

Early Road Maps of Hawaii

by Stan DeOrsey (RMCA #76)

Hawaii became a state in 1959 and published its first official state highway map in 1963. Prior to this there were a few oil companies which did business in Hawaii and distributed road maps, for example Chevron, Texaco, Union, and a few others. But these oil company maps only go back to the 1950s. Surely there were roads in Hawaii many years earlier; there must have been maps, maybe official maps?

While the preferred originator of official maps is the state highway department, often the state tourist department issued the official state highway map. In Hawaii during its early territorial days, actually beginning in 1903, four organizations banded together to form a joint tourist agency and they issued maps, official or at least semiofficial.

The four founding organizations were:

Chamber of Commerce of Honolulu (Oahu island)

Hilo Board of Trade (Hawaii island)

Maui Chamber of Commerce (Maui island)

Kauai Chamber of Commerce (Kauai island)

Evolution of Hawaii tourist agencies:

Hawaii Promotion Committee 1903-1919

Hawaii Tourist Bureau 1919-1943

Hawaii Travel Bureau 1943-1945

Hawaii Visitors Bureau 1945-1996

Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau 1996-date

A 1917 map by the Hawaii Publicity Commission has also been seen. It is not clear if this is a misprinted name or another organization.

Hawaii comprises eight main islands. The following are the islands, area in square miles, and 1920 population.

Hawaii	4038	64,895
Maui	729	36,080
Oahu	608	123,496

Kauai	553	29,247
Molokai	261	1,784
Lanai	140	185
Niihau	73	191
Kahoolawe	45	3

One can clearly see that the first four islands dominate in terms of both physical size and 1920 population, which explains why only four islands were included in the early tourist organization. Lanai, Niihau, and Kahoolawe are each privately owned, Kahoolawe by the US Government. While Molokai was owned by many individuals and companies, the low population initially voided the need to be included in tourist promotions.

The Hawaii Promotion Committee published five maps: one each of the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai plus a separate map of the city of Honolulu, far and away the largest city. It is not clear when these maps were first issued but maps are known from 1911. It seems that each map was not published every year but all were issued many times. The designs from the beginning to the early 1930s were of a road map of the entire island with one or no insets, plus lists of hotels, attractions, and transportation services. Drafting was provided by local people, and different for each island. For Oahu in the 1920s, the Honolulu Automobile Club is credited. Usually the same map was used for a number of years but the drafting changed over time.

By 1929 Honolulu was included on the Oahu map but in the 1930s two maps were again issued. Also by the mid-1930s maps were printed in two colors with a cover of less text. About 1937 a map of Molokai appeared. Then the war hit, quite literally in Hawaii's case. Tourist Bureau maps ceased to be issued until the early 1950s, certainly by 1952, perhaps earlier. By now the maps were more like travel brochures with photos, but free oil company maps were also readily available of the entire territory.

As can be seen, it was "normal" to publish maps of an individual island rather than the entire territory, which is mostly water plus islands without public access.

George Armitage was secretary of the Hawaii Tourist Bureau from 1920. With Tourist Bureau maps not available he decided to publish his own Honolulu map for use by military personnel and others who were now stationed or passing through Oahu. His maps of Honolulu and Oahu (one map, with one inset of all the islands) are found in a variety of editions and printings starting in 1942 and continuing into at least the 1970s. Most editions are printed on a bewildering variety of pastel colored paper. Apparently he printed a few each time paper

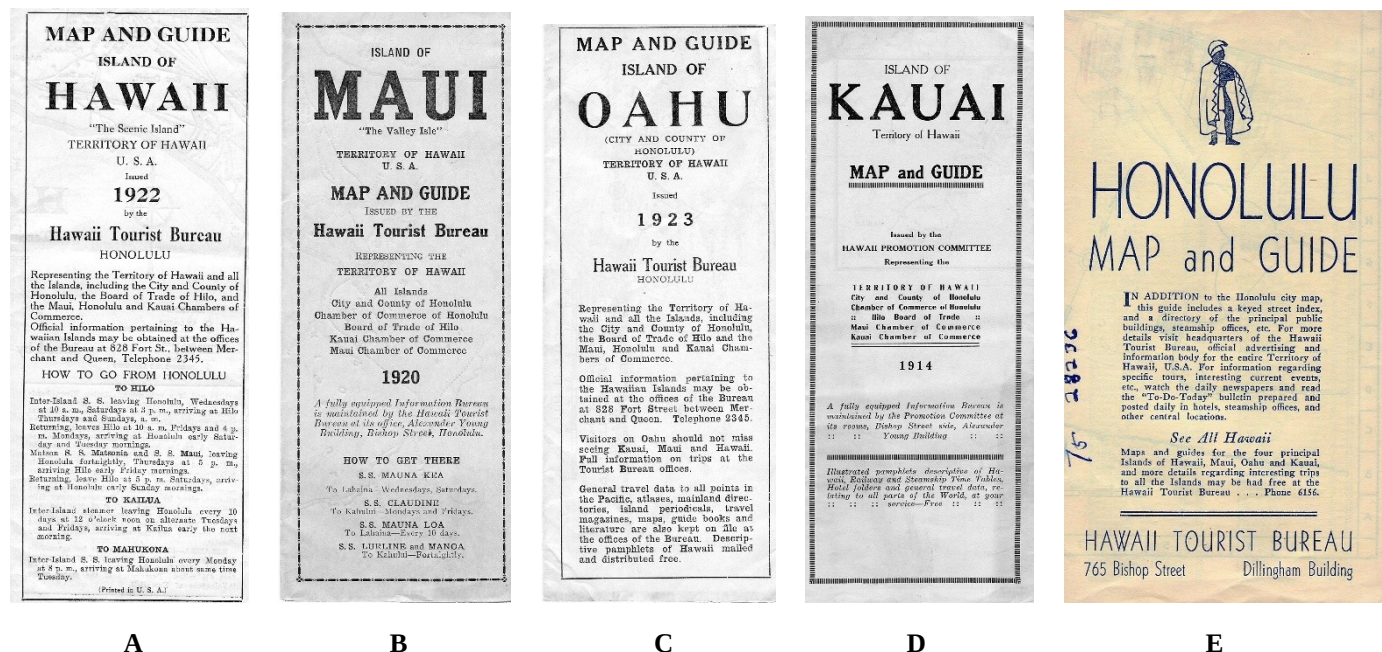
supplies became available during the war. They exist attributed to George Armitage, Lousie and George T. Armitage, Hawaiian Service, and Island Map Service.

One other person who took advantage of the war was Edwin H. Bryan, Jr. He had written articles for the *Honolulu Advertiser* newspaper about tiny Pacific islands or atolls. These island overviews were collected in the book *American Polynesia* published in 1941 and expanded in 1942 under the title *American Polynesia and the Hawaiian Chain*. Each of the northwest chain of islands, part of Hawaii, are included along with small maps. A very fascinating book of these seldom mapped areas.

Byran also published a booklet of sectional maps of Honolulu in 1943. Expanded to include all of Oahu, it continued at least into the 1980s with frequent editions. Lastly, he published Captain Byran's Pacific War Atlas containing 75 maps with full index. It went through at least four editions (or printings?), but has little on Hawaii.

Of course there are other early maps, some by the USO, ones by Honolulu Transit (trolley and bus) as well as topographic map sheets. But few are really road maps.

For current maps, the set by James Bier must be mentioned. They are full color maps of each island with shaded topography. They have been issued in multiple editions starting in the mid-1970s. Titles include Moloka'i and Lana'i, Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i. He has also published similar maps of Western and American Samoa, plus Oceania.



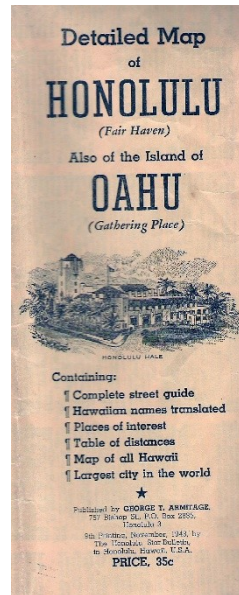
A: *Hawaii, 1922, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafting not credited, 1916.*

B: *Maui, 1920, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted by Hugh Howell, 1915.*

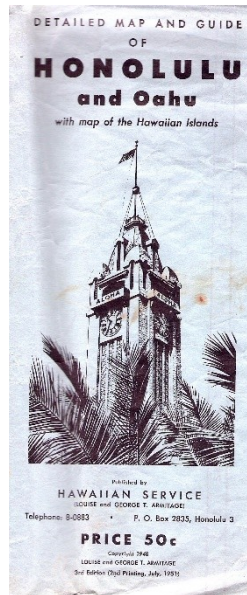
C: *Oahu, 1923, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted for Honolulu Automobile Club by U. Matsu, 1921.*

D: *Kauai, 1914, for Hawaii Promotion Committee. Map drafted by H.E. Newton, 1908.*

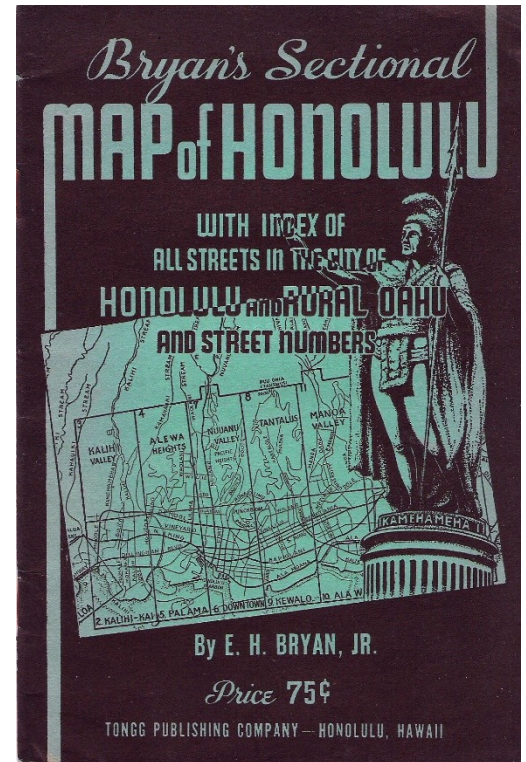
E: *Honolulu, 1939, for Hawaii Tourist Bureau. Map drafted by James B. Mann, 1939, "especially for the Hawaii Tourist Bureau."*



Honolulu and Oahu, 9th printing, 1943, by George T. Armitage. Honolulu map drafted by James B. Mann, 1942, "especially for George T. Armitage." Identical to Hawaii Tourist Bureau map. Oahu and islands maps not credited.



Honolulu and Oahu, 3rd edition, 2nd printing, 1951, copyright 1948, by Hawaiian Service, Lousie and George T. Armitage. Very similar to 1943 map, only updated. Honolulu map by David A. Awana.



Bryan's Sectional Map of Honolulu, 1943 (first edition), by E.H. Bryan, Jr.