

Samuel Alexander and Henry Baldwin

The death of her father in Africa in 1904 served as the catalyst for Annie Montague Alexander to found the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology on the Berkeley campus. At the age of thirty-seven, she felt the need to give meaning to her life and the idea of creating a natural history museum gradually took shape in her mind.

More than any other of Samuel Alexander's children, his second daughter, Annie, embodied her father's striking characteristics—his intensity and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as his generosity and an unshakable commitment to the causes in which he believed. Her life emulated his in extraordinary ways. From an early age, Alexander even seemed to display her father's head for business and his interest in farming. As a young girl, her uncle purportedly offered to pay her a quarter apiece for each avocado seedling she could bring him. She is said to have appeared in his yard some time later with an oxcart laden with small plants, each in its own tin, and to have presented the surprised man with a bill for \$75.00!¹

Among all of Samuel's children, only Annie seemed to share her father's love of adventure, his passion for travel, and his deep appreciation for nature. Like him, she was drawn to challenge yet reluctant to take center stage. Annie's older sister, Juliette, became a writer and poet. Her brother, Wallace, followed in the family business.² Her younger sister, Martha, married and raised a family. Family chronicles never mention the youngest child, Clarence, who died before his fourth birthday.

The striking characteristics that Alexander displayed had previously been passed from father to son. Samuel Thomas Alexander was the third son and child born to the Reverend William Patterson Alexander and his wife, Mary Ann McKinney. Married barely a month when they set sail from New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1831, the twenty-six-year-old minister and his

twenty-one-year-old bride were one of only nine couples comprising the fifth company of missionaries sent by the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missionaries (ABCFM) to proselytize among the natives on the Sandwich Islands (later, the Hawaiian Islands).³ King Kamehameha I had died in 1819 and the kingdom's new constitutional monarch quickly renounced the ancient religion that had long been a centerpiece of island life. Missionaries felt drawn there by Providence. Other missionary families whose names would become famous in Hawaiian history preceded the Alexanders to this tropical paradise. The Bishops had been a part of the second ABCFM company, the Gulicks had arrived with the third, and the Baldwins with the fourth. Amos Star Cooke and his wife, Samuel's future in-laws, would be in the eighth company.

Reverend Alexander's first posting was to a small congregation in Waoili on the island of Kauai, but in 1843 he was transferred to the town of Lahaina on the western coast of Maui, having been assigned to take charge of Lahainaluna Seminary, a missionary school for native Hawaiian boys. In the mid-nineteenth century, Lahaina was the principal town on Maui, a picturesque community and bustling whaling port, second only to Honolulu as an important commercial center on the islands.⁴ A dense growth of tropical foliage ran to the water's edge. Enormous kou trees, whose trunks measured up to 7 feet in diameter, grew to heights of 35 or 40 feet. To the east, the mountains of western Maui rose from the low-lying plains, their intermittent valley streams providing a valuable source of fresh water for the town's inhabitants. As it emerged from the dense foliage, the sparkling water cascaded to the lowlands in splendid falls. Clear streams rushed and tumbled from the hillsides, tripping over rocks and scouring streambeds, ultimately forming deep pools that were ideal for bathing. Only a few miles from the ocean's shore, one could experience the cool, bracing air of the valleys and escape the heat and humidity of town. The Lahainaluna Seminary, two miles away, stood in bold relief against the hills behind it.

For Samuel, growing up in Maui during the nineteenth century was in many ways idyllic. Life in general was lived out-of-doors—by the sea, in the mountains, under the sun. For children, tree climbing, horseback riding, and collecting land snails were favorite pastimes. The snails were astounding for the variety of colors, shapes, and sizes of their shells. Hours and even days might be spent turning over logs and rocks or peering under damp, decaying leaves amidst the lush foliage along the coast and up into the mountains in search of these fascinating gastropods.

Through activities as simple as gathering land snails and ferns, the Hawaiian missionaries and their children contributed significantly to what was

known about the islands' natural history during the nineteenth century.⁵ Many became passionate collectors who meticulously recorded extensive observations on all aspects of the natural world around them, describing unfamiliar botanical specimens and seemingly alien geologic structures that had resulted from volcanic activities not understood at the time.

Reverend Alexander transmitted an interest in natural history to his offspring.⁶ Samuel, in particular, inherited his father's love of trees. Both men planted hundreds of saplings on Maui, young shoots that, in time, grew to provide their families with sweet fruit, delightful fragrances, and soothing shade. Years later, Samuel was to impart this love to his daughter Annie.

Samuel was seven when his family moved to Lahaina. In its carefree and gentle atmosphere, the Reverend Alexander raised his children, his sons in particular, to make the most of their lives and be of use in the world.⁷ He based his own life on integrity and hard work and expected his children to live similarly. His financial resources were meager, but he stressed the merits of education and of learning, and he encouraged his children to think freely.

Even as a child, Samuel expressed a cheerful and outgoing personality. He interacted easily with people, and his popularity seemed based on his genuine good nature. His father reflected, "He has more energy & enterprise than any of his brothers. He will be more likely to make himself felt in the world than they. . . . He has more *go ahead* than any of my sons & a good deal more native talent."⁸

William's words would prove prophetic. While still a student at the Puna-hou School for missionary children in Honolulu, Samuel accepted a one-year position as bookkeeper and merchant on a sugar plantation on Kauai.⁹ Gainful employment on the islands was a perpetual problem for all missionary children, and management positions that required a secondary education were coveted.

The conclusion of Samuel's internship on Kauai coincided with an economic downturn on the islands. The government was bankrupt and few schools had the financial resources to remain open. Unable to find a satisfactory position in Hawaii, Samuel set off in search of gold, "finding it preferable to risk the seduction of California, than to rot at the Islands," he explained to his older brother James.¹⁰

Before leaving for California, Samuel became engaged. His bride-to-be, Martha (Pattie) Eliza Cooke, was the daughter of missionaries Amos Star Cooke and Juliette Montague. Upon learning of Samuel's good fortune, James wrote home, "I should think, from what I have heard, that he had gained the affection of as accomplished, attractive, and noble-hearted a lady

as there is in the Islands or anywhere. I hope he may thereby be clarified & ennobled himself."¹¹

Samuel's search for gold proved much less romantic and far less profitable than he had hoped. Long days of back-breaking labor brought him little remuneration and he met few honest men or trustworthy companions. After only a year in California, what gold he managed to amass was gone, some by theft, the rest spent nursing himself back to health after contracting malaria. He returned to Hawaii penniless, earning his passage home by working aboard ship.¹²

Samuel and Pattie's engagement spanned nine years. The young Alexander was determined not to marry until he could support his bride and the family that he was sure would follow in rapid succession. Starting anew, he eagerly accepted an offer of a teaching position at the Lahainaluna Seminary. Teaching was not his first love, but he viewed the position as a way to ensure his fiancée a proper home and some degree of financial security. The offer, however, was contingent upon his spending several more years on the mainland completing his education. While Pattie waited patiently, Samuel sailed to New England. He attended Williams College for two years before accepting a residency in the teacher training program at the Normal School in Westfield, Massachusetts.¹³

Samuel returned to Hawaii eager to take up his new position. In keeping with his own interests, he began planting banana trees and raising sugarcane with his students as an adjunct to the school's more established curriculum. The scores of ripe bananas and rows of mature cane that carpeted the hillsides overlooking Lahaina did not go unnoticed. Two years after he had returned, Samuel was offered the position of operations manager on a sugar plantation in northcentral Maui where the enchanting and lush Iao Valley lay immediately to the west. With his father's blessing, he gave up teaching and moved with his bride to Waihee.

The energy and enterprise that William had foreseen in his third son quickly manifested themselves. Within four years, Samuel resigned his position at Waihee and resettled his family in the town of Haiku near the dry and dusty cane fields that he and his business partner, Henry Baldwin, had purchased. Samuel and Pattie were now the proud parents of three children—Juliette, born in 1865; Annie Montague, born in 1867; and Wallace McKinney, born in 1869. A third daughter, Martha Mabel, would follow in 1878, and a son, Clarence Chambers, in 1880.¹⁴

Samuel had met his business partner, Henry Baldwin, after the Alexander family moved from the Reverend Alexander's posting on Kauai to Maui. Dr. Dwight Baldwin, Henry's father, served as the community physician in

Lahaina, as well as one of its spiritual leaders. The two couples and their children quickly became close friends—so close, in fact, that Samuel's oldest brother, William, married Henry's older sister, Abigail, while Henry, in turn, married Samuel's younger sister Emily (see the Alexander family tree in Figure 1).

Samuel and Henry had more in common than missionary roots and close family ties. Both were bright and energetic, possessed of good natures and naturally green thumbs. As friends, they developed a bond of trust and confidence that neither time nor good fortune would diminish in any way. As individuals with complementary strengths, they were exceptional business partners. Samuel was the fountain of new and innovative ideas, Henry the partner who carried their projects through to completion. This fruitful collaboration was a model that Alexander would later emulate in her relationship with Joseph Grinnell, the man she selected to serve as director of her Museum of Vertebrate Zoology.

The fields that Alexander and Baldwin had purchased lay in a stretch of northcentral Maui between the towns of Paia and Makawao. The partners' ability to buy the land with relatively little capital had to do with its undesirable location. The dormant volcano Haleakala (house of the sun) rose majestically to the east and cast a long, dry shadow across their property; the paucity of rain limited the size and productivity of their fields.¹⁵ The Victorian traveler Isabella Bird described the landscape in the vicinity of the family's new residence at Haiku as a "Sahara in miniature, a dreary expanse of sand and shifting sandhills, with a dismal growth in some places of thornless thistles and indigo, and a tremendous surf thunders on the margin. Trackless, glaring, choking, a guide is absolutely necessary to a stranger, for the footprints or wheel-marks of one moment are obliterated the next. . . . It is a hateful ride, yet anything so hideous and aggressively odious is a salutary experience in a land of so much beauty."¹⁶

To escape the dusty and barren landscape around Haiku, with its suffocating summer heat, Samuel built a second home at Olinda on the cool, damp slopes of Haleakala. The volcano towered more than 10,000 feet above sea level to dominate the landscape of eastern Maui like an awesome god. The children spent countless hours exploring the volcano's wooded slopes or turning over rocks and logs in search of land snails and ferns. Another of their favorite pastimes was watching the sun rise slowly and spectacularly over the "Big Island" of Hawaii. Often the children would pack camp gear, blankets, matches, and food and ride horses or mules to the top of the mountain before nightfall. On other occasions they would simply mount their horses at one or two in the morning, when the sky was black and no light

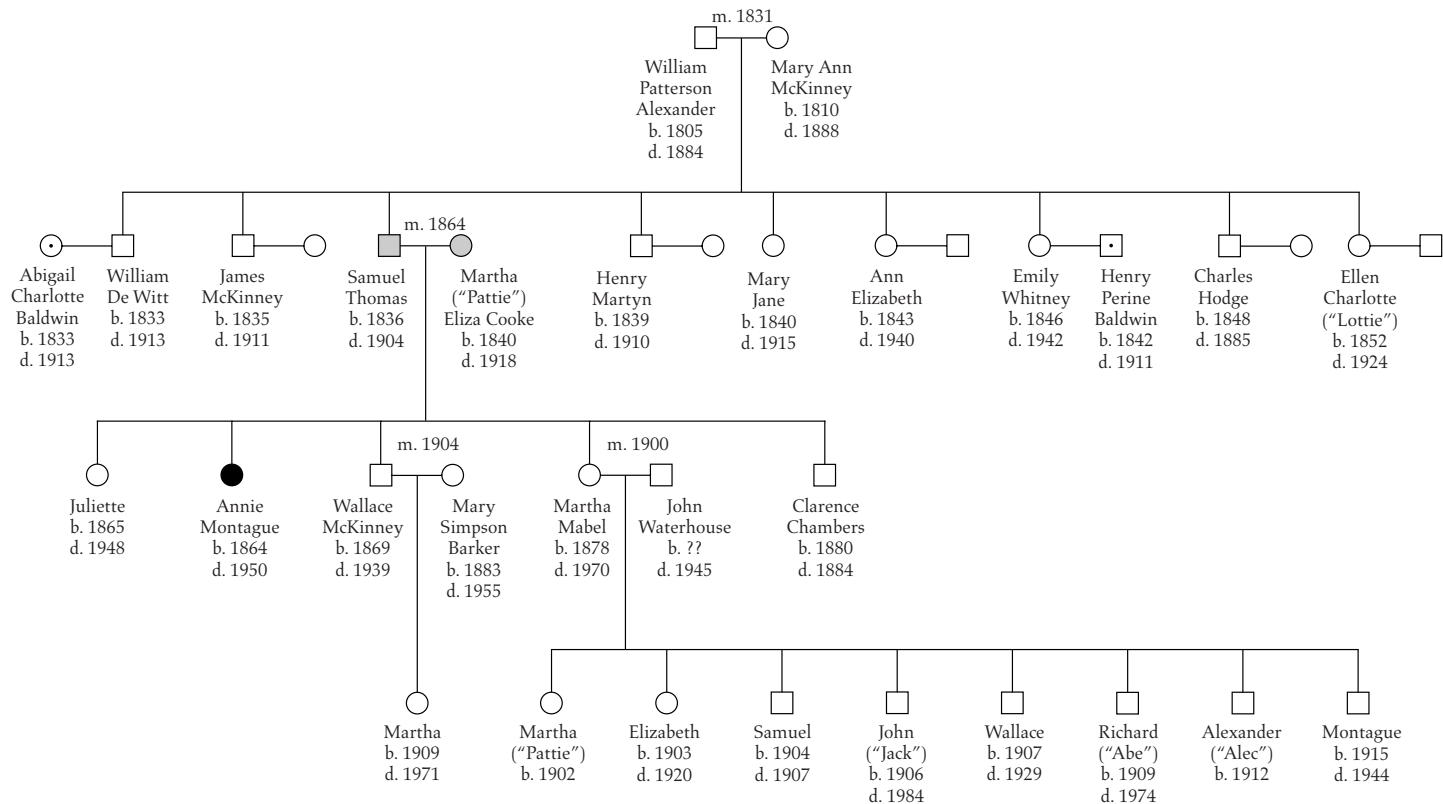


Figure 1. A simplified view of Alexander's family tree (it omits her many cousins and their offspring). Shaded areas highlight Alexander's lineage. Early marriages between the Alexanders and Baldwins are indicated by dots within a circle or square.

penetrated the dense woods along the steep mountain slopes, in order to arrive at the summit by daybreak. When they reached their destination there was no guarantee that they would actually see the sun rise. Instead, they might be greeted by dense clouds and fog, the spectacle reduced to little more than a gradual fading of darkness into the monotony of gray gloom.

Since the mountain itself was anything but dry, Samuel conceived of a remarkable plan to carry desperately needed water from its wet, windward side to his parched plantation below. By 1876, the property that he and Henry jointly owned had increased to such an extent that their only hope for survival, and for profit, was to devise a means to greatly enhance its irrigation capabilities. The rain that they depended upon for irrigation was now grossly insufficient for the size of their acreage.

The Hamakua ditch project became perhaps the most dramatic water project in Hawaii's history, and one that served as a model for later irrigation projects throughout the islands.¹⁷ Though not an engineer, Samuel proposed to construct an aqueduct approximately twenty-five miles long, which would gather water from the dozens of mountain streams and rivulets on the wet, windward, eastern side of Haleakala and carry it through ridges and across ravines to the fertile, but thirsty, plantations lying in the volcano's rain shadow to the west. Samuel arranged a preliminary survey for the construction, worked out its financing, and negotiated a lease from the government for the land. In turn, Henry oversaw the digging of the miles of ditches and tunnels, the building of flumes, and the placement of pipes for the completed structure. Under his direction, the project was completed by deadline in an astounding two years.

The timing could not have been better. Construction of the aqueduct and the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1876 between the United States and Hawaii marked the first steps toward profitability for Alexander and Baldwin. The ditch provided the water they so desperately needed to irrigate their crops. The treaty gave Hawaii a distinct advantage over other foreign producers by stipulating that the U.S. government agree to remit the duty on rice and sugar imported from the islands. Accordingly, the partners continued to purchase land in central Maui, increasing the size and importance of their plantation. They also bought out a third party's interest in a sugar mill. For the first time, they were now able to process some of their own cane.

In 1883, Samuel and Henry incorporated their informal partnership as a business. They chose to call it Paia Plantation.¹⁸ That same year, for unspecified reasons of health, Samuel announced that he was moving his family to Oakland, California. The climate in Hawaii may have induced unpleasant recurrences of the malaria that he had contracted as a young man.

Samuel loved the climate in San Francisco, which he described as “splendid and invigorating.” He wrote to his older brother William, “I am more than ever convinced that the climate of the Islands is debilitating;—the tendency is to sloth and vice.” More to the point, the still vigorous Samuel was thoroughly convinced that California was “*the* country.” Despite his somewhat harsh experiences in the state as a young man, he wrote to his brother James, “There is perhaps no country in the world better calculated to develop independence of character than California.”¹⁹

The move to California made business sense as well. From Oakland, Samuel kept Henry well informed of developments in Congress with respect to sugar tariffs and the issue of annexation. When the Revolutionary Reform Party gained renewal of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1887, Hawaiians were convinced that their economic well-being was assured. Thus, when Congress suddenly revised its tariff policy a short time later and granted a bounty of two cents per pound to American domestic producers, Hawaiians were stunned. One stroke of a pen had shut Hawaiian growers out of American markets and put the issue of Hawaii’s annexation to the mainland up for heated debate throughout the islands.²⁰

Samuel’s move to the mainland proved timely in other respects as well. Claus Spreckels, a wealthy San Francisco sugar refiner and an aggressive competitor, quickly established himself as a major sugar producer with the aim of monopolizing that commodity in the Hawaiian market.²¹ When Alexander and Baldwin’s purchasing agent in San Francisco teetered on the brink of bankruptcy during the depression of 1891–94, Spreckels’s Hawaiian Commercial Company took over its affairs. This maneuver placed Alexander and Baldwin’s debts to their agent in Spreckels’s hands and left the partners in an unenviable and precarious position. Samuel worked feverishly to raise the money needed to pay off the debts, terminate Spreckels’s firm as their agent, and establish a San Francisco purchasing agency of their own.

As a direct result of Samuel’s efforts, Alexander & Baldwin opened its doors in San Francisco in 1894. Samuel’s son, Wallace, and his nephew Joseph P. Cooke were picked to run the new purchasing agency. The two proved to be skillful businessmen. Marketing profits quickly increased and the agency began serving a growing number of smaller plantations on the islands. Less than three years after its founding, Joseph went back to Hawaii to open an A&B office in Honolulu, while Wallace remained in San Francisco to direct the company’s affairs on the mainland.

With purchasing now under their control, the partners turned their attention to the problem of refining their sugar. Finding a buyer and secur-

ing the best possible price for their product were paramount concerns. Whether the partners executed a one-year contract or a multiyear contract with a refinery that would produce table sugar from the raw material they delivered, the purchase price for their sugar fluctuated unpredictably with the markets in New York and Manila. To make matters worse, there were only two sugar refineries on the West Coast, both in the Bay Area. Spreckels controlled one, the California Sugar Refining Company, and maintained a one-third interest in the other, the smaller American Refinery. To avoid Spreckels's virtual monopoly on the refining industry in California, the partners would have to ship their raw sugar to the lone refinery on the East Coast—two decades before the Panama Canal was completed, sending their product around the southern tip of South America—at a significant cost in time and profit.

In 1896, after devoting considerable thought to the problem, Samuel quietly organized a majority of the independent plantations in Hawaii and, without Spreckels's knowledge, secured a three-year contract with the American Refinery to handle the group's sugar. With that contract in place, the consortium of independent growers successfully maneuvered to acquire a controlling interest in the American Refinery and the following year named Samuel to its board of directors. Simultaneously, Alexander & Baldwin, in conjunction with several members of the consortium, purchased an old flour mill in the town of Crockett northeast of San Francisco and converted the mill into a refinery of their own. The mill became established as the California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company, predecessor of today's California and Hawaiian Sugar Company, better known as C&H Sugar—pure cane sugar from California and Hawaii.

Spreckels still maintained extensive land holdings on Maui and a partial interest in the Maui Railroad & Steamship Company. With these investments he was able to deny other growers access to the waterfront, leaving Alexander & Baldwin and their allies no way to get their sugar to port. The partners responded by buying out both the Kahului Railroad and the competing line and port facilities owned and controlled by Spreckels, thus securing complete control of their sugar from field through refinery.

When Samuel and Henry started their business, sugar was carried to the mainland on sailing ships that the partners chartered. With the passage of time, the partners came to rely increasingly on the new, larger and faster steamships, including those operated by the Swedish-born captain William Matson. Before long, Alexander & Baldwin became the agent for Matson Navigation and eventually acquired that business as well.

Alexander and Baldwin were now established as the largest sugar pro-

ducers in Hawaii. In little more than six months, Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company (H.C. & S.) stock rose from \$27 to \$128 per share. Having outgrown their current organization, on June 30, 1900, they met to file papers of incorporation in Hawaii. Henry Baldwin was elected the corporation's first president and all the partnership's assets were transferred to the new company, Alexander & Baldwin, Limited.

While life in the Bay Area delighted Samuel, the move to Oakland never suited Annie. As a young girl growing up in Haiku, she regularly swam in the ocean and rode horseback through the dusty streets of town. She delighted in climbing to the roof of the upstairs verandah and entering her bedroom through an open window rather than using the stairs inside the house. Then, in the fall of 1881, at the age of thirteen, she enrolled at Punahou School in Honolulu, elated at the adventure involved in the arduous eighty-eight-mile ocean journey from Maui to Oahu. But her tenure and happiness there proved short-lived. After only a year, Samuel moved the family to California.

Perhaps the city of Oakland itself was to blame for Alexander's unhappiness or the role that she gradually felt compelled to play as an affluent, female member of society. Regardless, as a young woman she repeatedly flew from oppressive feelings that life in the city seemed to impose upon her. Increasingly, she exhibited her father's restless passion for adventure.

Oakland, however, did offer Alexander one incalculable benefit—its proximity to the newly established University of California in the neighboring town of Berkeley. Although Alexander could not quite come to terms with her life in the city, her introduction to the university in the fall of 1900 marked a turning point. The paleontology classes she began attending that semester did much more than simply stimulate her mind: they introduced her to fieldwork and a justifiable means of escape from her oppression.

Life in Oakland

In the 1880s Oakland was a fashionable place to live, a city reminiscent of the towns and villages on the East Coast from which its early settlers had come.¹ Its name reflected the groves of gigantic oak trees that lined its shore. Majestic redwoods still topped the gentle hills that rose to the east of town, and every spring wildflowers carpeted the fields surrounding the city as far as the eye could see. The city offered its residents paved roads, police and fire services, gasoline street lamps, regular hourly ferry service to San Francisco, and a steam railroad that connected to the ferry. Its convenient commuter connections and genteel atmosphere drew the families of prosperous San Francisco businessmen and many of that city's leading professionals. But perhaps more than any of Oakland's other attractions, its Mediterranean climate and educational facilities made it a bright, pleasant, wholesome family town—untouched by the excesses that were San Francisco's legacy of the gold rush days—"the Athens of the Pacific Coast," as it was known at the time.

Shortly after arriving in Oakland, Samuel set about building a house on the western side of town, on the northeastern corner of Sixteenth and Filbert streets.² Among the Alexanders' neighbors were the author Jack London, the architect Julia Morgan, philanthropists Jane and Peder Sather, a former city mayor, several university regents, and the family of Charles and Anita Kellogg, descendants of East Coast merchants and the cousins of Martin Kellogg, professor of ancient languages at the University of California and later the university's president.³

Details of Alexander's life in the years immediately following the move to Oakland are few. Although Samuel had come to California for reasons of health, he also wished to avail himself of the intellectual and social amenities that eluded an isolated plantation owner on Maui. In Oakland there were

opera and symphony concerts to attend, musical instruction and dance lessons for the children, as well as afternoon teas and luncheons for his wife.

In the fall of 1887 Alexander traveled east to attend Lasell Seminary for Young Women in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Located nine miles west of Boston on the newly installed Worcester Railroad line, the school was named for its founder, Edward Lasell, a former chemistry teacher at Williams College. Lasell had come to believe that women as well as men could benefit from instruction after high school. His thinking was radical at a time when educating women beyond the elementary skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic was considered unnecessary, even wasteful, and certainly against human nature. Lasell embraced the notion that good academic training was in no way injurious to a woman's success in marriage or in life.⁴ His seminary thus became the first four-year junior college for women in the United States and modeled its curriculum after the course of study at Williams College with which its founder was familiar. Samuel may have become aware of Lasell's relatively progressive program during his own brief attendance at Williams. Or Annie may simply have been following other missionary offspring to school on the mainland. When Alexander enrolled at Lasell in the fall of 1887, her close childhood friend Mary Beckwith was already a student there.

The mid-1880s ushered in a period of relative personal freedom for women at Lasell. Students were still expected to attend daily chapel and church on Sunday and participate in morning calisthenics and drill twice a week but, between 2:00 P.M. and 7:15 P.M. each day, they were free to go about on their own when not in class. This was a distinct change from previous years when every hour of the students' day was accounted for by special rules. This same freedom, however, was not yet accorded women's dress. Gloves were required and bloomers unacceptable during Alexander's tenure there. The mid-1880s also marked the introduction of military drills as a regular part of Lasell's program. The purpose behind these workouts was threefold—they were believed to be the best exercise for improving one's posture, they were deemed to be a good way to train young women to operate in an organized fashion, and they were a logical means to inspire patriotism.

Although Alexander never earned a degree at Lasell, during the two years she spent there she studied nineteenth-century history, French and Roman history, political economy, civil government, Shakespeare, English, German, French, composition, fair logic, moral logic, choir, voice, dress cutting, and photography.⁵ In later years she was fond of quoting bits of poetry in French and German. But of all the courses in which Alexander enrolled at Lasell, it was photography that she pursued most faithfully in later life.

In the summer of 1889, after Annie had left Lasell, the Alexander and Baldwin families vacationed in Europe. When they returned to the States, Alexander remained in Paris to study French. Having exhibited some degree of artistic talent, she also enrolled in drawing classes at the Sorbonne. She spent the winter in Berlin studying German and the following year she returned to Paris, living with her Aunt Lottie, her father's younger sister Ellen Charlotte, on the fourth floor of an apartment building on Avenue Kléber. During this period, she began suffering from migraines and experiencing persistent eyestrain. The doctors she consulted warned of blindness if the strain continued.⁶

Reluctantly, Alexander relinquished any hope of becoming an artist. She destroyed all her paintings and drawings, feeling that her work lacked finish. She returned to Oakland and entered a period of searching. She attempted nursing school but found that the required reading put too much strain on her eyes. Fearing blindness, she set about memorizing poetry, committing to memory the whole first canto of Milton's *Paradise Lost* among other favorites. Emulating her father, she also began to travel.⁷

Samuel had long expressed his own father's yearning for adventure and deep-rooted passion for travel. The elder Alexander had been raised on the frontiers of Kentucky and, during his early missionary years, had sailed to the South Seas and lived among the cannibals of the Marquesas. Samuel felt similarly drawn to explore the wild, untouched places on earth. In a letter to his older brother William in 1866 he pronounced, "What is the use of settling down comfortably & leading a good virtuous & industrious life & then dying. No, I would rather start off in quest of the elixir of life, & roam ragged & hungry over barren mountain summits, than live the life of the most virtuous & useful men." Suiting his acts to his words, within a fifteen-year period Samuel visited England, Scotland, Ireland, Egypt, Palestine, and India; voyaged through the South Seas visiting the island groups between the Marquesas and Australia; sailed around South America; ascended one of the highest mountains in Bolivia; journeyed far up into the Andes in Peru; and touched Rio de Janeiro, Pernambuco, and the Antilles. Later in life he visited Java, China, Japan, Alaska, and Iceland.⁸

In the summer of 1893 father and daughter toured 1,500 miles on bicycles through England, France, and Switzerland with Annie's younger sister, Martha, and one of their cousins. Two years later Annie undertook a second bicycle excursion, this time with her cousin Will Cooke. In 1896 she sailed to Asia and through the South Pacific with her uncle James, Samuel's older brother, visiting Hong Kong, China, and Singapore before turning south to explore Java, Samoa, the Marquesas Islands, and,

finally, New Zealand. Regrettably, no diaries or letters from these journeys survive.

In late May 1899 Alexander set out on horseback on a ten-week trip through northern California and southern Oregon with Martha Beckwith. Over the course of the summer, the women discovered themselves to be kindred spirits. "Had we not been the aspiring natures we were we never should have climbed the Lassen Buttes or ever reached Crater Lake," Annie wrote upon their return to Mary, her former classmate and Martha's older sister.⁹

Stowing their gear in packs and saddlebags, the women covered more than six hundred miles, camping as they went, sleeping on cushions of fir or pillows of tamarack boughs. The purpose of their journey was to collect plants, but Annie praised Martha's patience and exuberance in trying to teach her the names of all the birds that they encountered as well.

The pair stopped in Brandy City, Quincy, Greenville, Prattville, Fall River Mills, and Lookout, California, before wandering across the border into southern Oregon. From Klamath Falls they journeyed north to Crater Lake. In the high Sierra meadows, a few precocious blades of grass attempted to push their way toward a bright June sun amid scattered drifts of snow, often knee-deep. By their own reckoning, the most spectacular moment of the trip was their first glimpse of Mount Shasta silhouetted against the setting sun. The following morning, a three-hour hike up Lassen Buttes led them to the edge of a large meadow, beyond which dark hills forested with pines served as a stunning backdrop for the mountain. On their descent, they passed Tule Lake and from there continued on a distance through barren-looking country littered with fallen pinecones. When the weather turned inclement, evenings might be spent recuperating in sleepy little towns "where the men had nothing more to do than bask and blink in the sunshine and the women rocked in easy chairs and chewed gum." Accommodations in such towns were less than enticing, and Alexander displayed her playful humor when she wrote to Mary Beckwith, "To build little Swiss hotels in every town we had been in we considered to be on the whole the best missionary work that could be done."¹⁰

Almost immediately upon returning to Oakland, Martha boarded a train for the East Coast to resume teaching. With more than usual feeling, Annie mourned her going and counted the growing number of miles that separated the two. She penned increasingly fervent letters to her new friend, proposing long leisurely trips into the hills surrounding San Francisco Bay—they would hike, bring their lunch, glory in the sunshine, and take photographs together—if only Martha would return to California. In one letter Annie revealed her depth of longing for her new companion when she

recounted, "I woke myself up last night calling out—Martha!—I was sitting up in bed looking around the room with the confused feeling that I had pushed you out of bed and you had slipped off to find another place to sleep. There was no Martha anywhere near to answer me."¹¹

To Alexander's surprise and increasing dismay, after reaching the East Coast, Beckwith boarded a ship for Paris. Clearly distressed at the immense ocean that would be added to the continent already placed between them, Annie wrote passionately to her new friend. Understanding that "we only cast our lots together for the summer and the summer is over," she nonetheless now felt alone and bereft in Oakland.¹² Without Martha to guide her, Annie seemed at a loss for ways to develop the new interests that the ten-week trip to Crater Lake had added to her life.

The trip to Crater Lake marked the beginning of a lifelong friendship between the women. Yet Beckwith did not share Alexander's desire for a closer relationship. A letter from Alexander to Beckwith written in the fall of 1902 exudes her bitterness after confronting this reality and indicates that Beckwith precipitated the rift. As Alexander's letters make clear, she continued to care deeply for Beckwith. The correspondence went on unabated, albeit in a slightly less romantic tone. From Hawaii that winter she wrote most frequently about sugar—factors influencing the success of the current crop of cane or its price on the open market—and about mutual family and friends. Alexander's enduring fondness and commitment to Beckwith are perhaps most evident in letters written several years later in which she encourages her friend to become involved in a lasting relationship. She wished for Beckwith a union to ease the burdens and isolation that Annie felt were pervasive in Martha's life and impervious to the financial gifts that she herself continually proffered. She wrote, "Martha, dear friend, don't work too hard; find somebody to love you and do for you—you are off by yourself near that big University. I wish I might break in upon any hours of loneliness that might be yours. Think of me as loving you—Anne."¹³

Leaving the question of affection aside, the careers to which each of these women eventually devoted their lives were not suited to a partnership between them. Alexander later credited Beckwith with introducing her to geology and to an ensuing passion for fossils.¹⁴ However, Alexander's pursuit of paleontology and zoology as vocations necessitated a partner who would accompany her on field expeditions and could share the tedium and sheer physical labor involved in the work. Not only did she face the issue of impropriety if she dared to travel either alone or as the only woman in the

company of men but, once she began conducting fieldwork on her own rather than as a member of a party sent by the university, the possibility of equipment failure, sickness, or bodily injury made a compelling case for the presence of a collecting partner.

Beckwith's interest in fieldwork was of a different sort. After graduating with a bachelor's degree from Mt. Holyoke College in 1893, she began teaching, first at Elmira College, then at Mt. Holyoke, Smith, and Vassar colleges, before deciding to enter graduate school at Columbia University to pursue a degree in anthropology under Franz Boas. She published extensively on the folklore of Native Americans, Jamaicans, and indigenous Hawaiians, research that left no time for her to assist in the extended and arduous paleontological and zoological field expeditions that Alexander would eventually undertake for several months each year.¹⁵

Despite the physical distance between them, Annie continued to pour out her deepest feelings in letters to Martha. The increasing strain that reading now placed on her eyes led her to realize that she would never be capable of performing any close, detailed work. She wrote to Martha of her frustration with her optician and of her waxing and waning optimism:

Am always preaching to myself that one must have resources within oneself for happiness but I've been distraught this week by the machinations of my Dr. B. (a stiff way to put it but it suits me). He tells me that I must have the muscles of my eyes cut. Is he honest! . . . He looks me straight in the eye as I look him. I never understood proportion very well but this is clear to me—doctor:patient::imposter:imposed upon. Proven by experience. Mama thinks I am cynical but it is a mistake. I've been brought face to face with my optimism so many times that I know I shall soon be embracing it again—perhaps before the end of this week.¹⁶

Writing to Martha became Annie's catharsis. She readily admitted that she had "not quite been able to adjust myself to things as they were" since their return from Oregon. Her letters that fall detail her increasing frustration with the conventional role that she was forced to play at home and led her to muse, "I think if I could tramp around on snow-shoes for a while I would get quite rid of my malaria [malaise?]*—*O you know I'm always thinking up some excuse to leave Oakland. It makes me feel ashamed of myself. I must fight it out here and attempt to do a little work of some kind. If I cannot here I should not expect to accomplish anything anywhere else."¹⁷

Many of the letters that Alexander wrote to Beckwith during this period express a similar yearning to be out-of-doors, to escape the confines of do-

mestic and social activities that tired her eyes and drained her spirit. Alexander possessed the same restless spirit that had been the driving force behind the success of her father, yet comparable channels for her physical and mental energy did not exist. Perhaps equally frustrating was the realization that the problems with her eyes made acceptable professions for women, such as teaching, nursing, and the arts, unavailable to her.

After several pages, Annie's letter to Martha continued, "I decided to trust my doctor and have the muscles cut over two months ago—and my eyes have been better;—up to a certain point. All that remains is to pull what is left of the 'Old Man of the Sea' from my back and sling him away from me—I shall be as self-respecting as anyone but not until then."¹⁸

A number of Alexander's letters to Beckwith also reveal an insecurity about her own intellect, a belief that the intellectual pursuits she admired greatly in others were beyond her abilities, for example, "I'd hoe corn with you or milk cows and earn my wages if wages must be earned, but any labor of the head I shun." Even after Beckwith's prompting caused her to begin auditing classes at the university, her feelings remained unchanged: "Paleontology is getting too deep for me. I succumb before the complex structure of the echinodermata [starfish and their relatives]! This superficial way of doing things injures my self-respect but it is better than nothing isn't it and perhaps some day I can do laboratory work." Four years later, having already organized and led several highly successful paleontological field expeditions, Alexander would still feel compelled to confess, "I wish my work went further than to simply get the fossils to the University. I should like to follow the saurian [a fossil reptile] to the bitter end, chisel him out of the rock and write learned treatises on his venerable anatomy. But—."¹⁹

Why and how Alexander came to hold such attitudes about herself is the most vexing issue with respect to understanding this unusual woman. She was a creditable student, if not a brilliant one, and her lack of a diploma from Lasell was neither unusual nor indicative of poor scholastic performance. Many women attended the school who did not formally graduate. Whereas Alexander may have struggled to grasp the complexity of some subjects, she nonetheless had a comprehensive understanding of the major scientific issues of her day and held a detailed knowledge of many aspects of vertebrate biology and evolution.

Alexander did not view her shortcomings as related to her sex and did not harbor the illusion that a husband and family were the solution to her problem. She frequently expressed cynicism about the institution of marriage and the power wielded by men, as when she wrote wryly to Martha,

"I saw Mary McLean Olney this morning. She was Dean of Pomona College for a year, liked the work and would have enjoyed going on with it had not this other thing come up—that of falling in love and getting married."²⁰

Apparently there was no pressure on the Alexander children to marry, and neither Juliette nor Annie did. Juliette was odd, "not quite right in the head," and her parents may not have wished to place this additional strain on their quiet and thoughtful daughter.²¹ She lived with Samuel and Pattie until their deaths, after which time she lived in her own home but always in the company of a paid companion. For two weeks every fall, Alexander reportedly stayed with her older sister so that the companion could take a vacation.

In Annie's case, too, there was no financial incentive for marriage; the success of Alexander & Baldwin, Inc., ensured that each of the founders' offspring would be well cared for. And Alexander was not a weak individual who needed a husband to look after her personal welfare. Quite the opposite. As a young woman she had traveled abroad on her own and had already proved herself able to handle enormous physical challenges. If she was loath to abandon such adventures in favor of a husband, then apparently so were her parents to have her do so. Her purpose in life may have been unclear at the time, but she instinctively recognized that marriage would not quell her restlessness and pervasive malaise. Her continuing saga with the medical profession, at that time predominantly male, offers yet another clue to her attitudes about marriage. Cynically, if not a bit incredulously, she wrote to Martha:

My pride has been sustained by quite a different diagnosis by a doctor in the City whom Miss Wilson has been wanting me to go to for two years. . . . The process was interesting so I will tell you. I was made to undress to the waist except for my undershirt and sat down in a great chair in the center of a room full of electric apparatus. The first step the doctor took was to look out my date of birth in a wizard volume and then he studied me while my eyes blinked with a new interest at this strange method that asked no questions. Finally he had it—arrested development at the base of the brain, congenital, and he was ready to swear by all possessed that he was right. So I am taking electric treatment of him [*sic*] three times a week and hope that the nerve cells in my brain under this stimulant will go to work and form new tissue as fast as possible. The doctor is a fatherly old gentleman but he has a fad with which he torments me every little while, namely—every woman should marry if it is only to live with a man three months—that they are not women until they have had the experience that comes with marriage. He calls this his discovery! He is satisfied from the lines in

my hand that I would make some one a very nice wife, but indicating the Mount of Venus—you will never attract a man until that is better developed—and he proposes to accomplish this for me! My love-nature is strong, proved by certain bumps on my head, but has not been able to express itself. Really, Martha, I would not prattle along in this way, but I think you need to be amused don't you?²²

In December 1899 Martha left Paris for Halle, Germany. Annie continued to pen long newsy letters to her beloved friend. With the arrival of the New Year, she and Samuel traveled to the West Indies and Bermuda for several months. They rented rooms at a country boardinghouse along the edge of a small bay, eight miles outside of Hamilton, Bermuda. The ocean approached to within feet of their doorstep. Undeterred by the wet, windy weather, Alexander put on her waterproof cape and explored the surrounding countryside while other boarders stayed close to the fire. She walked along winding roads cut from coral rock and noted with pleasure inland ponds of clear salt water, patches of banana trees, a fruitless coconut palm, scattered mulberry bushes, and papaya plants, all of which reminded her of Hawaii and of the many hours she had spent as a child exploring its natural secrets. Yet the stone walls of white-washed coral against the pale blue of the ocean lent a picturesque feel to this landscape different from that other familiar island paradise.

Back in Oakland, once again Annie experienced that keen, sinking sensation of being trapped in an environment where she did not belong. Spring and summer passed slowly. Samuel and Pattie were planning to spend the fall of 1900 in New York City and the winter in India, leaving their daughter virtually alone in the big house on Sixteenth Street. Annie hoped to persuade Martha to travel to California to be with her. She wrote pleadingly, "I want you! Won't you come spend the fall and winter with me? What inducements can I offer? I would send you tickets several times over if that would bring you and go to Chicago myself to meet you."²³

At Alexander's plaintive urging, Beckwith agreed. She herself seemed to be experiencing a hiatus. She had returned unexpectedly from Europe the previous spring and did not wish to resume teaching immediately, or at least did not feel compelled to do so. Annie was jubilant. Buoyed by Martha's presence and motivated by her encouragement, Annie began auditing paleontology lectures at the University of California in the neighboring town of Berkeley.

A Passion for Paleontology

Before the trip through northern California, Alexander had never verbalized an academic interest in natural science; her curriculum at Lasell was lacking in this arena. But her thrill at learning the names of the plants and animals that summer, and her obvious pleasure in being outdoors, may have prompted the choice. Study of earth's origins and the history of its flora and fauna was a logical prerequisite to full understanding of its more recent forms.

The course that Alexander chose to audit in the fall of 1900 was given by John C. Merriam, a faculty member in the Department of Geology who had acquired a reputation as an inspiring and captivating lecturer. Merriam had arrived in Berkeley in 1894 after completing his doctorate in paleontology at the University of Munich and by 1900 had added several advanced courses in paleontology to the department's curriculum, including Vertebrate Paleontology, the History of Vertebrate Life in North America, and the Geological History of Man. Merriam's presence in the geology department focused welcome attention on the discipline of vertebrate paleontology at Cal and he single-handedly sparked the development of its fossil collections.¹

Merriam's lectures fascinated Alexander and she began to develop a passion for paleontology. At the end of the fall semester, Martha left for the East, and less than two months later Annie wrote to her delightedly, "What a fever the study of old earth that you thought should be a part of my education has set up in me! I am really alarmed. If it were a general interest in geology there might be something quite wholesome in it but it seems to centralize on fossils, fossils! And I am beleagu[er]ed."²

Armed with her "new and valued companions—the pick and collecting sack"—Alexander began to explore the geology and topography of the Bay