

## Henryk Sienkiewicz<sup>1</sup> to Julian Horain<sup>2</sup>

Exiles, Adventurers, Artists: Letters from Polish California, 1836-1901

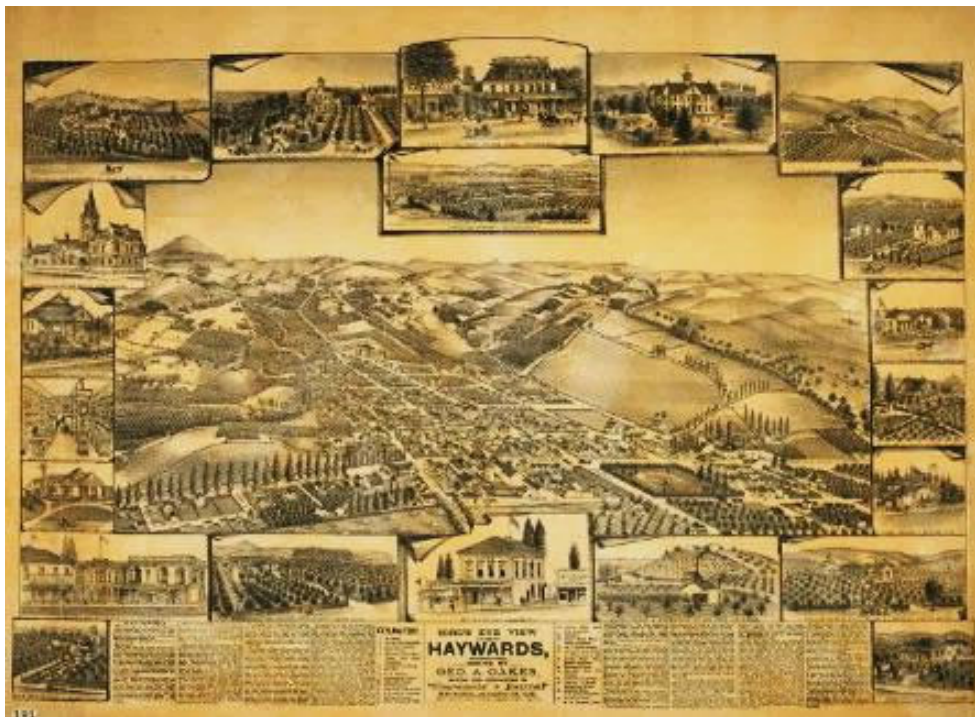
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Heywad or Haywad!<sup>3</sup>

April 22, 1877

First of all, I thank you a hundred times over for all of the letters. I picked up your last one today, which is Sunday. Second, I am sending you the finished play.<sup>4</sup> *Propia laus sordet*,<sup>5</sup> so I'll only say that it's

not as bad as I expected. There are no shortage of bitter truths [about] America; no shortage of movement and action – the men have some outlines of character – the women are only angels – but that's Pani<sup>6</sup> Helena's<sup>7</sup> fault, not mine. Get this lucubration to her as soon as possible, or read it together, but with leniency. The words are simple – it could all have been a lot more subtle, but I was trying not to hinder the translation. From the American angle, this may perhaps suffice regarding California and her upper crust, since at any rate I've



got little in the way of California-American dramatic literature. The acting should bring out whatever's missing, and there's a bit of scope for this. Many thanks to Pani Helena for the brief words she added to your letter. This is celestial nourishment for me. I kiss her hands<sup>8</sup> and ask that I may be remembered.

<sup>1</sup> Polish journalist and author; awarded a Nobel prize in 1905; see: <http://culture.pl/en/artist/henryk-sienkiewicz>.

<sup>2</sup> Julian Florian Horain, Polish journalist; see: <http://www.polishclubsf.org/Horain.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> A California town known variously as "Hayward's," "Heywood," "Haywood," "Haywards" (since 1876), and "Hayward" (since 1911); the town name inspires word play for Sienkiewicz.

<sup>4</sup> *American drama (Dramat amerykański)* described by Sienkiewicz as a "critical-satirical-sentimental" play; written for Helena Modrzejewska (Modjeska); the featured character, "Helena Steven," is modelled after Modjeska. Modjeska translated the play into English. The play was never published.

<sup>5</sup> A Latin proverb: "Self-praise is base."

<sup>6</sup> Pani is a Polish term of respect, roughly equivalent to Ma'am.

<sup>7</sup> Helena Modrzejewska (Modjeska); see: <http://culture.pl/en/artist/helena-modrzejewska-modjeska>.

<sup>8</sup> Kissing a lady's hands as a way of greeting is a traditional Polish custom.

Hugs to you. I'll write every so often.

Henryk

SOURCE:

Letter #17. Henryk Sienkiewicz. *Listy*, Tom 1, Cześć 2. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1977. Online: <http://www.henryk-sienkiewicz.pl/index.php?d=dzial&id=listy>.

NOTE: The editors of this English translation have revised and augmented some of the original footnotes by Maria Bokszczanin. Some footnotes are our own.

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