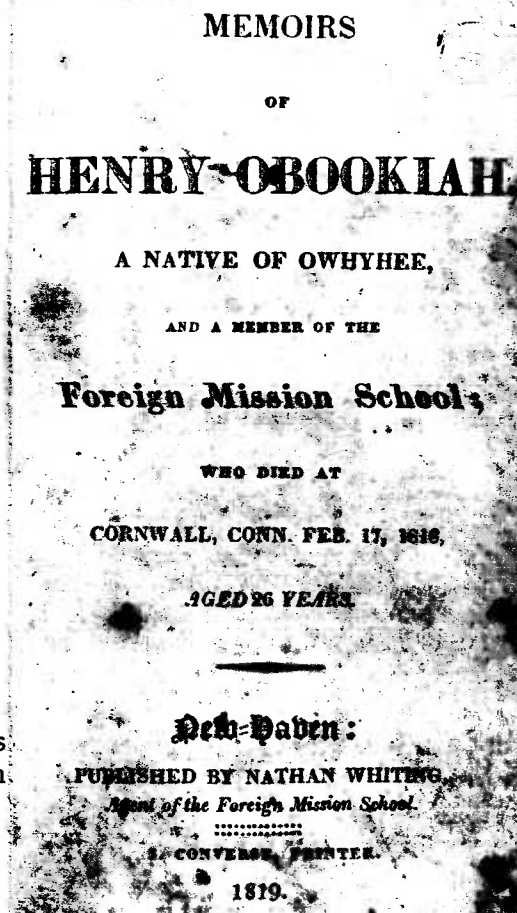


RETURN JOURNEY: HENRY OBOOKIAH, ca.1792-1818 ----- Elliott #1774

This thinksheet celebrates a gift to/from me. "To": I happened upon "Memoirs of Henry Obookiah," New Haven/1819, in the library of Lloyd and Ruth Miller of Centerville, MA--given me "for whatever use you may put it to." What seemed appropriate, I gave to the (UCC) Craigville (MA) Conference Center, in whose grounds Loree and I live--though the usual terminus of libraries I'm responsible for is N.Y. Theological Seminary, to which I'm related (with duties including the processing of libraries given to NYTS). "From": As the memoirs frequently mention Andover (9 reff., "In."), I have given this work to the rare book room of the library of Andover-Newton Theological School....The rest of this thinksheet is impressionistic commentary.

1. As the titlepage indicates, this worthy died, at a mere 26 years of age, one year before the book was printed--and the very year, from Boston, the first Westerners settlers sailed for the Pacific. In the thinksheet's title, "return journey" lifts up the fact that this single human being was responsible for the first Pacific/Atlantic/Pacific journey involving the West in Pacific residence (though of course commerce, especially whaling, had made previously many roundtrips). Though his death prevented his return to his native island, the witness of his life and mouth stirred up New England Congregationalists to send missionaries, so the Good News would be added to the good thing New England commerce was making of its contacts with the Sandwich (later, Hawaiian) Islands. (*2nd: first commerce was sandalwood.)....The Columbia Encyclopedia mentions "Owyhee" as the earlier form of "Hawaii"; on this titlepage, there's an additional "h."....Note that the titlepage identifies Obookiah as student: he was that, avidly so, wherever he was--first learning from his uncle to be a priest of the old Hawaiian religion. When he died, he was in preparation for ordination and return home as a Christian missionary.

2. This primary document of Christian missions corrects many an error in Jas. Mitchner's anti-missionary novel HAWAII (Random House/59, forever thereafter in softcover; answered by GRAPES OF CANAAN, obtainable from the UCC Conference, Honolulu; see an RCC effort to separate truth from propaganda: Bp.Restarick, HAWAII 1778-1920). While teaching at the U. of Hawaii, I came to know the two women responsible for the re-issue of the MEMOIRS, viz., Edith Wolfe and Albertine Loomis (UCC Hawaii Conference/68, the 150th ann. of Obookiah's death), This edition includes a map of the Sandwich Islands, two portrait engravings of H.B., a dozen pages of photo reproductions, "Notes," and "Index"--a worthy job....The earliest editions were 1818 and 1819, both English; the Hawaiian edition, 1867, (1) has the Hawaiian spelling, HENERI OPUKAHAIA, and (2) has him born in 1787, five years earlier than the titlepage of the English editions (whose titlepage is on my thinksheet: it does not appear in photo in the 150th ann. reissue, though the Hawaiian titlepage does)....The first printing was a few months after H.O.'s death; this gift-copy is of the second printing, the following year. A best seller among church folk, "this book shaped the future of Hawaii" (xi, A.Loomis); the document of a life cut off from mission became the major motivator for mission, and his gravestone in Cornwall CN proved to be "the hinge on which the door of the history of modern Hawaii swung" (viii, E.Wolfe). Research for the 150th ann. volume included the ANTS Library. (pp.97f).



OVER

3. The actual "return journey" was made by three other Hawaiians (on the Thaddeus, with the original settlers from New England, 1819-20). Why, then, do I use the expression for Obookiah? Because he, more than any other human being, occasioned America's first missionary journey to the Pacific--by the impact of his own missionary journeys around New England to raise money for educating, in New England, Hawaiians to become missionaries in Hawaii; and by the impact of his MEMOIRS. N. Perkins Jr. has this in his 21Jan17 report of his visiting towns with Obookiah, who for the purpose was on leave from "the Heathen School in Connecticut": (*The aims, a liberal contribution, ...an awakening in the Christian public, (and) a Foreign Missionary spirit* (this last "I had not anticipated") (were resoundingly fulfilled). It is truly astonishing to see what effects are produced on the feelings of the people by seeing Henry, and hearing him converse. It opens the hearts and hands even of enemies. Many have contributed generously who never contributed before. (PP.108 of 150th-ann. ed.)...Sidney E. Ashstrom (A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE AM. PEOPLE, Yale/72, p.863), mentions the three Hawaiians and indirectly alludes to the human quality of the whole enterprise--again, contra Michener: "Nowhere else under the American flag, or any other flag, have the Orient and the Occident met and blended with such goodwill and amity"...For Henry's influence on individuals, note Robt. Hall Glover (THE PROGRESS OF WORLD-WIDE MISSIONS, Harper & Bros./25, p.316): Hiram Bingham, a student of Andover," upon Henry's death, "volunteered to go in his stead" to Hawaii. (While the modeling is not only from Bingham, Michener's Abner Hale is close.)

4. The reverse of the MEMOIRS' titlepage (here; the facing page is p.1) shows that the owners, copywriter holders, were "LYMAN BEECHER, and JOSEPH HARVEY." The latter gets 8 reff. in the "Index" of the 150th-ann. edition; he was one of three on Henry's pastoral-care committee, so named in the fall 1814 minutes of the annual meeting (of the North Consociation of Litchfield County) at which Henry came under care; the meeting voted him \$28 for rooming Henry in his home; and he was "commissioned as (an) agent" for money-raising for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the board that had sent Adoniram Judson to Burma in 1812, the board that sprang from the Williams College "Haystack Prayer Meeting" (in which was Sam. Jn. Mills Jr., mentioned in the MEMOIRS)...The other promoter of the MEMOIRS' publishing, Lyman Beecher, is memorialized in Yale's Beecher Lectures and by having sired "Uncle Tom's Cabin" Harriet and preacher-to-America Henry Ward Beecher. His very long sermon at Henry Obookiah's funeral is in the MEMOIRS.

District of Connecticut, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of September, in the forty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, LYMAN BEECHER, and JOSEPH HARVEY, of the said district have deposited in this office, the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

"Memoirs of Henry Obookiah, a native of Owhyhee, Member of the Foreign Mission School; who died at New Haven, Conn. Feb. 17, 1818, aged 26 years."

in conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the term therein mentioned"

R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.
A true copy of Record, examined and sealed by me,
R. I. INGERSOLL,
Clerk of the District of Connecticut.

MEMOIRS
OF
HENRY OBOOKIAH.

HENRY OBOOKIAH was a native of Owhyhee, the most important of the Sandwich Islands. He was born about the year 1792. His parents ranked with the common people; but his mother was distantly related to the family of the King. Her name was Kummoolah. The name of his father is unknown. When Obookiah was at the age of ten or twelve, both his parents were slain before his eyes. "In the war," to use his own language, "made after the old King died, to see who should be the greatest among them." The only surviving member of the family, besides himself, was an infant brother two or three months old. This little brother he hoped to save from the fate of his parents, and took him upon his back to flee from the enemy; but was overtaken, and the child cru-