

Hawaii Provisional Govt Overprints, April 1893 – February 1894

SYNOPSIS for CHICAGOPEX

PURPOSE & SCOPE: Shows postal development of the overprinting of existing Kingdom of Hawaii postage stamp stocks in 1893, including the four “States” of the single typeset frame of 50 subjects, production printer’s errors, various transient and progressive varieties, and representative postal use.

Hawaii Provisional Government Overprints of 1893 were issued as a result of overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy in January of 1893. When it became apparent that the United States would not immediately annex Hawaii, a Provisional Government was established to govern until a more permanent solution could be arranged. The overprinting of existing Hawaii Royal Portrait stamps served two purposes; first, a signal that the new Provisional Government was credibly established, and second, the overprints effectively defaced the portraits of the deposed Hawaiian monarchy. The overprinting was more importantly a timely and cost-effective means of providing uninterrupted postal service until new stamps could be produced. The Provisional Government ruled until the establishment of the Republic of Hawaii on July 4, 1894.

TREATMENT: This study will illustrate the development of the overprint, the progression of changes to the single 50-subject frame throughout the four printings of the overprint, and the overprint varieties that resulted from those changes to the 50-subject frame. Exhibit begins with proofs of the overprints, followed by examples of the overprinted Portrait stamps. Next is analysis of the four major “States” of the overprint frame tied to the four printings of the overprints. Then examples of the various printing errors that occurred during production and examples of several transient or progressive varieties. Finally, an Epilogue closing the exhibit. Text for the main story line will be in Times New Roman (12 point), while supporting information, secondary text and interesting tidbits will be presented in Times New Roman (10 point). Key and important items are highlighted with a double-line red border.

End of chapter indicator:



IMPORTANCE: The Provisional Government overprints marked a key political transition in the history of Hawaii. They also became a philatelic sensation and sparked world-wide interest. The overprints were applied to existing stocks of Hawaii Bank Note stamps, one sheet at a time, by a frame containing 50 subjects arranged 5 across and 10 down to match the sheets of the Hawaiian Bank Note stamps. Each subject consisted of a 3-line typeset overprint: Provisional / GOVT. / 1893. This process resulted in many printing errors such as double overprints, split overprints and inverted overprints. There was also a steady progression of damage and wear to the overprint frame which has become the basis for mapping printings and “States”.

KNOWLEDGE, STUDY & RESEARCH: I have been collecting the stamps and postal history of Hawaii for over 50 years, with a focus on the Provisional Government Overprints since 1987. My interest in the Overprints was piqued by a correspondence with Dr. Wallace Beardsley regarding the typography of the Overprints. After Dr. Beardsley’s death I established a correspondence with Fred Gregory, author of Post Office in Paradise, a website devoted to Hawaiian philately. My knowledge of the production and varieties of the Overprints has been developed through study of major Hawaii works such as Meyer-Harris “Hawaii, It Stamps & Postal History, C. F. Richards “Checklist of Stamps of Hawaii”, Dr. Beardsley’s writings for Opinions, Joe D’Assis IDC of Hawaii, discussions with other notable Hawaii collectors (including Fred Gregory and Richard Malmgren) and many auction catalogs. In addition, I have expanded on Dr. Beardsley’s & Col. Pat Hogan’s plating study of the overprint Color Errors by mapping available images of the stamps.

Advice on improving the exhibit is welcome and appreciated.

RARITY & CONDITION: The Hawaii Provisional Government Overprints were produced in large numbers except for 4 of the issues; 12¢ red lilac w/red overprint, \$1 rose red w/ black overprint, 2¢ vermillion w/black overprint, and the 12¢ red lilac w/black overprint. While single sheets of the color overprint errors

Special Items of Interest:

- ♦ State IV Proof
- ♦ 15¢ Red Brown “Wandering Period”
- ♦ 10¢ Red Brown Overprint Color Error
- ♦ 6¢ Green Overprint Color Error
- ♦ 1¢ Purple & 5¢ Ultramarine Inverted Overprints
- ♦ 15¢ Red Brown missing “s”

(10¢ red brown w/ red overprint and the 6¢ green w/ black overprint) were produced (50 stamps of each error), only 37 and 32 copies respectively are known today. Only two sheets each of the 2¢ purple and the 5¢ ultramarine w/ inverted red overprint were produced. Large multiples of many of the issues are difficult to find, especially the 12¢ red lilac w/black overprint. The largest multiple I have ever seen of that stamp was a block of 25, once! There were numerous printing errors resulting in double and some triple

overprints, split and diagonal overprints. There are also many typographical varieties (missing letters/ numbers, deteriorating type, inking inconsistencies) some of which only 5 –10 copies are believed to exist.. Where those items exist in this exhibit they will be noted.

The entire issue was highly sought by stamp collectors around the world at the time of issue and for some time afterward. Centering and overprint location vary widely, but attractive copies can be found.

One notable element important to this study, but not represented, are the overprint essays that Postmaster Oat had prepared to determine the overprint format and type. These essays were last seen in Rumsey Sale 131, Lot 221, May 2026. I have only ever seen that one credible set, though I know of another that is privately held.

REFERENCES:

Website: <https://www.hawaiianstamps.com/provisional.html>, Post Office in Paradise, Fred Gregory (2022)

Beardsley, Wallace R., Ph.D. “The Use of Plating to Expertise Hawaiian Provisionals.” Opinions IV, New York, N.Y.: The Philatelic Foundation, 1987 pp 166-185.

Beardsley, Wallace R., Ph.D. “A Little Understood Variety.” Opinions V, New York, N.Y.: The Philatelic Foundation, 1988 pp 192-207.

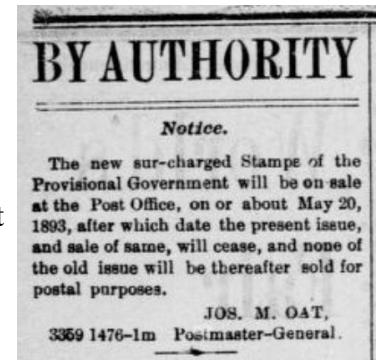
D’Assis, Joe. “An Informative & Descriptive Catalogue of Hawaii Stamps & Related Issues”, last update Jan 2003, pp 45-66.

Hawaii Provisional Govt Overprints; April 1893 – February 1894

Purpose & Scope: Tell a story of development & execution of 1893 Hawaiian Provisional Government overprint on existing Kingdom of Hawaii “Banknote Issue” stamps. Illustrate sequence of change in the single frame of 50 typeset subjects over four printings, printer errors & typeset anomalies that occurred throughout the production process.

Background: On Jan 17 1893 a group Honolulu businessmen led a “bloodless” revolt against the Monarchy of the Kingdom of Hawaii. Queen Liliuokalani, reigning monarch, was deposed and a Provisional Government was established with expectation that Hawaii would soon be annexed by the United States. The Provisional Government was short-lived, but not as a result of annexation. It was replaced by the government of the Republic of Hawaii on Jul 4 1894 when it became apparent that annexation by the United States would not be quickly accomplished.

Joseph M. Oat was appointed Postmaster General in the Provisional Government on Apr 1 1893. He ordered overprinting of existing stocks of Hawaiian stamps & issued notice at right on Apr 20 1893 in the Daily Pacific Commercial Advertiser & the Hawaiian Star;



Reverse—Shown at 75%

Plan & Organization: Plan is to demonstrate origin of overprint, followed by identification of printing frame “States” in context of 4 separate printings of the overprints. Also show various printer errors & progressive or transient physical changes to the printing frame.

Knowledge & Research: Through over 30 years analyzing very limited contemporary philatelic literature, early philatelist’s attempts to explain the overprinting processes, and more recent analyses by modern philatelists, I have developed a detailed understanding of printing process, the sequence of changes to the overprint frame, the causes of the many overprint varieties.

Importance: The Hawaii Provisional Government Overprints of 1893 marked a significant political transition & an event of great philatelic impact to Hawaii collectors. The overprinting was a timely & cost-effective means of providing uninterrupted postal service until new stamps could be produced.

Rarity & Condition: While 1893 Overprints were a broad issue, 4 of the object stamps had very limited quantities available in 1893. There are several errors and printing varieties that are very difficult to find and in high demand. Condition varies widely due to tropical conditions and centering.

Items of importance indicated by double-line border in Red.

Information resulting from personal research indicated by .

Items with certificates indicated by ©.

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