

## John Pickering an Wilhelm von Humboldt, 14.01.1828

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Mattson 1980, Nr. 12036

[37r] Sir,

I did myself the honour to address a letter to you on the 27.<sup>th</sup> of November last, accompanied with a copy of Zeisberger's Grammar; & on the 28.<sup>th</sup> of December I wrote to you again<sup>[a]</sup>, & sent you two recent publications in the Chahta language, commonly, but incorrectly, called the Choctaw<sup>[b]</sup>. I hope these two letters have reached you in safety.

The very day after I had written the last of those letters, I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 22.<sup>d</sup> of September last, which I read with much interest; as well on account of the philological information communicated in it, as for the expressions of personal regard which you are pleased to use in respect to myself.

Your Dissertation on the Chinese Language, mentioned in that letter, did not however arrive till last night; but, by sitting up till a late hour, I read it once, though in too rapid a manner to enable me to give you any reflections upon it, if I were capable of doing it. Indeed I read it as I do every thing from your pen with the feelings of a pupil, who is listening to the instruction of his teacher. [37v] I could have wished to read it again before writing to you; but having an opportunity, which I was unwilling to lose, of acknowledging the receipt of your last letter, I am obliged to defer the farther perusal & study of it at this time.

It gives me great satisfaction to learn that you are studying the languages of the Islands in the Pacific Ocean, as I flatter myself that I may be able to furnish you with some materials for that study by means of the Missionary Society which is

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**a)** [Editor] Der an Humboldt abgeschickte Brief ist auf den 29. Dezember 1827 datiert (Krakau, Coll. ling. fol. 52, Bl. 35–36), während Pickerings eigenhändige Kopie des Briefes das Datum vom 28. Dezember 1827 trägt (Boston, Public Library, MS q. 1900, No. 14). [FZ]

**b)** [Editor] Bei den beiden genannten Büchern handelt es sich um: *A Spelling Book Written in the Chahta Language* und *Chahta holisso a tukla*. [FZ]

established in this city, & which has a regular correspondence with the Sandwich Islands. **This Society** receives copies of all the little publications made at Hawaii (Owhyhee); and I have just requested **their Secretary** to give me one copy of them all for you. In my own collection I have a manuscript Grammar of the Language of Hawaii and a very copious Vocabulary of the language, neither of which have been printed.

I have also a copy of a Tahitian Grammar, which was printed at Tahiti a few years ago & which you have probably seen.<sup>[c]</sup> I have, too, a MS. Vocabulary of the language of the Feejee (Fidschi) Islands, which is the only specimen I have ever seen, & which I obtained from an intelligent supercargo of an American ship that visited those islands in the year 1811.

A small portion of these two MS Vocabularies was published, from my copies, in a little work |38r| (which I now send you) entitled " A Journal of a Tour round Hawaii" &<sup>c</sup> printed by our **Missionary Society** in 1825. You will find the words in the Appendix of the volume, p. 244 and 254. You will see (by the preface, p. IV, and the Appendix, p. 243) that our Missionaries have adopted the systematic Orthography which I recommended for our American Languages; & the missionaries have remarked, that the native children, by means of this orthography, learn to read their language in a much shorter time than our children in the United States learn to read English. **This Journal**, I would observe, has been republished in England, & you may perhaps have seen it. The author, the **Reverend William Ellis**, is now in England, his native country.

As connected with this subject I send you also a **Reply** to the **London Quarterly Review, N.º LXX**, which had made some scandalous & unfounded charges against our Missionaries in the Sandwich Islands. This **Reply** is written by **M.<sup>f</sup> Evarts**, who is the Secretary of the **American Board of Foreign Missions** in **this place**; & it has fully & ably exposed the calumnies & unfairness of that English Journal; particularly in regard to a forged letter, published by that journal as a genuine letter from a native of the Islands.<sup>[d]</sup> This **Reply** will be reprinted in **London**, where I think the public voice will compel the Editor of |38v| the Quarterly Review (if he

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**c)** |Editor| Die Tahiti-Grammtik von Davies lag in Humboldts Bibliothek in zwei Exemplaren vor; Schwarz 1993, Nr. 449 und Nr. 450, 1. [FZ]

**d)** |Editor| Evarts setzt sich in seinem Artikel auf S. 107–111 mit dem angeblich von dem Hawaiianer Boki stammenden Brief auseinander. [FZ]

has any regard to his own reputation) to produce the author of the forgery, or take the responsibility of it upon himself.<sup>[e]</sup>

I hope, too, that the [Reply](#) will be published in Germany, so that the antidote to the poison may follow as soon as possible, and justice be done to the American character, so far as respects this transaction.

You will be pleased to hear, that a line of regular packet ships is to be established, by the merchants in [New York](#), between that city & [Hamburgh](#), which will greatly facilitate your communication with this country. The first ship is announced to sail on the [15.<sup>th</sup> of February](#). I hope the projectors of it will meet with success; but whether the commercial gain shall be on our side or not, I am sure we shall derive much intellectual profit from this intercourse. If, too, this facility of travelling should induce you to honour our country with a visit, we should feel under additional obligations to the enterprising spirit of our commercial citizens.

I send this letter to the care of [M.<sup>r</sup> Niederstetter](#) with whom I have had the pleasure to become acquainted, as you have been informed.

I send you the new Cherokee Alphabet (mentioned in my last letter) from the types intended for [their newspaper](#). I have given the powers of all the characters as correctly [|39r|](#) as I am able at this time; but I shall be able to give you a more full account of them at a future day. In the course of two or three months, they will begin to publish their newspaper, which I shall not fail to send to you.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

your most obedient

& faithful servant

Jn<sup>o</sup>Pickering

Boston, Massachusetts,

January 14. 1828.

[|39v|](#) P.S. I open my letter again, in order to send you the Prospectus of the [Cherokee Newspaper](#), which I have this moment received from the Editor, a native Indian, by the name of [Elias Boudinott](#) (a name assumed from the English, as is very common) who is personally known to me.

On the second leaf of the Prospectus you will see an original letter from the Editor addressed to me, which I am sure will be a great curiosity in Europe. You will

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e) [|Editor|](#) Der Aufsatz aus dem *North American Review* wurde 1828 auch als Monographie unter dem Titel *American Missionaries at the Sandwich Islands* bei F. T. Gray in Boston verlegt. [FZ]

perceive that his English style is perfectly correct. If you would permit me, I shall put your name down as a subscriber; which would be esteemed a great honour; but whether you would allow this or not, I shall send you some of the newspapers.

[Anhang]

[40r] The Cherokee Syllabic Alphabet;

Invented by Guest, a native Cherokee.

[Die 84 Buchstaben sind gedruckt in zwei Reihen (Nr. 1–41 und Nr. 42–84) angeordnet]

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 # # # # # # # # # # # #  
# # # # # # 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 # #  
# 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57  
58 59 60 61 62 63 # 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71  
72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 #

[Die folgende Auflistung verteilt sich auf drei Spalten (Nr. 1–28, Nr. 29–56, Nr. 57–84)]

- N.° 1 = a
- 2 – aw
- 3 – la
- 4 – tsi
- 5 – na
- 6 – wu
- 7 – w#
- 8 – li
- 9 – n#
- 10 – mu
- 11 – gi or ki
- 12 – yi
- 13 – si
- 14 – klunh
- 15 – ah
- 16 – l# (as in b#t, English)
- 17 – l#
- 18 – ha
- 19 – w# (as in n#t, Engl.)
- 20 – kl# (—— " ——)

- 21 – ta
- 22 – l#n (as in b#t, Engl.)
- 23 – y#n (—— " ——)
- 24 – hi
- 25 – ss (sibilant)
- 26 – y# (as in n#t, Engl.)
- 27 – hu
- 28 – g# (—— " ——)
- 29 – tsu
- 30 – mugh
- 31 – s#
- 32 – saw
- 33 – kli
- 34 – kwi
- 35 – kw#
- 36 – sa
- 37 – kwa
- 38 – n# (as in n#t, Engl. and nasal)
- 39 – ka
- 40 – ts#n
- 41 – s#n
- 42 – ni
- 43 – t# or d# (as in n#t Engl.)
- 44 – k# or g#
- 45 – ta
- 46 – k#n
- 47 – wi
- 48 – i
- 49 – u (something like the French u)
- 50 – y#
- 51 – k#n
- 52 – t#n
- 53 – ku
- 54 – ts#
- 55 – kw#
- 56 – nu
- 57 – na

- 58 – l#
- 59 – yu
- 60 – ts#
- 61 – ti
- 62 – w#n
- 63 – tu or du
- 64 – t#
- 65 – tsa
- 66 – u# (nasal)
- 67 – n## (nasal)
- 68 – ta
- 69 – su
- 70 – ma
- 71 – tlu or dlu
- 72 – ha
- 73 – h#
- 74 – mi
- 75 – tlah
- 76 – ya
- 77 – wa
- 78 – ti
- 79 – tl#
- 80 – hna (HNA)
- 81 – kwu (something like French u)
- 82 – dlah
- 83 – m#
- 84 – kw#n or kw##.

NB. The vowels & consonants here all have the Continental sounds, except where they are said to be English; the cedilla under a vowel denotes that the vowel sound is nasalized.

[40v vacat]