



Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary Stamps

by Paul K. McCutcheon and Herbert A. Trenchard, PhD.

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In the early days of philately, rumors circulated about a cache of very rare and valuable Hawaiian missionary stamps secreted away in New England. Were the Grinnell stamps this legendary hoard and therefore, one the greatest philatelic finds of the 20th century? Or were they expensive fakes?

According to George H. Grinnell, Charles B. Shattuck gave him a cache of 71 Hawaiian missionary stamps in 1918. Shattuck had inherited the stamps from his mother Hannah. Hannah corresponded with a Hawaiian missionary, Ursula Newell Emerson, for several years and amassed a sizeable collection of the stamps.

On December 5, 1920, Grinnell sold 43 of his stamps to John Klemann, a New York-based stamp dealer, for \$65,000. Klemann resold 16 of the best stamps for \$75,000 to Alfred H. Caspary, a prominent New York collector. Ten days later, Caspary told Klemann he was convinced the stamps were fakes. Klemann returned Caspary's money, flew back to Los Angeles and filed a lawsuit against Grinnell to recover his money. The case went to trial in June 1922.

At the trial, two collections of certified missionary stamps were produced so that the court could make its own comparisons. Stamp and printing experts testified that the Grinnell stamps were made by photogravure rather than by letterpress with moveable type, as the certified stamps had been made. Close examination revealed that there are significant differences between the Grinnell stamps and the certified missionaries. The letters and numerals have slightly different shapes and the ornate borders have small but unmistakable variations.

Also, the Grinnell postmarks did not match the postmark used at the Honolulu Post Office in the 1850's. Furthermore, the Grinnell stamps appear to have been printed on a different type of paper than the certified missionaries. Others note the ink color is generally too blue, without the tint of green characteristic of the certified stamps. Also, the postmarks are bright red rather than orange-red. In addition, there was no known provenance for the Grinnell stamps at the time. Grinnell did little to counter the testimony. Instead, he argued that Klemann, an expert, bought the stamps without warranty.

On June 29, 1922, the Honorable J.P. Wood ruled in favor of Klemann. He declared the Grinnell Hawaiian missionary stamps to be fake, and awarded the plaintiff \$65,000.00. The testimony and lack of provenance undoubtedly influenced the judge in making his decision against Grinnell.

In 1927, Grinnell returned approximately half of the missionary stamps to Shattuck's descendants. Grinnell spent the rest of his life trying to prove the stamps were genuine. However, it was very difficult to document the provenance, to prove that the stamps were typeset-printed and that the paper and ink were manufactured in the 19th century. Mainly, it was very difficult to overcome the staunch opposition to the Grinnell stamps. Opponents of the Grinnell stamps vehemently expressed their opinions in philatelic books, journals and other professional publications.

Some time later, forensic examination conclusively determined that, like the certified missionary stamps, the Grinnell stamps were typeset. They were printed by letterpress from lockups of individual type elements to forms that were disassembled and rebuilt as needed. According to

Grinnell's proponents, there were multiple printings of the missionaries, which would account for the variations in the letters, numerals, and border designs.

Proponents also argue that postmaster Whitney ordered several different canceling devices, some of which were used on the Grinnell stamps. Others argue that the differences are so radical that the devices must have been made by a different process and manufacturer than the devices ordered by Whitney. They point out that all four devices Whitney ordered of style 236.11 are seen on the genuine stamps but none of them are seen on the Grinnell stamps. However, one of the devices of style 236.05, also ordered by Whitney, has never been detected on a certified cover or stamp.

Grinnell proponents argue that the differences in paper and ink are to be expected in multiple printings and usage over many months or even years. Others argue that the period in which the Grinnell stamps, if genuine, could have been produced is a mere six months and the demand was too small to justify multiple printings or extended usage. However, modern spectrographic analysis has shown that the paper and ink (including the cancel ink) are appropriate to 1851. In fact, the paper and ink are identical to the certified missionary stamps in the Tapling collection in the British Library.

Vincent and Carol Arrigo (Grinnell's granddaughter) provided the following information on the provenance of the Grinnell Hawaiian missionary stamps. William Emerson, a teenager from an early Hawaiian missionary family, apprenticed under Henry Whitney, newspaper publisher and Honolulu postmaster. In his capacity as postmaster, Whitney created the missionary stamps in 1851. Emerson worked in the post office and print shop during the autumn of 1851, when the missionary stamps were being printed. Emerson sent his mother some of the stamps, urging her to use them on her letters.

In late 1851, Emerson returned to his parents' home in Waialua, suffering from ill health. The Arrigos believe that Emerson brought some stamps and marking devices with him. In Waialua, he functioned as an unofficial sub-postmaster. He stamped and marked mail sent from his family to friends and relatives in New England. This explains the unusual cancels found on the Grinnell stamps. The Arrigos also speculate that the Emersons sent mint missionary stamps to their New England correspondents to aid in pre-payment of postage on return mail. Such westbound uses of the missionary stamps are documented. This would explain the unused stamps in the Grinnell collections.

Emerson stayed at Waialua until March 1852, when his health worsened. Seeking cooler weather, he sailed off in a whaler. Sometime later, he died at sea. All the dated Grinnell stamps were cancelled during the months Emerson lived in Waialua, and ceased when Emerson left. A few years later, his brother Samuel became the first official postmaster at Waialua.

The primary recipient of the disputed stamps was Hannah Shattuck, a childhood friend of Ursula Emerson, William's mother. Both women were from the small town of Nelson, New Hampshire. They grew up together, went to school together, and worshipped at the same church. After Ursula married and moved to Hawaii, the two women corresponded extensively. Hannah Shattuck died in 1856. Her son Charles later moved to Los Angeles and brought a few family possessions, including a book of sermons. The stamps were tucked between the book's pages, leaving faint impressions. Shattuck sold the stamps to Grinnell in 1918.

All of the Grinnell stamps, along with reams of forensic and documentary evidence, were sent to the Royal Philatelic Society for authentication. An opinion is expected in late 2003.





Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary Stamps: A Bibliography

Compiled by Paul K. McCutcheon and Herbert A. Trenchard, PhD.

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Smithsonian Institution Libraries

Red Honolulu Postmark

Complete List of the Seventy-One Hawaiian Missionary Stamps

Found by George H. Grinnell

In the list below the denomination is given in the first column. Then the Type, followed by the description of the stamp and in the column at the right are the numbers of the various stamps as applied to them by Mr. Grinnell for reference and identification.

The red cancels are described as A and B. The A is "HONOLULU U. S. Postage Paid". The B is HONOLULU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS.

Denom.	Description	No.
2c	Types II and I, used pair, on piece. Stamp shows greenish under UV lamp. Deep cherry red cancel, type B, dated March 1.	1- 2
2c	Types II and I, unused, in pair	3- 4
2c	Types I and II, used, on piece, orange red cancel, type B	5- 6
2c	Type II, unused, color shows greenish under UV lamp	7
2c	Type II, on piece, color shows greenish under UV lamp, round black cork cancel of 7 bars	8
2c	Type II, unused, large margins at top, bottom and left, dark blue	9
2c	Type I, dull blue but shows greenish under UV lamp, black cork cancel of 7 bars	10
2c	Type I, unused. This copy is one of those sent to Edw. Stern and further description is not available	11
2c	Type II, on piece, cancelled with black circular cork divided into large square dots. Was given to S. L. Wood, present whereabouts unknown	12
2c	Type I, on piece, dull blue and shows greenish under UV lamp, red cancel, type B, dated January 17	13
2c	Type II, used on piece, dark blue, red cancel, type B. dated March	14
2c	Type II, used on piece, dark blue, red cancel, type B. Lower right corner torn off, dated January 5	15

Denom.	Description	No.
2c	Type II, dull blue, circular cork cancel of 7 bars in black.	16
5c	Type II, used. This stamp sent to Edw. Stern, dated cancel which appears to be NOV, but hardly legible on photo, believed to be red cancel but illegible	17
5c	Type I, on piece, this stamp is missing, cancel is round black cork of 7 bars.	18
5c	Types II and I, in pair, unused, dull blue but shows greenish under UV lamp.	19-20
5c	Type II, used on piece, cancel is round cork, 7 bars in black. . .	21
5c	Type I, unused, dark blue.	22
5c	Type II, used. This stamp sent to Charles E. Severn. Red cancel, type B, dated March, date illegible on photo.	23
5c	Type II, used, dull blue, cancel round cork in black, 7 bars. Is torn in two from top to bottom.	24
5c	Type II, unused, dull blue.	25
5c	Type I, used. Round cork cancel of 7 bars in black. Piece out at lower right corner.	26
5c	Type I, dull blue. Red cancel, type B, dated February 5, shows greenish under UV lamp.	27
13c	Type II, dull blue. Round black cork cancel of 7 bars. Top left corner torn off.	28
13c	Type I, unused, with gum. Color is dull blue but shows greenish under UV lamp. This is the only known Hawaiian Missionary stamp with original gum. The gum is thin and white as described by Kenyon.	29
13c	Type II and I, unused, pair in dull blue.	30-31
13c	Type I. This stamp was in hands of S. L. Wood. Present whereabouts unknown. Difficult to judge from photo but appears to be used with a red cancel which is illegible.	32
13c	Type I, used. Dull blue, canceled with black cork, 7 bars.	33
13c	Type I, used. Dark blue. Red cancel, type A, dated Feb. 17. .	34
13c	Type I, used. Dark blue. Red cancel, type A, dated Mar. . . .	35
13c	Type I, used. Dull blue, on piece. Black cork cancel of 7 bars, has piece out of left frame line.	36
13c	Type II, unused, dull blue.	37
13c	Type II, used, on piece. Black cork cancel of 7 bars.	38

Denom.	Description	No.												
13c	Type II, used. Red cancel, type A, tear at top right corner, dated January.....	39												
13c	Type II, used, on piece. Red cancel, Type A, dated Mar. 11..	40												
13c	Type I, used, on piece. Red cancel, Type A, dated Mar.....	41												
13c	Type II, used, on piece, dull blue. Black cancel of 7 bars.....	42												
13c	Type I, used, on piece, red cancel, type A, dated January. This stamp was sent to Edw. Stern.....	43												
13c	Type I, used. Black cork cancel of 7 bars. This stamp sent to Chas. E. Severn.....	44												
13c	Type II, used. Red cancel, Type A.....	45												
2c	Type II, used, on piece. Dull blue, red cancel, type B.....	46												
2c	Type I, used, on piece, bright blue, red cancel, type B.....	47												
2c	Type II, used, on piece. Black cancel in round format and composed of 21 square dots. This stamp sent to Chas. E. Severn.....	48												
2c	Type I, used, bright blue. Cherry red cancel, type B.....	49												
2c	Type II and I, unused, pair with large top margin, bright blue, has stitch wmk. across bottom of both stamps.....	50-51												
13c	Types II and I, unused pair, bright blue.....	52-53												
5c	Type II, unused, pale blue.....	54												
2c	<table border="0"> <tr> <td rowspan="5" style="font-size: 3em; vertical-align: middle;">{</td> <td>Type II</td> <td rowspan="5">These five stamps on one piece. There are four red cancels, type A. The date shows Mar. 5.</td> <td>55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type II</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type I</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type II</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Type I</td> <td>59</td> </tr> </table>	{	Type II	These five stamps on one piece. There are four red cancels, type A. The date shows Mar. 5.	55	Type II	56	Type I	57	Type II	58	Type I	59	55
{			Type II		These five stamps on one piece. There are four red cancels, type A. The date shows Mar. 5.	55								
			Type II			56								
			Type I			57								
			Type II			58								
	Type I	59												
2c	Type II	56												
2c	Type I	57												
5c	Type II	58												
2c	Type I	59												
5c	Type II, used, dark blue. Black cork cancel of 7 bars.....	60												
5c	Type I, used, on piece. Light blue. Canceled in black with 26 small squares in circular format.....	61												
5c	Type I, used. Cancel is rather illegible on photo but appears to be a red cancel, type B. This stamp was in hands of S. L. Wood.....	62												
5c	Type II, light blue, on piece. Cancel is type B, a distinct orange shade.....	63												
5c	Type I, used, on small piece. Cancel is orange, type B, dated Jan. 11.....	64												
5c	Type II, on small piece, light blue, cancel is black cork, 7 bars.	65												

Denom.	Description	No.
13c	Type I, used, on small piece. Bright blue, red cancel, type A, dated Jan. Shows greenish color under UV lamp.....	66
13c	Type II, used, on piece, bright blue. Cancel is orange, type A, dated Feb. 16.....	67
13c	Type II, used, on piece, dull blue. Red cancel, type A, dated March.....	68
13c	Type I, unused, dull blue. Shows greenish under UV lamp....	69
13c	Type II, used, on piece, bright blue. Orange cancel, type A, dated Feb. 1.....	70
13c	Type I, used, on piece, dark blue. Red cancel, type A, dated March.....	71

RECAPITULATION

2c	Type I,	Unused.....	3	Used.....	8
2c	Type II,	Unused.....	4	Used.....	11
5c	Type I,	Unused.....	2	Used.....	6
5c	Type II,	Unused.....	3	Used.....	8
13c	Type I,	Unused.....	4	Used.....	10
13c	Type II,	Unused.....	3	Used.....	9
	Total	Unused copies.....	19	Used copies.....	52

Face value of the unused copies.....\$ 1.30

There are two unused pairs of the 2c, one of the 5c and two of the 13c value.

Stamps numbered 18, 41 and 45 are in the hands of parties to whom they were loaned for research and examination.

Stamps numbered 11, 17 and 43 were sent to Edward Stern several years ago for examination and research and are believed to be still in his possession.

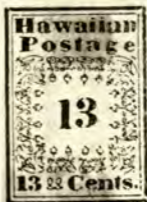
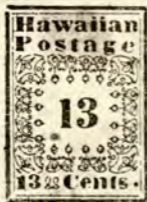
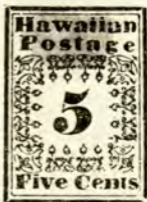
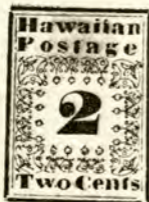
Stamps numbered 23, 44 and 48 were sent to Charles E. Severn years ago for research and examination and since his death have not been returned. Said to have been lost.

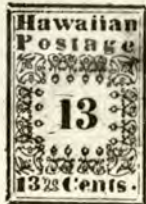
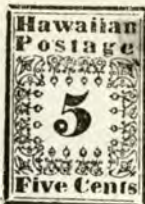
Stamps numbered 12, 32 and 62 were in the hands of S. L. Wood some years ago and were reported as stolen from him. Not recovered.

PUBLISHED BY

GEORGE W. LINN, Box 29, Sidney, Ohio











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"Photographs of the Grinnell Hawaiian missionary stamps purchased by John A. Klemann from George H. Grinnell" and "Complete list of the seventy-one Grinnell Hawaiian missionary stamps".
Images provided by Herbert A. Trenchard, PhD.

Map of Hawaii from Charles Wilkes, Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition.
Philadelphia: C. Sherman, 1844. Collection of Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

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