

## "Jarvis to Baker to Howland"

By EDWIN NORTH MCCLELLAN

JARVIS, Baker and Howland! Three little words for three little American islands! Few Americans ever heard or read of those words until the United States Government put them in headlines by sending expeditions to the "Little Three," as they are sometimes called, to secure aviation-data. Serious job it is and a well-done job, so far, with the Boys from the Kamehameha School in Honolulu expressing the real romance of the South Seas and enjoying the thrills and adventures that come to Americans once, if that often, a century. Historians of the future will stress more vividly than do present-day writers, what these lads of Hawaiian blood are accomplishing under Federal leadership, on these three islands—Jarvis, Baker and Howland.

Mutiny on the *Bounty* may have disclosed more stark tragedy and the 1814 cruise of the U.S.S. *Sir Andrew Hammond* under Captain John Marshall Gamble from the Marquesas to Hawaii, may have seen more grueling hardships; but the lives of the Kamehameha School Boys on Jarvis,

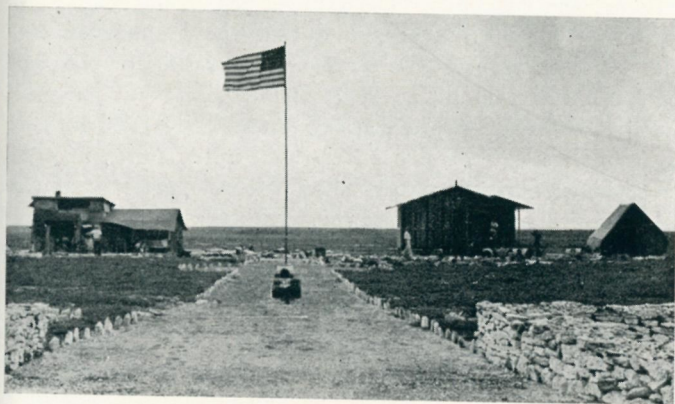


KAMEHAMEHA BOYS OF THE SIXTH EXPEDITION

ernment has been one of our earliest and greatest pioneers. This was a grand opportunity and the Government took advantage of it. To the Department of Commerce was assigned the mission of ascertaining whether such American dryspots of land that existed south of Hawaii were suitable for airship bases. The dryspots were Jarvis, Baker and Howland Islands, with others like Samoa.

At a meeting between the President of the United States and his Secretary of Commerce, in the White House, the task was turned over to the Department of Commerce because that executive department handles all civilian aviation and this project primarily was one of civilian aviation.

William T. Miller, Superintendent of Airways in the Department of Commerce was selected to assume charge of this important work. His orders, signed by the Secretary of Commerce, directed him to proceed to Honolulu, to organize an expedition to study the possibility of an air-route into the South Pacific which would lead to the Antipodes. His orders called for Mr. Miller to locate personnel on the Three Little Islands immediately.



HOWLAND ISLAND

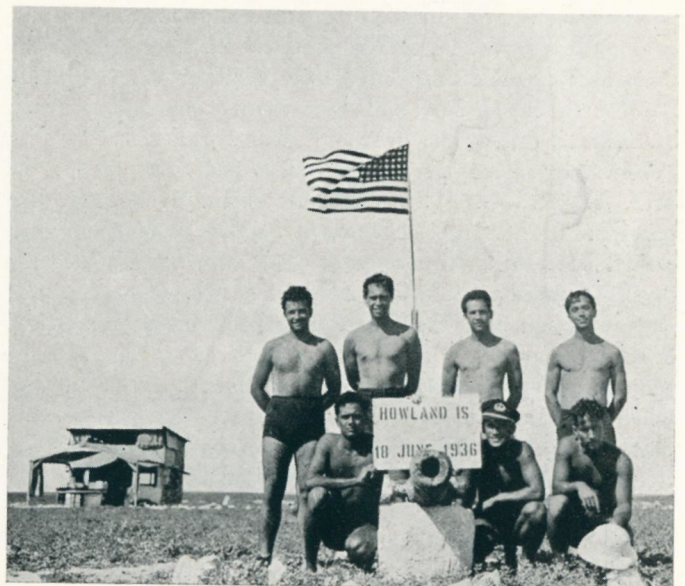
Baker and Howland, have been touched by experiences that are almost unique.

The largest of the Little Three—Jarvis—is situated in the almost-exact center of the Pacific Ocean. Over one thousand miles east of Jarvis lie Baker and Howland.

In addition to discovering and claiming islands of the sea it is necessary for a country to continually occupy them in order to eliminate the possibility of another country landing and creating a counter-claim. So, Americans, represented by Hawaiian schoolboys are down on the Little Three. Their presence there, however, is really incidental to their main duty of securing air-data, etc.

An airship must base on dry land. Sure, it can land on the water, but it must have land, too. So, a dry-spot is required, even for a seaplane. The great Pan-American Airways Route across the Pacific, from the American to the Asiatic continent, would not be in operation today if it were not for the American "dry-spots" of the Hawaiian, Midway, Wake, Guam and the Philippine Islands. Yes, the Stars-and-Stripes still fly over the Philippines.

So, an air-route southward from Hawaii to New Zealand, Australia and other destinations, must be dotted at efficient intervals, with spots of dry-land. The United States Gov-



AMERICAN COLONISTS OF HAWAII ON HOWLAND ISLAND





UNLOADING SUPPLIES ON BAKER ISLAND

Arriving in Honolulu in February of 1935, Mr. Miller soon had the preliminary stages of the work organized.

Personnel and matériel were required in order to satisfactorily complete the mission. The United States Coast Guard Cutter *Itasca* was assigned for transportation duty. Mr. Miller used the *Itasca* as his headquarters. That seemed to be a logical choice because he did not have to change his base during the expeditions that followed. After due consideration, it was decided to employ groups of boys from the Kamehameha School in Honolulu to assist in this valuable work. Americans must live on the islands to secure the vital air data. Colonists must also live on them continuously. This experiment, of utilizing the services of the Kamehameha Boys, turned out to be a huge success.

According to traditions of Hawaii the first colonist in Hawaii was Paoa, who arrived from Samoa or Tahiti about the year 1125 A.D. Other traditions suggest that earlier colonists came to Hawaii about the year 500 A.D. And now, in these years of 1935 and 1936, Hawaiians are reversing the route and colonizing the island-area whence their own ancestors may have migrated to Hawaii.

Since March 20, 1935, six expeditions have departed from Honolulu for the Equatorial Islands, to lay the foundations for an airship route. The present plan calls for these expeditions to be conducted quarterly, once every three months. All six of these expeditions were transported by the U.S.C.G. Cutter *Itasca*, the officers and crew of which also contributed valuable services to the success of the plan.

Commander W. N. Derby commanded the *Itasca* on the first three expeditions; Commander Fletcher W. Brown on the fourth expedition; and Lieutenant-Commander Frank T. Kenner, during the fifth and sixth expeditions.

Mr. Miller led all of the first expeditions, except the fifth. Richard B. Black, Field Representative of the Department of the Interior who, in September of 1936, succeeded Mr. Miller in charge of this work, accompanied the Sixth Expedition and will lead the Seventh.

Jurisdiction over the first four expeditions was exercised by the Department of Commerce. On May 15, 1936 the project was placed under the Department of the Interior when President Roosevelt, by Executive Order, permanently placed the Three Islands "under the control and jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior for administrative purposes." Therefore, the fifth and sixth expeditions were controlled by the Department of the Interior. That explains the shift of leadership from Mr. Miller to Mr. Black. Headquarters of this work was changed from the *Itasca* to the historic Iolani Palace in Honolulu on July 8, 1936.

The First Expedition started out from Honolulu aboard the *Itasca* on March 20, 1935, and the Great American Adventure was underway. "We took along considerable water in fifty gallon drums on deck, supplies, and so forth," explained Mr. Miller. "We stopped at the three islands—Jarvis, Baker and Howland—and left groups of about four Kamehameha Boys on each of the islands. Next, we visited Swains Island and from there proceeded to Pago Pago on Tutuila in American Samoa. Here we obtained fuel from the S.S. *Mariposa*."

"Leaving Samoa we re-visited the three American islands," continued Mr. Miller. "This visit was to be sure that all the boys were physically well and getting along satisfactorily. We found them comfortable, satisfied and happy, and also physically in sound condition. On each of these visits we always were careful to make physical examinations of the American Colonists."

"Since the use of these Kamehameha Boys was an experiment to determine whether the Boys were the right type of individuals for the mission undertaken, we were delighted to find them getting along so nicely. The future proved conclusively that the Boys were the right type of personnel and this relieved my mind of one responsibility."

"On the first visit to Pago Pago, in American Samoa, we studied the possibility for land and sea plane operations," said Mr. Miller. "We found that the harbor could be used for sea planes. We located another site for sea plane operations at Nu'uuli, a village on Tutuila about ten miles from Pago Pago on the southern coast. If carried into execution this will involve an expenditure of funds in order to construct a satisfactory base. We also ascertained that there were possibilities for constructing a land plane field near Vailoatai."

The Second Expedition, with Mr. Miller in charge, sailed from Honolulu on the *Itasca*, June 9, 1935. It visited Kingmans Reef, Palmyra, Baker, Jarvis, Howland and Johnston Islands. Supplies and water were left on the three "colonized islands."

On September 9, 1935, the Third Expedition got underway aboard the *Itasca* from Honolulu, Mr. Miller, of course, leading it. This expedition re-visited Palmyra, Baker, Jarvis and Howland Islands. Some of the personnel at each of the Little Three Islands were relieved by new Kamehameha Boys. Supplies, fresh water, and so forth, were left with them. Every indication pointed to the fact that the Boys were happy, satisfied and enjoying their interesting adventure.

January 9, 1936 was the date that the Fourth Expedition departed from Honolulu on the *Itasca*, led by Mr. Miller. "On this particular cruise we had with us Lieutenant Emory W. Stephens, Aerologist of the U. S. Navy Fleet Air Base, Pearl Harbor, T. H.," related Mr. Miller. "Lieutenant Stephens made upper air-soundings of wind conditions—wind directions, velocity and so forth—and made daily runs in each of the Little Three Islands and also at Pago Pago. It is believed that this is the first time that such information has been obtained between Hawaii and Samoa."

This Fourth Expedition continued on to American Samoa where it remained for about a month. While there, Mr. Miller visited the islands of the Manua Group. On board the U.S.S. *Ontario* (Lt. Ted Wirt), by courtesy of the

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**"Jarvis to Baker to Howland"***(Continued from Page Six)*

Governor, Mr. Miller visited Western Samoa (New Zealand mandate). On the return trip northward the *Itasca* picked up all the personnel from Jarvis, Baker and Howland Islands and returned to Honolulu.

About this time Mr. Miller was called officially to Washington for a temporary period. He sailed on the *Lurline* for the Mainland in April, 1936. During his absence the Fifth Expedition was organized. Captain H. A. Meyer, U. S. Army, represented Mr. Miller in this Fifth Expedition, which sailed from Honolulu on the *Itasca*, June 13, 1936. This expedition re-established the groups of Kamehameha Boys on each of Jarvis, Baker and Howland Islands. Mr. Miller arrived back in Honolulu during the last week of June, prior to the return of the *Itasca* from this fifth cruise, and was on hand to greet it.

Richard B. Black, Field Representative of the Department of the Interior, reported in Honolulu, July 8, 1936, to succeed Mr. Miller in charge of this interesting and highly important federal work. Mr. Black's experiences for two years in the Antarctic with Rear-Admiral Richard E. Byrd, prepared him particularly for leadership in this work.

Both Mr. Miller and Mr. Black accompanied the Sixth Expedition which left Honolulu, July 24, 1936. Among others who went along aboard the *Itasca* on this trip were Harry Stewart, the Territorial Architect (to supervise the construction of buildings on the Three Islands), Richard Stafford, the son of Judge H. E. Stafford of the Circuit Court, and Robert Hite, the son of Charles M. Hite, the Secretary of the Territory.

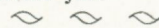
Palmyra Island again was visited, as were Jarvis, Baker and Howland Islands. Relief personnel for the Kamehameha Boys were disembarked on each of the Little Three. Lumber for the construction of a house on each of these three islands was put ashore. Before these houses were erected the Boys slept under canvas or in such rude shacks as they constructed with drift-timber. Lighting and cooking facilities were installed. Aerological upper-air stations were established on Jarvis and Howland Islands.

About thirty young coconut trees were carried from Palmyra Island to the Little Three and planted, the flourishing condition of trees previously planted, encouraging the addition of these new trees. Four months' supply of food and eight months' supply of water were deposited on the three islands.

The Seventh Expedition, in charge of Mr. Black, will sail from Honolulu, October 15, 1936, if present plans are carried through without change. By that time, Mr. Miller will have left Hawaii for his permanent station as Superintendent of Airways, Department of Commerce, in Washington. This seventh expedition will take a large 800-gallon tank to each island to house fresh water, including rain water. Future plans also call for the installation of adequate radio equipment on each of the Little Three. This, probably, due to administrative delays will not be done until the January, 1937, expedition.

Call them what you will—pioneers, colonists, settlers, Federal employees—those Kamehameha School Boys on Jarvis, Baker and Howland Islands, are making real American history for their Country and their Territory. The Department of Commerce temporarily administered this almost-

unique American activity in its initial stages; the Territory of Hawaii was the scene of its headquarters, located in the famous Iolani Palace, and contributed all available aid including her native-born citizens and other personnel; the United States Coast Guard of the Treasury Department, assisted materially with the *Itasca* and its Commanding Officers, officers and crew; the Navy Department encouraged the work by serving as Purchasing Agent and at times with efficient personnel; the United States Army supplied some personnel and lent every assistance possible; and finally the Department of the Interior took over the permanent administration of the project. Truly, it is an all-around United States Government job.

**Birds and Their Protection***(Continued from Page Seven)*

by deeds rather than by words. In childhood it is the heritage of most of us and happy are those who hold fast to it for it is one of the most precious and satisfying things in life.

It is our duty to assist our young people in their study of nature. The coming years will undoubtedly bring more leisure time to the average citizen and interest developed by the study of nature, not only makes for better citizenship but would be a hobby to fall back upon in later years.

Our schools teach natural history by informal talks, by lectures and by the display of skins and specimens of birds and animals. Occasionally, a visit to the woods and fields are made and wild life studied in its native habitat.

In pioneer days, wild life was so abundant and unafraid, that it could be studied in its natural environment without great effort or loss of time. But now, man's progress has seemed to leave a trail of desolation across the face of nature and our wild life either becomes inaccessible or entirely disappears.

It is inevitable that our ever changing civilization should present an ever increasing menace to our natural life. These conditions have been going on for quite a long time and it is interesting to note that in the *Commercial Advertiser* of Honolulu dated August 16, 1860, the pertinent statement was made that in the Territory of Hawaii, we need more songbirds. This statement holds true today.

Great thanks and appreciation is due to the *Hui Manu* Society for their continuous efforts to introduce at their own expense more songbirds to our beautiful islands. Already some of the birds so introduced, are not only perpetuating themselves, but are adding a touch of vivid color and sweet song to our gardens and woods.

This good work is seriously menaced by those evil-minded people who seem to believe that everything that flies in the air or swims in the sea, is their own personal property and they proceed to snare, trap and kill these beautiful feathered creatures for their own personal gain. This must be stopped and our educators and teachers should concentrate more on the teaching of the young people in our schools to protect and conserve our rapidly diminishing wild life.

**The Hawaiian Fourth Estate—Flowers***(Continued from Page Eight)*

is abloom with them, and their color, size and profusion are being perpetuated daily by the hands of artists who are being attracted more and more to these colorful shores.

To depict the beauty of these flowers accurately and to