

UNITED STATES-HAWAII MAIL VIA MEXICO



The trans-Mexico overland route for foreign mail came into existence after Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1821. Although there are contemporary references to Hawaiian mail sent via Mexico dating back to 1825, no examples have been seen dated prior to 1835. According to Fred Gregory's census, covers are known for each year from 1835 to 1848, except 1837. Trans-Mexico letters to Hawaii have been recorded from 1841 to 1846. When the United States and Mexico went to war in 1846, U.S. naval forces blockaded Mexican ports, which disrupted the normal flow of mail. Only six examples of trans-Mexico mail are recorded from 1847 and 1848. In 1849 the inauguration of regular mail service across the Isthmus of Panama eliminated the need for the trans-Mexico route, but there is no question that during the period leading up to the Mexican-American war, Mexico played a vital role in mail communication between places in the Pacific and Atlantic regions.

The map above will help the reader visualize the key ports and inland towns on the trans-Mexico route. On the Gulf Coast of Mexico the principal port was Vera Cruz, although one cover is recorded that transited Tampico. On the Gulf of California the principal port was Mazatlan, although Guaymas and San Blas were also conduits for mail.

The regular packets running between Vera Cruz, New Orleans and New York usually carried the Hawaiian mail, but covers are recorded that entered the U.S. post office at Pensacola, Mobile, Boston, Charlestown and Sag Harbor (late use). Most of the mail to Hawaii entered through Honolulu, although a few covers entered at Lahaina or Hilo.

The overland segment of the route usually ran along the road between Mazatlan or San Blas and Vera Cruz via Tepic, Guadalajara, Mexico City and Puebla (as marked on the map). An alternate route passed through Durango, but steep mountains made travel by the "Durango Trail" extremely arduous. The National Road through Mexico was never particularly safe or hospitable to travelers, but the Mexican-American War made the road extremely dangerous or unpassable, even after the war was officially ended.

Mail to and from Hawaii was handled by individuals or commercial firms that arranged to send or receive mail bags from incoming and outgoing vessels. They would maintain accounts with patrons so that Mexican postage charges could be paid as required. Several letters contain instructions to the addressee on how to direct letters, and covers often bear handwritten or handstamped markings identifying the name and location of the mail forwarder.

The Gregory census records a total of 86 trans-Mexico covers/letters, including 61 from Hawaii (east-bound) and 25 to Hawaii (westbound). Of the 61 eastbound covers, 7 are in institutions, leaving 54 in collector hands. A larger portion of the westbound covers are in institutions — 18 of the 25 — leaving only 7 in collector hands. The 17 examples offered in this sale are the largest congregation of Hawaiian trans-Mexico covers ever assembled by one collector.

KAMEHAMEHA III ISSUES

THE FIRST PRINTING IN THE SERIES OF FOURTEEN KAMEHAMEHA III STAMPS (including the 1857 Provisional, Re-Issues and Official Reproductions) was ordered by Honolulu Postmaster Henry M. Whitney and issued in March 1853. The last of the series, the Official Reproductions, was printed in 1889 and overprinted in 1892. Both the 5c and 13c denominations picture a three-quarter bust of King Kamehameha III. Because the first issue was engraved and printed in Boston, it is sometimes called the Boston Engraved issue.

1853 FIRST PRINTING
(Scott 5 and 6)

The plates of 20 subjects were engraved by Nathaniel Dearborn in Boston, and the stamps were printed by Dearborn or possibly another printer named Holland. They went on sale in Honolulu in March 1853. The 5c stamp was printed in dark blue on very thick white paper (.005 inches) and prepaid the Hawaiian single-letter rate on U.S.-Hawaiian mail. The 13c was printed in a deep orange-red on equally thick paper with a slight yellowish cast and prepaid the composite rate of 5c Hawaiian, 2c ship fee and 6c U.S. transcontinental rate (until March 31, 1855). Multiples of the first printing are extremely rare: the largest 5c multiple, unused or used, is a pair and only three blocks of the 13c (possibly four) are known, including the record-size blocks of eight and twelve that were cut from the same sheet (lots 211 and 212 in this sale). The 5c is of about equal scarcity in unused or used condition. Used 13c stamps are much scarcer than unused examples and considerably scarcer than the 5c stamp in used condition, despite the Scott Catalogue values.

1857 PROVISIONAL MANUSCRIPT SURCHARGE
(Scott 7)

Following the increase in the U.S. transcontinental rate from 6c to 10c on April 1, 1855, the 13c Kamehameha III stamp could no longer prepay the full postage from Hawaii to the U.S. East Coast, the rate having increased from 13c to 17c. In consequence, the patrons of Hawaii's postal system began using 5c stamps plus 12c U.S. stamps, or 13c plus 4c cash, or, when both denominations were available, 5c and 13c Kamehameha III stamps together. This circumstance soon depleted the supply of 5c stamps, and Postmaster Whitney's resignation in June 1856 appears to have interfered with the timely request for a second printing to replenish the dwindling supply.

In 1857 the post office in Honolulu applied a manuscript "5" to the ample supply of 13c Kamehameha III stamps to create provisional 5c values. Dated examples indicate that the provisionals were issued in January 1857 and were used as late as July 1858. The numeral "5" surcharge was written by hand on each stamp in the sheet, first by Postmaster Joseph Jackson and later by his clerk, Alvah Clark. The Type I (Clark) surcharge can easily be distinguished from the much scarcer Type II (Jackson) surcharge by the writing (examples of both are offered in this sale). No multiples, unused or used, are known. Eighteen covers with Scott 7 have been recorded by Fred Gregory.

In 1861 the Postmaster General in Honolulu, Alvah Clark (formerly Jackson's clerk), authorized the postmaster in Lahaina to sell a supply of unoverprinted 13c Kamehameha III stamps still on hand for 12c per stamp, to compensate for a shortage of United States 12c stamps. Examples of the 13c used in 1861 to pay 12c postage are called "Mute Surcharges" (see lot 256).

1857 SECOND 5-CENT PRINTING
(Scott 8)

During Postmaster Joseph Jackson's term he was responsible for the Second Printing of the 5c Kamehameha III stamp and the first Numeral issue in August 1859. He died in office in August 1859.

The second shipment of 5c stamps was placed on sale sometime around June 1857 and remained available for use until 1862, even after the 1861 Third Printing was in circulation. The paper used for the Second Printing was white and thinner than the previous issue, measuring approximately .002 to .003 inches in thickness. The shade of blue is lighter and slightly more greenish than the deep blue of the 1853 printing.

The Second Printing stamps are more common in used condition than are the First or Third Printings; they are scarcer unused. Multiples are very rare — there are no recorded blocks, and the largest pieces, unused or used, are strips of four. Even pairs of this stamp are very rare, with only four examples recorded on cover. The Second Printing was the most extensively used of the Kamehameha III printings, and covers are known dated as late as April 1863. The stamp is not known bisected, although a number of rates, including the introduction of the 2c inter-island rate in 1859, might have created the need for a bisected stamp. The relatively long period of use spanned three separate issues of United States stamps — the 1851-55 Imperforate, 1857-60 Perforated and 1861 Issues — all of which were available in Hawaii and are found in mixed frankings with the Hawaiian 5c Second Printing.

1861 THIRD 5-CENT PRINTING

(Scott 9)

The supply of 5c Kamehameha III stamps was depleted again by late 1860. Postmaster Alvah K. Clark ordered another 20,000 on March 12, 1861. The paper used for this issue was thinner than the Second Printing paper — measuring .0017 to .002 inches thick — and it was bluish, not white. The Third Printing stamps were evidently distributed slowly, starting in late 1861 (earliest documented use is September 9, 1861), because the Second Printing stamps are found on covers dated in 1862 and 1863.

The 5c Kamehameha III stamps were still in use in early 1866. Despite their availability over a four-year period and the fact that no other 5c issues were available until 1865, Third Printing stamps are relatively common in unused condition, but they are scarce used, on or off cover. There is no satisfactory explanation for the disproportionate number of unused stamps versus used stamps from the Third Printing, and we believe that further research will yield new knowledge about the quantities printed and issued. We think it is possible that Postmaster Kalakaua, who replaced Jackson, ordered more 5c Kamehameha III stamps in 1864. His order for the new 5c Kamehameha V stamps was placed on April 25, 1865, but a March 6, 1865, letter from Kalakaua to Postmaster Coney at Hilo states: “Your order for 5c Hawaiian and 5c U.S. stamps I am unable to furnish, being entirely out of them and having been obliged to send to the United States for a fresh supply...” The timing of this ambiguous statement has led some researchers to conclude that Kalakaua was referring to the new Kamehameha V stamps (Scott 32); others have determined that he was referring to an additional printing from the old Kamehameha III plate. The stamps found on very thin, strongly blued paper with original gum, which are numerous, are likely candidates for this undocumented printing.

1867–68 FOURTH PRINTING — RE-ISSUES

(Scott 10, 11, 10S, 11Sa and 11Sb)

By the mid-1860's stamp collecting was gaining popularity and stamp dealers began their efforts to secure supplies of popular issues to meet demand. The stamps of the exotic Hawaiian Islands were in great demand but relatively small supply, as evidenced by the letter dated March 1864 from an eager stamp collector to former postmaster Henry M. Whitney, offering to buy or trade Hawaiian stamps (see lot 186). In late 1867 or early 1868 the Honolulu post office authorized a re-issue of the 5c and 13c Kamehameha III stamps. The original plates were used, but the colors and papers were noticeably different from the three earlier printings.

There was no postal need for the Fourth Printing. It was intended to fill the needs of stamp collectors and, after the initial supply was released, the balance was overprinted “Specimen” to prevent postal use. The re-issues, with and without overprints, were sold at face value until 1896 and are found used on philatelically-inspired covers. In 1896 the remainders were destroyed. Multiples of the 5c are not uncommon. The 13c Scott 11 is very rare in block form.

1889 OFFICIAL IMITATIONS

(Scott 10R, 11R, 10RS and 11RS)

As late as December 1887 the Honolulu postmaster, F. Wundenberg, ordered an additional printing of the 5c and 13c Kamehameha III stamps. A previous postmaster, A. P. Brickwood, had defaced the original plates, thus requiring Wundenberg to send the original 5c die to American Bank Note Company in New York, so that they could create new plates. By retouching the 5c die and re-engraving a new 13c die, ABNCo. was able to produce plates that closely imitated the original issue. 10,000 of each value in blue and orange-red colors were sent to Honolulu and placed on sale on September 6, 1889. On August 19, 1892, the remaining supply was overprinted “Reprint” in black by the Robert Grieve Publishing Company of Honolulu. On January 18, 1897, the remainders were destroyed. Only 3,635 copies of Scott 10R and 10RS, and only 1,696 copies of 11R and 11RS had been sold in more than eight years. An additional cache of 1889 imitations, with a large “Specimen” overprint, reached the market when the ABNCo. archives were dispersed in 1990.

1859-65 NUMERAL ISSUES

THE NUMERALS WERE HAWAII'S FIRST STAMPS FOR LOCAL AND INTER-ISLAND POSTAGE. Before August 1859, Hawaiian inter-island mail was carried free of charge by schooners, and there was no charge for letters delivered locally. With the rise in inter-island correspondence came a greater need for collecting postage. In 1859 the postal laws were amended to include a 2c per half-ounce postage rate for inter-island letters (and 1c for printed matter), effective August 1. Drop letters left at and picked up at the same post office were not subject to postage, nor were consignee letters handled by ship captains, as long as they did not go through the post office.

The simple typeset Numeral stamps were intended to be a temporary measure until new 1c and 2c stamps could be ordered, printed and delivered. Far from being temporary, the Numerals maintained a prominent position in Hawaii's postal history for a period of seven years.

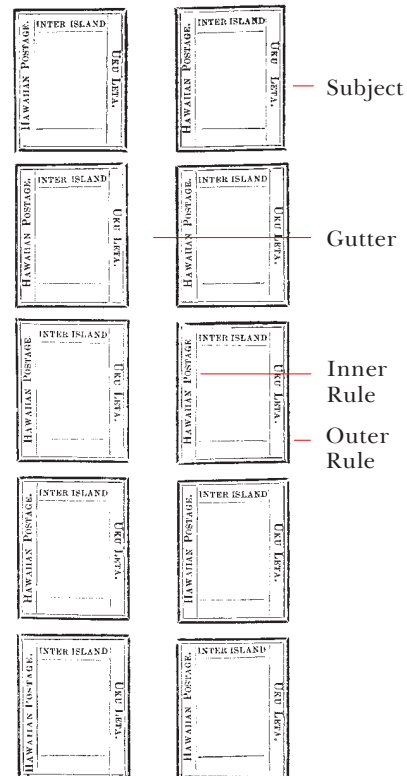
The Numerals were printed from newspaper type on a small hand-operated Ruggles card press. The early printings were made at the offices of Henry M. Whitney's newspaper, the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*. Later printings were made by another private printer and at the Government Printing Office.

The Numerals encompass fifteen major Scott numbers. The table on page 168 will help collectors visualize and identify the complex Numeral Issue printings. Each time the denomination was changed and the type had to be reset, philatelists call it a new *setting*. There were twelve settings of Numerals from 1859 to 1865, which produced 1c, 2c and 5c stamps. When the arrangement was modified, but the denomination stayed the same, philatelists call it a separate *plate* (the correct printer's term would be a typeset "form"). The Numerals were printed from at least 29 different *plates*. Much of the work in assigning stamps to specific plates and reconstructing the arrangement of each plate was accomplished by the late J. F. Westerberg. In recent years Westerberg's work has been expanded and improved upon by philatelists such as Geoffrey Brewster, Fred Gregory, Thurston Twigg-Smith and others.

The Numerals' production method — the use of loose type, printing in various colors on different papers, and making more than one impression on a sheet of paper—has provided collectors with a tremendous variety of fascinating items, including rare basic stamps, unusual typographic varieties and spectacular multiples, such as tête-bêche pairs and blocks. The postal history of the period in which the Numerals were used is also rich in artifacts, including inter-island covers, postmarks from exotic locations and colorful mixed-franking covers with United States stamps.

The following terms are used to describe the Numerals:

- Gutter** Vertical space between columns on plate, not to be confused with a straddle-pane margin between two impressions on sheet
- Plate** Arrangement of 10 subjects in the plate, showing typographic characteristics that distinguish each subject from those of any other plate
- Position** Relative location of subject on plate of 10
- Rule** The thick or thin lines surrounding the design and numeral
- Setting** Used to describe a plate revised by inserting a new denomination in the subjects
- Straddle-Pane** Vertical space between two impressions from plate on a sheet, not to be confused with a gutter margin between two columns on a plate
- Margin** Columns on a plate
- Tête-Bêche** A pair or multiple with columns inverted in relation to each other, resulting from print-and-turn production
- Type** Classification of a subject according to characteristics that remain relatively constant from one plate to another (I, II, III...X). Also called a cliché.



NUMERAL ISSUE SETTINGS AND PLATES

Setting	Plate	Date	Scott No.	Value/Color of Ink	Color of Paper	Kind of Paper
Setting 1 2 cent	1-A	July 1859	13a	2c Dark Blue	Grayish White	Thin wove with strong show-thru
	1-B	July 1859	13	2c Light Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove, semi-opaque minimal show-thru
	1-C	July 1859	13	2c Light Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove, semi-opaque minimal show-thru
Setting 2 1 cent	2-A	July 1859	12	1c Light Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove, semi-opaque minimal show-thru
	2-B	Jul-Aug 1859	12	1c Light Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove, semi-opaque minimal show-thru
		Jul-Aug 1859	12	1c Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove with strong show-thru
Setting 3 2 cent	3-A	Aug 1859	13	2c Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove with strong show-thru
	3-B	Aug 1859	13	2c Blue	Bluish White	Thin wove with strong show-thru
	3-C	Late 1859	16	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	3-D	Late 1859	16	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	3-E	Late 1859	16	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	3-F	Late 1859	16	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	3-G	Late 1859	16	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	3-Gx	1862	14	2c Black	Greenish Blue	Thin wove
Setting 4 1 cent	4-A	1863	15	1c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
	4-B	1863	15	1c Black	Grayish	Thin wove
Setting 5 2 cent	5-A	1863	18	2c Black	Gray Blue (shades)	Thin to medium wove, Bluish cast varies
	5-Ax	Late 1863	18 var	2c Black	Grayish	Thin wove similar to Scott 16
	5-Ay	1863	18 var	2c Black	White	Medium wove similar to Scott 20
	5-Az	1863	18 var	2c Black	Bluish Gray	Medium wove
	5-B	1863	17	2c Dark Blue	Bluish	Thin wove
	5-Bx	1863?	None	2c Black	Blue Gray	Medium wove
	5-C	1864	20	2c Black	White	Medium wove
Setting 6 1 cent	6-A	1864	19	1c Black	White	Thin to medium wove
Setting 7 2 cent	7-A	1865	24	2c Black	White	Medium to thick laid
Setting 8 1 cent	8-A	1865	23	1c Black	White	Medium to thick laid
Setting 9 5 cent	9-A	1865	21	5c Blue	Blue	Medium wove
Setting 10 2 cent	10-A	1865	26	2c Dark Blue	White	Medium wove
Setting 11 1 cent	11-A	1865	25	1c Dark Blue	White	Medium wove
Setting 12 5 cent	12-A	1865	22	5c Blue	Blue	Medium wove