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POSTAGE STAMPS

OF THE

HAWAIIAN

ISLANDS

IN THE COLLECTION OF
HENRY J. CROCKER, OF SAN FRANCISCO

Described & Illustrated
by
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Postage Stamps of the Hawaiian Islands.

We had been waiting for news. And we got it *with a vengeance.*

It was in the wireless telegraph cabin, and the time was after midnight. The decks were deserted, and as we sat with the cabin door ajar we could hear nothing but the tramp of the officer on the bridge, and the lapping of the waters against the ship as we ploughed on homewards.

We were six days out from New York. And the wireless chart said that we ought to "speak" with the *St. Louis* that night. She—the *St. Louis*—had sailed the day before from Liverpool.

The operator had his writing pad ready on the table.

Biz—biz!

Several times we had sent electro-magnetic waves out in the hope of getting a reply, and the rod on the mast above us had been spitting electricity into the night.

And then came the answering click, click.

It was the ship we had been expecting. She was some miles away on the outward course.

And the news!

At first it was not quite clear; our ears must surely be deceiving us.

The message was repeated three times at short intervals. And so we were forced to believe it. I forget the exact words, but I think they were:—

"Earthquake at San Francisco. City wholly destroyed."

There was other news. Somewhere's Hotspurs had beaten Something United at football. But what of that?

We had a score or so of 'Frisco people on board. They were sleeping peacefully, unconscious of homes wrecked and friends in danger.

"Good-night," clicked the receiver.

"Good-night," tapped my friend.

And so we passed the *St. Louis*.

My friend put on his cap, and left me to carry up a little slip of paper to the Captain.

And as I waited for his return I thought of San Francisco, and wondered of "Hawaiian" J. Crocker.

Mr. Henry J. Crocker has long had the distinction of being the most eminent philatelist on the Pacific Coast, and what more natural than that my thoughts should turn to him and to his collection?

Happily Mr. Crocker was safe.

Out of forty-three of his stamp albums in San Francisco at the time eleven were completely destroyed. His masterpiece—the collection of Hawaiian stamps—was safe in England awaiting the then impending International Exhibition of 1906. His Great Britain, which included such gems as the 4d green, plate 17; 10d, plate 2; 6d chestnut, plate 13; mint £1 anchor and £1 cross and the plate numbers complete, was destroyed. His British North America and his British West Indies went also. But the greatest loss of all was his superb specialised collection of Japan, which was the finest collection of these stamps ever brought together.

Like many of the visitors to the International Exhibition, 1906, I had seen Mr. Crocker's Hawaiians, but, in the feast of philatelic wealth there, one's palate was perhaps surfeited, and one did not take all the advantage of the opportunities the display afforded for study. It was a very pleasant sound in my ears, therefore, when the telephone bell rang and I heard a cheery, hustling voice say: "I'm Henry J. Crocker of San Francisco. I shall be very pleased to show you my collection. Come right along."

And I went; and, though my pen be inadequate, I shall endeavour to hand on some of the delights of the chat over the collection to my readers.

Mr. Crocker began collecting stamps, "even as you and I," at school. A few of his fellow-scholars collected stamps, but more collected birds' eggs and other more or less collectable objects, and many was the curious exchange he would effect in the way of a "tidmarsh's egg for a stamp." Beginning stamp collecting in 1871, he had, almost from the start, quite a cannibal's predilection for "Missionaries," as the 1851 stamps of Hawaii are familiarly styled, both by those who have and by those who have not got them.

Mr. Crocker spent nine years of his life, after leaving school, away from his home, but he kept up his stamp collection on general lines by correspondence, still keeping a weather eye open for Missionaries and Hawaiians generally. In later years his fame as a stamp collector spread all along the coast, and whenever a stamp was found it would be taken to Mr. Crocker, and thus on the Pacific shores some of the gems of the Crocker collection were, figuratively speaking, cast up.

The "Missionaries," 1851.

The four stamps catalogued as the 1851 issue of Hawaii are among the rarest stamps in the world. They are unpretentious, type-set stamps printed on a thin, bluish paper. There are two types of each value. Of the 2 cents stamp there are but two copies known of Type I. Mr. Crocker has one of them; the other is in the Tapling Collection, and is kept along with its fellow, Type II, apart from the rest of the collection in the Cracherode room at the British Museum. Mr. Crocker's copy is illustrated here.

Of the 5 cents there are no fewer than four copies all used, two of them on entires. One of the single 5 cents is shown in the centre of the page from Mr. Crocker's album, and one of the entires is illustrated separately.

One of the most choice pieces in the collection is the unbroken strip of three 13 cents "Hawaiian Postage" stamps on entire original, a strip which is unique. Two of the stamps are Type I, and one is Type II. An unused specimen of each type and two used specimens of each type are included.

Of the "H.I. and U.S. Postage" stamp there are two specimens, one of each type, used together.

The difference between the two types referred to in each of the foregoing stamps is best described by pointing out the relative positions of the initials H and P. In Mr. Crocker's Type I the letter P is not completely under the letter H, but starts farther away from the frame. In Type II the first upright of H is almost in a straight line with the upright of the P. Mr. Bacon's Variety I and Variety II in the Tapling Collection are the other way about.

Here in this one collection we have sixteen copies of the great rarities of this 1851 issue of the Hawaiian Islands. The Tapling Collection contains twelve.

1853 (King Kamehameha III).

Mr. Crocker's collection presents a fine display of these stamps, engraved by Dearborn, and printed by Holland of Boston. The 13 cents value was evidently engraved first, and the portrait transferred to another plate, and new inscriptions added for the 5 cents, as is to be seen by the two dots in the portrait frame left by the removal of the two vertical rules in the tablet. The rare, thick paper 5 cents (the first printing) is represented by a number of used copies on originals.

The use of the rather peculiar value, 13 cents, is explained by the fact that the postal rate up to this time was 5 cents for the Hawaiian postage, and 8 cents for the postage to and in the United States, making 13 cents in all. The chief value required, however, was the 5 cents stamp, and the stock of this having run short, some of the 13 cents value were surcharged "5" in manuscript. Of these Mr. Crocker has two.

Of the later printings of these stamps the collection contains entire panes of twenty.

With regard to the reprints or unissued prints of 1867 Mr. Crocker is of the opinion that this printing was ordered a long time before they were delivered, the delay being due to the mislaying of the plates. In the meanwhile, the National Bank Note Company had executed an order (1865) for 200,000 5 cents stamps, and, the more efficient style of engraving being approved, the others, when they arrived, were considered obsolete, and were not put into use. The "reprints" of 1889 were really Government facsimiles, made from dies which had been defaced when the stamps became obsolete, but were restored (as nearly as possible) to the order of the Hawaiian Government in 1889.

The Numerals.

The most complete study has been made by Mr. Crocker of the issues known as the Hawaiian "Numerals," of which the collection contains *several* hundreds—532 in all. The varieties of paper are indicated in the catalogue, but in addition there are eleven settings, and sub-varieties in the settings, all of which this painstaking philatelist has carried to the extent almost of finality. His reconstruction of setting V B, 2 cents dark blue on bluish (illustrated), a discovery of his own, he is particularly proud of, the reconstruction being complete, except for the stamp No. 10. One of the finest pieces in this section of the collection is the superb block of six of the 2 cents blue on bluish, of August, 1859. The 2 cents on greenish blue, called variously "robin's egg" or "duck's egg," is represented by a complete reconstructed plate, including two unused copies.

In the scope of our article we have been able only to note the rarer pieces in the collection, but the whole collection is on the same grand scale, and while the country is undoubtedly a difficult one, and one whose earlier issues are removed from the regions of possibility for the average collector, such a collection is a splendid lesson in individual effort and original study, quite apart from the cost of compiling it. Hawaiians have long appealed to some of our giants in philatelic prowess, particularly in America. Among others we recall F. W. Ayer, John N. Luff, M. H. Lombard.

To the general collector who can appreciate a real study in stamps, whether he has copies of his own for comparison or not, the news that Mr. Crocker is preparing a book on the stamps of this country will be highly welcome, and as it will be produced in the most artistic and scientific style, with superb illustrations from this famous collection, there can be no question that it will be an epoch-making volume.

Mr. Crocker's accomplishments outside of philately include the driving of a four-in-hand, at which he is particularly skilled, and there is a rumour that a certain philatelist, whose identity is sufficiently veiled by the letters C. J. P., suffered from *mal de mer* of an aggravated description when Mr. Crocker began describing (Hawaiian) numerals in his coach and four on the sands of the Pacific coast.

The mariner's tale, too, is worth the telling. Mr. "Hawaiian" J. Crocker once took a couple of sea-captains out for a drive, and after a while he started on some of his fancy driving. To those who are accustomed to steering a straight course the first sensations of an ornamental drive of this nature are not altogether of the most comfortable order. But the sea-captains complained not a word. A day later, however, they produced a mysterious package, and with due ceremony and palaver they presented it to Mr. Crocker, saying that it was a little token of their appreciation of his hospitality. Mr. Crocker thanked his guests, and on unwrapping the package disclosed a mariner's compass. Was it a delicate hint that he should learn to steer a straight course in driving?

Mr. Crocker did not tell me in plain words, but he showed me most clearly that he has the secret of *enjoying* his stamps. That is a secret which consists in more than study, more than collecting; it consists in making others interested in your study and in your collection. One must share one's treasures to enjoy them, and while I do not wish to suggest that Mr. Crocker should split his block of six 2 cents blue on bluish and give me half, or that he should "swap" eight of his Missionaries for a few of my paltry Turks, I submit that he was making me a sharer of his life-work and study by the real pleasure he seemed to take, and certainly afforded to me, in showing me his collection.

And Mr. Crocker is in sympathy with the youngster—in fact, with anyone who is really interested. He did not tell me this; but one day while he was in London he looked in to the British Museum to see the Hawaiians in the Tapling Collection, and he produced a number of photographs of his own stamps for comparison with those in the Museum. Some youngsters who were looking at the collection at the time were attracted by the display of photographs, and evinced an interest in a way which will doubtless readily suggest itself to those who have been young themselves and can remember it.

Some specialists might have said: "Go away, you boys."

But not Mr. Crocker. He was interested to find them interested, and (he little knew that THE STAMP LOVER was making notes) he explained in a bright, chatty manner some of the points of interest in the Museum Collection, and showed them the photographs of his collection, which was awarded the second Gold Cup at the International Exhibition in 1906.

Before I left Mr. Crocker I had a hearty invitation—and yes, certainly, if "the winds do blow" (winds which need to be "raised") me on to the specific Pacific shores where he dwells I'll risk my neck a thousand times (that's rather often, but I speak in ecstasy) on the new coach he promised to get—if only to spend a few nights dipping into the other of the thirty-two albums he saved from the fire.

We must not conclude without thanking Messrs. Stanley Gibbons for placing a room at our disposal for our photographer to take a special portrait of Mr. Crocker. The photographer has happily caught him turning to the page whereon Plate VB of the Numerals is displayed. Messrs Stanley Gibbons have kindly lent three of the fine blocks illustrating this article, while others appear here for the first time.

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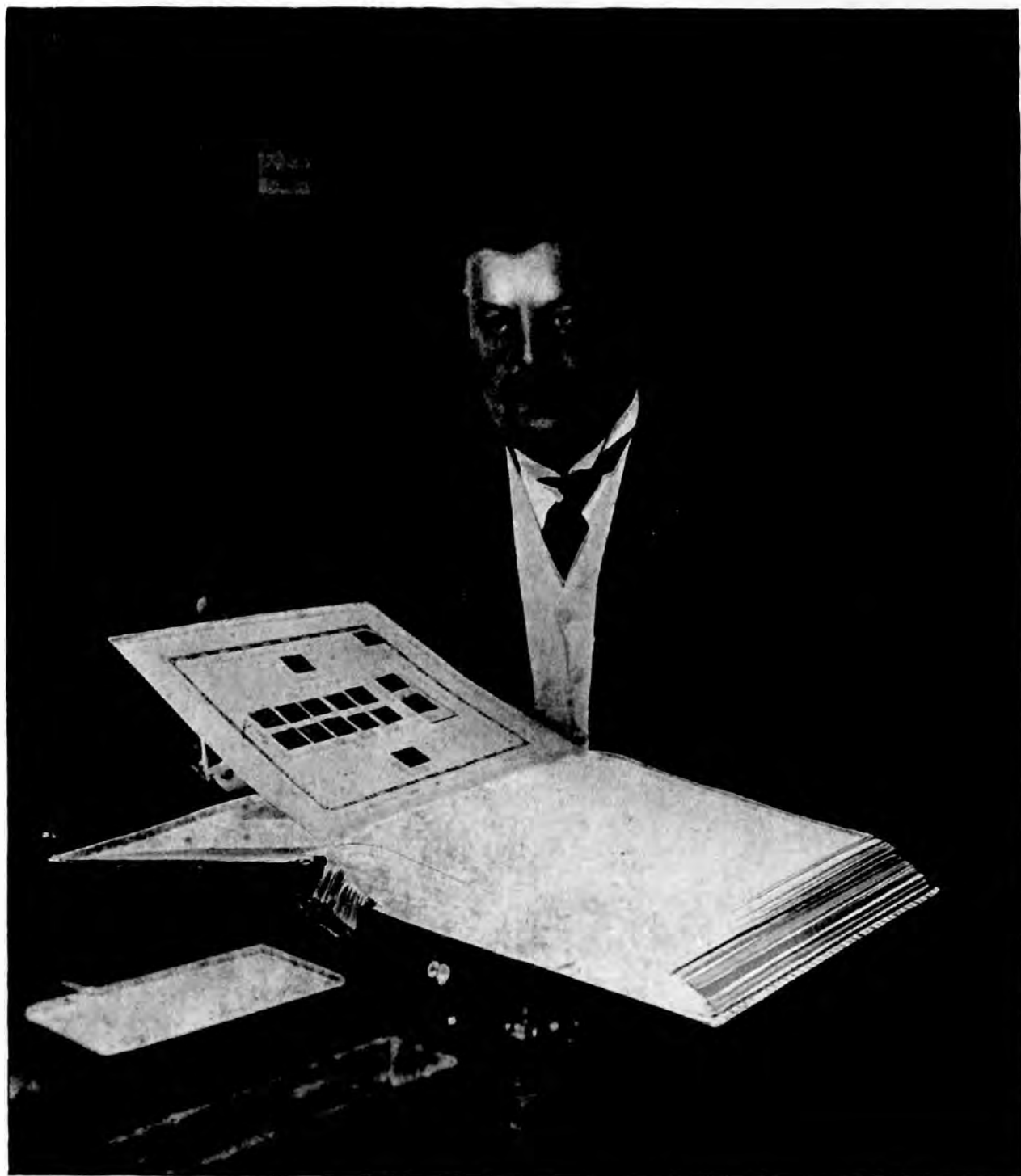
INDEX TO PLATES.

- Plate I.—Henry J. Crocker: Portrait.
- „ II.—1851. 2c blue; 1851 5c and 13c.
- „ III.—1851. 5c on original.
- „ IV.—August 1st, 1859. 1c pale blue. (Crocker's Plate IA.)
- „ V.—1864. 1c black. Wove paper. (Crocker's Plate IV.) Rare used.
1864. 1c black. Laid paper shewing error
“HA . . .” for “HAWAIIAN POSTAGE.”
(Crocker's Plate VII.)
1864. 1c black. Laid paper. Rare used
copy. (Crocker's Plate VII.)
- „ VI.—July, 1859. 2c pale blue on bluish.
- „ VII.—April, 1864. 2c deep blue on bluish. The
correct tenth stamp is missing from the
plate, its place being filled by a second
copy of number nine (Crocker's Plate
VB.)
- „ VIII.—1865. 5c blue on bluish. Two panes
unsevered.

The references to settings and plates follow Mr. Crocker's own descriptions. The plates in this reprint are inset loose and uncut, so that they may be inserted in any interchangeable album.

*Printed at Perth by
Wood & Son.*



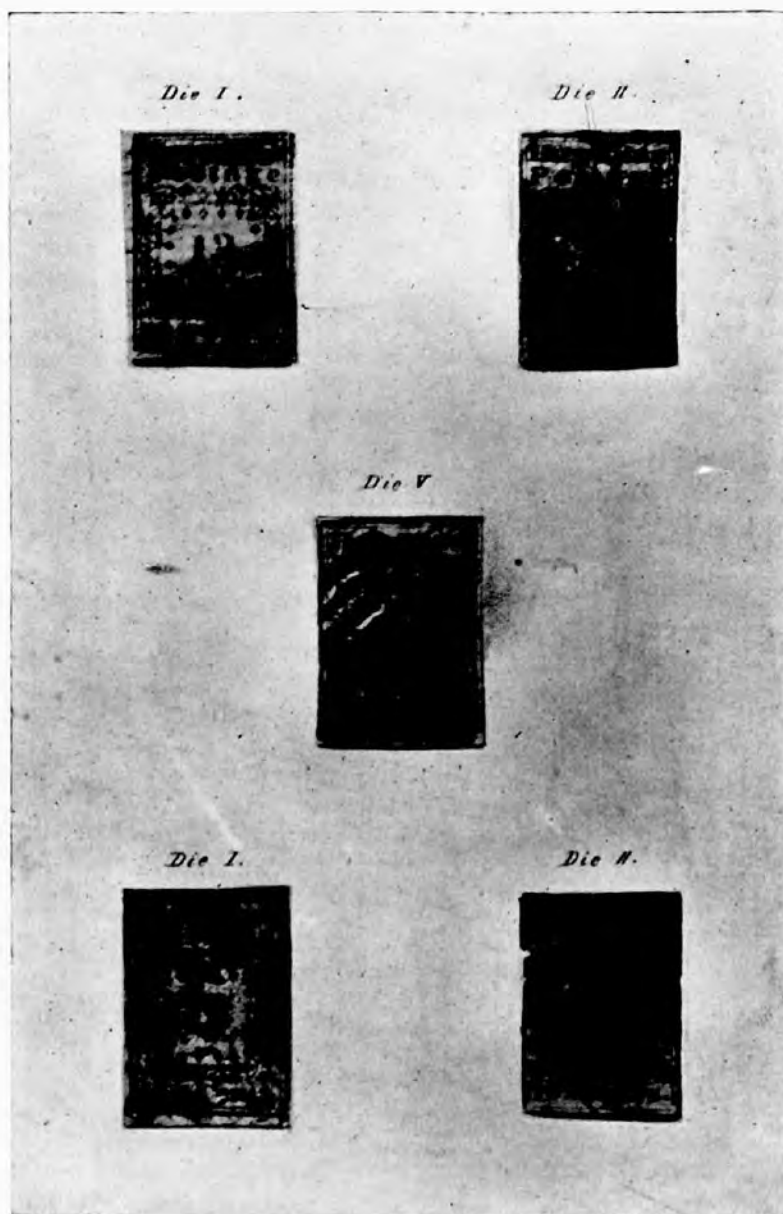


HENRY J. CROCKER.

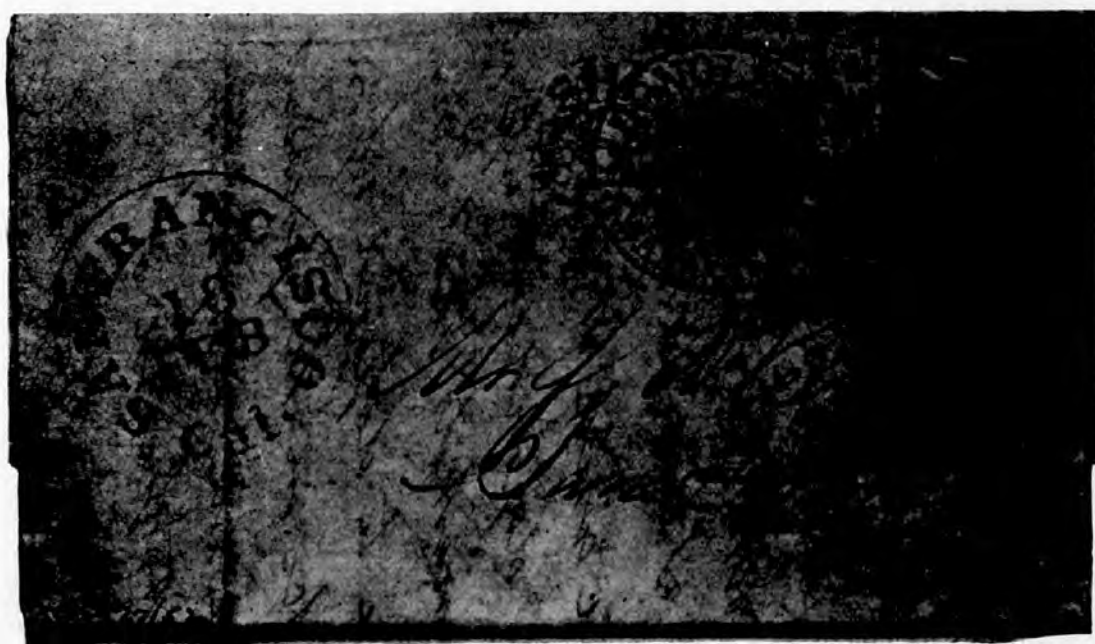




1851. 2C BLUE.



1851. 5C AND 13C.

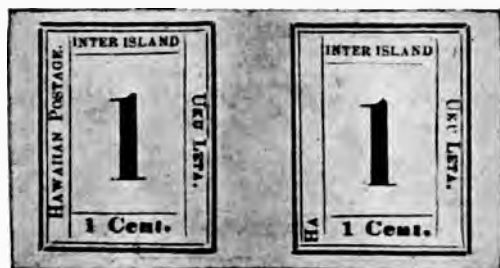


1851. 5C ON ORIGINAL.

PLATE IV.

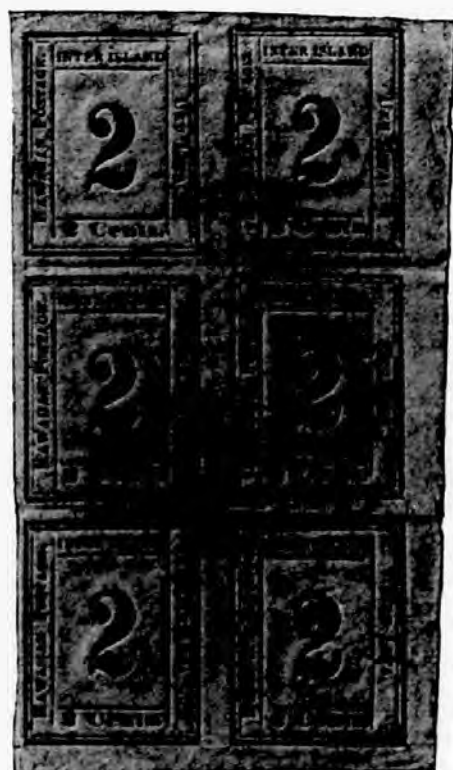


AUGUST 1, 1859. 1C PALE BLUE. (CROCKER'S PLATE IA.)

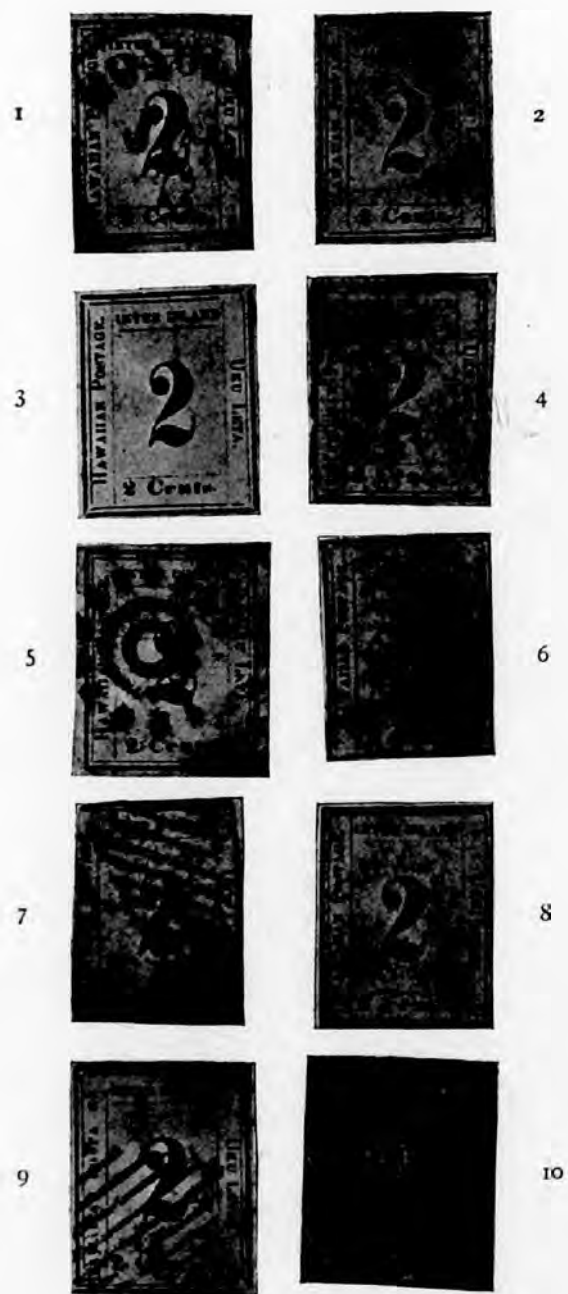


1864. 1 CENT BLACK. WOVE PAPER. RARE USED. (CROCKER'S PLATE IV.)
LAID PAPER. SHEWING ERROR "HA . . ." FOR "HAWAIIAN POSTAGE." (CROCKER'S PLATE VII.)
LAID PAPER. RARE USED COPY. (CROCKER'S PLATE VII.)

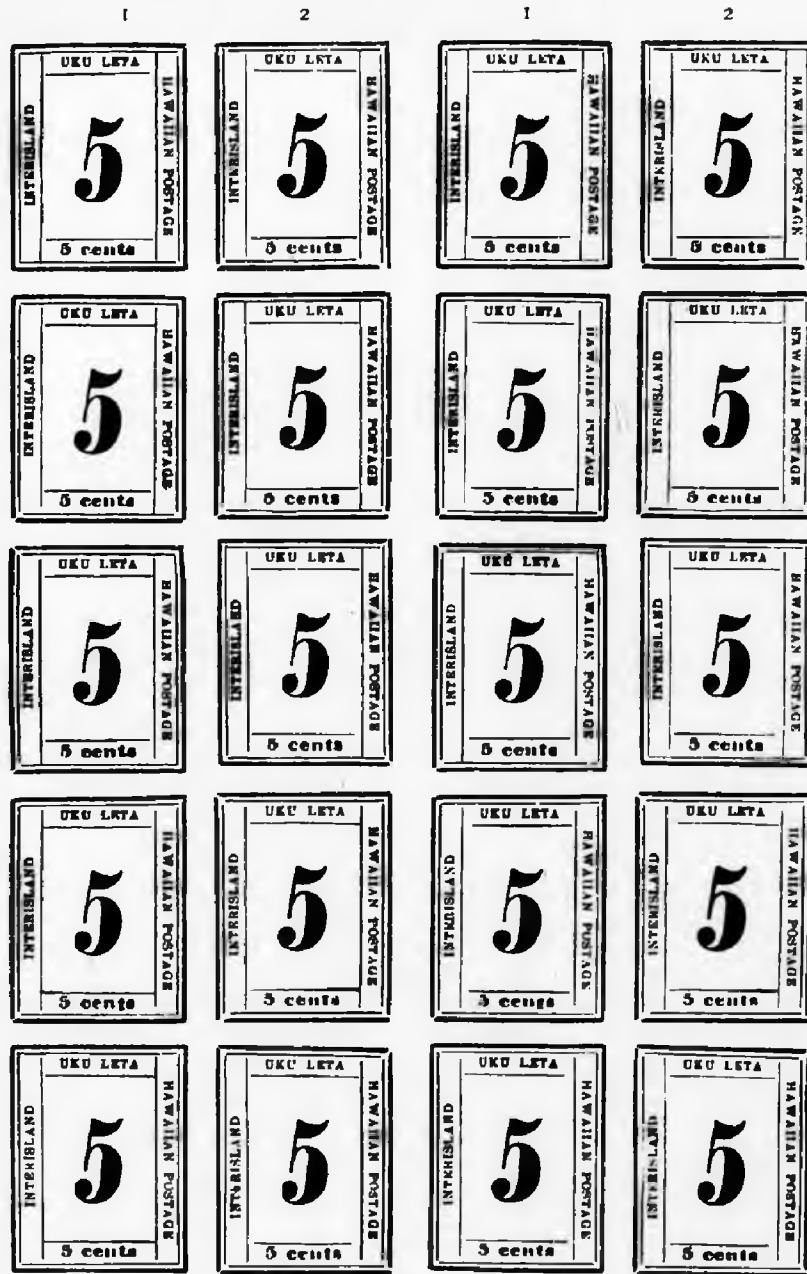




JULY, 1859. 2C PALE BLUE ON BLUISH.



APRIL, 1864. 2C DEEP BLUE ON BLUISH. THE CORRECT TENTH STAMP IS MISSING FROM THE PLATE, ITS PLACE BEING FILLED BY A SECOND COPY OF STAMP NUMBER NINE. (CROCKER'S PLATE VB.)



1865. 5C BLUE ON BLUISH. TWO PANES UNSEVERED.

POSTAGE STAMPS *of the*
HAWAIIAN
ISLANDS

In the Collection of HENRY J. CROCKER, Esq., OF SAN FRANCISCO
Described by FRED. J. MELVILLE, and Illustrated with Eight Plates

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