

This Day in History... June 14, 1900

Hawaii Becomes a US Territory

On June 14, 1900, Hawaii became a US territory and began using US stamps for its mail.

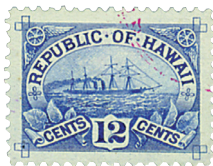
American missionaries arrived in Hawaii in 1820. As the white population grew, it became apparent that postal provisions were a necessity. The first attempt at establishing postal regulations was made in the 1840s, with the Organic Act. This was a series of three laws, the second of which established postal rates for inter-island mail and mail to the US. These laws were never put into effect.



One of the rarest and most famous stamps in the world. Only 3 known with crossed bar cancellation!



1859 Plain Border Numeral stamp



1894 Pictorial stamp – only stamp with “Republic of Hawaii”

The new stamps were used through June 13, 1900. In 1898, Hawaii was eventually annexed by the US under President William McKinley. Three more stamps were issued in 1899, and used until Hawaii officially became a US territory on June 14, 1900. At that time, all Hawaii stamps were “demonetized” (marked as having no value), and regular US stamps were used instead. The US stamps in use at the time included the Universal Postal Union Colors stamps as well as the Trans-Mississippi Exposition commemoratives.



Issued for the 25th anniversary of Hawaii's statehood.

At the time, Hawaii had a government-printed newspaper, called *The Polynesian*, which published letters from the residents of the islands, complaining about the lack of a postal system. The first Hawaiian stamps were printed in the same office that printed *The Polynesian*. It was not until October 1, 1851, that these first stamps, called the “Missionaries,” were sold.

In 1853 new stamps picturing King Kamehameha III were printed in Boston. “Plain Border Numerals” followed these in 1859. These stamps were printed in Hawaii using the same methods as the previous Missionaries. These stamps were produced in limited runs, as they were unsure of the future of their postal system. So they were printed a total of nine times.

Then in 1861 the Hawaii post began producing stamps honoring Hawaiian royalty. For over 30 years, Hawaii's stamps pictured kings, queens, princes, and princesses. But in 1893, Queen Liliuokalani was overthrown and the monarchy was replaced.

In the first year after the coup, the Provisional Government ruled Hawaii. The previous stamps were still used, but with an overprint marking the difference. On July 4, 1894, the Republic of Hawaii was declared – even as representatives were lobbying the American government to be added to the United States. (While Benjamin Harrison had supported annexation, President Grover Cleveland, who took office just two months after the coup d'état, was a staunch anti-imperialist and called for the queen's restoration.)

In conjunction with the new government, a new set of stamps, known as the Pictorials, was issued. E.W. Holdsworth of Honolulu, who was the winner of a design contest advertised in the Commercial Advertiser newspaper, designed them. Holdsworth received \$10 for each accepted stamp design.

Six stamps were issued for the Republic of Hawaii, with five of them issued before the new government officially began. The sixth was issued on October 27, 1894. It had the inscription “Republic of Hawaii” added to reflect the new status, making it the only stamp of its kind in the world.



1853 Kamehameha III stamp



1893 stamp with Provisional Government overprint



UPU color stamp that was in use at the time Hawaii became a territory and began using US stamps.

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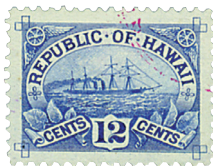
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