

7. Hawaii – Frank Molteno goes whaling in the Pacific

A rupture, but of a wholly different kind, happened with John Molteno's, Frank. He, like his elder brother John Charles a few years before,¹ concluded that there was no future for him in England and emigrated. At the age of only 21, he landed up in 1837² in the middle of the Pacific Ocean on the Sandwich Islands, as the British called Hawaii when Captain Cook first stumbled upon them in 1788. This is where Frank settled for the rest of his life – and which led to the founding of a new branch of the Molteno family. It was still the age of sail and the islands were located about as far from London as it was possible to get on the planet. For a century and a half after Frank's death, there was absolutely no contact between his descendants and any other Moltenos. The Hawaiian Moltenos did not even know of the existence of other branches of their family in Britain, South Africa, Australia, or anywhere else. It was only in the course of writing this book that we stumbled on one another, and indeed this chapter could not have been written without these distant cousins generously sharing information with me about their Hawaiian forebears.³

Frank Molteno's narrow escape off the Californian coast, 1838

The first we know about Frank Molteno in that part of the world was when he joined the crew of the *Lama*, based in Hawaii. It was a small, square-rigged, two-masted ship, somewhere between 75 and 150 feet in length. Captain Bancroft was in command and engaged in what was called trading 'skins'. There was a lively market in animal pelts, notably beaver, red fox and squirrel, all of which were greatly valued in Europe and the USA for the warmth they could provide people with during the savage continental winters. The West Coast was populated at this time by native Americans, among whom a tiny number of traders and trappers from the East Coast were living. These men had reached the area by sea; no party of American settlers reaching the West Coast overland until 1841. Further south, Mexico, newly independent of Spain, exercised a nominal sovereignty along what is today the Californian coast – hence the Spanish names of its early settlements like Los Angeles (the angels) and San Francisco (St. Francis).⁴

Visiting ship would stop off at a Native American village on the coast, negotiate with local men to come on board with their canoes and, for an agreed recompense, transport them to where there were good hunting grounds, and the 'Indians' would paddle ashore, hunt what animals they could, and weeks or months later be returned by the ship's captain to their village. The ship would then sail

¹ See Chapter 8.

² Tribute to Frank Molteno on his death, *Hawaiian Gazette*, 3 March 1869.

³ I am most grateful to Mandy Ellis-Ishakawa, Ian Lewis and Dr Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman – all descendants of Frank Molteno, and Jenny Molteno in Australia.

⁴ Mexico only became independent in 1821, not long after the end of the Napoleonic Wars. It lost much of its territory, including California, when the United States went to war against it in 1848.

back to the Hawaiian islands from where the pelts would be shipped to Europe or the East Coast of America.

We know about Frank's involvement in this trade from a long letter he wrote to a Mr Grimes, signed 'Your obedient humble servant' and recounting 'the distressing affair which happened' on board the *Lama*. Grimes was possibly the man who owned the boat and financed the venture. Frank's letter appeared in a very early number (January 1839) of the *Hawaiian Spectator* which was published partly in Hawaiian and partly in English. We only have the text because it was reproduced nearly a year later in the *Sydney Herald* (25 December 1839) as a result of a copy of the *Spectator* having reached New South Wales and the *Herald*, intrigued by the story, deciding to reprint Frank's account.

It was early winter 1838. Captain Bancroft had his wife on board, along with three other European men, including Frank; the rest of the crew being Hawaiians. They had headed over 2,000 miles east-north-east to the West Coast where they had picked up some 'Indian' trappers. With good weather continuing, they reached Point Concepcion, which lay about 125 miles west of Los Angeles where the Californian coast turns sharply north towards what today are Oregon and Washington State. They then headed for a series of quite sizeable, uninhabited islands – Santa Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz – about 30 miles south of Point Concepcion. On 16 November, the day of Frank's 22nd birthday, they reached Santa Miguel. Captain Bancroft sent the 'Indians' off in their canoes to hunt on the island. Two days later, two of the canoes returned, but with only three skins. Bancroft spoke to one of the two Indian headmen, Yeltenhow, quite brusquely and found that the men had done no hunting at all the previous day. He sent them off again with Mr Robinson, one of the crew, this time accompanying them. But Yeltenhow, Frank records, was 'very sulky from this time on and the principal cause of all that happened afterwards.'

Two days later, two more canoes came back to the *Lama*, this time from the neighbouring and much bigger island of Santa Rosa, but still with only eight skins. Later on another canoe arrived with four more skins. Robinson reported that the 'Indians' were not hunting well and had been quarrelling amongst themselves while on the island. Captain Bancroft was clearly irritated. No hunting meant no pelts and the financial failure of the voyage. He ordered a gun to be fired as a signal to all the hunters to return to the ship, but they took no notice. Robinson was sent ashore again, with orders not to proceed to the next island, Santa Cruz, til Santa Rosa had been well hunted.

A couple more days passed and Captain Bancroft then sailed from Santa Miguel to meet everyone off Santa Rosa. To the crew's surprise, they saw some canoes coming over from the third island, Santa Cruz. The Captain thought they must be strangers and ordered the guns to be loaded – a reflection of the lawless condition of the Californian coast at this time. In fact, all the canoes were the ship's own; but the men had clearly violated the orders to hunt out Santa Rosa before proceeding to the next island.

The canoes reached the *Lama* at 11 in the morning and the Indians crowded on board. Captain Bancroft began to find fault with them; high words were exchanged (all in what Frank calls the North West language that neither he nor the Hawaiian crew members could understand). But things seemed to settle down and the Captain went below for dinner with his officers while the Indians remained up on the fo'c's'le talking among themselves. When he came up on deck a bit later, the row started all over again 'and by what we could understand, very bad language passed between them'.

Suddenly the Indians began to pass their muskets up out of their canoes. Captain Bancroft ordered Mr Robinson to stop them, but it was too late. Bancroft went forward but Yeltenow shoved him away. He then ran aft shouting something Frank supposed was 'Fire if you dare' and fire they did. He tumbled down into the waist of the ship. When Frank and the other Europeans who were still below heard the firing, they rushed on deck. The 'Indians', all now armed with their muskets, were on one side of the fo'c's'le, the Hawaiians on the other, and the two white men aft. One of the latter, Gaydon, was shot in the head and killed on the spot. For some reason – Frank does not speculate why – he and Mr Robinson escaped without a scratch. The Captain's wife was not so lucky. She had rushed across to her husband and thrown her arms round him, begging for his life, but the Indians went on firing and she was hit repeatedly in the legs. As for her husband, he was killed in a fusillade of shots.

The 'Indians', who had by now armed themselves additionally with the ship's boarding pikes as well as their own knives, came aft and demanded all the ship's weapons and the keys to the 'arm-chest'. They ordered Frank and the surviving crew to sail them back to their village, where they would leave the ship in their canoes. The little vessel set sail up the coast, burying the two white men at sea on the 25th, and reaching Kigarny a month later -- on the 26th of December. It must have been a very tense voyage. In the end, the men quit the ship with all the items they had demanded, but leaving five skins and 21 tails 'as a present for Mr Robinson'. Frank does not relate who, in the absence of the dead Captain, navigated the *Lama* back over thousands of miles of ocean to the Honolulu, but Hawaiians were well known to be superb sailors.

Hawaii at the time of Frank's arrival

This string of sub-tropical islands first became inhabited when Polynesian sailors reached them around 1,500 years ago. Situated in the Northeast Pacific Ocean 1,500 miles north of the Equator and an even longer distance from North America, these mountainous volcanic islands are strung out over several hundred miles. The main inhabited islands, all but one only 50 or 60 miles long, are Kauai in the north, Oahu to its south (with Honolulu, where Frank settled), Maui, and much the biggest of them all, Hawaii (meaning 'the Big Island').

There were only two routes by which a sailing ship from Europe could reach this remote location. The shorter, but most dangerous, route was round Cape Horn which meant spending up to half a year sailing down the length of the Atlantic Ocean, round the storm-wracked tip of South America, and then up almost the same distance north through the Pacific. The more usual, 19th century route was via Britain's new colonies in Australia. We know that Frank's brother Fred hoped some 15 years after Frank's departure from London to find him in New South Wales.⁵ Why Frank did not settle there is not known. It was of course a penal settlement and even in the 1820s nearly half its British (as opposed to indigenous) population were convicts who had been transported there. Frank may have found the atmosphere uncongenial; alternatively, being entirely without capital, earning his living as

⁵ See the previous chapter.

a sailor may have been almost the only option. Soon after arriving, if not immediately, he got a passage to the far more remote destination of the Sandwich Islands where he then based himself.

Frank arrived in the little coastal settlement of Honolulu in the late 1830s. By this time, there had been a unified political authority over all the islands for quarter of a century, following Chief Kamehameha of Hawaii's conquests of the other islands. Relying in part on a small number of foreigners with guns, he established himself as King of the whole archipelago in 1810 and moved his capital to Honolulu which was situated on the shores of Oahu Island's great natural harbour. From the early 1820s, foreign whaling ships began to stop off there and the village acquired began to grow into a tiny town. Port cities were always rough places as tough, lonely men came ashore. Prostitution, heavy drinking, gambling and rowdy behaviour were commonplace, and Honolulu was no exception. Its expatriate population swelled as sailors sometimes jumped ship in order to escape the hard life on board – the poor food, constant cold, and the dangers of hunting whales in open boats.⁶

Frank's arrival coincided with the people of the islands being caught up in a maelstrom of change.⁷ Diseases hitherto non-existent on the islands were already beginning to decimate the population. Like the indigenous peoples of the Americas following the arrival of Europeans, Hawaiians fell prey to measles, whooping cough, influenza and other imported diseases.⁸ A population of several hundred thousand fell to 130,000 by the early 1830s, and halved again to 60,000 by 1860.⁹ At the same time, the number of foreigners grew. There were only some 2,000 when Frank first arrived, but 20 years later the number had doubled. So the balance between indigenous Hawaiians and immigrants was shifting in his time, and even more rapidly in his children's generation; by the time of his death in 1869 the number of native Hawaiians had shrunk to just under half the total population.

Other huge changes resulted from the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries from New England in the 1820s. They rapidly established themselves as the major force re-shaping Hawaiians' belief systems, modes of dress, schooling, and way of life. The intruders were profoundly hostile to the people's customs and practices. One example of the early missionaries' racist attitudes was their attempt to forbid their children playing with local Hawaiians for fear they would pick up a far too free and easy attitude towards sex!

⁶ www.hawaiihistory.org

⁷ This account relies on several sources, including Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon and the Sandwich Islands*, published in the 1870s and various Internet sites, including <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Honolulu.aspx>

⁸ For a detailed account of a series of epidemics that afflicted all the Hawaiian islands in 1848-49. Robert C. Schmitt and Eleanor C. Nordyke, 'Death in Hawaii: The Epidemics of 1848-49'.

⁹ According to an early census in 1832 conducted by the missionaries, and another in 1860, see also www.fsmitha.com/h3/h43-pa2.htm

Earning a living from the sea

Frank had started his seafaring life as an ordinary crew member, picking up the essential skills of boat handling, navigation and captaining a crew. Hawaii offered various ways of earning a living from the sea. One was the coastal trade between the islands; another was whaling. Frank got involved in both, as shown by his name appearing in what fragmentary sources exist – reports in local newspapers, lists of Arrivals and Departures of Merchant Vessels at Honolulu, and lists of Whalemens. He did well enough to get a part share in one or two vessels and eventually to own his own boat and become a ship's captain. As in all forms of enterprise, it was more lucrative to employ others than just being an employee. He spent most of his time not in Honolulu, but on the high seas.

The whaling industry on the islands had started growing massively just before Frank arrived. Long before the discovery of oil wells and invention of the combustion engine, the 19th century experienced a big demand for oil – for use in lamps, heating and to lubricate machinery. Whales were the prime source because of their huge size. An added commercial reason for hunting whales was the baleen strips supporting their lower jaws which Europeans began using in women's corsets, for buggy whips and so on. Sperm whales in the Arctic and Pacific Oceans off the Japanese coast were particularly prized. But Japan was closed to foreigners until the late 1860s, so the Hawaiian islands were an ideal stopping off point for whaling ships needing to re-stock with water and provisions and to trans-ship the oil barrels containing their precious cargo for onward despatch to markets in Europe and the Eastern seaboard of North America. The very first whaling ship arrived in Hawaii in 1819. The boats mainly used the ports of Honolulu where Frank based himself and Lahaina on the spectacularly beautiful neighbouring island of Maui, dominated by its 10,000 foot volcano Haleakala. By the late 1820s, some 150 ships, mainly American, were stopping in Hawaii every year, and this grew to over 500 in the 1850s.

Frank was involved in whaling one way or another throughout his life and some newspaper reports give us a glimpse of his life as a whaling captain. In March 1857 the *Daily Globe* ran a report from what it still called the Sandwich Islands that Captain Molteno of the schooner, *Maria*, had been an eyewitness to a conflict between two different species of whales in Kalepolepo Bay. A school of sperm whales had entered the bay, but been driven out by two humpback whales. Not to be put off, the sperm whales returned later in the day, only to be driven off again. Frank felt the humpbacks appeared to consider the bay as their own particular territory.

There happen to be several reports from the year 1861 that provide a little more detail about his life as a whaler. On 26 February – ie towards the end of the winter – the *Marine Journal* listed the *Maria*, with him as Captain, carrying 850 barrels of oil (the second largest consignment of the 19 vessels listed). A couple of months later, on 14 April, the same journal reported the *Maria's* arrival in Honolulu, specifying it as a Hawaiian whaler (very rare among all the American boats listed). It had been 'out [at sea] five and a half months' and had on board 1,030 wh [whalebone?] and 78 barrels of whale oil. Later in the same year, Frank featured in the 'Fall Season 1861 North Pacific Whalemens' List' as Captain of a different boat, the *Harmony*. No details of sperm oil or whalebone were mentioned; instead the entry merely said the ship had sailed for the Californian coast on 21 October. The following year, 1862, the *Marine Journal* reported that they had heard from Frank, Captain of the 'bark', *Harmony*, that they had killed 15 whales.

The whaling era lasted throughout Frank's life. Its demise was only heralded with the discovery of petroleum in Pennsylvania in 1859 which triggered the start of the on-shore US oil industry. It suffered another blow during the American Civil War (1861-65) when, towards its end, Confederate vessels started attacking and sinking large numbers of Yankee whalers.¹⁰ These developments resulted quite soon in a collapse in the number of whaling ships continuing to visit the islands.

Frank himself suffered a heavy blow from the Confederate attacks. He had become part owner, along with Messrs. Hackfield & Co. and J. I. Dowsett (all three men from Honolulu), of the whaling bark, *Harvest*, sailing under the Hawaiian flag. It was operating off Ascension in the Northern Pacific in April 1865 when it was attacked and set on fire by the Confederate cruiser, *Shenandoah*, commanded by Captain Waddell. The sinking of the *Harvest* was part of the much wider operation that led to the destruction of much of the Arctic and Ochotsk whaling fleets. Fortunately, Frank and his partners had had the foresight to insure their boat and its German underwriters in Bremen paid out. The *Honolulu Advertiser* was uncompromisingly critical of this 'act of piracy': 'Should Waddell or any of his officers ever be found within the jurisdiction of the Hawaiian courts, it may go hard with them.'¹¹

Frank was also heavily involved in the coastal trade among the islands and on occasion ventured much further afield. Ten years after his arrival, for example, he was Master of a little 87 ton schooner. This was reported in October 1847 coming into Honolulu from Tahiti, nearly 3,000 miles to the south, and setting off en route 'coastwise'. A few months later, in January the following year, he sailed from Honolulu bound for Monterey on the Californian coast as Master of the same boat. On that occasion he then made his way down the coast and arrived back in Honolulu from Guatemala in June 1848, having taken 6 weeks to make that leg of the voyage.¹²

A decade later, Frank was still engaged in the coastal trade as well as whaling when in command of the schooner *Maria*. An example of the very variegated freight he carried is this list when bound for Lahaina and Kawaihae: '50 bags salt, 4 horses, 12,000 shingles, 2,500 clapboards, 50 pairs sashes, 6 doors, 8,616 foot of lumber, 1,000 pickets, 20 tons [general] merchandise'.

The whaling ships created a demand, in particular, for potatoes which were now being grown locally, in addition to the indigenous sweet potatoes and many other vegetables. A trader at Kalepolepo on the island of Maui, J. J. Halstead, proudly advertised 'New Irish Potatoes!' in September 1857 which he was 'fully prepared to furnish, at shortest notice, ... at the lowest rates' since he had made 'such arrangements [with Captain Molteno] as he expects will enable him to furnish an ample supply at either place (Lahaina or Honolulu) during the Spring season, 'per schooner *Maria*.' Frank and his boat had built up a fine reputation. And when that year the *Maria* had to be temporarily withdrawn from her route in order to be 're-coppered and thoroughly overhauled', she was described in the local press as having 'become a favourite under the command of Capt. Frank Molteno'.

¹⁰ Confederate cruisers captured and burned scores of whalers and commandeered their cargoes during the War and in the months afterwards; the value of the ships lost was estimated at many millions of dollars. *The Sun*, New York, 3 May 1891.

¹¹ *Honolulu Advertiser*, 10 Feb. 1866. I am grateful to Ian Lewis for drawing this incident to my attention.

¹² Arrivals and Departures of Merchant Vessels at and from the Port of Honolulu, printed in local newspapers.

Another indication of the reputation local captains like Frank and his friend Captain Thomas King built up appeared when they were mentioned in a letter to the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (28 April 1857). Written by 'One in the Trade', the author was responding to a leader in the paper that had criticised the 'Honolulu and Hilo line of poi clippers';¹³ he rebutted it, arguing that 'a good native master is about "so good and so good" with a foreign one. As far as "drunk" was concerned, they were as abstemious as their co-equals in rank of a different color and lineage.' He went on in ringing tones: 'Get good officers and good vessels and you can laugh at wind and weather and the bug-bears of inter-island navigation.... Our poi clippers can match any other line of clippers in any field of business for safety and despatch.'

Coastal schooners were also expected, in addition to carrying freight and passengers, to pick up the mail from the islands. But the majority of captains, to save time, often didn't bother. Frank, captain of the schooner *Rialto* in 1856, was mentioned on the little island of Molokai as being one of only two captains who did do so. Another article explained the situation: 'A coaster's bond renders it obligatory upon the captain of a vessel engaged in the inter-island trade to call at the post office for the letter bags leaving port. This is exactly the thing which most of them neglect to do.... The very obvious consequence is that our opportunities of communication, never too plentiful, are rendered more precarious than they otherwise need to be.... Those who are not guilty of it are marked out as honourable exceptions, and amongst the latter we would make particular mention of Captain Molteno of the *Rialto* and Captain Gulick of the *Kamehameha IV*.'

There is one more thing to say about Frank as a mariner. Sailing in the Hawaiian archipelago was not just skilled and responsible work, but dangerous and liable to sudden disasters, because it involved navigating around not just the handful of bigger inhabited islands but over 130 little islets, shoals and reefs stretching over 1,500 miles of ocean. No detailed charts existed in Frank's day and there was always a danger of getting wrecked. This happened to the *Rialto* in 1857 although Frank was not in command at the time. More serious for him in financial terms was another incident, the sinking of the *Emma Rooke*, which he part owned with his friend Captain J C King, off Kohala Point in January 1864. The ship was a total loss. And it had been a superior and more than ordinarily expensive vessel, built specifically for the coastal trade by Miller of New London and brought out to Hawaii around Cape Horn.¹⁴

A hazard of a different kind struck Frank just months before he died, when the Captain of his schooner, the *Nettie Merrill*, tried to steal it by bribing the crew to sail it across the Pacific to Manila in the Philippines where he intended to sell it. The chief mate, however, persuaded the crew not to obey him and sailed the boat back to Honolulu. But the crew then proceeded to sue Frank as the owner, claiming that they had in effect salvaged his ship and should be paid a large sum. The case came to court in April 1869 a couple of months after Frank's death. They lost the case!¹⁵

¹³ Poi is the main Polynesian staple made from the taro plant's tubers.

¹⁴ *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, 5 Feb. 1864.

¹⁵ *Hawaiian Gazette*, 7 April 1869.

Family

Telling the story of Frank's personal life in any detail is impossible. Not a single letter of his survives. He lived in a country where modern forms of government and record-keeping were only starting to take shape during his life time. The result is we know really nothing of his family life. It is not even certain whether he married only twice, or whether, in addition to his son and three daughters who survived into adulthood, there were any other children born.

We do know that he married on 9 March 1841; he was 25 years old and had been on the islands four years. His wife was called Kahipa, or possibly Mele.¹⁶ She had been born in Honolulu, perhaps around 1823; if so, she would have been about 18 at the time of her marriage. Nothing more is known about her. Not even a burial record has been found; so we do not know when or how she died.¹⁷

Frank and Kahipa's first child was a boy, Charles Frank Molteno, born in 1851, ten years after his parents had married. Three more children are recorded as Frank's daughters, although there is some uncertainty as to their birth dates except that they were all in the 1860s. Nancy Molteno was probably born in 1863 and her sister, Caroline (known as Carrie), in 1864 in Lahaina on the island of Maui. It is not clear whether Kahipa was their mother. But one possible clue exists: Carrie's descendants say that the initial for her middle initial was K.¹⁸ If so, this might stand for Kahipa; certainly Frank had no relatives whose first name began with a K.

What seems likely is that Nancy and Caroline's mother died when the two girls were still very little, and this propelled their father into remarrying. His second wife was Makanui (or ka-Makanui) from Maui. She and Frank married on 20 August 1867 and lived in his property in Palace Walk on the corner with Punchbowl Street in Honolulu. Their daughter Rose Molteno was born the following year (and only a year before Frank died unexpectedly). Makanui outlived Frank by a number of years, dying only in July 1883. She is buried in Maria Lanakila Catholic Church Cemetery in Lahaina, Maui County.

Frank Molteno's children and their marriages

Mother	Child's Names	Year of Birth	Year of Marriage	Spouse	Year of Death	

¹⁶ International Genealogical Index (IGI) records don't agree on either her name or date of birth! One gives her name as Mele; another as Kahipa. The problem is compounded when modern genealogical sites reproduce what may be errors in dates entered by descendants. What's more, Hawaiian names can be long and complicated; it is entirely possible that Frank's wife's name was in fact Melekahipa.

¹⁷ Jenny Molteno searching on-line for relevant records.

¹⁸ Communication from Mandy Ellis-Ishikawa, 15 March 2013.

Kahipa	Charles Frank Molteno	1851	1872	Dora Duncan (divorced)	1915	
Kahipa ?	Nancy Molteno	1863	1886	Oliver Kawailahaole Stillman	1925	
Kahipa ?	Caroline ('Carrie') Molteno	1864	c. 1883	George Rufus Naoi Titcomb	1922	
Makanui	Rose Molteno	1868			1894	

The Hawaiian Moltenos

Frank's children were, of course, half indigenous Hawaiian. They and their descendants regarded themselves as Hawaiian and down the generations have been intensely proud of their ancestry. Because of the remoteness of the islands, they never had any knowledge of, let alone contact with, their Molteno cousins in England, Southern Africa or other parts of the world. Indeed all three girls were so young when their father died, they knew very little about his life and it must be doubtful how long any memory survived of the fact that they were descended from a Molteno ancestor who had come all the way from England and settled on Hawaii.

How much was Frank Molteno himself changed as a result of living in Hawaii? He was, as we know, born in London, his father half-Italian and his mother English. But from the age of 21 when he arrived on the islands, he lived his entire adult life there. He never made it back to London, even for a visit to his mother. Just how remote Hawaii was from Europe in the mid 19th century is graphically shown in a list of Arrivals and Departures of Merchant Vessels at Honolulu for the year 1848; in 12 months, only three ships arrived from Europe – two from Liverpool and one from London.

We must also bear in mind that almost all crew members on the ships that plied the islands in the coastal trade, as well as some on the boats that ventured further afield, were Hawaiian. They had a reputation as magnificent and knowledgeable sailors, and Frank spent much of his life at sea with such men. He must have developed respect for his Hawaiian crews as well as picking up a working knowledge of the Hawaiian language.

When he was ashore in Honolulu or Lahaina, foreigners were so few in number that he must also have mixed with many Hawaiians socially as well as in his commercial dealings. Even a decade after his arrival the number of non-Hawaiians was tiny. A Register of Foreigners residing in Honolulu in 1847, for example, lists fewer than 300 persons, including only one woman. This tiny expatriate

community comprised mainly men with technical skills like carpenters, coopers and blacksmiths, as well as a number of bar owners and hotel keepers, storekeepers and merchants, plus a handful of teachers and missionaries. Frank was listed as a mariner.

It is no surprise, therefore, that when Frank married, it was a Hawaiian, Mele Kahipa, he wed. And when, 26 years later, he married a second time, he again chose a Hawaiian, Makanui. His marriages created a web of Hawaiian brothers- and sisters-in-law with whom he must have interacted. And we know that in 1862 he chose to become a naturalized Hawaiian subject.¹⁹

In cultural terms, Frank probably remained largely a man of Europe. But he lived in a country that was not a colony and where the indigenous political authorities (no matter how much they began to adopt Western forms of legal system and government) remained in control, and where the kind of military violence, racially discriminatory laws and segregation that disfigured the European empires in Asia and Africa did not obtain.

Captain Frank Molteno – What manner of man?

Despite the obstacles of distance and infrequent postal communication, Frank kept in touch with both his mother, Caroline Molteno, until her death in 1866, and his sister Nancy, and he continued to be a much loved figure in his family in England. Only a couple of fragments from his letters survive. He wrote on one occasion to Caroline: ‘Dear Dear Mother. An idea just strikes me. I was regretting that distance debarred me of the pleasure of sending a small present to each of my Brother’s children [referring to John Charles Molteno’s children]. Do you now, my dear Mother, buy just such a present as you may judge fit for each of them and present the same to them in my name... Goodbye... I am now and always your affectionate son, Frank Molteno.’ He also sent his love to Nancy and her husband Mr Bingle, and wished them all the best in the school they were running – hoping for ‘plenty of scholars and the parents all pay their bills.’

On 28 February 1869 less than two years after his marriage to Makanui, Frank died unexpectedly of typhus, an infectious disease that, before the age of antibiotics, often killed large numbers of people. He was only 53 and with three small daughters. His funeral was ‘fully attended from his late residence on Palace Walk²⁰ and he was buried in Oahu Cemetery in Honolulu, where his tombstone can still be seen.²¹

The *Hawaiian Gazette* wrote these words when he died:

The Hand of Death has once more been laid among ... us. Mr Frank Molteno, a native of Peckham, Surry [sic], England, where he was born in 1816, paid his last tribute on Saturday, 28 February, after a very short illness. He had been for many years an enterprising owner in several coasters.... He was

¹⁹ See Registry of Naturalized Subjects in the Hawaiian Kingdom (c. 1840-1893).
www.hawaiiankingdom.org/info-registry/m.shtml

²⁰ *Hawaiian Gazette*, 10 March 1869.

²¹ The tombstone gives details of his birth: 16 November 1816, in Peckham, Surrey.

very popular amongst our old settlers, and is now deeply regretted by his numerous friends who will long remember his kindness, urbanity and amiable and pleasant disposition. As a businessman, nothing could equal his straightforwardness and activity – well known and fully appreciated by all who had to deal with him. In him we lose a valuable member of our community. He leaves ... a beloved wife and several children here to mourn his death.²²

The news of his death filtered through to Nancy in London several months later; she in turn sent it on to John Charles at the Cape. His daughter, Caroline Molteno, wrote in her Journal: 'Poor Aunt Nancy seems to feel it so much, she quotes part of his last letter to her in which he speaks so affectionately of us all; although I have never seen him, I feel as if I knew him; Grandmama used to tell us so many stories about him when a boy and used to send us parts of his letters, she was so fond of him... He had only lately been married for the second time and has one child [by his second wife].'²³ John Charles wrote back to Nancy that her letter 'informing of the death of our dear brother Frank was felt severely not only by myself but by my dear wife and children who, although personally unknown to him, had (....?) acquiring quite an attachment towards him from his letters and [his] amiable and loving character.'²⁴

Makanui Molteno applied to the Supreme Court for the appointment of an Administrator of her late husband's estate. The following month W. C. Parke was appointed trustee and guardian of his estate and Frank's 100 ton schooner, the *Nettie Merrill*, and his personal effects were put up for sale.

These personal possessions of his give us a glimpse of what Frank valued in life. In addition to 'an assortment of dry goods, a lot of furniture, pictures etc,' not to mention supplies including 'quarter casks of sherry, cases of porter, barrels of salmon, and bags of wheat', up for sale also were one piano and stool, two musical boxes, 30 volumes of assorted books, and two sets of chessmen.

Frank did not die a rich man, but the sale of the *Nettie Merrill* and his properties in Honolulu and Lahaina did leave his widow and three little daughters with a modest inheritance.

The next generation – Charles Frank Molteno

²² *Hawaiian Gazette*, 3 March 1869.

²³ Caroline Molteno's Journal, entry dated 17 August 1869. Grandmama is Frank's mother, Caroline Molteno (nee Bower).

²⁴ Letter in the UCT Archives.

Charles was Frank and Kahipa's eldest child and only son.²⁵ He was 17 when his father died. We do not know what kind of relationship the two of them had, except that Frank was away at sea much of the time. Charles, when he grew up, lived an entirely different life from his father and, by conventional standards, a much less successful one. Much of the time, he earned his living as a barber.²⁶ He also seems to have had somewhat conflicted about his identity. Having grown up in Honolulu, he went to the United States as a very young man soon after his father's death and married an American woman, Dora Duncan, there. But his subsequent wives, Hattie Kahula and Mary [surname unknown] were both Hawaiian.²⁷

On arriving in San Francisco, Charles earned his living as a barber. He and Dora married in 1872; he was twenty-one, she about eighteen. They stayed for several years in the city, four of their children were born there, and Charles took out US citizenship.²⁸ But tragedy afflicted them almost immediately. Their first child, a boy called Charles like his father, died as an 18 month old baby on Christmas Day 1874.

Charles Molteno and Dora Duncan's Children²⁹

Birth	Names	Marriage	Spouse	Death	Comment
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²⁵ One note of warning about the account of Charles Frank Molteno's life that follows here. Jenny Molteno discovered a funeral notice for a Charles Molteno, said to be 36 years of age, held from Kuakini Street, Honolulu on 14 January 1894 (Charles in that year was in fact 33). She concluded that references in newspapers and censuses to Charles Molteno in the years *after* 1894 must refer to a son Charles Frank may have had, also bearing his forename. If this is the case, the story I tell in this chapter conflates father and son. However, I am unconvinced: Charles and Dora Molteno did have a son called Charles, but he died aged one and a half; the Charles Molteno detained in 1895 was a barber, as was the Charles of the 1870s; Charles Molteno in the 1900 Census living in Pearl City, Honolulu, states correctly that he was born in 1851; and the same Charles Molteno listed in the 1910 census states his father was born in England (which means he is the son, not grandson, of Captain Frank Molteno). All this points to these Charles Moltenos being one and the same person. But the mystery then remains: who was the Charles Molteno who died in 1894?

²⁶ Various newspaper reports and US census returns report him as a barber both in San Francisco and in Honolulu.

²⁷ Charles's third wife, Mary (born c. 1870), is described in the 1910 census, under Race, as Hawaiian. It states that both her mother and father were born in Hawaii. But it records Charles as Chinese whereas the previous 1900 census correctly listed him as Polynesian Hawaiian (Part Hawaiian).

²⁸ He took out US citizenship in 1876 while still in San Francisco. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 April 1895.

²⁹ Birth dates derived from 1880 US Census. Years later Dora told the 1910 US Census that she had had nine children, but she had long since divorced Charles and it is unlikely that any of these other children were his. I do not know whether Charles had any other children by his subsequent wives, or indeed out of wedlock.

1873	Charles Molteno			1874	Died on Christmas Day, aged 18 months, in San Francisco ³⁰
1875	Keala Molteno			1887	Born and died in San Francisco ³¹
1878	Maud Molteno			?	Born in San Francisco; died as a child, date unknown
1880	Olivia Molteno	1898	C. A. Macklin	Before 1910	Born in San Francisco
1882	Helen Molteno				Born in Honolulu, Hawaii

Shortly after the 1880 census, Charles decided to return to Hawaii with Dora and their children – Keala, Maud and baby Olivia.³² Their last child, Helen, was born in Honolulu in 1882. But either Dora didn't take to life in Hawaii or she and Charles weren't getting on. Within a year of Helen's birth she left with the children and went back in August 1883 to San Francisco, but without Charles. A few months later, February 1884, a case was brought against Charles and a woman called Malika. This started as a charge of 'disturbing the quiet of the night', but then led to his being accused of adultery.³³

Charles was going through a rough period. He figured in several more court proceedings accused of selling alcohol illegally and, despite being legally represented (he apparently had the means to employ a lawyer), he was usually found guilty.³⁴ On yet another occasion he was accused of assault and battery, but a *Nolle Prosequi* motion was successfully lodged on his behalf and the case dropped.

Goings on at the Kapiolani Bath House

The most colourful scandal Charles got involved in, however, happened when Dora and the children were back living with him and he was running a bath house. Early in 1886 when he was still practising

³⁰ Death notice, *San Francisco Bulletin*, 26 Dec. 1874. The little boy's funeral was conducted from the Third Baptist Church.

³¹ Death notice, *San Francisco Bulletin*, 22 July 1887.

³² They were still in San Francisco at the time of the 1880 US Census. This recorded Charles and Dora Molteno (misspelt Moltino), and their children Keala (also misspelt – Kela), Maud and Olivia. It described the whole family as MU (Mulatto).

³³ *The Daily Bulletin*, Honolulu, 27 Feb. 1884.

³⁴ This is the result of Jenny Molteno's going through the local newspapers.

as a barber on King Street in Honolulu, he joined up with a Mr Aylett to lease a piece of 'water land' between Marine Railway and the Myrtle Boat Clubhouse on which they proceeded to build a 'bath house'.³⁵

The first thing to happen was a near tragedy. Little Helen, who was four by this time, fell into the water next to the bath house. Keala found her on the point of drowning and screamed. Charles, hearing the commotion, rushed out and saved the little girl's life.

The scandal broke the following year, 1887, with the bath house figuring prominently. Here is how Honolulu's *Daily Bulletin*, described what happened:³⁶

During the small hours of Saturday night, when all good boys should have been bed, Marshal Kaulukou, accompanied by officer Hopkins, two native policemen and Arthur Peterson, Deputy Attorney General, rudely, that is without invitation, descended upon the Kapiolani Bath House, and collared an army of naughty boys. When the Marshal and his party made their appearance on the house, there was a general stampede. Lah-de-dahs in their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes jumped from the balcony into the bay, thus escaping. One, well-known, tried to go through a window, but the Marshal caught him by the legs saying, 'Pardon me, I would like you for a witness. Your name please.' 'Oh, never mind my name, and let go my corn,' responded the well-known. After securing the boys, and the keeper of the house, Chas Molteno, the rooms were searched and wines, beer, gin and whisky were found in large quantities, beside hula dresses³⁷ and other things connected with a disorderly house. Molteno was taken to the Station House, but was liberated shortly after on \$500 bail.

Ten days later, under the heading 'The Molteno Case', the paper ran a further report on the Court proceedings that had followed.³⁸

The court room was crowded in every part... The front two rows of seats for the public were occupied by 18 Hawaiian and half-white girls. There was one white girl among them, who looked ashamed of her position. The back part of the Court was filled with persons representing nearly every class in Honolulu. Near the dock were several cases of Annheuser beer, bottles of gin and champagne, packs of cards, poker chips, a hula costume and a guitar.'

Charles was charged with selling liquor without a licence. The judge, however, referred to the case as one of 'keeping a disorderly house.' Charles was represented by counsel and pleaded guilty. His sentence (unknown) was pronounced the next day.

Soon afterwards, Aylett decided wisely to 'retire'. The partnership was dissolved and Charles issued a notice saying that all bills owed by the Bath House would be paid by him.

³⁵ *The Daily Bulletin*, 5 Jan. 1886.

³⁶ *The Daily Bulletin*, 21 March 1887.

³⁷ Hula skirts were regarded by the American missionaries on Hawaii as the epitome of the indigenous population's sexual looseness.

³⁸ *The Daily Bulletin*, 31 March 1887.

Another blow now hit the family only a few weeks later. Keala, Charles and Dora's eldest child, had for some reason been sent to San Francisco and put in school there. In May she fell gravely ill, just after getting a 'roll of excellence' at school. Dora rushed over from Honolulu, but too late. Keala died without either of her parents with her; she was only twelve.³⁹

Little wonder perhaps that Dora Molteno decided she couldn't take any more of this and returned to San Francisco for good, accompanied by her and Charles's only two surviving children – Olivia and Helen. In August 1892 she was granted a divorce on the grounds of wilful neglect (the court heard about the Bath House incident which was described as 'the scene of orgies'). Dora was awarded custody of the girls. She by this time was in her late 30s and Charles 41.⁴⁰ A couple of months after the divorce, Charles married again, this time a Hawaiian, Hattie K. Kahula.⁴¹

Politics intrudes; Charles Molteno thrown into detention

Throughout the 19th century, the Hawaiian islands were in a continuous process of political transition. Unified for the first time under Chief Kamehameha who proclaimed himself king in 1810, his administration regarded itself as under the protection of Britain as a result of the Royal Navy's undisputed global reach; the first Hawaiian national flag actually incorporated the Union Jack in its top left quadrant! And for many years the only diplomatic presence on the islands by an outside power was the British Consul General. But by mid century American missionaries, whalers and later sugar planters had become the dominant expatriate presence on the islands, and in 1851 King Kamehameha III put Hawaii under US protection.

Disease also continued to decimate indigenous Hawaiians at the same time as increasing numbers of new immigrants, Chinese and Japanese, were brought in to labour on the sugar plantations. Late in the century a point was reached where foreigners outnumbered Hawaiians in increasingly overwhelming numbers. All this caused further political and social tensions.⁴²

In 1895 Charles Molteno got caught up in the political struggles that were taking place. Queen Liliuokalani had been the reigning monarch since 1891, but without executive power. One section of the population, led by expatriate businessmen, wanted Hawaii and its growing sugar plantation sector incorporated into the United States. On 4 July 1894 they staged a coup which deposed the Queen and set up a Republic of Hawaii under Sanford B. Dole who was styled 'President'. This sparked a 'loyalist' attempt at the beginning of 1895 to restore the monarchy and a degree of

³⁹ *The Daily Bulletin*, 5 May 1887.

⁴⁰ *Morning Call*, San Francisco, 20 August 1892.

⁴¹ October 1892. Whether Charles and Hattie Molteno had children, I do not know.

⁴² See the website www.hawaiihistory.org; and relevant chapter in Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*, New York, Times Books, 2006. Also Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon and the Sandwich Islands*, op.cit.; http://sailhawaii.com?Hawaii_whaling.html; and <http://www.fsmitha.com/h3/h43-pa2.htm>.

indigenous political control. It was led by Minister Joseph Nawahi and supported by Hawaiians as well as many of the Chinese and Japanese immigrants, all of whom had been deprived of the vote by overtly racist provisions in the constitution of 1887.

Dole's administration responded by declaring martial law on the island of Oahu where the capital Honolulu is situated. Habeas corpus was suspended, all gatherings banned, and a curfew introduced.⁴³ A 'Special Order No. 25' set up a Military Commission to try detainees which, judging by the European-sounding names of its members, indicated how the clampdown was a largely local American response to the 'loyalists' opposing the end of indigenous Hawaiian control of their islands. Among the premises searched by Dole's forces were the former Queen Liliuokalani's royal bathhouse at Wakiki, although nothing was found except a bundle of ancient spears.

A significant number of people were rounded up at gun point and over 100 Hawaiians and 39 other people charged with conspiracy or treason by the new republican administration. In addition, There 111 Hawaiians and four foreigners were detained as 'prisoners of war'. Several hundred other people, mainly but not exclusively Hawaiian, were held for investigation.⁴⁴

Charles Molteno was among those rounded up. It was, as always happens when ordinary people are arbitrarily rounded up by armed men, a very frightening experience. The detainees complained of being kept in complete ignorance of why they had been arrested. They also objected to being given appalling food, armed men breaking into their houses while they were in detention, valuables stolen, and their mail opened. Special legislation was proclaimed to deny them redress through the courts. And, when eventually released, the detainees emerged to find their reputations trashed and livelihoods destroyed.

Charles was detained for nearly two months before being released, along with seven other men, on 27 February 1895. Under the headline 'Released from Prison – Nine men breathe again the air of liberty', *the Daily Bulletin* reported their being set free, having hitherto been 'under suspicion of complicity in the rebellion'. Unlike the small number of detainees who were American citizens and were deported to the United States following their release, Charles was a Hawaiian citizen (and half indigenous Hawaiian, of course, as well) and could not be thrown out of the country. The *New York Times*⁴⁵ reported that 'Charles F. Molteno, a barber, born in Honolulu, ... [did] complain that he was detained 47 days without any charge being made against him. He says his business went to ruin during his imprisonment. He also denies any knowledge of the uprising.'

The Americans who had been forced to leave tried to claim compensation from the Hawaiian government. And when a couple of years later Hawaii was finally incorporated into the United States as a territory in 1898, they pursued their claims with the US authorities. John Ross, a prominent planter, demanded a princely \$100,000 and P. M. Rooney, late manager of the *Daily Holomua* in Honolulu, and also a planter, \$50,000. Frank, who had dual citizenship from when he had obtained

⁴³ *The Daily Bulletin*, 19 Jan. 1895, Vol. IX, No. 1241.

⁴⁴ Daily reports in *The Daily Bulletin*, Honolulu, January to March 1895.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, 28 April 1895.

American citizenship in San Francisco back in 1876, was more modest: he just wanted \$4 a day for the period of his confinement!⁴⁶ All the claimants swore affidavits which were sent by the US representative in Hawaii to the Secretary of State in Washington D.C. in which they denied having committed, or having had any intention to commit, a political act.

We know nothing of what happened subsequently to Charles, his first wife Dora, and their children until the 1910 Census. Now nearly sixty, he was living at Pauwela, Maui, with a new wife, Mary, and working as a policeman. Mary, both of whose parents were Hawaiian, was quite a lot younger (only 46) than him. She told the census that she had had six children, of whom five were still living, although none of them were currently living with her and Charles. Charles died in 1915.⁴⁷

Dora was still in Oakland, San Francisco. The census again classified her as MU (Mulatto). She was continuing to use her former married name, Dora Molteno, and told them she was a widow. In fact, Charles was still alive and they had been divorced for nearly 20 years. Perhaps she was avoiding the stigma of being a divorced woman that was so all-pervasive in those days. She was now 55 years old and clearly hard up. She said she was a 'domestic', but currently out of work and had been the whole previous year. She further told the census that she had had 9 children, but that only one of them was still alive. This was her daughter, Helen, who was now 30 years old, working as a 'forwoman' and single. Two children – not Helen's – were living with them. They were Charles and Dora's only known grandchildren – a boy called Adolph Molteno Macklin, aged 12, who was supplementing the household's income by working as a newsboy (place of work 'on the street'), and his younger sister, Fiametta Macklin, who was only ten.⁴⁸ Their mother, Olivia Molteno, had been the youngest of Charles and Dora's children and had married C. A. Macklin, an immigrant to the United States from Lausanne in Switzerland, but she had since died.⁴⁹ It is difficult not to feel how bleak and hard Dora's life had become.

Three sisters – Nancy, Caroline (Carrie) and Rose Molteno

In addition to his son Charles, Frank Molteno had had three daughters – Nancy, Carrie (Caroline) and Rose – and it is through them and their children that his descendants in Hawaii can be traced. There is, however, frustratingly little information about them.

⁴⁶ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 28 April 1895.

⁴⁷ Information supplied by Ian Lewis.

⁴⁸ Molteno Adolph Macklin (b. 1898) married Lavina Gertrude [Surname not traced]. During the Second World War, he fought in the US Navy as a Torpedoes Mate 2nd Class Petty Officer. He died in 1969. His sister, Fiametto (or Fanetto) Macklin (b. 1900), married Daniel Mosley and moved to Washington D.C. Their children, if any, would be another line of Frank Molteno's descendants.

⁴⁹ 1910 US Census record for Dora Molteno, the head of household. The Census has no reference to Olivia Macklin (nee Molteno).

Nancy was born around 1863, and her sister Carrie the following year in Lahaina, Maui, where their father also had a house.⁵⁰ It is not certain who their mother was since there is no record of when Frank's first wife, Kahipa, died. She and Frank had married in 1841, and Charles had been born ten years later. It seems a bit unlikely that she would have had two more children another ten years on in the 1860s, but that seems to be the case. In August 1867 Frank had married again, and he and his new wife, Makanui, had Rose in 1868.⁵¹ What may have happened is that Nancy and Carrie's mother had died when they were still babies and Frank needed to remarry in order to have someone reliable to look after them when he was at sea. Sadly, within 18 months of the marriage, Frank, as we have seen, was carried off by typhus. Following his death, the Administrator of his estate, W. C. Parke, was also made guardian of Frank's three minor children, a position he held for several years.⁵²

The names Frank gave his daughters reflected the three relatives back in England whom he felt close to all his life – his mother Caroline, his sister Nancy, and his aunt Rose. Years before he had already called his son Charles after his elder brother, John Charles Molteno.

Caroline (Carrie) Molteno and George Rufus Na'oi Titcomb

Carrie Molteno, the second of Frank Molteno's daughters, was the first to marry. She and George Rufus Na'oi Titcomb got married around 1883.⁵³ George was from the island of Kauai where he and Carrie settled.⁵⁴ George's mother, Kanikele, was of Hawaiian royal origins.⁵⁵ His father, Charles Titcomb, was a successful entrepreneur, but George perhaps less so – he certainly appeared quite often in the newspapers being taken to court for owing people money and not contesting the actions.⁵⁶ Carrie and George had a daughter, Mae Kanani Titcomb, who was born on 6 May 1885. At some point Carrie and George got divorced and George went on to marry a second time.

Nancy Molteno and Oliver Kawailaha'ole Stillman

Nancy Molteno and Oliver Kawailahaole Stillman married in Honolulu in September 1886. This was three years after Carrie's marriage and just a few months before their brother Charles was in the

⁵⁰ IGI record for Caroline Molteno.

⁵¹ His niece at the Cape, Caroline Molteno, confirms in her Journal that he had only recently remarried and that he and his wife had had only one child at the time of his death.

⁵² *The Hawaiian Gazette*, 10 March 1869 and 17 July 1872.

⁵³ IGI record for Caroline Molteno.

⁵⁴ Successive US Censuses – 1900, 1910 and 1920.

⁵⁵ Information supplied by a great great granddaughter of Caroline (Carrie) Molteno, Mandy Ellis-Ishikawa.

⁵⁶ Research by Jenny Molteno, shared with me, 21 July 2009.

news over the Kapiolani Bath House scandal.⁵⁷ Oliver Stillman (born, like Nancy, in Honolulu in 1861) was also half-Hawaiian.⁵⁸ His father Henry Martyn Stillman had emigrated to Hawaii in the 1850s from California (where he had landed up during the gold rush). He had married Kamaka Oukamakakaokawaukeoioiopiopio who had been born around 1833 in the Honolulu area into a chiefly family related to King Kamehameha.⁵⁹

The wedding was conducted in the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Honolulu by the Right Rev. Bishop of Olba in front of a ‘fashionable audience’, according to the local papers,⁶⁰ and the reception held at Mr Stillman’s house in School Street where ‘an elegant feast’ was provided. ‘The King’ was in attendance.

A decade later, Oliver was caught up in the same ‘loyalist’ revolt of 1895 as his brother in law, Charles Molteno. They were detained at the same time. And when they were released together, he also could not be deported because he had both Hawaiian citizenship and American.

Oliver took his indigenous Hawaiian cultural heritage very seriously. As a young man, he had been present with Princess Luka ‘Ruth’ Keelikolani when she had used ancient Hawaiian rites to try and halt the Mauna Loa lava flow in 1882;⁶¹ and in later life he became an authority on Hawaiian land titles. He and Nancy had two children, both born in Honolulu – Arthur Joseph Stillman (b. 1887) and Frank Molteno Stillman (b. 1889).

Arthur Stillman, when he grew up, stayed initially in Honolulu and married a locally born woman, Aileen Maguire, whose family owned extensive ranching land on Hawai’i Island where the couple later settled. Aileen inherited a tract of this land on the western slopes of Hualalai, one of the island’s five main volcanic mountains. This was in North Kona where Arthur eventually became a District Magistrate and, like his father before him, involved himself in Hawaiian cultural events, in particular outrigger canoe races. A local dance, the Hu’ehu’e, was popularly referred to as the ‘Stillman ranch’. Arthur and Aileen had four children – Thelma who was born in 1919, Ruth born the following year but who died in childhood, Mary and Nancy. Thelma married Philip Stringer (Uncle Pilipo) and lived at the Hu’ehu’e ranch house where their only child, Hannah, continues to live. Mary married twice – James Robinson with whom she had one daughter, Aileen, and then her cousin Valentine Holt. Aileen married Rodney Kragness and moved to Oregon where they had several children; after Rodney’s death she married Peter ‘Pekelo’ Day, a master hula instructor, and they now live on Hawai’i island. As for the youngest of the four sisters, Nancy Stillman, she married Carroll Oliver and lived on O’ahu.⁶²

⁵⁷ *The Daily Bulletin*, 30 Aug. and 6 Sept. 1886.

⁵⁸ The 1910 US Census classified Nancy as Chinese!

⁵⁹ www.stillman.org Information about the Stillmans comes from this family website.

⁶⁰ *The Independent*, Honolulu, 6 Sept. 1886.

⁶¹ The Stillman family genealogical website, www.stillman.org

⁶² Much of this information furnished by Dr Amy Ku’uleialoha Stillman, 4 Dec. 2016.

Frank Molteno Stillman, Arthur's younger brother, settled in Honolulu. He and his wife, Amy Stratemeyer, had three sons – Francis (b. 1913), George (b. 1914) and Oliver (b. 1917). Both Frank and Amy died when their boys were still children, so the three of them were taken to Kailua on O'ahu where they were brought up by their grandparents, Oliver Stillman and Nancy Molteno. The boys were close to their three cousins, Thelma, Mary and Nancy Stillman. At least two of them married wives of indigenous Hawaiian origin, and lived out their lives in Hawaii. Frank Molteno Stillman's granddaughter, Dr Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman, is an authority on Polynesian music and dance traditions, especially in Hawaii. She is Associate Professor of Music and American Culture and Director of Asian/Pacific American Studies at the University of Michigan. To this day, most of the Stillman clan have remained based on the islands and see themselves as profoundly Hawaiian in their ancestry.⁶³

The Stillman and Titcomb families are related to one another through Frank Molteno's two daughters, Nancy and Caroline. Dr Amy Stillman's father, George, was close to his cousin George Na'oi Titcomb and Amy remembers the many happy hours and holiday celebrations at Uncle Na'oi's house in Sunset Beach on O'ahu's north shore: 'It was one of those stately kama'aina homes with a huge living room in which we had sit-down luau feasts, and pigs were roasted in an underground imu oven in the backyard.' The house is still in the family's possession, having passed to the children of Uncle Na'oi's daughter whom Amy remembers as "Pinky" Richardson.⁶⁴

Rose Molteno and John Dominis Holt

Turning to the youngest of Frank Molteno's daughters, Rose, she – unlike her sisters – did have her mother, Makanui, around as a child. But when Makanui died in 1883, she also became orphaned.⁶⁵ She was fifteen years old. It seems likely that her older sisters, Nancy and Caroline, took responsibility for her because, the very next year, there was a report that Nancy and Josephine Molteno (assuming Rose's second name was Josephine) had just arrived in Honolulu from Kauai.⁶⁶ And three years later, the same paper reported Caroline, now married to George Titcomb, travelling with him and J. Molteno to Oahu.⁶⁷

⁶³ See their superbly detailed family tree at www.stillman.org

⁶⁴ Dr Amy Stillman, 4 Dec. 2016.

⁶⁵ Makanui was buried in the Maria Lanakila Catholic Church Cemetery in Lahaina – interesting, given Frank Molteno had originally been baptised a Roman Catholic and the fact that the overwhelming majority of Hawaiians were Protestant. On the gate a notice says this is a Historic and Private Cemetery. Visitors are asked not to pick the flowers! Source: www.findagrave.com

⁶⁶ *The Daily Bulletin*, 22 Sept. 1884.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 April 1887.

As an adult, Rose had a relationship with John Dominis Holt II who was from a prominent Hawaiian family descended, as so often the case, from a line of chiefs.⁶⁸ They had a son, William Holt Molteno, born on 17 March 1891. It seems his parents were not married.⁶⁹ Tragically, Rose died a couple of years later (1894) when the little boy was only three years old.⁷⁰ Nancy now took responsibility for him and brought him up on the Waianae Coast of O’ahu. The 1900 US Census listed Nancy and Oliver with their two children and her nephew, William Holt, living with them. Ten years later, the next Census still lists William, now recorded as William Molteno, as living with Nancy and Oliver.⁷¹ Nancy also successfully petitioned for, and was awarded, Rose’s estate.⁷² Three years later, however, there was a notice of foreclosure on a house that Rose and John D. Holt had jointly owned.⁷³

William, now using Holt as his surname, married Mary Kealii (or Kaleialii) in Honolulu in 1913. They had one son, Robert Holt, in 1915. William later divorced Mary Kealii and married Mistue Hashimoto, also of Hawaii, around 1931 and had five more children. William died in 1956 and is buried, as is his wife, at Valley of the Temples in Kaneohe. Their offspring still live in Hawaii.⁷⁴

By 1920, Carrie Titcomb, Rose’s elder sister, was a grandmother in her early 50s living with her daughter Mae Kanani and two children (possibly nephews), Samuel and George. She died two years later and Mae Kanani married John Hanohano Pa.⁷⁵ Some of their descendants live on Kauai to this day. The Titcomb family and their descendants are a large family with their own website.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Communication from Ian Lewis, a descendant of Rose Molteno and John D. Holt, 9 June 2014.

⁶⁹ Several facts point in this direction. Rose’s grave is recorded under the name Rose Molteno, not Holt. Her son was referred to as William Holt Molteno, although later in life he used his father’s surname, calling himself William Molteno Holt. At the time of his birth, his father, John D. Holt (1861- 1916), was married to Emma Daniels by whom he had several children both before and after William. Source: Mandy Ellis-Ishikawa, 2 April 2013.

⁷⁰ *The Daily Bulletin*, 7 Feb. 1894. Her grave is probably in O’ahu Cemetery in Honolulu, but unmarked. Source: Ian Lewis, 13 June 2014.

⁷¹ Further information about where they lived from Ian Lewis, 9 June 2014.

⁷² *The Daily Bulletin*, 24 Aug. and 21 Sept. 1894. Several years earlier, the three Molteno sisters had sold up their father’s estate which comprised the two properties in Lahaina and Honolulu. *The Daily Bulletin*, 1 and 16 June 1887.

⁷³ *The Daily Bulletin*, 18 Oct. 1897. Jenny Molteno concluded that Rose’s partner had heavily mortgaged the house, the foreclosure resulting from non-payment of interest due following Rose’s death. Communication, 27 Oct. 2010.

⁷⁴ I am most grateful to Ian Lewis for all this information.

⁷⁵ Mandy Ellis-Ishikawa warned me (18 March 2013) that Hawaiian names are often very long and difficult for Non-Hawaiians to master. People also sometimes changed how their names were presented. So her great grandfather, John Pa, was originally called John Kahooohanohanopa, and then John Hanohanopa.

⁷⁶ <http://titcombsofhawaii.com/>

Nancy, the oldest of the three sisters, outlived them both and died three years after Carrie in October 1925. Her husband, Oliver, survived her by many years and only died in Kailua, Honolulu in January 1947.

Hawaiian Moltenos – A Story still to be told

It is sad so little can be told about Captain Frank Molteno's life and his children's. Their descendants – the Stillmans, Titcombs, and Holts – are all proud of their Hawaiian ancestry. They have constructed their family trees and put them on the web, and the Stillmans and Titcombs have occasional big family reunions. Telling the stories of these families is a task someone hopefully may undertake one day.

From the standpoint of the wider Molteno family, several things stand out from the experiences of Frank and his children in Hawaii during the 19th century. It only came about in the wake of the so-called Age of Discovery, and only started got under way once the Portuguese developed ocean-going sailing vessels in the late 15th century and made certain crucial navigational breakthroughs. From then on, there were really no geographical limits on where people of European descent could land up. This profoundly shaped the lives of countless numbers of people, including the descendants of Anthony Molteno, the original printseller who had settled in London.

But like all migrants to distant places in the pre-modern era, those Moltenos who moved to other continents in the early 19th century paid a price. Before the age of international postal services (there were really none connecting Hawaii and the world in Frank's day), before steam ships (which only came into their own after he had died), and the telegraph (it was 1903 before Hawaii got a cable link with the nearest landmass, the United States), once a person went an ocean or two away from home, it meant a more or less complete rupture between them and their parents and brothers and sisters who stayed behind. This is what happened to Frank when he landed up 14,000 miles from his mother in London, 11,500 miles from his brother John Charles at the Cape, and not much closer to his brother Fred in Australia.

And one other reflection. When European sailors and merchants first encountered other powerful and advanced states and cultures like the Ottomans in the Middle East, the Mughals in India, and China in East Asia, there was little room for lack of respect, let alone myths about superior and inferior 'races'. It was only when a growing gulf in power – military, technological, economic – between European states and societies elsewhere on the planet became overwhelming, that these trading links mutated into outright colonial occupation of more and more territories, and European rule over more and more peoples in the Americas, Asia, Australia and finally Africa. This was when an unashamed, almost axiomatic racism became deeply entrenched in the consciousness of Europeans of all classes in the late 19th century. Frank, arriving in the remote Hawaiian islands in the 1830s, was fortunate to pre-date that era. He settled in a part of the world where European political domination did not yet exist. This resultant freedom from racist prejudice and segregation profoundly affected his life and the lives of his Hawaiian descendants. But as we will see, this was not quite the case with the later generation of Moltenos landing up in other parts of the world.

