

Speech before the Hawaiian Philatelic Society: Philately: The hobby of kids and kings

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PHILATELY: THE HOBBY OF KIDS AND KINGS

SPEECH BY THE HONORABLE SPARK M. MATSUNAGA
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN FROM HAWAII
AT AWARDS/INSTALLATION BANQUET
HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY
PACIFIC BALLROOM, ILIKAI HOTEL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1976

MR. TOASTMASTER, HONORED GUESTS, MEMBERS OF THE HAWAIIAN
PHILATELIC SOCIETY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I AM NOT HERE TO MAKE A CAMPAIGN SPEECH.

HAVING MADE THAT PLEDGE, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT I CONSIDER
IT A PRIVILEGE TO BE WITH YOU TONIGHT. I AM INDEBTED TO YOUR
INCOMING PRESIDENT, JOHN NUGENT, FOR HIS KIND INVITATION TO BE
YOUR SPEAKER THIS EVENING. LET ME HASTEN TO REASSURE THOSE WHO
ARE WONDERING ABOUT THE NATURE OF MR. NUGENT'S INVITATION THAT
POLITICS DEFINITELY WAS NOT SUGGESTED AS A TOPIC OF MY TALK.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS
TO YOU, TWELVE POSTAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES WHO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN
TO RECEIVE THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY AWARD, THE HOALOHA
PO'OLEKA O HAWAII, OR FRIEND OF HAWAIIAN PHILATELY. AS A FORMER
MEMBER OF THE HOUSE POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE,
I STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE PRINCIPLE OF PAY COMPARABILITY FOR
FEDERAL EMPLOYEES AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE POSTAL SERVICE.
AT A TIME WHEN INCREASING PUBLIC CRITICISM, WHETHER GROUNDLESS
OR NOT, IS BEING DIRECTED AT THE POSTAL SERVICE, YOUR DEDICATION
TO YOUR WORK AND YOUR DETERMINATION TO DO A GOOD JOB WILL HELP

A GREAT DEAL TO DISPEL SUCH CRITICISM. HAVING SAID THAT, I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE, FURTHER, THAT THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY AWARD IS BASED ON THE SERVICES YOU HAVE RENDERED OVER AND ABOVE THE CALL OF DUTY. YOU HAVE BEEN NAMED FOR THE AWARD BECAUSE OF YOUR EFFORTS IN ENCOURAGING THE HOBBY OF STAMP COLLECTING AMONG YOUR PATRONS, ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNG BEGINNERS. IN THIS RESPECT, YOU ARE PERPETUATING THE PROUD TRADITION THAT WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE POSTAL SYSTEM OF THE KINGDOM OF HAWAII OVER 100 YEARS AGO. IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "THE STAMPS OF HAWAII," WHICH WAS WRITTEN IN 1944, LT. COLONEL CHARLES C. GILL, AN ARMY DOCTOR WHO WAS A RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY ON THE HISTORY OF HAWAIIAN STAMPS, WROTE:

"HAWAII WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO TAKE COGNIZANCE OF THE DESIRE OF COLLECTORS FOR ITS STAMPS AND TO ENCOURAGE COLLECTORS BY FILLING MAIL ORDERS, GIVING OUT DESIRED INFORMATION, AND KEEPING A STOCK OF OBSOLETE ISSUES ON HAND FOR MANY YEARS AFTER THEY HAD BEEN SUPPLANTED BY NEWER ISSUES.

"IN FACT, THE HONOLULU POST OFFICE PRACTICALLY OPERATED A PHILATELIC AGENCY AS EARLY AS THE 1860'S."

I BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE IN ORDER FOR ME TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY, THE ^{GRANTOR} ~~OWNER~~ OF THESE AWARDS. THE CURRENT TWO-DAY EXHIBITION OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S RAREST AND MOST VALUABLE STAMPS, RIGHT HERE IN HONOLULU, AUGMENTED BY APPROPRIATE LECTURES, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SPONSORSHIP OF SUCH A RESPECTED ORGANIZATION AS THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY. THE FACT THAT ON ITS 65TH ANNIVERSARY

THE ORGANIZATION IS AS ACTIVE AND INTERESTING AS EVER IS A FINE TESTIMONIAL TO THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY. IT ALSO SPEAKS WELL FOR YOUR LEADERS, PAST AND PRESENT.

LET ME THEREFORE EXTEND TO YOU WHO HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO GUIDE THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY DURING THE 1976-77 TERM, MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS AND ALSO MY BEST WISHES FOR AN UNUSUALLY INTERESTING AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR.

PHILATELY -- TO SAY THE WORD IS TO OPEN THE DOOR TO THE LIMITLESS VISTAS OF A FASCINATING AVOCATION. IT IS AN AVOCATION WHICH IS FOLLOWED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY YOUNG AND OLD ALIKE, BY PERSONS IN ALL WALKS OF LIFE, BY PERSONS IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD. SOMETIMES CALLED THE HOBBY OF KIDS AND KINGS, PHILATELY IN THE PAST HAS ATTRACTED SUCH NOTABLES AS KING GEORGE V OF ENGLAND, KING FUAD OF EGYPT, KING ALFONSO XIII OF SPAIN AND QUEEN MARIE OF RUMANIA. AMONG THE STAMP COLLECTORS IN AMERICA, WE FIND SUCH NAMES AS PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, THEODORE STEINWAY, THE PIANO MANUFACTURER, ADOLPHE MENJOU AND JEAN HERSHOLT, MOTION PICTURE STARS, AND MANY OTHERS.

PERHAPS EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN THE NAMING OF KINGS AND NOTABLES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHO WERE PHILATELISTS IS THE FACT THAT COUNTLESS ^{YOUNG PEOPLE} ~~KIDS~~ HAVE BECOME AVID STAMP COLLECTORS. FOR BOYS AND GIRLS OF ALL AGES THERE IS NOTHING MORE ABSORBING, MORE FASCINATING, OR MORE EDUCATIONAL THAN TO START A STAMP COLLECTION AND TO WORK DILIGENTLY TO MAKE IT GROW. TO COLLECT STAMPS IS TO ENGAGE IN A CONTINUING STUDY OF SUCH SUBJECTS AS HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY,

COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, ART, AND THE SCIENCES.

CAN YOU IMAGINE A BOY OR GIRL PHILATELIST BECOMING A JUVENILE DELINQUENT? I, FOR ONE, CERTAINLY CANNOT. A YOUNG PHILATELIST WOULD HAVE NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE INCLINATION TO ENGAGE IN SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR. THE YOUNG PHILATELIST WOULD BE TOO PREOCCUPIED DOING SUCH THINGS AS COLLECTING STAMPS, MOUNTING STAMPS AND FIRST DAY COVERS, STUDYING STAMP CATALOGUES, VISITING STAMP SHOPS, AND DREAMING OF THE DAY WHEN HIS OR HER COLLECTION WOULD INCLUDE SOME OF THE WORLD'S RARE AND EXPENSIVE STAMPS, PERHAPS ONE OF THE FABULOUS STAMPS OF THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, KNOWN AS "MISSIONARIES."

THE "MISSIONARIES," AS YOU KNOW, WERE THE FIRST HAWAIIAN STAMPS. OF THREE DENOMINATIONS, 2 CENTS, 5 CENTS, AND 13 CENTS, THEY WERE PLACED ON SALE ON OCTOBER 1, 1851. THESE EARLY HAWAIIAN STAMPS ARE CALLED THE "MISSIONARIES" BECAUSE THEY WERE FOUND ON CORRESPONDENCE FROM AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN HAWAII TO THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE 2-CENT "MISSIONARY" RANKS AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST RARITIES. BECAUSE IT WAS THE UNIT RATE OF POSTAGE ON NEWSPAPERS AND OTHER PRINTED MATTER TO THE UNITED STATES, IT DID NOT HAVE AN EXTENSIVE USE IN THE FIRST PLACE. THIS LIMITED DEMAND FOR THE STAMP, COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT THE HAWAII NEWSPAPER WRAPPERS, HAVING NO PARTICULAR SENTIMENTAL VALUE, WERE THROWN AWAY, ACCOUNTS FOR THE GREAT RARITY OF THE 2-CENT "MISSIONARY."

IN THOSE DAYS, A PERSON WHO MAILED A LETTER FROM HONOLULU TO,

SAY, NEW YORK, HAD TO PAY BOTH HAWAIIAN POSTAGE AND U. S. POSTAGE. THE 5-CENT "MISSIONARY" PAID THE HAWAIIAN POSTAGE ONLY, AND U. S. POSTAGE WAS PAID EITHER BY MEANS OF U. S. STAMPS OR IT WAS COLLECTED ON DELIVERY. ALTHOUGH THE 5-CENT "MISSIONARY" IS CONSIDERED TO BE A RARE STAMP, IT IS NOT NEARLY SO RARE AS THE 2-CENT "MISSIONARY."

THE 13-CENT "MISSIONARY" PAID THE COMPLETE POSTAGE ON OUR HONOLULU-TO-NEW YORK LETTER: 5 CENTS HAWAIIAN POSTAGE, PLUS 6 CENTS U. S. POSTAGE, PLUS 2 CENTS SHIP FEE.

WHAT IS THE VALUE THAT HAS BEEN PLACED ON "MISSIONARIES," THE EARLIEST OF HAWAIIAN STAMPS?

BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION, I OUGHT TO SAY FIRST THAT TO THE TRUE PHILATELIST HIS OR HER OWN COLLECTION IS PRICELESS. HOWEVER MODEST IT MAY BE, A STAMP COLLECTION REPRESENTS FOR ITS OWNER MANY HOURS OF PLEASURE AND RELAXATION.

HOWEVER, SINCE I AM NOT FAMILIAR WITH MONETARY VALUES PLACED ON THE "MISSIONARIES," I HAD ONE OF MY WASHINGTON STAFF MEMBERS DO A LITTLE CHECKING. HE LEARNED THAT AT AN AUCTION SALE WHICH WAS HELD IN THE 1950'S, A HAWAIIAN ISLANDS COVER WITH A 2-CENT "MISSIONARY" AND A 5-CENT "MISSIONARY" OF THE 1851-1852 PERIOD, PLUS A PAIR OF U. S. 3-CENT STAMPS, WENT TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER. IN PHILATELIC PARLANCE, THE "MISSIONARIES" HAD AN OVAL GRID CANCELLATION, AND THE U. S. PAIR BY A SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA DATE STAMP, EITHER OCTOBER 23 OR OCTOBER 28, 1852.

THE COVER WAS SOLD FOR \$25,000!

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE INFLATIONARY TREND OF THE INTERVENING YEARS, WE CAN ONLY GUESS WHAT THAT COVER WOULD BRING TODAY IF IT IS SOLD AT AUCTION. IT WOULD COMMAND AN ASTRONOMICAL FIGURE!

THE "MISSIONARIES," LINKED AS THEY WERE WITH THE BEGINNINGS OF HAWAIIAN POSTAL SERVICE, PROBABLY WILL ALWAYS BE UNIQUE IN THE POSTAL HISTORY OF THE NATIONS.

THE THRUST OF THE PROPOSED CAPTAIN COOK COMMEMORATIVE STAMP IS FAR DIFFERENT FROM THAT WHICH HAD PROMPTED THE ISSUE OF THE "MISSIONARIES." FOR THE BENEFIT OF PERSONS WHO ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE PROPOSED CAPTAIN COOK STAMP, I WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT A BRIEF SUMMARY.

IT IS FAMILIAR HAWAIIAN HISTORY, OF COURSE, THAT CAPTAIN JAMES COOK, OF THE BRITISH NAVY, IS CREDITED ^{WITH} ~~FOR~~ HAVING "DISCOVERED" THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, OR THE SANDWICH ISLANDS, AS HE NAMED THEM, AFTER THE EARL OF SANDWICH. WE KNOW, TOO, THAT CAPTAIN COOK WAS KILLED ON THE BIG ISLAND ON FEBRUARY 14, 1779, ON HIS SECOND VOYAGE TO HAWAII. NOT SO FAMILIAR, HOWEVER, IS THE FACT THAT IT WAS IN THE WATERS OFF WHAT IS NOW WAIMEA, KAUAI, THAT CAPTAIN COOK FIRST ANCHORED HIS SHIPS "DISCOVERY" AND "RESOLUTION" AND CAME ASHORE IN JANUARY, 1778.

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED TO THE U. S. POSTAL AUTHORITIES THAT A CAPTAIN COOK STAMP, OF APPROPRIATE DESIGN, BE ISSUED IN JANUARY, 1978 TO COMMEMORATE THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BRITISH NAVAL OFFICER'S LANDING IN HAWAII.

IN THE EFFORT ^{WHICH NOW SPANS} ~~NOW SPANNING~~ A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS, TO HAVE A CAPTAIN COOK COMMEMORATIVE STAMP ISSUED IN 1978, THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY IS THE RECOGNIZED LEADER. AS A MATTER OF HISTORICAL INTEREST, YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT IT WAS IN 1973 THAT I FIRST WROTE TO THE POSTMASTER GENERAL IN SUPPORT OF THE CAPTAIN COOK COMMEMORATIVE STAMP PROPOSAL. MORE RECENTLY, I WROTE TO POSTMASTER GENERAL BENJAMIN F. BAILLAR REGARDING THE COMMEMORATIVE STAMP. BY HIS LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 28, 1976, MR. BAILLAR STATED THAT WHILE THE POSTAL SERVICE WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO PROMISE FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION OF THE CAPTAIN COOK STAMP PROPOSAL, HE ASSURED ME THAT IT WOULD BE "CAREFULLY CONSIDERED" BY THE CITIZENS' STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE, WHICH IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE STAMP PROGRAM FOR 1978.

YOU ARE ASSURED OF MY CONTINUING INTEREST AND SUPPORT WITH RESPECT TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE CAPTAIN COOK COMMEMORATIVE STAMP AND ACCOMPANYING "FIRST DAY OF ISSUE" CEREMONIES IN HAWAII.

ANOTHER MAJOR HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY PROJECT FOR 1978 WHICH I PLAN TO SUPPORT VERY STRONGLY IS THE RESTORATION OF THE KAMEHAMEHA V POST OFFICE BUILDING TO HOUSE THE HAWAII POSTAL MUSEUM. THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KAMEHAMEHA V POST OFFICE, WHICH FOR MANY YEARS WAS DUBBED "THE BETHEL STREET POST OFFICE" BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION AT THE CORNER OF MERCHANT AND BETHEL STREETS, WAS NOT KNOWN TO MANY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE. BY ELEVATING THE STRUCTURE TO ITS RIGHTFUL STATUS AS A PERMANENT PUBLIC SHOW PLACE, THE KAMEHAMEHA V POST OFFICE COULD BECOME

A NATIONAL TOURIST ATTRACTION.

HOWEVER, THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT FEDERAL FUNDS SHOULD BE SOUGHT UNDER THE HISTORIC SITES, BUILDINGS AND ANTIQUITIES ACT IS ONE THAT NEEDS TO BE STUDIED FURTHER. FUNDING UNDER THAT ACT WOULD MEAN THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR WOULD TAKE JURISDICTION OF THE PROJECT AND OPERATE AND MANAGE IT. SUCH A COURSE, IF FOLLOWED, MAY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF MUCH OF THE VISITOR APPEAL AND LOCAL CHARM OF THE HAWAII POSTAL MUSEUM.

A FAR BETTER COURSE, IT SEEMS TO ME, IS TO RETAIN LOCAL CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT OF THE BUILDING RESTORATION PROJECT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POSTAL MUSEUM. WHETHER THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED ON A FEDERAL-STATE MATCHING FUND BASIS IS A FURTHER QUESTION THAT I INTEND TO EXPLORE.

I HAVE TAKEN THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TOUCH UPON A FEW OF THE VISTAS THAT I BELIEVE THE WORD "PHILATELY" SUGGESTS. A COMPOUND OF TWO GREEK WORDS, "PHILOS," MEANING "A FONDNESS OF," AND "ATELEIA," INDICATING "A TAX RECEIPT," PHILATELY AS WE KNOW THE WORD TODAY WAS FIRST SUGGESTED IN 1863 BY M. G. HERPIN OF FRANCE.

AS THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY CONTINUES TO ADVANCE THE MAJOR PROJECTS I HAVE MENTIONED, I SINCERELY HOPE THAT MEMBERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION, WHETHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN GROUPS, WILL ALSO WORK DILIGENTLY TO INTEREST THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF HAWAII IN PHILATELY. BY DOING SO, THE HAWAIIAN PHILATELIC SOCIETY WILL MAKE A LASTING CONTRIBUTION TO THE PEOPLE OF HAWAII AND ALSO

ENSURE, WITH RESPECT TO ITS OWN LIFE, A BRIGHT AND VIGOROUS
FUTURE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.