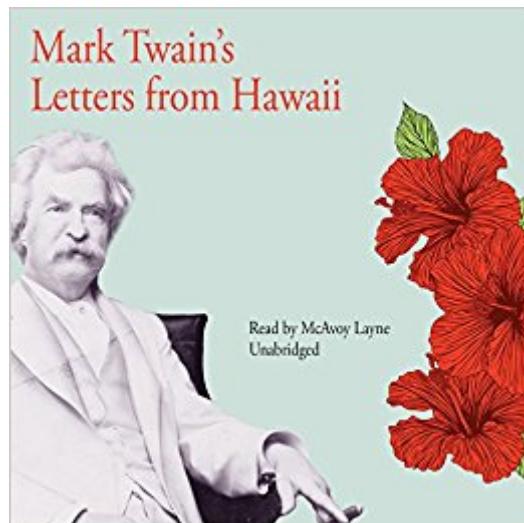


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Mark Twains Letters From Hawaii



Synopsis

The Huck Finn of foreign correspondents provides a colorful account of old Honolulu, the island nobility, the City of Refuge on the Kona coast, and the active volcano of Kilauea. These selections of Mark Twains newspaper dispatches are both charming and informative. The light touch of the great humorist is seldom missing as he reveals the loveliest fleet of islands that lie anchored in any ocean. This recording evokes the historical era with the eye of a verbal artist and the voice of the performing artist.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hearing Layne read Mark Twain's newspaper dispatches from Hawaii gives one the invigorating sense of visiting an exotic locale as well as a different era. Those who treat themselves to these blustery, spirited letters will experience a journey in every sense of the word. Before writing his first novel, the penniless journalist got a four-month-long gig writing about his travels in the "the loveliest fleet of islands that lie anchor in any ocean." Layne reads the letters as Twain might have, not backing down during parts that may sound questionable to modern ears (e.g., Twain's repeated congratulations to the missionaries for quashing native customs). In this thoughtfully abridged collection, one letter may rhapsodize about scenery while the next delves into death rituals for a native princess; the result is a listening experience that feels balanced, not overdone. Though few people other than lovers of Hawaii will likely tune in to these letters, those who do will never see their favorite vacation spot (or home) in quite the same way again. They will also receive a reminder of why Twain's legacy has endured. Based on the Univ. of Hawaii Press paperback. (Dec.)

"Hearing Layne read Mark Twain's newspaper dispatches from Hawaii gives one the invigorating sense of visiting exotic locale." -- Publishers Weekly, January 3, 2005 "Twain's superb writing about the history of the islands, as well as his experiences there, deliver a powerful audio experience." -- AudioFile, February 2005

This is the audiobook edition of a collection of dispatches that Mark Twain wrote, as a newspaper correspondent, to the Sacramento Daily Union in 1866 during his 7-month sojourn in Hawaii. Mark Twain impressionist McAvoy Layne very ably does the reading for the audiobook edition, bringing Mark Twain's written narrative to life. Letters from Hawaii provides a fascinating look at 19th century Hawaii -- the people, royalty, customs, culture, neighborhoods, infrastructure, commerce, government, volcanos, valleys, beaches, sea -- as well as a sprinkling of Mark Twain's inimitable humor. History buffs and Hawaiiana buffs will find Twain's first-hand, boots-on-the-ground observations of 19th century Hawaii uniquely satisfying. I found almost every dispatch riveting. One that comes to mind now as I write this mini review is Mark Twain's account of his visit to the active volcano, Kilauea, on the Big Island, which he viewed both during the daytime and at night. In addition to Twain's powerful visual imagery describing the lava flows, he also interestingly describes the sounds of the volcano. "It makes three distinct sounds - a rushing, a hissing, and a coughing or puffing sound; and if you stand on the brink and close your eyes it is no trick at all to imagine that you are sweeping down a river on a large low pressure steamer, and that you hear the hissing of the steam about her boilers, the puffing from her escape pipes and the churning rush of the water abaft her wheels. The smell of sulfur is strong, but not unpleasant to a sinner." Whether you are a Mark Twain buff, history buff, travel story buff, kama'aina or a malihini, chances are you will find this book enjoyable.

I had read this years ago, but now with an upcoming trip to Hawaii on the horizon, I wanted to re-experience the Sandwich Islands as only Mark Twain can portray. Recommended reading to any Twain fan.

A must read for anyone interested in Hawaii and its history. The reader is excellent too.

It was interesting after just being there to read what he had to say about the islands in the 1900's

and especially with his wit.,

What is it about the Hawaiian Islands that is so profoundly affecting? Twain was the ultimate skeptic, yet the Islands won him over in a minute. This collection of newspaper columns tells us why, and it is a story that remains relevant to Island visitors and lucky residents. Twain was as well travelled as anyone of his day, and had no trouble identifying Hawaii as not just a pleasant place, but a unique place on earth. He hoped to live out his days on the Islands, but never made it back. Modern travellers sometimes wonder about the attractions of the Islands versus other places with warm climates. No one has explained it better than Twain.

I moved from the Big Island a year ago and finally had an opportunity to read Twain's letters (after finishing Roughing It). The timing was actually fortuitous- I appreciated his experience in the islands after having had my own; his informed mine beyond what I could have gained and Twain is Always a fun read.

Bought this for a fellow Mark Twain fan. First time I read it was on the Big Island as my intro to Hawaiian history back in the early 80's. Still go back to read favorite parts.

This book is easy and interesting reading. Anyone who enjoys learning about historical backgrounds will be enthralled by this book. It provides great first person perspective of what Hawaii was like before being tainted by the outside world. I highly recommend it!

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