



*Did these stamps pay the 13¢ letter rate from Hawaii to the U.S.?*

# **The Grinnell Missionaries: Genuine Stamp Rarities or Clever Fakes Created to Cheat Collectors?**





*George H. Grinnell*

**T**he saga of the “Grinnells” began in 1918, with the purported gift of a number of Hawaiian Missionary stamps to George H. Grinnell from a man named Charles Shattuck. What followed was a decades-long quest by Grinnell, and later his descendants, to prove the authenticity of these stamps. Nearly one hundred years after the Grinnell Missionaries appeared on the scene, this philatelic detective story remains one of the most tantalizing in the history of stamp collecting.

Here is that story...



*A Genuine 13¢ Hawaiian Missionary stamp on cover  
Ex the Christian H. Aall Collection. Courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries*



Courtesy National Postal Museum

In October of 1851, the Kingdom of Hawaii post office issued its first set of postage stamps in three denominations. These are Hawaii Scott 1, 2, and 3.

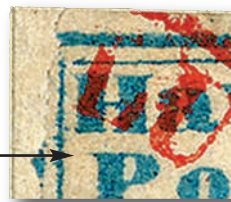
## George Grinnell's Hawaiian Missionary Stamps: “America's most fantastic philatelic story”

By Ken Lawrence

The Hawaiian Islands have beckoned and beguiled Americans for at least two centuries. By the mid-19th century, Protestant Christian missionaries had settled in that Polynesian paradise, located in the Pacific Ocean about 2,400 miles west and south of the continental United States, and had initiated religious and educational work among the indigenous residents. In those days the Hawaiian Kingdom was a constitutional monarchy whose independence had been recognized by the United States in 1842, led by King Kamehameha III.

Nearly all early mail from Hawaii consists of missionaries' letters and publications to America. For that reason the country's first postage stamps, issued in 1851, are known as Hawaiian Missionaries. They are among the rarest and most famous stamps in the world. After the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, Hawaiian stamps became philatelically even more important as issues of a U.S. possession. Today they are listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* as well as in the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*.

In June of 1918, a California stamp collector named George H. Grinnell acquired at least two Hawaiian Missionary stamps



2¢ Missionary  
Type I: “P” of  
“Postage” indented



2¢ Missionary  
Type II: “P” of  
“Postage” directly  
beneath “H”

Two types were printed of each denomination, which differ in small details. The word “Postage” is slightly indented below the word “Hawaiian” on Type I settings. The first letters of both words are parallel at the left on Type II settings.

from an elderly man named Charles B. Shattuck, which eventually gave rise to a legend and a mystery that the famous writer and expert on United States classic stamps and postal history, Stanley B. Ashbrook, called “America’s most fantastic philatelic story.”



*Honolulu  
U.S. Postage Paid  
(Genuine)*

### **Origin of the Honolulu Post Office, Postal Markings, and Missionary Stamps**

The Hawaiian King’s Privy Council created the post office and appointed the 26-year-old government printer, Henry M. Whitney, to be Honolulu postmaster on December 21, 1850. On June 18, 1851, the Hawaiian legislature ratified the Privy Council Act and authorized Whitney to issue postage stamps. In anticipation of his appointment Whitney had ordered four sets of postmark devices from Joseph W. Gregory, proprietor of Gregory’s Express at San Francisco. One set of circular date markers bore the words “Honolulu Hawaiian Islands.” Another read “Honolulu U.S. Postage Paid.”

No one is certain when Whitney’s postal supplies arrived at Honolulu, but circular Honolulu postmarks in red ink appear on Missionary stamps and on stampless mail dated February 20 and later, which scholars attribute to 1852 usage. The markers remained in service until mid-1857 or later. Meanwhile, Whitney had announced his first issue of adhesive stamps on October 1, 1851: “STAMPS of the denomination of *two*, *five*, and *thirteen* cents have been issued, and can be obtained at the Post-office.”

The October 4 issue of the government paper *The Polynesian* reproduced Whitney’s bulletin, which also announced rates of letter and newspaper postage to foreign destinations (domestic inter-island letters were free). Early in 1852, a completely new setting with different type and ornamentation created a revised 13¢ “H.I. & U.S. Postage” stamp, which indicated that the face value included full prepayment of Hawaiian and transcontinental United States postage.

### **The Grinnell Missionary Stamps**

George Grinnell embarked on his Hawaiian Missionary stamp odyssey in February 1918, as he later narrated his adventure in several typewritten manuscripts. An edited version of Grinnell’s memoir appeared in the October 1, 8, and 15, 1951, issues of *Linn’s Weekly Stamp News*.

Grinnell was a high school teacher and curator of the herbarium at the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. He was also an enthusiastic stamp collector. After he asked a Masonic fraternity



*Courtesy National Postal Museum*

*A fourth design issued in early 1852 replaced the word “Hawaii” with the inscription “H.I. & U.S.” to make clear that the postage, which consisted of 5¢ Hawaiian postage, 6¢ United States postage, and a 2¢ ship fee, was paid all the way to the destination. This is Hawaii Scott 4, which also exists in two types.*

brother named Lewis Perkins if he had saved old stamps, Perkins referred him to Charles Shattuck, whose mother Hannah had corresponded with Ursula Emerson, the wife of a Hawaiian missionary, in the 1830s. Hannah (Child) Shattuck and Ursula (Newell) Emerson had been schoolmates in New England as children.

In June of 1918, Grinnell paid a visit to the elderly Charles Shattuck at his Los Angeles residence. He recalled that Shattuck had presented him with a large number of used and unused Hawaiian stamps and a seafarer's letter mailed in 1852. The unused stamps had been kept between leaves of a prayer book; the used stamps, in an envelope. Grinnell had offered to buy the stamps but Shattuck had said he did not want payment, so Grinnell left a \$5 bill on a chair as a token of his gratitude.

Over time Grinnell's accounts of exactly how many stamps he got from Shattuck have varied considerably, and today we know that Grinnell made up that part of the story. A 2006 report titled *The Investigation of the Grinnell Hawaiian Missionaries* by the Expert Committee of the Royal Philatelic Society London (RPSL) referred to "72 known examples," of which 71 had been documented, but the committee failed to disclose that the Grinnell heirs also possessed ten previously unreported examples.



Honolulu  
U.S. Postage Paid  
(Grinnell)

Even 98 years ago the *Scott Catalogue* values of Hawaiian Missionary stamps were high: the 2¢ Missionary was not valued in unused condition because none were known to exist, but in used condition it was valued at \$5,000. The 5¢ was valued at \$3,000 unused, \$1,000 used; the 13¢, \$2,500 unused and \$1,000 used. Making adjustments for unlisted unused 2¢ and pairs of all three stamps, the 1918 catalog value of Grinnell's collection, if genuine, exceeded \$200,000.

### Grinnell's Plan to Profit from Shattuck's Generosity

Grinnell's superior at the Southwest Museum, Hector Alliot, advised Grinnell to find an honest stamp dealer to help him sell the stamps. Alliot was not a stamp collector but he was an expert buyer of fine art. Following Alliot's advice, Grinnell selected S. L. Wood, who had



*A pair of canceled 2¢ Grinnell Missionary stamps that the Grinnell and Shattuck heirs submitted to the Royal Philatelic Society London expert committee shows how Type I and Type II settings were laid out side by side in the printing form.*

## Genuine



## Grinnells

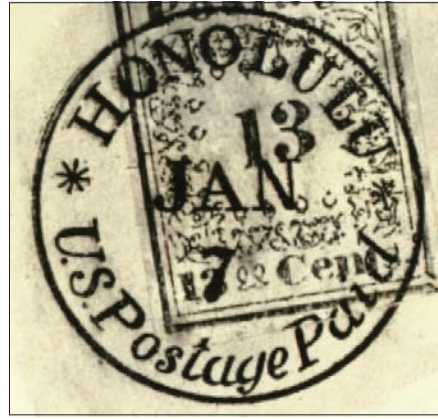


*Genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps on the left compared with Grinnell Missionary stamps on the right. Although many details have subtle differences, the easiest ones to identify are in the central numerals of value. The serif on the tail of the 2 is rectangular with a flat top on the Missionary and triangular with a sharp point on the Grinnell. The top flag of the 5 begins as a downward sloping line at the left, but curves sharply upward near the right end, on the genuine Missionary; on the Grinnell forgery it's a smooth curved arc. The center line of the 3 in 13 on the genuine Missionary is almost horizontal; on the Grinnell it points diagonally upward to the left and ends closer to the upper ball serif.*

## Genuine



## Grinnells



*A genuine classic Honolulu postmark on the left compared with a Grinnell postmark on the right. On datestamps struck on genuine Missionary stamps and other mail, capital “S”es in “U.S.” have barbed linear serifs that resemble fishhook points. Grinnell counterparts have round ball-shaped serifs on “S”es. These differences are consistent on all genuine and Grinnell datestamp styles without exception.*

\*\*\*\*\*

compiled *Mekeel’s* stamp catalog in 1895. Alliot died before Grinnell became acquainted with Wood, but after Grinnell gained confidence in him, he showed Wood 35 of the Hawaiian stamps, and said he wished to sell them for \$90,000.

Wood countered with an offer of \$50,000 (equivalent to about \$850,000 in today’s money), which Grinnell declined. In light of subsequent events, it’s hard to imagine how differently opinions might have evolved had Grinnell sold the stamps to Wood. If they had been dispersed gradually by a respected professional stamp dealer, one by one, into collections across the country and around the world, they might have become accepted as genuine Missionary stamp varieties.

After Grinnell declined Wood’s \$50,000 offer, Wood arranged a meeting with Col. Edward M. Taylor, a wealthy local collector. Taylor brought along prominent Los Angeles stamp dealer Bertram W. H. Poole as his advisor. After Poole examined Grinnell’s stamps, compared them to Hawaiian Missionaries in Taylor’s collection, and declared Grinnell’s stamps genuine, Taylor offered Grinnell \$60,000 for them.

Again Grinnell turned down the offer, and he also declined to sell a smaller number of stamps separately from the rest.

### **Grinnell’s Sale to John Klemann**

On November 20, 1919, Poole sent a telegram to Nassau Stamp Company in New York: “Tell John come out at once. Virgin find of Hawaiian Missionaries here. Very important. B.W.H. Poole.” The recipient was John A. Klemann, one of the country’s foremost stamp dealers. Klemann replied, “Can’t leave until December fifth. Wire detailed list of what there is with asking price, and if satisfactory will wire you funds to make purchase for us. Nassau Stamp Company.”

Poole’s November 22 follow-up said, “Thirty-five Hawaiian Missionary stamps, twos, fives, thirteens, pairs of each used and unused. Price a hundred thousand dollars.” Klemann

answered, "Price seems high. Will come out. Arrange to leave as much before December fifth as affairs permit. John A. Klemann."

On November 30, Charles Shattuck died, an event that passed without notice by nearly everyone involved in these events, but which proved fateful to the outcome.

Klemann took the train to Los Angeles and arrived on December 1. After arranging to pay commissions to Poole and Wood in the event he were to buy Grinnell's stamps, Klemann and Wood met Grinnell at the Los Angeles Trust and Savings Bank where Grinnell kept his stamps in a safe deposit vault.

Klemann examined the 35 stamps under a magnifying glass and said, "They are all right." Klemann asked if these were all the stamps. Grinnell answered that he had eight damaged ones in addition that he planned to donate to the Southwest Museum. Klemann insisted that Grinnell had to sell him the entire batch or there would be no deal.

Bargaining ensued. Eventually Wood persuaded Grinnell to accept Klemann's top offer of \$65,000 for the 43 stamps. Klemann paid \$1,000 in cash with the balance due in thirty days. Some of the stamps were mounted on a card on which Wood had written, "I have carefully examined and guarantee these stamps genuine. S. L. Wood." Klemann ripped that note off the card, tore it into pieces, and tossed it in the trash.

On December 8, Klemann completed payment, took possession of the 43 stamps, and boarded a train for his return trip to New York. After Klemann departed, Grinnell gave Wood two canceled 2¢ stamps and a want list of Hawaiian stamps that began with the 13¢ Missionary stamp of 1852 inscribed "H.I. & U.S. Postage." Grinnell asked Wood to trade the two 2¢ Missionaries to Taylor in exchange for the stamps on his want list.

### **Alfred Caspary Declares Grinnell's Stamps Counterfeit**

Back in New York on December 13, Klemann sold 16 of the stamps, including three pairs, to Alfred H. Caspary, a prominent wealthy collector, for \$75,000. The following day, Caspary compared the Grinnell stamps to Hawaiian Missionaries in his collection. He observed differences in the typography of the stamps and in the appearance of the cancellations that convinced him the Grinnells were counterfeit.



*Main Street, Downtown Los Angeles, 1920s*

Caspary returned the stamps to Klemann. Moving quickly to nullify the purchase, Klemann's lawyer attached all of Grinnell's money and property, and notified the Secret Service that Grinnell had sold his client counterfeit stamps, while Klemann returned to Los Angeles. At his attorney's office in Los Angeles on December 24 Klemann

handed the stamps to Capt. William P. Walsh of the Secret Service, who marked each item indelibly with his initials and the date. Walsh later seized the two 2¢ stamps that Grinnell had consigned to Wood.

The Secret Service took no action that would have led to a criminal prosecution, but Klemann sued Grinnell in Los Angeles Superior Court to nullify the sale and to get his money back. In the January 1921 issue of *The Albemarle Stamp Collector*, Charles H. Mekeel wrote in anticipation, “There are those who have had knowledge and experience in stamps, who believe that the stamps were perfectly genuine, and still believe that they are good, and that the claim that they are counterfeit cannot be proved.

“There are others who now say that the stamps are probably bad, who when they first examined them, pronounced them genuine beyond any doubt. The stamps were compared with genuine specimens belonging to California collectors, and were approved in all preliminary examinations.

“It will certainly be very interesting to American collectors to know how this affair is going to turn out, whether the stamps will be proved **good** or **bad**.” A month later he added, “If this present California lot prove to be **bad**, it will be evident that there is a very experienced fraud connected with the matter, because they were wonderful in workmanship, and unquestionably deceived many so-called authorities on the start.”

The Grinnell trial was scheduled to begin in January 1922, but was postponed until the end of May. It continued through most of June and concluded on June 29. Its importance was enhanced in the public eye because it unfolded against a backdrop of the fabulous Ferrary estate auctions in Paris, which kept rare stamps in the limelight.

A year earlier, Ferrary’s 2¢ Hawaiian Missionary stamp had sold to Maurice Burrus for 156,000 francs plus 17.5 percent tax, equivalent to \$14,700 in U.S. currency, the record price paid for a single stamp at that time. On the eve of the Grinnell trial at the third Ferrary sale in April 1922, Arthur Hind purchased “the world’s rarest stamp,” the unique 1856 British Guiana 1¢ black on magenta rarity, for 351,000 francs.



*A lightly canceled  
genuine 2¢  
Hawaiian Missionary*

### **Grinnell Missionaries on Trial**

In the July 1, 1922, issue of *Mekeel's*, Bill Bloss wrote, “Needless to say, this case has attracted international attention in the stamp world, and no small amount of interest from the public at large. It is without doubt the most important philatelic litigation which ever took place in any court...”

“Anyone wishing to locate a Los Angeles dealer or collector on that [May 31] morning would have had no difficulty, for they were all assembled in that court room, ready to receive their instruction in the whys and wherefores of the Hawaiian Missionary.”

The trial in Los Angeles Superior Court before Judge John Perry Wood opened with two days of testimony by Klemann about his purchase of the stamps from Grinnell, the sale to Caspary, and the attempt to return them for a full refund after Caspary declared them counterfeit. Caspary’s deposition was read into the record, which included his testimony that the Grinnell stamps were typographically different from genuine Missionaries, that the paper



*A canceled 2¢ Grinnell  
Missionary on piece*

was of recent vintage, that the cancellations were counterfeit and made with *aniline* ink that had not existed in the early 1850s. Aniline is a synthetic organic compound used for many industrial purposes. The first synthetic aniline dye was mauvine (aniline purple) discovered in August 1856 and became commercially available in 1857. Other aniline dye colors followed in due course. None of them existed when Hawaiian Missionary stamps were in use.

A parade of expert stamp dealer witnesses included Charles J. Phillips from London and Manuel Galvez from Madrid in addition to Poole and other U.S. experts. They compared the Grinnells to Hawaiian Missionary stamps in the collections of William H. Crocker of San Francisco and J. McK. Starrow of Pasadena, using enlarged photographs to illustrate differences that showed the Grinnells were not genuine.

Galvez was Klemann's star witness. He testified that the Grinnells were printed from photo engravings, a process that had not existed in the 1850s, and that different elements in some of the postmarks had been applied separately, not in single strikes of a Honolulu datestamp.

Charles Shattuck's widow Elizabeth was too ill to testify in court, so the judge transferred the trial to her home to take her testimony. She recalled Grinnell's visit to her husband, but denied that he could have given the stamps to Grinnell because he had not kept stamps in the trunk described by Grinnell, and because the family's New England heirlooms had been destroyed in a warehouse fire.

Grinnell's attorney made no serious effort to refute the experts' testimony. The essence of his defense was the claim that Grinnell had sold the stamps to Klemann "as is," without warranting them as genuine, and that Klemann had relied on his own expertise and the advice of others in making the purchase.

On June 29, 1922, Judge Wood ruled from the bench in Klemann's favor: "Now the first thing, and the most important thing, to be determined is, are these stamps genuine? It is clear to my mind that they are not, that they are forgeries, constructed by a process of photo-engraving. . . . I am convinced that those stamps, that is the Grinnell stamps, were never made with type."

The conflict between Grinnell's testimony and that of Shattuck's widow about the stamps' origin destroyed Grinnell's credibility in the judge's opinion: "I will content myself in that connection with saying, regretfully, that the story of the discovery and acquisition of these stamps by the defendant bears marks of improbability which makes it difficult for the court to accept it."

Although the judge ruled that the stamps "had no appreciable value," he added, "I think they probably will have a good deal more value as curiosities after this lawsuit than they possessed at any other time."

In his final order entered November 27, 1922, Judge Wood wrote that "on December 1, 1919, and at all times thereafter and for sometime prior thereto defendant knew that all of said pieces of paper were forgeries and imitations." In the sale to Klemann, "Each of the statements and representations so made by defendant was untrue and known by defendant to be untrue."

He ordered Grinnell to refund the entire purchase price plus interest to Klemann, Klemann to return “the forty-three pieces of paper” to Grinnell, and Grinnell to pay Klemann’s costs. Afterward Klemann settled out of court on terms more favorable to Grinnell, avoiding the appeal that Judge Wood had anticipated.

### **Grinnell’s Pursuit of Vindication**

After he retrieved the stamps from Klemann, Grinnell offered them for sale to Colonel Edward Howland Robinson Green, the eccentric millionaire best known for his purchase of the sheet of 24¢ Curtiss Jenny airmail stamps with inverted centers in May 1918. Green told Grinnell that he would rely on the advice of Economist Stamp Company owner Edward Stern.

According to Stern’s written recollection many years later, Grinnell agreed to pay him a large commission if Stern would declare the stamps genuine and close the sale, but if he found them to be forgeries, he could keep three of the stamps as compensation. Like Klemann and his witnesses, Stern determined that they were counterfeit. He still owned the stamps in 1951 when he described the experience. They reappeared in a May 24-26, 2011, Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries sale of the David Golden collection of Hawaiian stamps, where they sold for \$8,000 plus a 15 percent buyer’s premium.

In October 1923 Grinnell had a chance encounter with Charles Shattuck’s son, Edward S. Shattuck. Shattuck told Grinnell that he and his mother and sister had testified against Grinnell as they did in depositions and at the trial because Grinnell’s lawyer had spurned their request for a share of Klemann’s money.

Shortly afterward the Shattuck heirs discovered lost family articles bequeathed by their grandmother that they thought had been destroyed in a fire. That discovery convinced them that their testimony against Grinnell had been mistaken, and that his story of how he obtained the stamps from their father had been true. They executed affidavits in early November 1923 recanting their previous testimony. Grinnell agreed to split any proceeds from the sale of the stamps equally with the Shattucks.

After securing their affidavits Grinnell approached Judge Wood to see if he would reconsider his ruling. Following his meeting with the judge Grinnell wrote, “He said he did not think the affidavits were worth anything at all: that he did not value his own rulings to the extent that he would be unwilling to reverse his own opinion if he later found that he was wrong, but that until I had stronger evidence than what I had he could not help me any.”

In the summer of 1924, Grinnell’s attorney Oscar Lawler asked Judge Wood to reconsider his opinion based on the “frailty of human testimony” by the Shattucks that they had later



*A canceled attached pair of  
13¢ Grinnell Missionaries*



*A postmarked 5¢ Grinnell  
Missionary on piece*

recanted. Judge Wood again declined the request. “It seemed to me also that there was much evidence to corroborate this conclusion. It seems to me now that the accumulation in one place of so many genuine stamps when travel was so infrequent was very unlikely. Nevertheless, as you say, human testimony is frail, and, I may add, so is human judgment.”

After failing in several attempts to sell the stamps, Grinnell and the Shattucks divided the remainder of the 71 stamps (some had already been dispersed to Edward Stern and S. L. Wood) in 1927, with the Shattucks receiving 33 stamps and Grinnell keeping the rest.

Grinnell renewed his quest in 1942. After securing certificates of authenticity from New York stamp dealer Y. Souren for his remaining stamps, supposedly based on scientific forensic tests, he offered them for sale to

Philadelphia dealer Philip H. Ward, Jr. Ward sent them to Hawaii expert Admiral Frederick R. Harris, who once again declared them counterfeit and returned them.

George Henry Grinnell died in 1949 without having reversed either Judge Wood’s ruling or the court of philatelic opinion. But his granddaughter Carol Arrigo, her husband Vince Arrigo, Charles Shattuck’s descendants, and a small band of stalwart supporters continued his quixotic mission. Every several years the Grinnell story drew renewed attention. Stamp raconteur Herman Herst Jr. began a 1986 article about the Grinnell stamps, “Philately has its own Halley’s comet, but it does not need 76 years to reappear.”

### **Herbert Sterling, George Linn, and Harry Weiss**

In 1951 the HAPEX stamp exhibition in Honolulu commemorated the Hawaiian stamp centennial. Herbert Sterling, a California businessman who knew George Grinnell well and believed in his cause, exhibited a group of Grinnell Missionary stamps there. Stamp writer and publisher George Linn was captivated by Sterling’s display and became convinced that the stamps were genuine.

As an experienced printer Linn recognized that the trial evidence was flawed. In his first editorial on the subject in the August 27, 1951, *Linn’s Weekly Stamp News*, Linn acknowledged the difficulty facing him: “I fully realize that I am looking into something that is loaded with dynamite.” Nevertheless, “I shall continue to study these stamps and think I shall be able to show that they have been given a very raw deal in the past.”

Harry Weiss, editor and “Inside Straight” columnist for *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, was even more daring and reckless than Linn. After a cursory examination of a Grinnell sample under ultraviolet light, without any Missionary stamp certified as genuine for comparison, Weiss declared the Grinnells “genuine.”

Over the course of the next year, Linn published about 20 articles and editorials on the Grinnells, several of them filling three or more pages of newsprint. But he was never successful in borrowing genuine Missionaries to compare with the Grinnells, nor was he

ever able to find a stamp or cover canceled with any of the markings he found on the Grinnells. In April 1952, Linn offered a \$1,000 reward “to the person who can produce an old Hawaiian Cover bearing the cancellation we illustrated [on a Grinnell stamp].” No one came forward with such a cover.

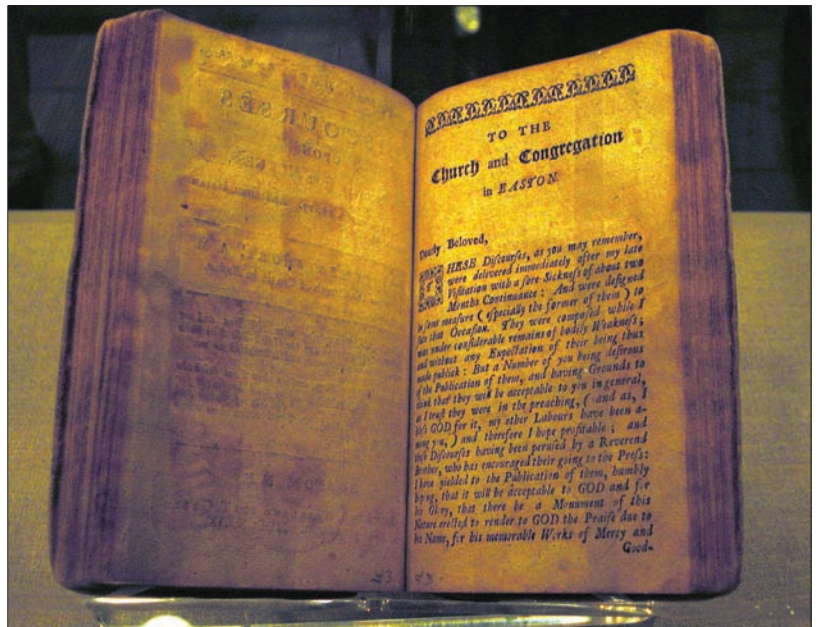
In his editorial “Final Report on Grinnell Missionaries” in the December 8, 1952, *Linn’s*, he summarized both his conviction and his disappointment. “I believe now that I am justified in making a final statement as to my opinion and beliefs about these stamps as I see no reason for continuing with my work since it is impossible to get together the necessary material for a complete comparison and study of these stamps alongside other known and accepted as genuine stamps.

“First let me start by saying that I believe there is every reason to believe that these stamps are just as genuine as any of the other known Missionary stamps.

“I believe the story of the find as related by Mr. Grinnell. Certainly if this had not been a legitimate find he would never have spent his time and his money for 25 or 30 years in trying to have the stamps accepted and authenticated.”

Six years later, Linn had a change of heart. In the April 20, 1959, *Linn’s* he wrote that the Grinnells were back in the news, in a *Los Angeles Times* look back at the 1922 trial. “Mr. Herb Sterling of Los Angeles also has been trying for years to learn the origin of these stamps, or to authenticate them. Both Mr. Sterling and myself come to the conclusion that these stamps were made by a California man and that had he not made the error in Postmark that is so different from the accepted copies that he would have been able to have them accepted as legitimate. To me, this has been the greatest mystery in the history of Philately and one that has baffled more people than any other. The man we suspect, we believe is capable of the work and we hope he will confess in his will.”

He took a more ambiguous view in his final published words on the subject in the October 1, 1962, *Linn’s*. “My own opinion has always been that there is as yet no conclusive proof that the stamps are phony. I still have an open mind and there is much that an expert printer can see about the stamps that is well in their favor.”



*The psalm book in which the Shattuck family claimed they had stored the stamps given to Grinnell, some loose, others in an envelope. After testifying the book had been destroyed in a fire, the heirs discovered it had survived. The impressions show something had been stored between the pages for a period of time, but there is no evidence connecting them to the Grinnells.*

## Renewed Search for Evidence

The Grinnell and Shattuck descendants never faltered in their conviction that the stamps were genuine. Vince and Carol Arrigo commissioned studies by master printer Keith Cordrey and forensic scientific tests of paper and ink samples by Dr. Gene Hall of Rutgers University, which concluded that the materials were consistent with 1850s manufacture.

Patrick Culhane, the great-great-grandson of Charles Shattuck, conducted archival research that uncovered previously unreported correspondence between Ursula Emerson and Hannah Shattuck, plus evidence that Ursula's son William had apprenticed as a printer in Henry M. Whitney's shop about the time that Whitney was the Honolulu postmaster and the Missionary stamps were being printed.

By ascribing legible JAN, FEB, and MAR Honolulu datestamps on Grinnells to the year 1852, the families deduced that the stamps could be linked directly to young William Emerson. They suggested that he may have performed postal duties upon his return to his parents' residence in Waialua, taking Missionary stamps and Honolulu postmarkers with him. William departed Hawaii on March 17, 1852, and died at sea on April 24.

In a 2001 essay titled *Logic, New Evidence, and the Grinnell Missionary Stamps*, the late Dr. Varro E. Tyler, an expert on philatelic fakes, forgeries, and forgers, wrote, "To forge a stamp successfully, one must have a model, and the published photographs of the Hawaiian stamps available before 1919 were poor and not suitable for this purpose. That meant the forger would have to have copies of the genuine stamps... Since single copies even in poor condition were selling for many thousands of dollars, this becomes totally illogical."

"Besides, the provenance of most certified copies is known in some detail and as far as can be determined, none was in the possession of a forger in the years preceding 1919... evidence would seem to support strongly the contention that the Grinnell Missionary stamps of Hawaii are indeed genuine."

All that evidence was submitted, along with 55 of the stamps, to the Royal Philatelic Society London's expert committee in 2002. The RPSL commissioned its own studies



*George Grinnell had mounted ten stamps on this card, which was unknown to philately until Mystic Stamp Company displayed it at the Washington 2006 international stamp exhibition. Eight of the stamps are Grinnell counterfeits, but the 13¢ stamps at the bottom of the middle and right columns are genuine Hawaiian Missionaries.*

using both scientific and philatelic methods of analysis, which reached the opposite conclusion. After four years of study, the society published *The Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary Stamps*, which concluded that the stamps were counterfeit.

### Flashes of Inspiration, Revelation, and New Questions

The Arrigos consigned their Grinnell Missionary stamps to Mystic Stamp Company for display at the Washington 2006 international exhibition in hopes of selling them. For the first time ever they revealed to the philatelic community that George Grinnell had kept ten additional stamps, fastened to a card, for his personal collection. Thousands of show-goers had a chance to view Grinnell's stamps in person for the first time in more than half a century.

On July 5, 2006, more than a month after the show closed, I was examining a photograph of the stamps when I realized that the red Honolulu postmark on a 13¢ Type I stamp at the bottom appeared to match postmarks on certified genuine Hawaiian stamps and covers, and did not have traits of the typical Grinnell postmarks that have been condemned as fake. I could not be certain whether the stamp itself matched the traits of other Grinnells or of genuine Missionaries because consistent differences are subtler on 13¢ stamps than on 2¢ and 5¢.

I consulted Dick Celler, an expert collector of United States 1851 and 1857 stamps whose special talent is plating — detecting, remembering, and comparing similarities and differences of subtle details that amount to each stamp's distinctive fingerprint. Beginning in 2003 he had assembled data in the form of scans of numerous genuine Missionary stamps and most of the Grinnells for the purpose of identifying the exact design characteristics of each version of Missionary and Grinnell stamp. Celler confirmed that the stamp and the postmark matched the characteristics of genuine Missionaries and did not match traits of other Grinnells.

This led to another surprise. Celler realized that a second stamp on the card, a 13¢ Type II stamp with a black grid cancel, also matched the traits of genuine Missionaries and did not match other Grinnells. Thus two canceled 13¢ First Issue stamps of Hawaii once owned by George H. Grinnell — one Type I, the other Type II — are genuine Missionaries.

That discovery meant that Dr. Varro Tyler had been wrong when he thought that the Grinnells could not be counterfeit because no forger had genuine models to copy. The stamps (Hawaii Scott 3) have a 2017 catalog value of \$29,000 each, but that is deceptive because nearly all known copies are damaged and repaired so Scott values them in that condition. The two stamps appear to be in excellent condition without repairs, possibly among the finest canceled copies known.

But Tyler was right that earlier forgeries were not as skillfully made, and were much easier to identify as counterfeits.



*The two genuine 13¢ Hawaiian Missionary stamps from the card George Grinnell had kept for his personal collection.*

## Early Forgers and Forgeries of Hawaiian Stamps

Because of their rarity and desirability, unscrupulous individuals have sold forgeries of early Hawaiian stamps to gullible collectors since the 1860s. In the 19th century most English language publications referred to Hawaii as the Sandwich Islands, which is often how the stamps were listed.

The first illustration of a Hawaiian Missionary stamp appeared in the October 1864 issue of Arthur Maury's journal *Le Collectionneur de Timbres-Poste* published in Paris. The drawing failed to record the stamps' design details accurately, notably omitting outer elements from the corner ornaments of the filigreed frame around the numerals of value. Most old forgeries have the same design flaw.



*This inaccurate illustration of the Hawaiian Missionary stamp design was first published in a French stamp magazine in 1864. It became the concept used by early forgers, but also was used by the Scott Catalogue until 1997.*

In the December 1865 edition of his stamp journal *Le Timbrophile*, Pierre Mahé published a letter that corrected Maury's rendition, alerting serious collectors to the correct appearance of genuine Missionaries. The wrong image nevertheless developed a life of its own. Until 1997, the *Scott Catalogue* used the incorrect design to represent Hawaiian Missionary stamps of 1851.

Maury's and Mahé's reports about these exotic stamps from a distant island kingdom piqued collectors' interest. Among the first to solicit favors from the Honolulu postmaster, also in late 1864, was the Belgian bookseller, publisher, stamp collector and dealer Jean-Baptiste Moens. Missionary stamps gathered by these three men found their way to the renowned collection of Count Philip von Ferrary.

In 1875, a Philadelphia stamp dealer named Giovanni Patroni was arrested and imprisoned for making and selling fraudulent imitations of foreign stamps. The *Illustrated London News* reported, "One of Patroni's counterfeits was that of the Sandwich Island stamp of 1852, which retailed at \$200." Few stamps of any country were worth \$200 in those days; that's an indication of how tempting Hawaiian Missionaries were to talented but unscrupulous forgers.

In preparation for the International Congress of Philatelists held at Paris in 1878, its conveners hoped to acquire examples of the 1851 and 1852 issues for display. Their Honolulu correspondent sent disappointing news:

"I unfortunately am obliged to inform you that my efforts have not been crowned with success.

"The stamps have entirely disappeared from circulation, and I presume, that the American missionaries who lived in this country and of whom there are now but very few left, are the only ones who were able to hold in their possession any specimens.

"There live also in Honolulu a number of advanced collectors and I do not know any among them who possess these stamps.

"I know that two years ago a son of a missionary possessed the four stamps in question, but an Englishman from Southampton, having seen them and desiring to complete his collection of

Hawaiian stamps, made him the tempting offer of five hundred francs (one hundred dollars) which he accepted.”

That might be a reference to Thomas K. Tapling, whose collection is today held by the British Library in London, or to someone who sold them to Tapling. The Tapling collection includes 12 Hawaiian Missionary stamps, which are among its grandest treasures. Photographs of Tapling’s Missionaries became available at the London International Philatelic Exhibition of 1890.

Other photographic reproductions of Hawaiian Missionary stamps, taken from stamps in the collection of F. W. Ayer of Bangor, Maine, were published by Brewster Cox Kenyon of Long Beach, California, in his 1895 book *History of the Postal Issues of Hawaii*. Kenyon pictured six Missionary stamps. Four of the same pictures also appeared in the October 24, 1895, issue of *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*.

Most experts therefore believe that the 1890s provided forgers’ earliest opportunity to model deceptive reproductions that might have fooled experienced collectors and dealers. Kenyon himself was a notorious stamp forger and creator of bogus issues. About the time that Kenyon was preparing to publish his book, San Francisco stamp dealer Walter Sellschopp wrote that “there was a rumor that somebody or other in Los Angeles made attempts at different paper-houses to procure some old paper, the same or very similar to that old peculiar kind of writing paper on which the rare old Hawaiian numerals were printed,” and that Kenyon had sold genuine Hawaiian stamps with counterfeit 1893 provisional surcharges.

For a time some experts believed that the Grinnell Missionaries had been forged by Kenyon, but another suspect is almost certainly the true culprit.

### **Who Forged Hawaiian Missionary Stamps for George Grinnell?**

If the Hawaiian Missionary stamps of 1851 that George Grinnell sold to New York stamp dealer John Klemann in 1919 were not genuine, someone must have forged them. Ever since 1923 a man named Charles Sidney Thompson has been the prime suspect. First to infer Thompson’s culpability had been Judge Wood.

After the Shattuck witnesses recanted their trial testimony, Grinnell paid a visit to the judge in hopes that he would reconsider his verdict, which the judge refused to do. Grinnell recorded their discussion in a November 11, 1923, memorandum, “He said he got the idea, which was only an hypothesis, but nevertheless one which impressed him strongly, and that was that the short dark-complexioned witness we had who sat around all during the trial (Mr. C. S. Thompson) had made the stamps and then used me to dispose of them for him.”

Thompson had been an important witness for Grinnell, but his testimony had failed to persuade the court that the stamps were genuine. In the July 1922 *Collectors Club Philatelist*, George B. Sloane quoted from an interview with Manuel Galvez, the witness



*Brewster Cox Kenyon  
Well-known stamp  
forger, once suspected of  
forging the Grinnell  
Missionaries.*

whose testimony swayed the judge and led to his ruling court that the Grinnells were counterfeit:

“The next day the defense brought forth . . . one witness on stamps. This was Mr. Charles S. Thompson, a stamp dealer of Los Angeles. . . .

“Mr. Thompson explained, that in his opinion there was more than one printing of the Missionary stamps, possibly three, or four or five separate printings, and sought to substantiate his opinion by showing the Court various differences among the genuine stamps, and comparing genuine stamps with photographs and other illustrations cut from philatelic publications, etc., wherever differences between the stamps and reproductions were apparent.

“Judge Wood had by this time acquired considerable knowledge of philately – that is, as regards Hawaiian Missionary stamps — and remarked that comparison of original stamps with photographic reproductions of copies in other collections was very poor evidence, and inquired if the difference pointed out among the genuine stamps as before the Court, could not be due to another cause outside of printing, for instance, repair work. To this inquiry, Mr. Thompson replied that he did not know any of the genuine stamps before the Court were repaired, but was only referring to the difference as they appeared to his eye. . . .

“As to Thompson’s statement that there may have been other printings of the Missionary stamps, this could not have a favorable bearing on the Grinnell stamps, for I had proved when on the stand two days previously that the stamps were produced by photo-engraving. As the photo-engraving process was not perfected in the fifties, any second printing of the genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps would have been done from type, hence, this automatically excluded the Grinnell stamps, which having been done by photo-engraving must have been printed at a much later date, and could not be genuine originals.”

### **The Southwest Museum Connection**

Charles Thompson was a stamp dealer, as Galvez had told Sloane, and a writer for *Philatelic Gossip* and *Mekeel’s Weekly Stamp News*. His articles were characteristically robust at a time when wartime austerity had reduced hobby literature to a minimum. An example was his 1918 *Gossip* series on “Special Delivery Stamps of the World.”

Thompson was a member of the American Philatelic Society, the American Stamp Dealers Association, and the Metropolitan Philatelic Association. He was president of the International Philatelic Association.

Thompson called himself a general collector. His specialties included stamps of Austria to 1910, including offices in Crete and the Levant; Bosnia; Crete (for which he published an album); Czechoslovakia; Brunei; Labuan; North Borneo; Sarawak; and Canadian revenues. He was an APS expert for stamps of Albania, Bosnia, and Crete.



*Los Angeles stamp dealer, author, printer, teacher, and museum curator Charles Sidney Thompson, photographed in 1919, is probably the man who created and printed the counterfeit Grinnell Missionary stamps.*

He also had a large collection of sea shells and “ornithological specimens of



*Charles Thompson added WAR STAMP overprints in red ink on 1¢ George Washington stamps, one of which George Grinnell affixed to this May 15, 1917, Los Angeles cover addressed to the Scott Stamp and Coin Company in New York City.*

all kinds, of which we have some ten or twelve thousand specimens in two buildings erected for the purpose.” He also collected prints of birds and books relating to ornithology, ethnology, and anthropology.

Thompson and Grinnell had more in common than stamps. Both were teachers in Los Angeles schools and both were on the staff of the Southwest Museum, which had opened August 14, 1914, under the directorship of Dr. Hector Alliot, a native of France. Thompson was curator of economic and field ornithology at the museum; Grinnell was curator of the herbarium. Alliot was the man who had advised Grinnell on the best way to sell his stamps.

### **Thompson’s WAR STAMP Overprints**

Another link connected Grinnell, Thompson, Alliot, and the Southwest Museum. During World War I, Thompson overprinted 1¢ Washington-Franklin stamps with the words WAR STAMP in red ink on the museum’s printing press, in imitation of WAR TAX surcharges issued in other countries.

*The Philatelic West* called the overprinted stamps “a joke,” but in an October 17, 1918, letter to stamp writer Fred Melville, Thompson gave a patriotic explanation for the overprints, which the museum’s printer produced:

“Being a Canadian, of course, I have been vitally interested in the war from the first, and felt rather impatient that the United States did not get in it sooner. Then Mr. Wilson finally decided, and revenue measures were being discussed, I decided to see if I couldn’t stir up a bit of interest in an increased postage rate. In order to draw immediate attention, I decided

that the best way to do it would be to violate a long-established precedent that United States postage stamps should not be surcharged...

“Therefore I bought a thousand 1¢ stamps, and after discussing the matter with our printer, who is an Englishman, we decided that we would overprint them in blocks of ten, 2 high and 5 wide. Owing to the fact that we possessed but little type of a font sufficiently striking to suit the purpose, it was necessary to use sans-serif type of three different sizes (but all the same style) to do the work.

“This was done in an exceedingly careful manner, many trial impressions being taken on paper in order to get an overprint that should be clear and brilliant. When it came to printing the stamps, the press was turned over by hand slowly, instead of using the motor, with the result that our home-made surcharge is executed much better than some produced in Government Offices.”

Thompson began using them May 3, 1917, adding an overprinted stamp in addition to the correct postage in ordinary stamps on mail from the museum. He sent copies to President Woodrow Wilson and Postmaster General Albert S. Burlison. Eventually a complaint to the New York postmaster brought an order to stop putting them on mail, but not before Thompson had printed a second edition with the same words and 13 stars set-tenant between plain stamps without overprints, some of which are imperforate, which also appeared on mail.

Thompson’s patriotic prank became redundant on November 3, 1917, when domestic letter and postcard rates were increased by 1¢ as a war tax, but no stamps were surcharged for this purpose.

### **Editor of Weekly Philatelic Gossip**

In March of 1941, Thompson moved from Los Angeles to Holton, Kansas, where he became editor of *Weekly Philatelic Gossip*, one of the most important and respected stamp magazines of that era.

Thompson was an activist editor, traveling to New York to attend the fabulous Edward S. Knapp sales in person, and providing his readers with lot-by-lot reports on the spirited competition for great rarities that reach the marketplace only once in a generation.

Before his first year was out another world war was on. Over the next several months more than half of Gossip Printery’s employees had volunteered for military duty, leaving only a skeleton staff to run the shop. Thompson kept the journal going by writing a great deal of it himself and by serializing John N. Luff’s important 1902 reference book *Postage Stamps of the United States*.

In two and a half years Thompson wrote about 950 articles, of which about 250 were lengthy features. He introduced a new columnist, Harry Weiss, who later became *Gossip*’s editor himself. Weiss’s “Inside Straight” commentaries became readers’ favorite part of the magazine.

By the time Thompson returned to California in September 1943, *Gossip* had assembled the best archive of photographs and halftone cuts owned by a commercial stamp publication, built upon the record of the Knapp collection. That enterprise had cemented Thompson’s friendship with one of the hobby’s most flamboyant dealers.

## Y. Souren's Philatelic Research Laboratories

New York stamp dealer Souren Yohannessiantz had been known professionally as Y. Souren since the early 1920s. He had joined the American Philatelic Society in 1922, sponsored by John Klemann, but APS expelled him from membership in 1928. Reason for the expulsion was not published but it must have been a violation of the society's code of ethics.

Souren established Philatelic Research Laboratories, Inc., in 1939. It was the first attempt in this country to employ tools and techniques of forensic science for philatelic authentication. He promoted his service for detecting forgeries and alterations in a publication titled *Philately of Tomorrow*.

Among PRL's first customers was Knapp, who submitted his controversial U.S. 10¢ George Washington stamp of 1847 (Scott 2) "with extensive double transfer throughout." The stamp had bitterly divided leading experts. Stanley Ashbrook had declared it genuine, Frank R. Sweet had declared it a fake, and Elliott Perry had declared it a printing freak (set-off from a slip sheet). After photographing the stamp and applying all his scientific tests, Souren pronounced it genuine. He devoted 23 pages of his publication to a lavishly-illustrated explanation of his technique.

Today we know that the "Knapp shift," as it is called, is a clever forgery, with details painted onto a normal stamp by a skilled artist. In the November 1997 *Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues* authors Wade E. Saadi and Philip T. Wall explained how it was created.

Souren achieved his pinnacle of glory in 1941, when Parke-Bernet Galleries commissioned PRL to record, arrange, and photograph the Knapp collection for sale at public auction. At that time his was the only recognized expertizing service for United States stamps and covers, because the APS had suspended its expert committee and the Philatelic Foundation did not yet exist. Terms of the Knapp sales stated, "In case of dispute, a certificate of the Philatelic Research Laboratories, Inc., shall be accepted as final."

Thompson praised Souren's PRL in a *Gossip* editorial and paid special tribute to the Knapp shift certificate. He added his own twist to reconcile the dispute among experts: "Those unwanted and fortuitous lines of entry were filled with a copper alloy, of lower melting point than the plate, which was then burnished off, and the proper entry made.

"At a later, presumably extremely later date, some or all of this filling, alloy, or solder, dropped out, with the result that when stamps were printed from the plate, that position showed the characteristics noted." Thompson and Souren remained close friends and collaborators for the rest of Thompson's term as editor of the *Gossip*.



*A postmarked 13¢ Grinnell Missionary on piece*

## Expertizing the Grinnell Missionaries

George Grinnell had written to Souren on January 4, 1940, seeking information about his expertizing service. Souren sent booklets that explained his techniques and quoted a price of \$5 per stamp. Two years later, after Thomson had taken the reins at the *Gossip*, Grinnell submitted three of his stamps (one of each denomination) to PRL for certification.

On August 17, 1942, Souren returned the three stamps with certificate number 2132 that stated, “The stamps are genuine. The technical proof of genuineness is not based on opinion but on the facts as disclosed by scientific machinery at the laboratory.”

Two days earlier, Thompson had written to Grinnell, in a letter that referred breezily to many prominent stamp dealers of the day, “Have just had about \$25 worth of long distance conversation with Souren, in New York. He has ‘taken apart’ the stamps you sent him, evidently, and he comes to the conclusion, which we have had for years, that your stamps are the only ones that are genuine and that all of Caspary’s are fakes, and that he SUSPECTS a certain gentleman of having made them.

“In this connection do you remember that Colson would not even let me take his stuff in my hands to look at it, in Lelande’s office, years ago? That he insisted on holding them himself, about three feet away, where I couldn’t get a good look, but nevertheless DID see a lot of things? Well, maybe Colson had damn good reasons for not wanting them compared with yours.

“S. evidently figures on provoking Caspary or some of the rest of them into a suit, and when they do, he’ll prove that their stamps are fakes without bringing yours into it at all. S. is a wily operator, far more clever than any of the N.Y. gang realize. Of course they all hate him, because he has caught some of them and will catch some more...

“It seems to me that we are at last on the way to clearing this business up, and when we do—dammit, WHERE will all the ‘experts’ find holes sufficiently deep to bury themselves, and just how many of the ‘cognoscenti’ of philately, including Wylie, Klemann, Sloane, Colson, and some more, will commit suicide?”

After securing Souren’s certificate, Grinnell offered his stamps for sale to Philadelphia dealer Philip H. Ward, Jr. Ward sent them to Hawaii expert Admiral Frederic R. Harris, who once again declared them counterfeit and returned them. Grinnell’s last best hope had failed to overcome the hobby’s verdict.

To be understood properly through the fog of exaggerated prose, Thompson’s convoluted letter should be read in the context of his 1922 trial testimony. Nearly all certified genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps are repaired, and in some instances the major part of the stamp is a painted restoration. Thompson believed that those alterations were treated as authentic in testimony that discredited the Grinnell stamps.



*A canceled genuine  
2¢ Hawaiian Missionary*

*Ex the Christian H. Aall Collection*

*Courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries*

\*\*\*\*\*

PHONE PLAZA 3-8077

# PHILATELIC RESEARCH LABORATORIES, INC.

394 PARK AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

August 17, 1942.

Dear Brother Grinnell:

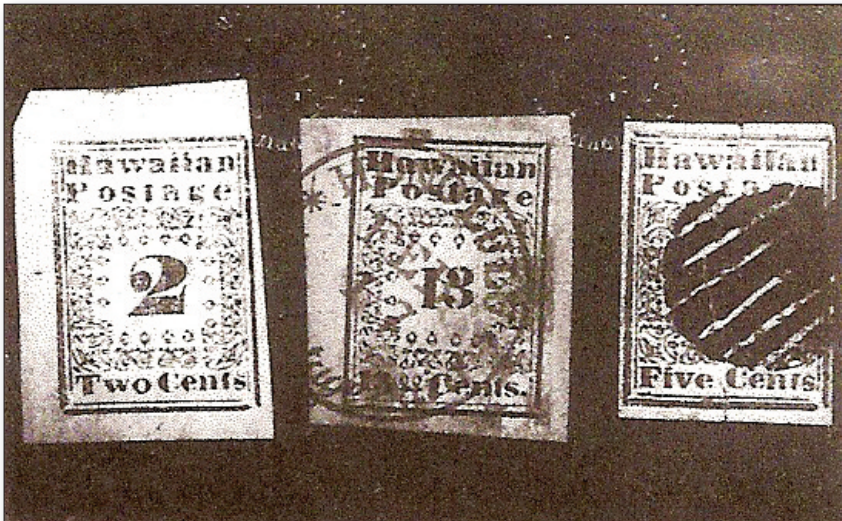
I am returning your stamps herewith. I hasten to confirm laboratory findings briefly:

The stamps submitted as shown by photo's No 2123-2124-2125-2126-2127-2128-2129-2130-2131-2132 are genuine Hawaiian Stamps No 1, 2 and 3.

The technical report and tests taken will be quite voluminous. The proof of genuineness is not based on opinion but on the facts as disclosed by scientific machinery of the Laboratories.

Sincerely yours  
Y. Souren

Grinnell and Thompson hoped that Y. Souren's certificate declaring the Grinnell Missionaries to be genuine would persuade someone to buy them at high prices, but that ploy failed.



\*\*\*\*\*

No doubt Thompson was thinking of the legendary stamp doctor of Paris and New York, Sam Singer. If Singer could add nearly every detail to a fragment of a stamp so that it could be accepted as genuine, could he not have created entire fake stamps while he had pieces of genuine ones to copy? Might unscrupulous American dealers, possibly the East Coast dealers Thompson had named in his letter to Grinnell, have commissioned him or another talented forger? Those were probably fantasies, but they seemed plausible to Grinnell and his supporters.

### **Sam Singer's Alterations on Hawaiian Missionary Stamps**

In *The People with Calumny* published in 1908, Singer documented details of stamps he had repaired and altered for Charles J. Phillips of Stanley Gibbons, after Phillips had published an attack on Singer in *Gibbons Monthly Journal* that denied he had paid Singer to fake stamps for him. Singer reproduced the orders he had received on Stanley Gibbons letterhead, which proved to be damning evidence.

A December 28, 1894, letter to Singer (translated from French) stated, "Dear Mr. Singer,... We enclose Sandwich Islands 5 and 13, first issue, for special attention; these stamps are especially rare and you will doubtlessly attend to them. Do so very carefully and with all possible attention. We also enclose 15 stamps of less value to which kindly attend when convenient."

A January 3, 1895, letter stated, "My dear Mr. Singer, We have just received your est. of yesterday, with the 3 Hawaii. Many thanks. The Hawaiis are repaired in a splendid manner."

A July 17, 1895, letter stated, "To Mr. Singer, Enclosed 2 stamps of first issue of Hawaii and 8 Fidji to be repaired. Kindly repair the Hawaii with the greatest care. You will see that it is necessary to dip them to remove them and care for them, as they had been poorly repaired before we bought them."

A July 24, 1895, letter stated, "Mr. S. Singer,... In our opinion, you have very well repaired the Hawaii first issue."

A June 21, 1896, letter stated, "My dear Mr. Singer, We enclose herewith a piece of the Hawaii 13 cents, first issue, to which we call your special attention, as this stamp is a rarity of the first order. This has been badly damaged. Kindly repair. We would be most happy if you can remove the brown spot."

A June 25, 1896, memorandum stated, "Mr. S. Singer, CREDIT, Balance in your favor --.8.8, Repairing: Hawaii 2.0.0 = £2.8.8, Dear Sir, We have duly received your est. with the repaired stamp. You repaired it very carefully and we are well satisfied. We credit you as above. Stanley Gibbons Limited."

Singer doubted that Phillips had described the restorations when he sold the repaired stamps to wealthy collectors. Today those alterations are understood as intrinsic to Missionary stamp lore, but by Thompson's twisted logic they were not genuine. To him the splendid condition of Grinnell's unaltered stamps made them appear not only authentic but superior in every respect.

\*\*\*\*\*

GEORGE W. LINN  
PRESIDENT  
CARL P. RUETH  
VICE PRES. AND  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

GEORGE W. **LINN** COMPANY

LEWIS F. TURLEY  
SECRETARY-TREASURER  
ADVERTISING MANAGER

PUBLISHERS OF  
**LINN'S WEEKLY STAMP NEWS**



PRODUCERS OF  
**LINN PHILATELIC PRODUCTS**

119-121 EAST COURT STREET  
Sidney, Ohio, U.S.A.

OFFICE OF  
**GEORGE W. LINN**  
EDITOR

PLEASE ADDRESS REPLY:

**HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS**  
FLORIDA

Oct. 14, 1957

Mr. Stanley B. Ashbrook,  
Ft. Thomas, Ky.

Dear Stanley:-

I have read your Grinnell article and agree with most of what you have to say. However the photos which I have show 72 instead of 71 stamps in the Grinnell lot.

Also I note the remark about the color of the ink of the stamps, not the postmarks. I have had many of these stamps under a lamp and did find that many of them showed the greenish color which is referred to as being in the genuine stamps.

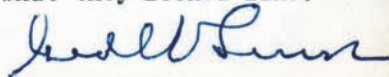
As to difference in the stamps themselves your article admits that only the 2c shows any marked difference from the genuine.

I am not ready to admit these were Photographic reproductions. If so the producer had to have six unused copies to work from and where are there six known unused copies that are genuine. As for the paper in the Grinnells I feel it is as near being right as could be found and I doubt if it is different than that in the stamps.

We know that in pairs the position of Type I and I<sub>1</sub> are transposed in the Grinnells. I believe the Crocker collection had a stamp which showed a part of a frame line of another stamp at the upper corner, which if an actual part of a frame line would show that some of the accepted as genuine stamps were printed in the transposed position.

In a recent letter from Mr. Sterling he admits that the stamps are perhaps counterfeits but wonders who made them. He states that he thinks he knows who was responsible and that after the death of this party comes about that the matter may be cleared up once and for all. I believe the man he has in mind is Charles Sidney Thompson. Do not mention this to anyone. Time may tell. That would also be my guess.

Regardless of everything else I still think this is the greatest mystery in the stamp world. Had these not been ruined by the cancel that is on many of them they would have had a remarkable chance of being accepted as good for the printing method was such that even genuine and accepted copies will show variations and with all the repair work that has been done on these copies, who knows just what they looked like.

Cordially, 

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO THE CORPORATION AND NOT TO INDIVIDUALS

*George Linn's 1957 letter to Stanley Ashbrook identified the suspect and concluded that the Grinnell story "is the greatest mystery in the stamp world."*

\*\*\*\*\*

## Herbert Sterling and George Linn

After Grinnell died in 1949, his friend Herbert Sterling continued the quest to authenticate and vindicate the Grinnell Missionary stamps. In 1951 he enlisted George Linn, editor and publisher of *Linn's Weekly Stamp News*, in that project. After two years of study and research Linn reached an impasse without having achieved a satisfactory conclusion, but by then he believed the stamps were genuine.

However, by 1957, Sterling was not so sure. He wrote to Ashbrook, "At the present time I am absolutely neutral — I did all I could to prove them good. I will, when convenient, again call on Mr. Thompson. He is a mighty interesting man to converse with and I do not know if I can get any information or not but I would like to know just what part he had in the so called stamp find."

Sterling's qualms led Linn to change his mind. In 1959, he wrote, "Mr. Herb Sterling of Los Angeles also has been trying for years to learn the origin of these stamps, or to authenticate them... Both Mr. Sterling and myself come to the conclusion that these stamps were made by a California man and that had he not made the error in Postmark that is so different from the accepted copies that he would have been able to have them accepted as legitimate. To me, this has been the greatest mystery in the history of Philately and one that has baffled more people than any other. The man we suspect, we believe is capable of the work and we hope he will confess in his will."

The California man was Charles Sidney Thompson, who died less than a year later, on March 21, 1960. If Thompson really was a mastermind who forged Hawaiian Missionary stamps on a press at the Southwest Museum, possibly in a conspiracy with George Grinnell and Hector Alliot, he took his secret to the grave.

After Thompson died without leaving a confession, Linn softened his opinion once more. In 1962, Linn wrote that he still had an open mind about whether the Grinnells were real or not, his final public word on the subject. Linn died in 1966, never having published the California man's name.

### Could the Grinnell Missionary Stamps Have Been Genuine?

Explaining how Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary stamps might be genuine was a daunting challenge for the descendants of George Grinnell and Charles Shattuck, not to mention for Herb Sterling and George Linn. Considering that neither the stamps nor the cancellations matched any previously known genuine Missionaries, the stamps would have had to represent separate settings and printings of all three denominations, and the difference in the cancels would have required a plausible explanation.

But they had a glimmer of hope. As noted previously, Whitney had ordered four sets of postmarkers from Joseph W. Gregory, proprietor of Gregory's Express at San Francisco. Yet markings from only three different markers of each style had been recorded by postal historians on Hawaiian mail of the 1850s. Might the Grinnell cancels have been struck by the previously unrecorded fourth set of markers?

Whitney had ordered his postmark devices from a private express company, and had

asked Gregory to ship them to his Honolulu agent, Isaac Mitchell; Mitchell operated the firm's Hawaiian office. Gregory's Express shipped letters and parcels to and from every part of the U.S. and many foreign countries, often in competition with the post office, but postage had to be paid on letters carried out of the mails by express companies.

Why had Whitney placed his order for postal supplies with Gregory's Express rather than with Jacob Bailey Moore, the San Francisco postmaster who was helping him to establish the post office? Another odd fact is that Whitney ordered two boxes of marking apparatus and two scales. Why two, when one of each should have been sufficient?

As Henry A. Meyer and Rear Admiral Frederic R. Harris explained in *Hawaii—Its Stamps and Postal History*, “Probably sometime in the 1840's, private express companies became an important factor in carrying mail to the United States. . . . [they] co-operated in the handling of the mails even after H. M. Whitney became postmaster.”

Gregory founded his express company in California at the beginning of 1850, offering fast and secure collection and delivery service of “letters, parcels, and gold dust” between New York and California. By the end of the year he had offices in Portland, Oregon, and Honolulu. In January 1851, he added agents at Panama, New Orleans, and Liverpool, and in March, “to the Sandwich Islands and China by American clipper built vessels.”

According to *The Joseph W. Gregory Express 1850-1853* by Ernest A. Wiltsee, “From an unknown expressman in the early part of 1850, in less than one year he covered practically the known business world.” Speedy transport was the key to Gregory's business plan. In July 1851 he contracted with the Vanderbilt line for steamer service across Nicaragua, reducing the time between California and New York by six to eight days, and he advertised weekly service to Honolulu, Hong Kong, and Canton, China.

On October 10, 1851, Gregory announced express service to China by the *Flying Cloud*, the fastest clipper ship in the world, which had set a speed record around Cape Horn to San Francisco in 89 days. On October 25, Gregory boasted that he had delivered a gold shipment from California to London via Nicaragua in 37 days, another record.

Unfortunately for Gregory, speed alone did not guarantee success in the express business. His competitors got the better of him in the gold fields, where the most lucrative shipments originated. Wiltsee dated his decline from March and April 1852. The decline might have been a consequence of a November 1851 security breach that



*A canceled pair of 5¢ Grinnell Missionaries*

came to public attention in March 1852, discussed below.

Bounced checks are a bad omen for any business, but by August Gregory had dishonored his drafts in New York. He continued to forward letter bags to New York until May 1, 1853, when he closed his business and left San Francisco aboard the steamer *Pacific*, personally carrying his final dispatch to the East Coast.

Isaac Mitchell and J. R. Hutchins opened Gregory's office in Honolulu to "receive letters and parcels and forward to San Francisco for the States by every opportunity" on December 14, 1850, about the time that Whitney opened the first Hawaiian post office.

Mitchell and Hutchins reorganized their partnership adding Ira Richardson on March 31, 1851, under the name Mitchell & Company.

To remain competitive, Mitchell & Company announced on July 1, 1851, "Hereafter, the postage on half-ounce letters for San Francisco will be 5 cents only." From January 1, 1852, to December of that year, Mitchell alone was Gregory's agent at Honolulu. Meanwhile, from February to November, Gregory's San Francisco office served as the government forwarding agent for mail to Hawaii.

In March of 1852, a scandal erupted when the public learned that a Gregory's Express mail bag brought to Hawaii aboard the ship *Game Cock* on November 15, 1851, had been violated en route from San Francisco, and several important letters had been stolen. The disclosure inadvertently revealed the importance of that express service for carrying letters to and from the islands.

According to Randall E. Burt writing in the January 1989 *Western Express*, "At least three 1852 outgoing mail announcements added Gregory's Express bag as being made up 'at the same hour' or 'by the same conveyance' as the government mail bag." Clearly there was a close practical collaboration between the post office and Gregory's Express at both Honolulu and San Francisco.

Unfortunately, surviving covers known to have been sent by Gregory's Honolulu Express are so rare that covers bearing Missionary stamps are common by comparison, and fires in San Francisco destroyed whatever records may have been kept there. For those reasons, evidence of the collaboration is scant. But the fact that Whitney ordered his postal supplies from Gregory is suggestive.

In my initial investigation I hypothesized that one set of post markers and a postal scale might have been for Mitchell's use in preparing outgoing express mail, and that he also might have kept a supply of stamps for his customers' use. If demand had been great, he might have received one entire printing of stamps.

In all probability most Honolulu residents and transients mailed their letters and newspapers at the post office, but out-of-town residents had no reliable mail collection and delivery. If Gregory's Express provided those services, Mitchell may also have provided stamps to his customers in addition to dispatching their papers by mail, letters by express or by mail according to the sender's wish or by the most expedient transport, and parcels by express.

Reverend John Emerson and his family at Waialua, who corresponded frequently with

friends and associates in New England, and sent them Hawaiian publications, are exactly the kinds of customers who would have benefited from this service. Ursula Emerson corresponded with her childhood friend Hannah Shattuck, whose personal effects contained the stamps that her son Charles gave to George Grinnell.

That scenario stretched my imagination to the limit, but it was the only feasible explanation that could explain how the Grinnells might have been genuine, a slender reed of hope that snapped when additional scientific tests showed that the red ink of the Grinnell cancels included synthetic compounds that did not exist in the 1850s.

The biggest weakness in my conjecture, and in even less plausible origins of the Grinnell Missionaries suggested by the Grinnell and Shattuck descendants, is that no other users of these stamps and cancels have ever come to light, and that the purported Shattuck-Grinnell hoard was so large. But to solve a mystery one must examine every possible solution no matter how remote.

### **Evaluating Contradictory Evidence**

Paradoxically, the discovery that George Grinnell had owned two genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps, which he probably had obtained from Charles Shattuck in 1918, helped to solve the mystery of where the rest of his stamps came from, but several outstanding issues continued to cloud the analysis and led me to postpone my own final judgment.

For example, Dick Celler's plating studies of certified genuine Missionary stamps showed that there were at least two settings of 13¢ Type II stamps, which meant there had been more than one printing of the 1851 issue. In addition, the 1852 13¢ design represented a later composition. Might Grinnell's stamps have been from yet another 1851 setting?

Celler also demonstrated that genuine stamps described as having a "complete original design," being "completely sound," and "free of repainting" had been repaired with design elements painted in. If experts had not caught those alterations and additions, what else might they have failed to detect? How thorough was their understanding?

Forensic analysis by Dr. Gene Hall at Rutgers University commissioned by the late Wilson Hulme, Curator of Philately at the National Postal Museum, showed that ink components of Missionary stamps in the Smithsonian collection were of modern vintage, not available in the 1850s. Those findings confirmed Celler's observation about substantial alterations that experts had missed.

An article in the November 2006 *London Philatelist*, "The Investigation of the Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary Stamps" by Professor Robin J. H. Clark, one of the RPSL expert committee's scientific consultants, cited several mistakes in the committee's published report. Although Clark did not dispute the committee's conclusion that the Grinnells are counterfeits, his commentary at the very least revealed a surprising degree of carelessness and ineptitude.

The RPSL analysis disagreed with Galvez's trial testimony about how the Grinnells had been manufactured, declaring that they had been printed by typeset letterpress, not reproduced by photo-engraving, which added a note of uncertainty to the trial evidence and



the court's judgment. "There is no doubt in the Committee's mind that the Grinnells were printed from loose type rather than from some sort of electro or stereo."

Scott R. Trepel, president of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, who has probably examined more Hawaiian Missionary stamps than anyone else, disagreed with the RPSL experts despite his conviction that the Grinnells are fakes. In a 2006 monograph he concluded that "the Grinnells were printed from solid plates, not loose type." "This conclusion directly contradicts the RPSL report," he wrote.

These outstanding issues needed to be re-examined by new tests. For scientific results to be valid, they must be subject to independent replication without preconceived outcomes. To check the previous results we performed fresh studies using different equipment, and we consulted additional experts. But forensic science was not the only area that required analysis. If the Grinnells were counterfeit, as now seemed to be virtually certain, what had motivated the perpetrators of the scheme and their accessories before and after the fact?

*"The story of the Grinnell stamps is among the most interesting and complicated of all time. They arouse much passion and debate and continue to be one of the most controversial subjects in philately." David Beech, prior to his 2003 lecture at the National Postal Museum October 15, 2003.*

### **Many Villains, Few Heroes**

From the beginning it was plain that George Grinnell had been deceitful. He had lied to everyone about the quantity of stamps he possessed, and gave different numbers to different people at different times. By itself that was evidence of fraudulent intent, but not necessarily evidence of forgery. But after John Klemann bought 43 of Grinnell's stamps, he led Alfred Caspary to understand there were only 35, as Caspary testified in his final deposition. So Grinnell wasn't the only deceiver.

Grinnell also was shamelessly avaricious. He had rejected offers of \$50,000 and \$60,000 for stamps he said Charles Shattuck had given to him free (and for which he had left behind a \$5 token gratuity). But again, John Klemann paid Grinnell \$65,000 for 43 stamps, then sold just 16 of those stamps to Alfred Caspary for \$75,000. Grinnell was not the only greedy man in this drama.

Having miscalculated and over-reached, Grinnell had lost almost the entire amount that his scheme had briefly realized. But his initial success had established the potential of his counterfeits if another buyer could be found.

Grinnell became obsessed with finding a way to revive his hoax. The Shattuck heirs' agreement to recant their sworn trial testimony in exchange for an equal share of Grinnell's sale proceeds, and the subsequent fifty-fifty division of the collection, was transparently corrupt. Judge Wood's refusal to reconsider his verdict based on their revised testimony should not have surprised anyone. But flawed characters were not necessarily criminal conspirators.

After Mystic Stamp Company purchased the Arrigos' share of the Grinnell Missionary stamps their complete files became available for study. Nothing in them offers fresh evidence

in the stamps' favor, but a previously undisclosed contract between the Shattuck heirs, Grinnell heirs, and George Linn exposes a bias that Linn had never disclosed to readers.

Linn would have profited handsomely in the event he had been able to authenticate the Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary stamps so that they could be sold for a high percentage of catalog value. The contract specified that the heirs “will make no representations or warranties as to the genuineness” to prospective buyers of the stamps, and that Linn would receive no compensation if he failed to get them authenticated.

### Final Verdict

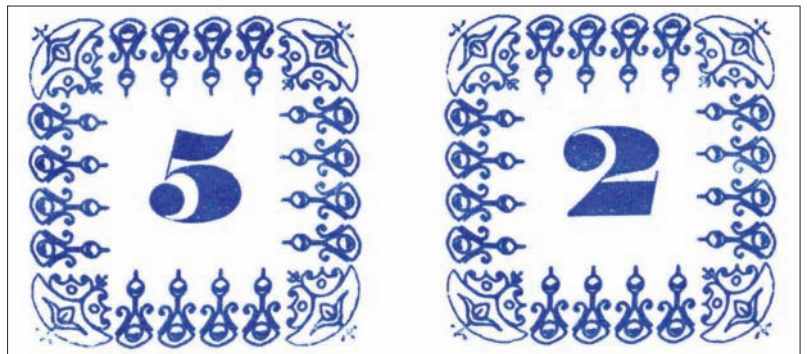
As noted above, careful scrutiny of previously certified genuine Missionary stamps revealed that many of them had been more extensively repaired and reconditioned than had previously been acknowledged. In some instances stamps consist of more added than original paper and ink. Those factors account for anomalous results of forensic testing, but do not call into question their authenticity, even though such alterations would not be condoned today.

To ascertain how the Grinnells had been manufactured I consulted David Churchman of Indianapolis, a veteran printer who collected, bought, sold, serviced, and operated vintage letterpresses. From his stock of 4,000 different antique type fonts, cuts, and ornaments, Churchman composed settings that simulated the central designs of Hawaiian Missionary stamps. He printed samples for me, which illustrated the potential for a skilled forger who possessed similar equipment.

Churchman, who died in December 2015 at age 82, believed that closely matching the setup of genuine Missionary stamps would not have been difficult in 1918. He noted that Thompson's WAR STAMP overprints proved that he had access to appropriate equipment and supplies. The printing method that Thompson had published — “the press was turned over by hand slowly, instead of using the motor” — showed that the Southwest Museum's printer was sufficiently sophisticated to print forgeries of exceptional quality.

Churchman acknowledged that Thompson might have made electro cuts of his setup, an easy way to preserve the setting of one denomination and type before composing the next with the fewest necessary changes. (Even in the 1850s printers made stereo- and electrotypes for the same purpose.) For that reason, Trepel's analysis was probably accurate. But it was even more likely that prints had first been pulled from the original form, so the RPSL was probably also right unless all the original prints had been destroyed.

Further scientific tests that I recommended were



*To illustrate the ease with which a skilled forger could create plausible counterfeit stamps, Indianapolis collector and printing expert David Churchman composed and printed these arrangements from antique type in his collection, which simulate the central design elements of Hawaiian Missionary stamps.*

performed on a representative sample of Grinnell Missionaries. Examination under ultraviolet and infrared illumination using the American Philatelic Society's CS-16 Crimescope imaging equipment, and re-examination by Dr. Gene Hall at Rutgers, established that red ink in the Grinnell cancellations fluoresces brightly under ultraviolet because its formula includes synthetic compounds that had not been invented in the 1850s.

Forensic examination by the APS expert committee member and Philatelic Foundation consultant Dr. Edward M. Liston established that the two 13¢ Missionary stamps which Dick Celler and I had recognized as genuine in 2006 matched the spectra of known genuine stamps. Liston also examined another stamp that George Grinnell had mounted on the same card and found that "it is totally different" and "not genuine."

The combined results of those tests should put to rest all legitimate doubts. Except for the two previously unrecognized genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps, which Grinnell probably did obtain from Charles Shattuck in 1918, **all 79 or 80 of the nonstandard Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary stamps are counterfeits, probably manufactured by, or in collusion with, Charles Sidney Thompson at the Southwest Museum.** But their saga is, as Stanley Ashbrook wrote, "America's most fantastic philatelic story." The Grinnell drama, with a suspenseful plot and devious characters suitable for a *Masterpiece* television performance, was performed in real life by a man who might have missed his calling.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Ken Lawrence*

## About the Author

Ken Lawrence has been a philatelic writer and researcher for more than 30 years, a United States antebellum and Civil War era historian for more than 40, and a stamp and cover collector for more than 60. He has published articles in all the major American stamp hobby publications, some in other countries, and in many specialty journals. He is a former vice president of the American Philatelic Society and a former trustee of the American Philatelic Research Library. He was elected to the APS Writers Hall of Fame in 1998. In 2004, the United States Philatelic Classics Society honored him with its Distinguished Philatelist award. He is co-author with Scott R. Trepel of *Rarity Revealed: The Benjamin K. Miller Collection*, published by the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in 2006; editor and co-author of *The Liberty Series*, published by the APS in 2007.

# People Involved in the Grinnell Missionaries Mystery

## \* \* \* \* \* The Families and Friends \* \* \* \* \*

**Carol and Vince Arrigo:** George Grinnell’s granddaughter and her husband, who inherited his portion of the Grinnell Missionary stamps and spent 40 years trying to prove their authenticity.

**Patrick Culhane:** Great-great grandson of Charles Shattuck, Culhane currently represents the Shattuck heirs. His research uncovered additional correspondence linking William Emerson to postal duties in Waialua, Hawaii, in 1852.

**Ursula Emerson:** A missionary who moved to Hawaii, lifelong friend of Hannah Shattuck and mother of William Emerson.

**William Emerson:** Ursula’s son and an apprentice in Whitney’s print shop. Died at sea on April 24, 1852.

**George H. Grinnell:** High school teacher and curator of the Southwest Museum’s herbarium. Grinnell maintained Charles Shattuck gave him a large number of Hawaiian stamps, including the Missionaries, in 1918.

**Charles B. Shattuck:** Hannah Shattuck’s son, Charles died in November 1919, before the Grinnell trial began.

**Edward Shattuck:** Son of Charles and Elizabeth. After the trial, Edward and other Shattuck heirs found heirlooms believed lost in the fire that allegedly claimed the Hawaii stamps. The heirs executed affidavits recanting their previous testimony.

**Elizabeth Shattuck:** Widow of Charles Shattuck. Recalled Grinnell’s visit to her husband but refuted his story about obtaining stamps during the trial, claiming they would have been among heirlooms destroyed prior by fire.

**Hannah Shattuck:** Childhood friend of Ursula Emerson and mother of Charles Shattuck. Hannah and Ursula corresponded with each other after the Emersons traveled to Hawaii, allegedly providing the Shattucks with the Hawaiian Missionary stamps.

**Henry M. Whitney:** Printer appointed Honolulu postmaster in 1850. Whitney was authorized to produce the first Hawaii stamps in 1851.

## \* \* \* \* \* Grinnell’s Associates \* \* \* \* \*

**Hector Alliot:** Curator and director at the Southwest Museum, where Grinnell and Charles Thompson served on the staff.

**Brewster Cox Kenyon:** Notorious stamp forger formerly suspected of being the possible creator of the Grinnell Missionaries.

**Charles Sidney Thompson:** Stamp dealer and defense witness during Grinnell’s trial. Thompson was Grinnell’s co-worker in Los Angeles schools and the Southwest Museum. Applied “WAR STAMP” overprints to U.S. stamps. Thompson is probably the person who created the Grinnell Missionary stamps.

**Alfred H. Caspary:** Wealthy collector. Klemann sold 16 of the Grinnell stamps to Caspary. The following day, Caspary decided they were counterfeits and returned the stamps.

**Dick Celler:** Expert collector and plater of U.S. stamp series of 1851 and 1857. Together with Ken Lawrence, identified as genuine stamps from the card of 10 in George Grinnell's private collection.

**David Churchman:** Veteran printer and collector of vintage letterpresses. Consulted for his opinion on how the Grinnells might have been printed.

**Dr. Gene Hall:** Professor of chemistry at Rutgers University who conducted forensic analysis of ink components in the printing and cancellation inks of the Grinnell Missionaries.

**Ken Lawrence:** Philatelic writer and collector, along with Dick Celler, who discovered two genuine Missionaries among card of 10 Grinnell stamps. The find provides proof Grinnell's contemporaries had genuine Missionary stamps to serve as models for the forgeries.

**John A. Klemann:** Prominent New York stamp dealer. When notified of Grinnell's discovery, Klemann traveled to Los Angeles, examined the stamps and purchased 43 of them for \$65,000.

**George Linn:** Philatelic author and publisher. In 1951, saw a group of Grinnell Missionaries and felt the trial evidence was wrong. Believed the stamps were probably real, later changed his mind, convinced they were forgeries.

**Bertram W. H. Poole:** Los Angeles stamp dealer. Wood arranged a meeting with a wealthy collector, who brought Poole along to advise him. Poole declared the Grinnell Missionaries genuine. Grinnell declined \$60,000 for them.

**Varro Tyler:** Expert on philatelic forgeries and the people who created them. Identified the lack of genuine Hawaiian Missionary stamps available to forgers as a factor supporting the Grinnells' authenticity.

**Judge John Perry Wood:** Presiding judge in the Grinnell trial. Reached his decision the stamps were forgeries based on his belief that they were produced by photo-engraving rather than type.

**S. L. Wood:** Compiler of *Mekeel's* stamp catalog in 1895. Seeing 35 of Grinnell's Hawaii stamps, Wood offered \$50,000. Grinnell declined.

**Souren Yohannessiantz (aka Y. Souren):** Stamp dealer and founder of Philatelic Research Laboratories, Inc. Certified three of Grinnell's stamps as genuine.

# History of Hawaii's First Postage Stamps

In 1819, Hawaiian King Kamehameha II established freedom of religion. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions began sending teachers and missionaries to the islands. By the 1840s, many American missionaries had settled there.

To send a letter from Honolulu to America at that time, a person first had to find a ship ready to sail to the U.S. Then, he took his letter to the ship's captain and asked him to mail it on the mainland. He did not pay the captain; the recipient would pay the postage.

When he docked at a U.S. port, the captain took the letters to a post office, turned them in, and received two cents per letter for his service.



*Honolulu*



*King Kamehameha III*

Incoming mail delivery was haphazard. Often mailbags were spilled across the counting table at a local business and people sorted through the stack looking for their mail.

As the volume of mail from missionaries, teachers, and traders increased, King Kamehameha III was asked to establish a more systematic arrangement for the mail. On June 18, 1851, the Legislature of the Kingdom of Hawaii authorized the printing of stamps of useful denominations.

Postmaster Henry M. Whitney designed three denominations of postage stamps, using the same basic design. They were printed with loose, hand-set type on an old manual printing press brought over and assembled by early missionaries.

## The Hawaiian Missionaries

The first Hawaiian stamps, called "Missionaries," were produced at the government printing office in Honolulu. Printed with blue ink on very thin paper, the stamps went on sale October 1, 1851.

The 2-cent stamp paid the postage to the U.S. for newspapers and printed circulars. Since most newspaper wrappers were thrown away, few examples of the 2-cent stamp have survived.

A 5-cent stamp was required to transport a letter from the Honolulu post office to a ship in the harbor. The 13-cent stamp paid the 5-cent Hawaiian postage to the ship, a 2-cent fee for the ship's captain, plus the 6-cent U.S. postage from San Francisco to points east. To encourage literacy, letters sent to addressees within the Hawaiian Islands were delivered for free.



*Scott 3694 Souvenir Sheet Shows First Hawaiian Missionaries and Famous "Dawson" Cover*

# About Mystic Stamp Company

Mystic Stamp Company was founded in 1923 by Camden, New York, native and stamp collector Lawrence Shaver. In 1974, he sold the company to friend and fellow stamp dealer Maynard Sundman of Littleton, New Hampshire. Maynard sent his 19-year-old son Donald to run Mystic as general manager. In the forty-plus years since, Mystic has grown to become America's largest mail order stamp dealer.

Since 1980, the company has also become the country's largest buyer of collections and dealer stocks. Mystic buys millions of dollars' worth of stamps each year to satisfy customer needs – over \$70 million in the past five years alone.

Located in a small town in upstate New York, Don and his Mystic colleagues are proud of their service to collectors. Treating people the way they like to be treated – with honesty, fairness, and courtesy – is how Mystic interacts with its loyal customers and colleagues.

A staff of 150 stamp professionals is dedicated to helping Mystic's family of collectors enjoy the world's greatest hobby. Through *Mystic's U.S. Stamp Catalog*, *Stamp Showcase*, and other publications, the company offers a full line of U.S. and foreign stamps, collecting supplies, albums, and supplements. Over the years, the company has introduced tens of thousands of collectors to the joys of stamp collecting.

Mystic has been involved with some of the most exciting stamp stories of all time. In 1986, Mystic purchased a quantity of the newly discovered \$1 Candleholder error stamp, known as the "CIA Invert." Don donated one to the National Stamp Collection and filed a Freedom of Information Act request to learn how the error happened. The report revealed CIA employees purchased the error at a Virginia post office. This discovery made international headlines when Don broke the story in *Linn's Stamp News*.

In 1998, Don's 11-year-old son Zachary bid a record \$935,000 for the rarest U.S. stamp – the 1868 1¢ Z Grill. In 2005, Mystic traded its 1¢ Z Grill for the unique Jenny Invert Plate Number Block, worth \$3 million, with collector Bill Gross. Mystic sold the Jenny Block for around \$5 million in 2015 to famed shoe designer Stuart Weitzman.

Mystic supports the preservation of America's stamp heritage through donations to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. It furthers philatelic scholarship, providing a forum for new stamp research by funding the Maynard Sundman Lecture at the Museum.

Mystic works to support the hobby of stamp collecting in many ways. President Don Sundman has sponsored over 5,800 American Philatelic Society members, a record for the APS. He is Chairman of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum's Council of Philatelists, and Vice Chairman of the Philatelic Foundation. He is a fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society. In 1988, Don received the APS Century Award, and in 2010, the prestigious Luff Award for Outstanding Service to the American Philatelic Society.

Upon request, Mystic furnishes stamps and collecting materials to schools and stamp clubs around the country. This service introduces young people to the fun and challenge of stamp collecting, assuring the survival of the world's greatest hobby for the next generation.

**Mystic Stamp Company**  
*America's Leading Stamp Dealer*

9700 Mill Street, Camden, N.Y. • (315) 245-2690  
[www.MysticStamp.com](http://www.MysticStamp.com)