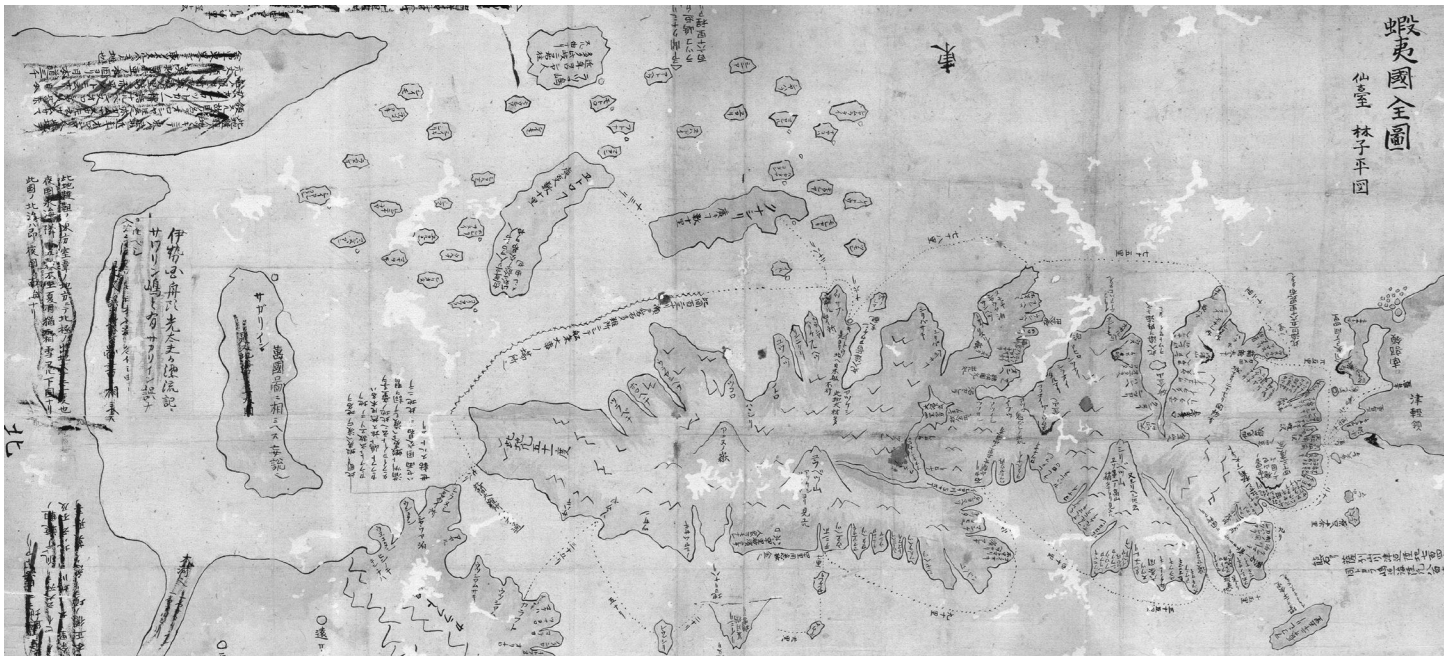


“GO WEST, [OLD] MAN”

Horace Capron, Gilded Age Capitalism, and the Development of Hokkaido

After the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese turned to Western models to modernize their government. Specifically, they hired former American Commissioner of Agriculture Horace Capron to advise the colonization of Hokkaido. Records from the Capron Mission therefore provide a window into both the history of Japanese development and the history of America’s commercial expansion and foreign influence.

By J. Austin Schaefer ‘15
Yale University



Hand-drawn map of Hokkaido (c. 1850)
Source: *Geographicus Rare Antique Maps*

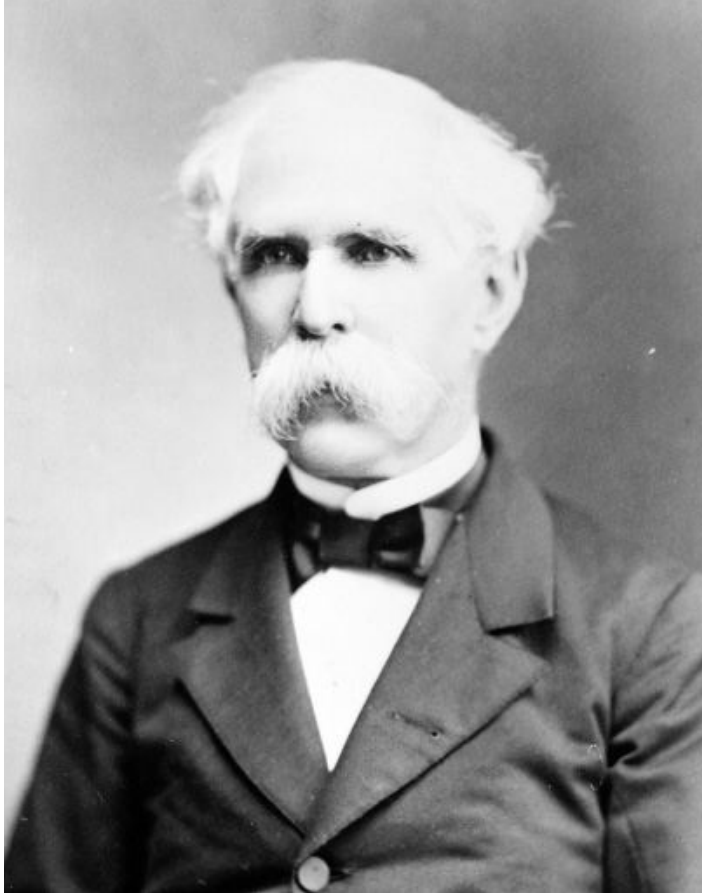
In June 1871, Horace Capron wrote to U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant to tender his resignation as Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture. His next project, an “engagement with the representatives of a Foreign government,” would begin later that summer, and Capron was proud to leave the Department in “efficient working order” to “advance the public weal with private welfare.”¹ Others had taken note of Capron’s administrative effectiveness and agricultural aplomb; thus the Japanese government hired him to advise the Kaitakushi, the Development Commission tasked with colonizing Hokkaido, Japan’s northernmost island.

Late nineteenth-century Japan was a frenzy of rapid modernization. Just fourteen years after Japan’s renewed exposure to foreigners, the Meiji government came to power determined to modernize the country using Western governmental, military, and economic blueprints. Colonizing Hokkaido, previously known as Ezo, was of utmost importance to this project.² Sparsely populated by indigenous Ainu people,

Hokkaido was vulnerable to Imperial Russia’s eastward expansion. Imperial Japan had its own expansionist goals, and their realization would require mineral and agricultural resources that Hokkaido was well situated to provide. Impressed by the speed and scale with which the United States settled its western territories (and subdued their native populations), the Meiji government specifically sought American experts to advise on their colonization of Hokkaido.³

Capron’s background made him an obvious candidate for this job. Having raised crops in New England, Maryland, and Illinois, Capron became adept at matching crops to soil types and bred prize-winning herds of Devon cattle, earning him renown within the Illinois Agricultural Society for progressive farming techniques.⁴ His career was not, however, limited to farming: In 1852 President Fillmore commissioned him to resettle Native Americans displaced during the Mexican-American war, and in 1863 Capron raised and commanded an Illinois cavalry regiment.⁵ President Johnson appointed

him Commissioner of Agriculture in 1867, in which capacity he served until his 1871 letter. Thus, when Kuroda Kiyotaka, the vice-governor of Hokkaido, toured the United States in 1871 to recruit foreign advisors for the Kaitakushi, Capron's agricultural expertise and experience resettling indigenous populations made him a compelling candidate.



Horace Capron (1804–1885), US Commissioner for Agriculture (c. 1865)

Source: *Civil War Photograph Collection (Library of Congress)*

Capron reached Japan in August 1871 and established experimental nurseries outside Tokyo while developing a plan to settle Hokkaido. Despite its cool temperatures and high latitude, he concluded, the island would be suitable for large-scale agriculture. Rather than operating mines, he believed that the government should look to “the experience in England and America” and sell mining licenses to private corporations that would develop the island's mineral deposits. Developing Sapporo into Hokkaido's capital city, as desired by the Kaitakushi, would be feasible but difficult, requiring extensive investment in transportation infrastructure to link it to southern ports. The government should establish a “school of experimental and practical agriculture” near Sapporo and nurture secondary industries to support it. Legislation modeled on America's 1862 Homestead Act would encourage settlement. Japanese diets would shift away from rice and toward wheat, meats, and other products that Hokkaido could produce more efficiently. This would facilitate

Capron's final recommendation: the introduction of mechanized farming. “So long as human muscle continues [to be] the cheapest of all power, and competes successfully with the dray-horse on the streets, there can be no permanent advancement.”⁶ Over the next three years, Capron and his team supervised the Kaitakushi's implementation of these and subsequent recommendations. Hokkaido's development progressed steadily throughout Capron's residency, though not without recurrent tensions and controversies.

Japan's development created enormous commercial opportunities, and Gilded Age Americans were quick to capitalize on them. Capron and others viewed the mission as a tremendous opportunity for personal enrichment and career advancement. United States businesses viewed Japan as a new, high-growth market for their wares. The incentives facing the Capron Mission were therefore complicated and sometimes conflicting. This led to tensions and occasionally strife within the mission, but ultimately both the Americans and the Japanese benefited from the arrangement, which had a lasting influence on Japan's development.

JAPAN AND THE CAPRON MISSION AS A CAREER OPPORTUNITY

There existed in nineteenth-century America a constant impression that opportunities to find fame and fortune existed to the West. Some believed in a “heliotropic theory” of history, wherein civilization had progressed steadily westward from Mesopotamia to Greece and Rome, from Britain across the Atlantic, and had recently reached the Great Plains.⁷ It stands to reason that many saw Japan simply as the “next west,” a place where brave and ambitious men could earn renown and remuneration.⁸ The words and experiences of many involved in the Capron mission support this interpretation.

For Capron himself, the mission offered substantial (and much-needed) financial security. Though he had won renown both on the battlefield and in bureaucracy, Capron sorely needed money that, among other things, would pay his sons' medical bills. Two of his sons had sustained injuries in Confederate prison camps; one subsequently became blind and required institutional care.⁹ Capron received \$3000 annually from the Department of Agriculture, an amount apparently insufficient to cover these expenses. He therefore demanded seemingly aristocratic compensation from the Kaitakushi:

...ten thousand dollars in gold, or its equivalent... all my expenses paid by the Japanese Government to, and from Japan, and during my stay there, including furnished house, servants, guards, and attendants.¹⁰

The American press had mixed reactions to this arrangement. Dozens of newspapers ran headlines in June 1871 boasting inaccurately of his appointment as “Commissioner of Agriculture in Japan” with a salary exceeding \$20,000.¹¹ *The Cincinnati Daily Gazette* praised his work at the Department of

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Agriculture, “for which he deserves the thanks and commendation of the whole country.”¹² Meanwhile, *The Nation* scathingly criticized Capron, describing him as an incompetent opportunist who “would have found it very difficult to earn a living in any other than government employment.”¹³

Capron used his position in the Kaitakushi to secure jobs for some of his immediate family. His son, Albert, remaining in the United States, wrote to Capron in Japan about their nascent business arrangement: “I am pretty well fixed in this country to do your business, and do it right, and hope you will encourage [sic] me in sustaining myself.” He requested a “letter of introduction stating that I am your purchasing agent in this country, and am authorized to purchase for the Japanese government.” Preferably, this letter would be in both English and Japanese to lend it further legitimacy.¹⁴ Albert Capron gained access to a bank account in Washington in which the Kaitakushi deposited funds. His massive 8% commission on purchases became a constant bone of contention between Horace Capron and the Japanese consul in San Francisco. Albert Capron also asked his father to create a job for his brother-in-law, George Mayo, insisting without reference to specific skills: “[He] is worthy of any position you can place him in, & I hope he may gain favour in your employment.” Mayo became Albert’s Cashier, handling Kaitakushi funds. Vocational nepotism brought great benefits to Capron’s extended family.

A number of Western experts unrelated to Capron also worked for him, and few fulfilled their contracts to acclaim. In several cases, Capron’s staff seem not to have been well vetted. A.G. Warfield served as topographical and civil engineer. His letters to Capron show a diligent and careful worker: When planning a road between Hakodate and Sapporo, he resisted Kaitakushi insistence that he expedite the process by surveying the land visually rather than by instrument.¹⁵ Unfortunately, Warfield was an alcoholic, and Kuroda urged his dismissal after the engineer injured two Kaitakushi workers and shot a number of Ainu hunting dogs during a drunken rampage.¹⁶ Thomas Antisell was a scientist at the Department of Agriculture when Capron initially assembled his team. Though highly accomplished as a chemist, his background did not prepare him well for his job as Kaitakushi geologist and mineralogist.¹⁷ He and Capron clashed often, culminating in his dismissal. Nonetheless, Antisell capitalized on his opportunities in Japan to secure a professorship in the Provisional School for Agriculture, which Capron had recently advised the Kaitakushi to found.¹⁸

Others from the Capron Mission similarly used their positions to advance their careers. Stuart Eldridge, a doctor by training, was the Department of Agriculture librarian when Capron hired him as a secretary for the mission. For Eldridge, the impetus to work in Japan extended beyond his salary, which increased from \$1800 to \$2000. Rather, according to Capron’s biographer Harold S. Russell, “Eldridge



Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce (c. 1890)

Source: MChew (Wikimedia Commons)

was interested in promoting a medical career for himself in Japan.”¹⁹ Indeed, his responsibilities exceeded those of an ordinary secretary, as Capron dispatched him to Hakodate to inspect hospitals and other medical facilities. He eventually became “Chief Surgeon” of the mission but fell out with Capron and filed charges against him.²⁰

Because of the mission’s extensive press coverage, a number of people whom Capron never met or barely knew wrote to him seeking employment. L.B. Hooff, a distant cousin, took it upon himself to board a steamer for Japan, “very anxious to get some good position under the Japanese government.” Apparently he had not yet secured such a position but hoped Capron might.²¹ A German metallurgist working as “Territorial Assayer” of Colorado similarly inquired into “the chances of employment in Japan.”²² A former Surveyor General of California came out of retirement after “the whirligig of fortune has of late dealt me some severe blows; and I am now compelled to seek active service in some capacity for which I am fitted, - as I never expected to be forced to do again... The profession here is [overcrowded].”²³ John T. Bramhall of the Potomac Fruit Grower’s Association wrote to Capron seeking any job in Japan, “governmental or private,” that would enable him to “obtain a present livelihood and a chance for a good start in life.” Bramhall emphasized that he did not require a large salary.²⁴ This shows almost explicitly the “next west” view some Americans held of Japan as a place of opportunity for those who would seize it. He never indicated explicitly that he wanted to work directly for Capron; rather, he simply wanted any position from which he could begin a long and successful career.

Thus, Horace Capron’s appointment to the Kaitakushi induced numerous Americans to view recently-opened Japan

as a career opportunity, either on Capron's mission specifically or in the country more generally. The appetite for opportunity in Japan extended further, however: Some saw no need to leave home to profit from commerce with the Far East.

JAPAN AND THE CAPRON MISSION AS A COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY

The "heliotropic" view of civilization induced Americans not only to travel to Japan, but also to appraise it as a lucrative object of political, cultural, and commercial influence. As Capron wrote to Colonel Warren, an army colleague:

The great tidal wave of civilization which then was sweeping across the American continent, seems only to have paused upon its western coast to gather strength for its passage over the broad Pacific in its westward progress around the world. It has reached the Asiatic continent, and your dreams of the great future benefits to your city and state in this connection are at last to be realized.²⁵

Capron and others explicitly sought to make Japan more similar economically to the United States. Many saw its opening as a massive market opportunity for American businesses to sell their products, and indeed, the Capron mission became the source of juicy contracts for numerous American firms.

Before Americans could profit from Japan, they had to recast its political economy into a western mold. Upon arriving, Capron described "a state of semi-barbarism" with "[e]very

presented. Capron's letter to "Mr. Russel," a Department of Agriculture colleague, discusses this topic in detail.²⁹ America must either seize or lose this opportunity, as England is poised to dominate Japanese markets. "[A]n immense field will be opened to the commerce of the world. England as usual, with her enlightened policy, and far reaching energy, has already a strong influence here, and is now supplying the rapidly growing wants of the country." Capron then describes Japan's latent demand for western goods: Thirty million Japanese are "without nearly all of the requirements of a highly civilized people to which position they aspire, and are destined at some future day to attain." They seek innumerable industrial and consumer items: "everything from a candrie needle to a steam engine... and every description of wearing apparel, from a shirt collar, to the most elaborate topper you can put on." Foreign goods, he notes with hyperbole, were completely absent from local markets at his arrival, five months before. By February 1872, they had become ubiquitous. Acutely aware of the geopolitics of commercial competition, Capron stresses the need for the United States to strengthen its merchants' position, lest other countries gain a foothold.³⁰ Capron thus conveys a sense of vivid urgency: Japan is a commercial battleground. Its people, noble and intelligent, are nonetheless a market to be exploited. In a century when European colonial powers fought wars over spheres of trade monopoly in East Asia, Capron sensed that there might not be room for two mercantile powers to supply the Japanese market.

“[Capron] criticized their inefficient use of physical labor and the overconfidence with which they imitated western technology... He viewed himself as an indispensable agent of Japan’s rapid transformation.”

occupation, even the most common in life,... performed exactly the reverse of all European or American ideas.” He criticized their inefficient use of physical labor and the overconfidence with which they imitated western technology. Nonetheless, he perceived a “people naturally so intelligent, ingenious, [and] appreciative” that would make tremendous progress if given proper direction.²⁶ As he continued to Colonel Warren: “The people and Government of Japan are in earnest in this great work, and aim at a higher type of civilization, than any other of the eastern nations, and are more capable of its attainment.”²⁷ Capron perceived a “tendency... towards a republican form of government,” which he attributed to American influence.²⁸ He viewed himself as an indispensable agent of Japan's rapid transformation.

As this new political economy developed, Americans sought to capitalize on the enormous market opportunity that Japan

Indeed, the Capron Mission brought windfalls to numerous American firms that supplied products for Hokkaido's development, and many others sought to use it gain a foothold in greater Japan. Albert Capron commissioned a Brooklyn firm, C&R Poillon, to build two massive and decadent steamships for the Kaitakushi. Named *Capron* and *Kuroda*, they were cutting-edge vessels with lit cabins and refrigeration, “suitable as a steam yacht.”³¹ Albert's associate J.H. Kimball advised Capron to use the banking house Henry Greenebaum & Co. to handle the export of industrial materials. Capron's mission, Kimball wrote, would “create a future business that will make a fortune apiece, and a very important share for yourself.”³² Greenebaum, described as a “banker” but apparently more of a polymath industrial capitalist, looked forward to a “pleasant and lasting” arrangement with Capron.³³ His was not the only industrial conglomerate seeking lucrative contracts from the Kaitakushi, however; Capron also

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corresponded with Perkins, Livingston & Post about iron and steel products and financing.³⁴ Competition for these contracts was, at the very least, duopolistic.

Not only powerful industrial capitalists sought to profit from trade with Japan, however. Interestingly, several small manufacturers of musical instruments asked Capron for a monopoly over their corner of the Japanese market.³⁵ George Mayo, Albert’s cashier, received from Horace Capron the exclusive right to import pianos into the Japanese Empire. E.L. Richmond, a native of Albert’s Wisconsin hometown, wrote to the senior Capron requesting “the exclusive privilege of introducing Guitars in the same manner.” He proposed that Capron give him a position in Japan as “Government Printer,” a foothold from which to establish a business giving lessons and selling imported instruments. Whether or not Capron ever facilitated Richmond’s entrepreneurship, a clear perception existed that ordinary tradesmen could dig a niche in the Japanese market.³⁶

Americans sought not only to sell agricultural machinery and consumer goods to Japan, but also to use Japanese resources to develop new domestic industries. Capron sent the Department of Agriculture several shipments of silkworm eggs in May 1872. Most died en route, but the Department cultured the survivors to test the feasibility of nurturing an American silk industry. This sparked enough interest that the new Commissioner, Frederick Watts, wrote again in October to request more eggs and gave specific packing instructions to ensure their survival.³⁷ Commodore David Ammen of the Navy’s Bureau of Navigation wrote unofficially to Capron “to call your attention to some of the products of Japan, its persimmons and that most useful plant, the bamboo.” He further inquired about certain shrubs and bushes “likely to furnish a fine material for making paper” and asked that Capron send him roots he could plant.³⁸

The Capron Mission therefore provided a foot in the door for commercially-minded Americans. Their interest in Japan demonstrates a view of the country as an object for influence, a market to sell goods, and a source of new products.

JAPAN, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CAPRON MISSION

What did this mean for Japan itself? Too often, a toxic combination of career ambition, misplaced incentives, and sheer incompetence among Capron’s staff threatened to derail the mission, in which the Japanese government had invested much talent and money. Yet the Kaitakushi developed Hokkaido successfully, and subsequent evidence suggests they attributed this to “American influence.”

Capron’s management style sparked controversy. An 1872 memo details Eldridge’s claims that Capron was “liable to arrest for his swindling and behavior in Japan.”³⁹ Months after Warfield’s dismissal, Capron sent him a series of legalis-

tic questions about Eldridge and Antisell that he would use to defend himself from charges “against my character and conduct as chief of the commission,” including an allegation that he misappropriated \$400 of Kaitakushi funds for private use. Warfield supported Capron and filled out the affidavit, which bears the seal of the United States Legation to Japan.⁴⁰ The dispute’s severity required arbitration at the highest level, which speaks to the intractable personnel difficulties that plagued the Capron Mission.



Restored main office building of Kaitakushi (2005)
Source: Kinori (Wikimedia Commons)

Despite these issues, a Japanese source credits Capron with effectively directing Hokkaido’s development. In 1915, the College of Agriculture in Sapporo published a short book titled *American Influence upon the Agriculture of Hokkaido, Japan*. It describes Capron as a man of “wide learning, profound knowledge, and wise advise” who “helped the Governor [Kuroda] greatly in the development of Hokkaido.” Further, Capron was instrumental in founding the agricultural college “with a view to develop the natural resources of Hokkaido, as well as to promote the general welfare, of the people.” His suggested land-sale legislation, modeled after the U.S. Homestead Act, became Japanese law in 1872. Forty years after Capron’s commission ended, Japanese agricultural authorities viewed his influence favorably.⁴¹

Beyond Capron himself, the book lists numerous ways that American products—results of commercial opportunism by American firms—improved the efficiency of Japanese agri-

culture. Because of soil differences between Hokkaido and the mainland, “farmers import many agricultural implements from America; and these not only greatly helped the cultivation of Hokkaido, but also acted as spurs to improve existing implements.” The Japanese government supported and encouraged the importation of American-manufactured saws, stump-pullers, blows, and spades. Early agriculture on Hokkaido essentially replicated American methods on a much smaller scale.⁴²

Agricultural influence spilled over into cultural influence. Whereas Japanese architects had traditionally constructed buildings with large amounts of highly flammable paper, Capron advised them to build “solid and substantial dwelling-houses after the American style,” which spread beyond Hokkaido to other Japanese islands. American-style grass lawns became fashionable among the Japanese elite, creating a market for lawnmowers. Capron introduced hundreds of new fruits and vegetables, grains, meats, and dairy products that profoundly changed Japanese diets. Yet *American Influence* does not lament the waning of traditional Japanese culture; rather, it marvels at the sophisticated techniques used to produce these new products.⁴³


Clearly, Japan was not a passive victim of American commercial exploitation. Despite the dysfunction that often characterized the Capron Mission, Kuroda and Capron maintained a close and productive relationship that subsequent Japanese agriculturalists would judge favorably. The Capron Mission enabled the Kaitakushi to achieve many of its goals in Hokkaido, and the evidence available suggests that they appreciated it.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

Capron influenced Hokkaido indelibly, in ways that benefited both Americans and Japanese. A lasting testament to this influence is the globally-distributed Sapporo Beer: Without large-scale, organized agriculture in Hokkaido, this brand

could never have come into existence. Individual Americans saw the Capron Mission as an opportunity to launch lucrative and prestigious careers at a time when the traditional “west” was becoming less wild. American businesses saw Japan as a tremendous market opportunity to exploit, with the Capron Mission a source of remunerative contracts. The Japanese government, meanwhile, reinvented itself along western models and acted affirmatively to hire *American* advisors—Kuroda himself insisted that they were best suited to developing Hokkaido. Japanese agriculturalists favorably appraised the Capron Mission, its suggestions, and the American manufactures imported to Japan. It appears that all parties received what they sought from the arrangement.

Of course, this view of the Capron Mission only considers those voices eminent enough to be recorded in university archives. To those most intimately involved—the Ainu and common Japanese people—Capron’s influence may have been disastrous. An indigenous people saw its traditional way of life sacrificed to the unrelenting “progress of civilization.” Japanese culture, so carefully preserved by centuries of isolation, changed rapidly and dramatically as diets shifted from traditional to western crops. The environmental damage wrought by numerous invasive species is inestimable.⁴⁵

The story of Horace Capron and Hokkaido is an important lesson in the study of development: Modernization inevitably creates winners and losers. American businesses and the Meiji government’s vision for Japan benefitted directly from the Capron Mission. Within Japan’s broader development, millions of ordinary Japanese enjoyed new technology, more plentiful food, and an increasing standard of living over the next century. Though it is impossible to balance these benefits definitively against the cultural and environmental changes that they precipitated, it is important nonetheless to recognize them. The Capron Mission, for better or for worse, changed Hokkaido indelibly and assisted Japan’s transformation from a feudal society into an imperial power. 

Endnotes

- [1] Horace Capron to Ulysses S. Grant, June 27, 1871, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [2] An impressive testament to this fact is the fate of Admiral Enomoto Takeaki, who remained loyal to the Shogun in the Boshin War. Enomoto fled with his navy to Hakodate, in southern Hokkaido, and was proclaimed president of the short-lived Republic of Ezo. Kuroda Kiyotaka, later vice-governor of Hokkaido, defeated him in battle but intervened to prevent his execution, knowing that Enomoto’s knowledge of the region would be invaluable to colonization efforts. Kuroda later hired Enomoto to work at the Kaitakushi. Harold S. Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian: The Extraordinary Life of General Horace Capron* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 87.
- [3] Bogdan Mieczkowski and Seiko Mieczkowski, “Horace Capron and the Development of Hokkaido: A Reappraisal,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984)* 67, no. 5 (1974): 488.
- [4] *Ibid.*, 489-90.
- [5] Capron eventually attained the rank of Brevet Brigadier General, an honorary title conferred to him after the Civil War ended. Importantly for his self-esteem, it allowed him to use the title “General” for the rest of his life. Mieczkowski and Mieczkowski, “Horace Capron and the Development of Hokkaido: A Reappraisal,” 490; “Horace Capron Memoirs - Biographical Note,” Government, *United States Department of Agriculture: National Agricultural Library, Special Collections* (December 8, 2014).
- [6] Horace Capron, “Abstract of First Annual Report, of Horace Capron, Commissioner and Adviser of Kaitakushi of Hokaido, Tokio, Japan, for 1871,” in *Reports and Official Letters to the Kaitakushi* (Tokyo: Kaitakushi, 1871), 43-52.
- [7] “Heliotropic” comes from the Greek *helios* (“sun”) and *tropos* (“direction”). Just as the sun moves from east to west, goes the ahistorical theory, so does civilization. John Mack Faragher and Robert V. Hine, *The American West: A New Interpretive History*, 1st Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 405.
- [8] To the extent of the author’s research, Capron corresponded exclusively with men. Even news from his wife, who remained in Washington for a time after his commission began, arrived via the letters of Capron’s male colleagues.
- [9] Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 9, 134. Of course, his demand for “servants, guards, and attendants” has nothing to do with his son’s treatment.
- [10] Horace Capron to Arinori Mori, April 1, 1871, Memoirs of Horace Capron, Vol. 2, United States Department of Agriculture Special Collections, 1-2.
- [11] Apparently this was the date that the news of Capron’s resignation, which President Grant had asked he keep secret until a successor was named, was made public. “Judge Capron Appointed Commissioner of Agriculture in Japan,” *The New York Herald*, June 28, 1871, America’s Historical Newspapers; “Commissioner Capron Bound for Japan,” *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, June 28, 1871, America’s Historical Newspapers.
- [12] “The Retiring Commissioner of Agriculture,” *The Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, July 10, 1871, America’s Historical Newspapers; “Commissioner Capron’s Japanese Mission,” *The New York Herald*, June 29, 1871, America’s Historical Newspapers.
- [13] Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 103 quoting *The Nation*, October 3, 1872.
- [14] Albert Capron to Horace Capron, December 11, 1871, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library; Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 114.
- [15] A.G. Warfield to Horace Capron, August 30, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 12, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [16] Interestingly, Kuroda here demonstrated consideration for the Ainu and emphasized the hardship this caused them: “The dogs are one of the most important instruments to Ainus, they aiding their masters to find animals and enable to pay tax on the game.” Kiyotaka Kuroda to Horace Capron, November 8, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 15, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [17] Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 104.
- [18] *Ibid.*, 116, 118-120.
- [19] It is important to note that Russell is Capron’s direct descendent, and he is not a historian by training. Though capable of criticizing Capron, the book is extremely apologetic and defends him relentlessly. Accordingly, Russell is highly critical of those who disliked Capron. *Ibid.*, 136.
- [20] Unlike Antisell, Warfield, and Eldridge, one member of Capron’s staff actually excelled at his job while using it to launch an influential diplomatic career. Edwin Dun came to Japan to breed animals on Capron’s experimental farms, but he married a Japanese woman and remained in Hokkaido after the mission ended. He eventually joined the American Legation in Tokyo, and President Cleveland appointed him Minister to Japan in 1893. Almost uniquely among his colleagues, he seems not to have quarreled much and was never discharged, though he disliked Capron immensely and candidly described him as “an incompetent.” Horace Capron to Stuart Eldridge, May 20, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library; Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 170-173.
- [21] L.B. Hooff to Horace Capron, September 29, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [22] A. von Schultz to Horace Capron, October 23, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [23] Writing from San Francisco, Brewster literally could go no further west within the continental United States. This has interesting implications for the “Safety Valve” theory in the Turner-era historiography of the American West. According to this theory, the Western frontier prevented social discord back East by creating opportunities for those struggling to get by. John A. Brewster to Horace Capron, June 16, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [24] John T. Bramhall to Horace Capron, May 7, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library. Underline in the original.
- [25] Horace Capron to Warren, February 25, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library. Colonel Warren lived in San Francisco at this time.
- [26] Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 108.

- [27] Capron to Warren, February 25, 1872.
- [28] Horace Capron to Russel, February 25, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [29] “Russel” is Capron’s spelling. The only indication of his identity is Capron’s reference to “our pleasant associations at the Department.”
- [30] Capron to Russel, February 25, 1872.
- [31] Russell, *Time to Become Barbarian*, 105.
- [32] J.H. Kimball to Horace Capron, August 14, 1871, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [33] Greenebaum directly owned numerous industrial facilities, “supplying the most prominent agricultural implement manufacturers and artisans in the West with iron and other materials in addition to our not limited connections over this country.” J. Greenebaum to J.H. Kimball, August 11, 1871, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [34] Archer N. Martin to Horace Capron, November 16, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 16, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [35] It is unclear what legal basis, if any, Capron had to grant such monopolies.
- [36] E.L. Richmond to Horace Capron, March 13, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [37] Frederick Watts to Horace Capron, May 28, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library; Frederick Watts to Horace Capron, October 21, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 6, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [38] Bamboo was a “most useful plant” because it would grow so easily, which would eventually make it a troublesome invasive species in the United States. One can only speculate the environmental damage to Japan’s ecosystems wrought by the introduction of numerous American crops. David Ammen to Horace Capron, October 18, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [39] N.W. Holt and Sanford Clark, “Memorandum of a Conversation at Different Times and Places. Vis-at Yedo, Hokohama, Hakodate, & Sapporo between S. Clark, Dr. Eldridge, and N.W. Holt, Concerning Gen Capron and Party Belonging Thereto,” August 3, 1872, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 10, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [40] Horace Capron, March 5, 1873, Horace Capron Papers, Box 1, Folder 28, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University Library.
- [41] The book does not list an author. Its praise for Capron should be taken with some skepticism, as many Americans taught at Japanese agricultural schools and may have influenced its production. However, absent any evidence that that actually happened, the book suggests that agricultural academia in Japan looked favorably upon him. *American Influence Upon the Agriculture of Hokkaido, Japan* (Sapporo, Japan: College of Agriculture, Tohoku Imperial University, 1915), 2-3, 9.
- [42] *Ibid.*, 7-10.
- [43] *Ibid.*, 10-21.
- [44] Deeper research into Japan’s perception of the Kaitakushi and its American advisors would greatly augment this point. Unfortunately, it would require knowledge of the Japanese language, which this author does not possess.
- [45] Neither Capron nor his Japanese contacts seem to have much considered this possibility, and Commodore Ammen’s enthusiasm for bamboo (now considered a troublesome species in North America) belies complete ignorance of it. The environmental legacy of Capron’s mission would make a fascinating topic for further inquiry.