

Historical Note

The first chapter in the history of Hawaiian printing becomes primarily a resumé of the linguistic efforts of the early missionaries to the Sandwich Islands. To a researcher perhaps the most remarkable feature of the story is that the missionaries began their printing activities even before they had settled on a standard alphabet and orthography for the hitherto unwritten Hawaiian language.

The members of the Sandwich Islands Mission sent from Boston by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had arrived at Kawaihae armed with zeal, press, and printer, on March 30, 1820, and in Honolulu the following April 19. To their collective mind it was absolutely essential to have printed material available as soon as possible to reinforce their efforts in disseminating the gospel among the widely scattered communities of the island group. Consequently, as the oral language had to be converted to writing before any printing could be done, intolerable delay would be inevitable if the men of God were to wait until their studies became definitive.

So they set to work almost immediately and in only two years completed the complicated task of developing a preliminary written language. However, the final decisions in choice between *t* and *k*, *b* and *p*, *r* and *l*, *v* and *w* were made later, only after prolonged discussion among the members of the group and their native informants. Agreement was reached in 1826, when the Hawaiian alphabet was established with twelve letters: *a, e, i, o, u, h, k, l, m, n, p, w*.

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Nevertheless, four years earlier, on January 7, 1822, the first piece of printing, using a purely tentative alphabet, had come off their small press. It was a spelling lesson published as a broadside, six by four inches, entitled "Lesson I." Of this broadside, we know of only three copies (none of which now survive), although more were probably printed and distributed. The material subsequently reappeared as the second and third pages of a sixteen-page speller-primer, of which the first eight pages were issued later that same January and the second eight in February. These sixteen pages, together, are recognized as the first Hawaiian imprint—entry number 1 in this bibliography.

Thereafter, printing on the first press, a second-hand Ramage, went on continuously for six years, until in 1828 an additional press was sent from Boston. The original press, still operative, was acquired by the missionary school at Lahainaluna on Maui in 1834. There, it helped print textbooks in Hawaiian until, after several years, it wore out—the end of a long and varied career. It was perhaps given to Lorrin Andrews when he retired as principal of the school in 1842, to use in printing copper engravings. His son is said to have played with whatever was left of it years later in Honolulu.

In the meantime, a Wells-model press arrived at Lahainaluna in 1832 and it carried the major load of the printing there.

Elisha Loomis, a member of the Pioneer Company, was the first printer of Hawaiian material. With the help of native apprentices, he worked at his trade in Honolulu until 1827, when, health failing, he returned to America. There he recovered sufficiently to continue printing Hawaiian books in New York State, many for the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society. These books were sent to the Sandwich Islands with later missionary companies. Other dedicated Congregational missionaries replaced Loomis in Honolulu. They worked under very difficult conditions, trying to keep up with the insatiable demand for reading matter in the Hawaiian language.

The presses of the Sandwich Islands Mission in Honolulu and Lahainaluna were the major printers of books in Hawaiian in the Islands until 1858, when the work of printing for the Mission was handed over on a business basis to Henry M. Whitney, a missionary son. He continued to handle the Hawaiian-language books for the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, which had superseded the Sandwich Islands Mission in 1854.

The Bible was translated from the original Greek and Hebrew by the combined efforts of Hiram Bingham and Asa Thurston of the Pioneer Company, Artemas Bishop and James Ely of the Second Company, William Richards, Lorrin Andrews, Jonathan Green, and

Ephraim Clark of the Third Company, and Sheldon Dibble of the Fourth Company. Although the work was begun in 1822, the first segment of the Bible, the Gospel of Luke, did not come off the press until 1827. The rest of the New Testament was completed by 1832 and the Old Testament in 1839 (although the date given on the title page is 1838).

The Roman Catholics did not begin printing in Hawaii until 1840, when they produced a broadside. Late arrivals, after the Congregationalists were well entrenched, they had been banished in 1831, during the reign of Kamehameha III. They withdrew to Macao, where they translated and had printed two Hawaiian catechisms which they sent to Hawaii in 1832. In 1836, when opposition to their presence had diminished somewhat, Catholic missionaries returned to the Islands. There, several local Hawaiian presses printed texts for the priests until the latter set up a press of their own. This press produced the Catholics' materials from 1841 to 1889.

Catholic printing made use of *t* and *v* instead of *k* and *w* in Hawaiian, probably because *k*'s and *w*'s occur infrequently in the French language, and consequently the font sent out to the priests from their homeland contained few of these letters. Another reason, however, may have been the influence of their earlier experiences in Mangareva, where the *t* and *v* sounds prevailed. Mangareva at that time was an important station of the Roman Catholic Mission in the Pacific.

Printing in the Hawaiian language was by no means restricted to the Sandwich Islands. In fact it became quite widespread. The first two Catholic works translated and printed by the banished fathers in Macao in 1831 were supplemented by two more in 1847 from Valparaiso, where the translation was done by Father Louis Maigret, who was in South America to be consecrated as Bishop of Arathia. In addition, various other Catholic texts in Hawaiian were published in Paris.

The American Tract Society and the American Bible Society were responsible for most of the Hawaiian-language printing in New York State. This consisted of catechisms, primers, bibles, and tracts. Elisha Loomis, after his health improved, printed parts of the Bible and catechisms in Utica and Rochester. William Williams printed primers and religious tracts on his press for Loomis. Salt Lake City and San Francisco were the centers for printing Mormon texts. Mormon missionaries arrived in Hawaii in 1850 but developed no press of their own in the Islands.

In London and Oxford several editions in Hawaiian of the Book of Common Prayer were published for the Church of England. Texts

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published in Hiroshima included two editions of a Hawaiian-Japanese-English dictionary to assist the contract laborers in adjusting to the new life that awaited them in the Islands.

While most of the books published in Hawaiian were of a religious nature, such as sermons, tracts, and bibles, other books on as diverse subjects as language, anatomy, arithmetic, and history were published. Although our project does not include government documents, it must be noted that great quantities were printed throughout the latter part of the century. After 1899 publication of Hawaiian-language materials declined, and consisted mainly of hymnals, periodicals, newspapers, and government documents.

The most prolific of all the presses was the Hawaii-based Mission Press, which during its first twenty years, from 1822 to 1842, put out more than one hundred million pages, even in the face of wornout presses, paper shortages, and bouts with insufficient supplies of *k*'s and *a*'s, in which the Hawaiian language abounds. While the volume of printing never again approached this level in any commensurate time period, there was still a surprising amount of publishing done in the Hawaiian language until the end of the century.

In recent years a resurgence of local interest in Hawaiian has occurred, and many ethno-conscious students are now studying the language both at the college level and in the lower grades. Very little new material has been published, but this bibliography will serve as a guide to what came earlier and where it is available.

For those interested in additional background information, the following historical bibliography will be useful.