Times Have Changed So Much!

What’s Next?

By Dr. Richard Kelley

This week, Linda and I attended a gala dinner honoring the founders of the University of Denver who, 150 years ago, put together some classrooms and began offering advanced educational opportunities to the people of that rough-and-tumble town at the foot of the Rocky Mountains in the then-Territory of Colorado.

It was a lovely evening, and it started me thinking about how different from today things were in 1864. I also thought about the many amazing changes I have personally seen in my lifetime, which has spanned more than half of those 150 years.

In America, times were tough in 1864. The American Civil War had already been raging for three bloody years, and General William Tecumseh Sherman was about to burn Atlanta before setting off on his “March to the Sea.” On a far brighter note, it was only a year since President Abraham Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, the first big step in ridding our country of the blight of slavery. (The adoption of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865 completed the abolition of slavery.)

In the mid-1800s, life was also totally different in all the locations where Outrigger (which has now been in existence for 67 of the 150 years since 1864) would some day manage a hotel or resort. To put that thought into perspective, let’s look at some historical snapshots from each of those locations.

- **Hawaii**: Punahou, the school founded by missionaries in 1841, was still in its infancy. King Kamehameha V was revising the constitution of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i, first written in 1852 under Kamehameha III.

- **Guam**: Claimed by Spain in 1565, the island was for over two and a half centuries a regular port of call for Spanish galleons carrying gold and silver from Mexico and Peru to purchase silks and spices in China. In the 1820s, a series of revolutions put an end to Spanish rule in most of the Western Hemisphere, and in 1898 Spain ceded Guam to the United States at the end of the Spanish-American War.

What’s Next? >> 2
**What's Next? ... << From 1**

- **Australia**: Originally settled 40,000 or more years ago by the people today known as Aborigines, modern Australia began, less than auspiciously, as a British penal colony in 1788. By the mid-1800s, gold discovered in New South Wales and central Victoria attracted a stream of adventurous new immigrants from the British Isles and, eventually, elsewhere in Europe. These were rugged, often lawless times, but the wealth from gold and wool brought in immense investment, and by the 1880s, Sydney and Melbourne had become stylish, modern cities.

- **Fiji**: “Blackbirders” (slave traders) began to arrive in Fiji with captives from the New Hebrides (today’s nation of Vanuatu) and Solomon Islands who were put to work on the cotton and sugar plantations. A few years later, ships began to make the 10-week voyage from Calcutta (today known as Kolkata) carrying Indian laborers who would work for five years under the British indentured labor system. A total of over 60,000 people arrived under this program (source: Girmitunited.org).

- **Bali**: In addition to rice production, Bali – which, like the rest of today’s Indonesia, was then a Dutch colony – had long been a center for intellectuals, artists, priests and musicians who migrated there from the island of Java. By the mid 1800s, Dutch political and economic ambitions were pitting various distrustful Balinese realms against each other.

- **Thailand**: King Mongkut (1851-1868) was nearing the end of his reign. He is remembered as the leader who, as retold in the novel by Margaret Landon, embraced Western innovations and initiated Thailand’s modernization. The 1946 film, *Anna and the King of Siam*, and the 1951 musical and 1956 film, both titled *The King and I*, were based on King Mongkut’s life.

- **Mauritius**: This beautiful Indian Ocean island began as a Dutch colony with sugar plantations that relied on slave labor from 1638 until the Netherlands abandoned it in 1710. The French took over and the British followed from 1810 to 1968, when the island gained independence. When slavery was abolished in most of the British Empire in 1834, Britain began bringing in indentured laborers from China, Malaysia, Africa and India. They are the source of the mosaic of cultures seen in Mauritius today.

Fast-forward 150 years from 1864 to 2014. No longer do travelers need to hazard a voyage through pounding seas in wooden sailing ships for weeks or months to reach any of these fascinating places. A modern Boeing or Airbus jetliner gets us there in just hours.

In each of these locations, there is now one or more Outrigger hotels or resorts. When our guests arrive, they are received with warm hospitality that reflects the fascinating, diverse history of the region, the true meaning of which one can only glimpse through these historical snapshots.

Think of how much life has changed since the mid-1800s. One can only imagine what it will be like 150 years from now!

In the meantime, enjoy the journey and join me in recognizing that **Outrigger is a Great Place to Work and Grow.**

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**Mongkut, King of Siam**

**The Dutch 7th Battalion advancing in Bali in 1846.**