

“Hawaiian Headache: Is This Stamp a Genuine Imperf?” Part Two of Two

by Dr. Wallace R. Beardsley

2c Brown (Scott No. 35)

The listing of this variety may be due to the seemingly imperforate used copy in the Tapling Collection of the British Museum. This stamp does not appear to be from the edge of the sheet. It bears a CDS cancellation which appears to be the rare M-H #238.42; KAHULUI POST OFFICE/MANI dated OCT/?/188?. The socked-on-the-nose nature of the cancellation suggests that this may have been the only stamp on the envelope. If so then it did service on interisland mail. Nothing has been added to the Tapling Collection since 1886. (Editor's note: Some items in the Tapling Collection, marked with an “x” in the frames, were later added by Sir Edward Denny Bacon to complete certain sets.) This fact in itself is sometimes advanced as evidence of the authenticity of the material in this collection. However the postmaster at Kahului is believed to have been responsible for the large number of philatelically inspired bisected stamps during the 1880's, many bearing this Kahului postmark. For this reason alone the imperforate must be regarded as suspect. No valid imperforate variety of the 2c brown stamp has come to the author's attention, nor does information regarding such a variety exist in the Post Office records or in the philatelic literature.

2c Lilac Rose (Scott No. 38)

Supposedly imperforate varieties of this stamp are occasionally seen. A seemingly imperforate used copy in the Tapling Collection bears the cancellation M-H #234.62; HONOLULU/H.I. dated DEC 1. It has no wide margin. However there is no evidence to support the existence of such a variety. It is not listed in the “Detailed List” and a detailed examination of the Tapling copy is needed.

5c Ultramarine (Scott No. 39)

The “Detailed List” does list an imperforate variety existing for this issue. The evidence, however, seems to be based upon a single used copy formerly in the Admiral Harris collection. Its appearance suggests it belongs to the first printing of this issue which occurred in 1882. As discussed later in this study the validity of this Harris copy is very doubtful.



Figure 5. A 2c carmine rose stamp having two wide margins. The perforations have been trimmed away. The right margin is a wide straight edge characteristic of LAYOUT V. Compare this with a similar untrimmed copy shown in Figure 2.

2c Carmine Rose (Scott No. 43)

The listing of this variety may be due to a seemingly imperforate used copy tied on piece which was formerly in the Admiral Harris collection. This copy has the incriminating wide straight edge and it is tied to the piece across the wide margin by a target cancellation. This could easily have been a favor cancellation much like the aforementioned Kahului cancellation or the stamp could have been lifted from the piece, the perforations trimmed and the stamp then replaced. Also, the Honolulu Advertiser Collection contains two copies which originally belonged to Atherton. Both copies have the characteristic wide straight edge from LAYOUT V, however one copy also has a very wide margin on the opposite side as well (Figure 5). A twin to this stamp is illustrated in Figure 6. This has the perforations intact. None of the above mentioned copies meet the measurement standards as defined in the next section. Again, no information regarding an imperforate variety of the 2c carmine rose issue is to be found in the Post Office records or in the philatelic literature, and no valid imperforate variety has come the author's attention.



Figure 6. Lead us not into temptation! Examples of sheet edge stamps showing prominent wide margins. Such stamps have proved a strong temptation for unscrupulous persons to “create” imperforate stamps.

In summary, the criteria for judging authenticity of possible imperforate Hawaiian Bank Note varieties may be stated as follows:

1. If one or more wide margins are present and the layout dots characteristic of a sheet edge copy are present in one or both margins, the validity of the imperforate must be regarded as highly suspect.

2. Measurement along the greatest horizontal dimension and greatest vertical dimension of every seemingly imperforate variety *must exceed* these values, otherwise the possibility of trimmed perforations cannot be excluded:

Sheet edge copies — horizontal 26.0 mm
vertical 30.5 mm

Interior copies — horizontal 23.0 mm
vertical 28.5 mm

(These values represent maximum dimensions as determined by measurement of a variety of stamps belonging to each of the above denominations.)

3. If one or both of the criteria are not met, then the imperforate variety must either have an impeccable pedigree, i.e. ownership can be directly traced to PMG Brickwood, or the imperforate variety is a pair or larger multiple having standard thickness paper, i.e. not a proof on India.

A final note. What follows is a classic instance of the pitfalls that may occur should the above criteria not be heeded. The Kaufmann Auction number 35, June 24, 1977, offered four lots of supposedly imperforate varieties of Hawaiian stamps. One lot, #236, was the 5¢ ultramarine alluded to previously. It was identified as “ex-Harris.” The remaining three lots, #238-240, were all the 2¢ carmine rose, one being the seemingly imperforate variety on piece alluded to previously and mentioned in Munk as formerly in the Wolter collection (Figure 7). Note that of these three, two have the wide LAYOUT V straight edge which makes them immediately suspect according to criterion 1. All four stamps can be traced to membership in the famous collections of Wolter, Tows, and Harris. The late Sam Karash, a well-known collector and PF Trustee, bought these stamps at that auction assuming that if they formerly belonged to such famous collections, they must be genuine (i.e. he concluded that criterion 3 applied). However, famous collections in themselves do *not* imply or prescribe criterion 3. This was recognized by The Philatelic Foundation when it refused to give an opinion on the stamps. It can now be stated that all four stamps fail criterion 2 as well. Yes, Sam paid a lot of money for those stamps, but, as often has been said, “Caveat Emptor.”

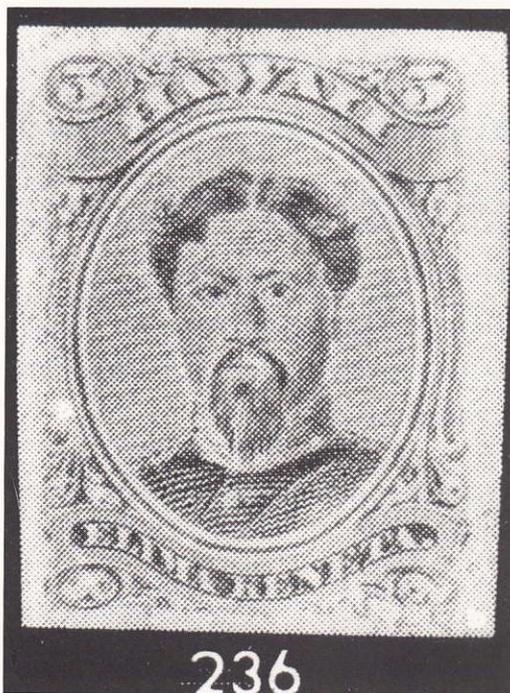




Figure 7. Lots #236, 238-240 from Kaufmann Auction No. 35, June 24, 1977. Three of the lots are the 2¢ carmine rose issue, two of which have the wide straight edge characteristic of LAYOUT V. None of the four stamps satisfies the standards of criterion 2.

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