



Japan through American Eyes: The Journal of Francis Hall, Kanagawa and Yokohama, 1859-1866

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In this Journal, Francis Hall, America's leading business pioneer in nineteenth-century Japan, offers a remarkable view of the period leading to the Meiji Restoration. Privately preserved for more than a hundred years, this previously unpublished document shows Hall to have been an astute observer of Japanese life, as well as an influential opinion-maker on Japan in the United States during the crucial decade of the American Civil War and the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate. While contemporary American and British diplomatic accounts have focused on the official record, Hall reveals to us the private side of life in the treaty port. The publication of his Journal, as well as many articles he wrote for the American press, furnishes us with an insightful and sensitive portrayal of Japan on the eve of modernity. The biography included in this volume provides a context for the Journal. An upstate New York book dealer, Hall went to Japan in 1859 to collect material for a book and to serve as correspondent for Horace Greely's New York Tribune. Seeing the opportunities for commerce in Yokohama, he helped found Walsh, Hall and Co., which became the most important American trading house in Japan. Hall was a shrewd businessman, but more important for us, he was a perceptive recorder of life around him.

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