

## THE MISSIONARIES OF 1851-1852

### The First Postage Stamps of Hawaii

In December 1850 the Hawaiian government created the first official post office and established postage rates on inbound and outbound mail (inter-island mail was carried free until 1859). In June 1851 the first postmaster, Henry M. Whitney (shown on page 9), was authorized by the privy council to issue stamps to prepay the new rates. Whitney used the printing press at the office of the government newspaper, *The Polynesian*, to print the first issue, known to philatelists as the Missionaries.

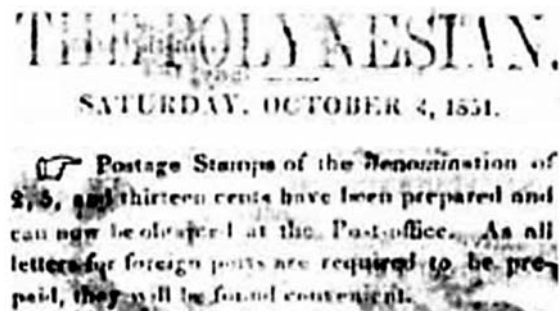
The Missionaries were issued in three denominations that prepaid the Second Treaty Period rates within Hawaii and to the United States: 2¢ for newspapers to the U.S.; 5¢ for the Hawaiian postage; and 13¢ for the rate to the U.S. East Coast (5¢ Hawaiian, 2¢ ship fee, and 6¢ transcontinental U.S. postage).

The dual nature of the 13¢ stamps—comprising the postage of two different countries—is most remarkable and makes these stamps, in part, United States postage stamps. The second version of 13¢ Missionary clarifies this point with the legend at top that reads “H.I. & U.S. Postage.” Whitney was compelled to make this change in April 1852 after patrons complained for months that the first 13¢ “Hawaiian Postage” stamps were ambiguous to them and to post offices in the United States. The earliest recorded use of the “H.I. & U.S. Postage” Missionary is April 23, 1852 (this cover is offered as lot 16).

The Missionary stamps were issued on October 1, 1851, and remained in use as Hawaii’s only postage stamps until the Kamehameha III issue was placed on sale in May 1853. The Missionaries continued to be used in 1853 and 1854, and examples have been found dated as late as March 1856, when the 5¢ Kamehameha III stamps first began to run out.

The earliest dated Missionary is a fragment adhering to a December 30, 1851, folded letter datelined at Kahului and addressed to Connecticut. At this date it appears that the cancellers ordered by Whitney in May 1851 had still not arrived; this December 1851 cover has no Hawaiian markings other than a pen cancel tying the Missionary, and all known circular datestamps are dated from and after February 10, 1852.

The Missionaries were printed on a small hand-operated press. The designs were created by assembling type and ornaments into two nearly-identical side-by-side settings. Sheets of an unknown number of stamps were made by making multiple impressions from these dual settings. The lefthand stamp in the setting (as printed) is known as Type I, and the righthand stamp is Type II. On Type I the “P” of “Postage” in the top label is slightly indented; on Type II, the “P” is flush left with the “H” of “Hawaiian.” There are other small differences between the two types, but the “H” over “P” alignment is most obvious.



Notice announcing the first postage stamps in Hawaii  
(*The Polynesian*, October 4, 1851) and  
Paul Emmert drawing of *The Polynesian* office where the  
Missionary stamps were printed  
Courtesy of the Bishop Museum

SETTINGS OF THE MISSIONARY STAMPS

TYPE I "P" INDENTED

TYPE II "H" & "P" ALIGNED



FIRST SETTING—5¢

Small "n"



SECOND SETTING—2¢

Normal "n"



THIRD SETTING—13¢ "HAWAIIAN POSTAGE"

Missing period



FOURTH SETTING—13¢ "H.I. & U.S. POSTAGE"

The relative positions of the two types was a mystery until the Dawson find in 1904, which included the cover bearing a strip of three 13¢ "Hawaiian Postage" Missionaries, proving beyond doubt that Type I ("P" indented) was on the left and Type II ("H" and "P" aligned) was on the right, as printed. The Tapling collection at the British Library still shows the two types reversed, conforming to the pre-1905 body of knowledge. At left we illustrate both types in their correct positions for each of the four settings of Missionaries. Although the 2¢ is classified by philatelists as Hawaii Number 1, the first setting was probably the 5¢ stamp. The small "n" of "Cents" (a font of smaller dimensions) appears in Type II of the 5¢ setting, but not in the 2¢ or 13¢ settings. It is the consensus among philatelists that this flaw was corrected when the type was changed for the 2¢ and 13¢ printings.

Another flaw unique to one setting is the missing period after "U" of "U.S." in Type II of Scott 4, the fourth setting. It is interesting that the consistent variation between Types I and II—the indentation of the letter "P" of "Postage" in Type I—remained throughout all four settings, even after the complete revision of the top label in the fourth setting (Scott 4).

The ornaments surrounding the numeral value come from a stock font sold by several 19th century type foundries. Remarkably, these ornaments show little change between settings.

The ink used to print the Missionaries is a consistent shade of cold metallic blue. The ink and paper are very similar to those used to print the first Carrier Department stamps of Boston, Massachusetts, in 1849 (Scott 3LB1). The paper is called pelure and has a very thin tissue-like texture. Without gum it is soft and flexible, but prone to tears. With gum it can become brittle. For these reasons 90% of all Missionaries have faults to some degree, and more than 60% have serious defects or repairs. Examples of Missionaries have been found as fragments or with pieces missing before they were cancelled in Honolulu, proving that the peculiar paper was difficult to handle even at the time of issue. One wonders if the stout card stock used for the 1853 Kamehameha III issue was specifically requested by Postmaster Whitney as a reaction to his experience with the Missionaries.

## Hawaiian Missionary Stamps on Cover

There are 28 recorded covers with intact Missionary stamps (this count excludes covers with fragments). Of the 28 covers, four are part of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum collection, and a fifth is in the Reichspost Museum in Germany, leaving 23 covers in collectors' hands. The Walske collection features **six** of the 23 covers in private hands—26% of the available supply—including three of the six recorded mixed-franking covers with United States stamps. The greatest of all Hawaiian Missionary covers—the unique Dawson cover with 2¢ and 5¢ Missionaries—leads this history-making offering.

### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE 28 COVERS WITH HAWAIIAN MISSIONARY STAMPS

**Boldfaced entries are offered in this sale of the Walske collection. ♦ indicates museum ownership.**

<i>Origin/Date</i>	<i>Pmk Date</i>	<i>Missionary</i>	<i>Cancel</i>	<i>U.S. Franking/Postage</i>	<i>S.F. Pmk</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Addressee</i>
1 ♦ —	20-Feb-52	#3 13¢ (I-II-I)	red sponge	red PAID, ms 18	(20 MAR)	New York, NY	Dawson
2 — (pre-5/52)	n/a	#3 13¢ (I)	blue italic PAID	blue-black PAID, red 6	illegible	East Hartford, CT	Van Ingen
<b>3 —</b>	<b>23-Apr-52</b>	<b>#4 13¢ (I)</b>	<b>datestamp</b>	<b>red PAID, circled 8</b>	<b>16 MAY</b>	<b>Troy, NY</b>	<b>Culver</b>
4 endorsed 'pr Noble'	26-Apr-52	#4 13¢ (II)	datestamp	red PAID, circled 8	16 MAY	Boston, MA	Burrage
<b>5 —</b>	<b>26-Apr-52</b>	<b>#3 13¢ (I)</b>	<b>red oval U.S Paid</b>	<b>red PAID, circled 8</b>	<b>16 MAY</b>	<b>Nashua, NH</b>	<b>Gulick</b>
6 —	24-Jul-52	#4 13¢ (II)	datestamp	black PAID, circled 8	1 SEP	Marlboro, MA	Goodale
7 Maui Jul-52	24-Jul-52	#4 13¢ (I)	datestamp	black PAID, circled 8	1 SEP	Persia via Boston	Fiske
8 Honolulu 31-Aug-52	11-Sep-52	#2 5¢ (II)	black 7-bar grid	black SHIP 6 Clamshell	4 OCT	San Francisco, CA	Foulkes
<b>9 Lahaina</b>	<b>4-Oct-52</b>	<b>#1 2¢ (II), #2 5¢ (II)</b>	<b>black 7-bar grid</b>	<b>1851 3¢ pair</b>	<b>27 OCT</b>	<b>New York, NY</b>	<b>Dawson</b>
<b>10 —</b>	<b>4-Oct-52</b>	<b>#2 5¢ (I)</b>	<b>black 7-bar grid</b>	<b>black 12</b>	<b>1 NOV</b>	<b>Portland, ME</b>	<b>Camwells</b>
11 docket 30-Nov-52	4-Oct-52	#3 13¢ (I)	black 7-bar grid	red PAID, circled 8	1 NOV	Lancaster, PA	Reynolds
12 —	16-Oct-52	#3 13¢ (I)	black 7-bar grid	black PAID, red ms 14	1 DEC	Cambridge, MA	Greenleaf
13 —	20-Nov-52	#3 13¢ (II)	—	blue PAID, circled 8	16 DEC	Boston, MA	Johnson
14 —	3-Dec-52	#4 13¢ (I)	black 7-bar grid	blue PAID, circled 8	1 JAN	Holmes Hole, MA	Luce
15 ♦ —	3-Dec-52	#4 13¢ (II)	black 7-bar grid	PAID, circled 8	1 JAN	Holmes Hole, MA	Luce
16 ♦ Maui 27-Dec-52	18-Jan-53	#2 5¢ (I)	black 7-bar grid	black SHIP 6 Clamshell	18 FEB	San Francisco, CA	Brittan
17 ? 1-Jan-53	16-Feb-53	#2 5¢ (II)	black 7-bar grid	black 12	(16) MAR	Lowell, MA	Rogers
18 ?	16-Feb-53	#4 13¢ (I)	black 7-bar grid	PAID, circled 8	(16) MAR	New Bedford, MA	Bailey
19 —	5-Apr-53	#3 13¢ (I)	—	black PAID, circled 8	—	Oswego, NY	Turrill
20 ♦ —	28-Apr-53	#4 13¢ (II)	black crossed bars	black PAID, circled 8	MAY 26	Albany, NY	Sessions
21 ♦ —	10-Sep-53	#3 13¢ (I), #6	blk grid of squares	black PAID, ms 14	7 OCT	Port Gibson, MS	Archer
22 docket 1-Oct-53	20-Oct-53	#2 5¢ (I)	blk grid of squares	black SHIP, 12	10 NOV	Lancaster, PA	Reynolds
23 Lahaina 22-Mar-54	n/a	#3 13¢ (II)	—	1851 3¢ pair paste-over	(15 APR)	Farmington, ME	Croswell
24 —	12-Jul-54	#2 5¢ (I)	datestamp	black SHIP, 12	16 AUG	Lebanon, CT	Gay
<b>25 Maui Nov-15-54</b>	<b>29-Nov-54</b>	<b>#4 13¢ (II)</b>	—	<b>1851 3¢ pair paste-over</b>	<b>1 JAN</b>	<b>Persia via Boston</b>	<b>Fiske</b>
26 —	5-Mar-56	#2 5¢ (I)	—	1851 3¢, SHIP 6	21 MAR	San Francisco, CA	Penny-Post
INBOUND:							
<b>27 Auburn, MA (ms.)</b>	<b>21-Dec-52</b>	<b>#2 5¢ (I)</b>	<b>red ms. 'X'</b>	<b>1851 3¢ pair</b>	—	<b>Lahainaluna, Maui</b>	<b>Pogue</b>
28 NEW-YORK ? 5	n/a	#2 5¢ (II)	—	1851 3¢ pair	—	Lahainaluna, Maui	Pogue

### SUMMARY

<i>Franking</i>	<i>Recorded</i>	<i>Museum</i>	<i>Available</i>
2¢/5¢ Scott 1-2 with U.S. 3¢ 1851	1	0	1
5¢ Scott 2 single	6	-1	5
5¢ Scott 2 with U.S. 3¢ 1851	3	0	3
13¢ Scott 3 single	6	0	6
13¢ Scott 3 strip of three	1	-1	0
13¢ Scott 3 with Hawaii Scott 6	1	-1	0
13¢ Scott 3 with U.S. 3¢ 1851	1	0	1
13¢ Scott 4 single	8	-2	6
13¢ Scott 4 with U.S. 3¢ 1851	1	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>23</b>