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Kilauea Volcano in Eruption on Postals



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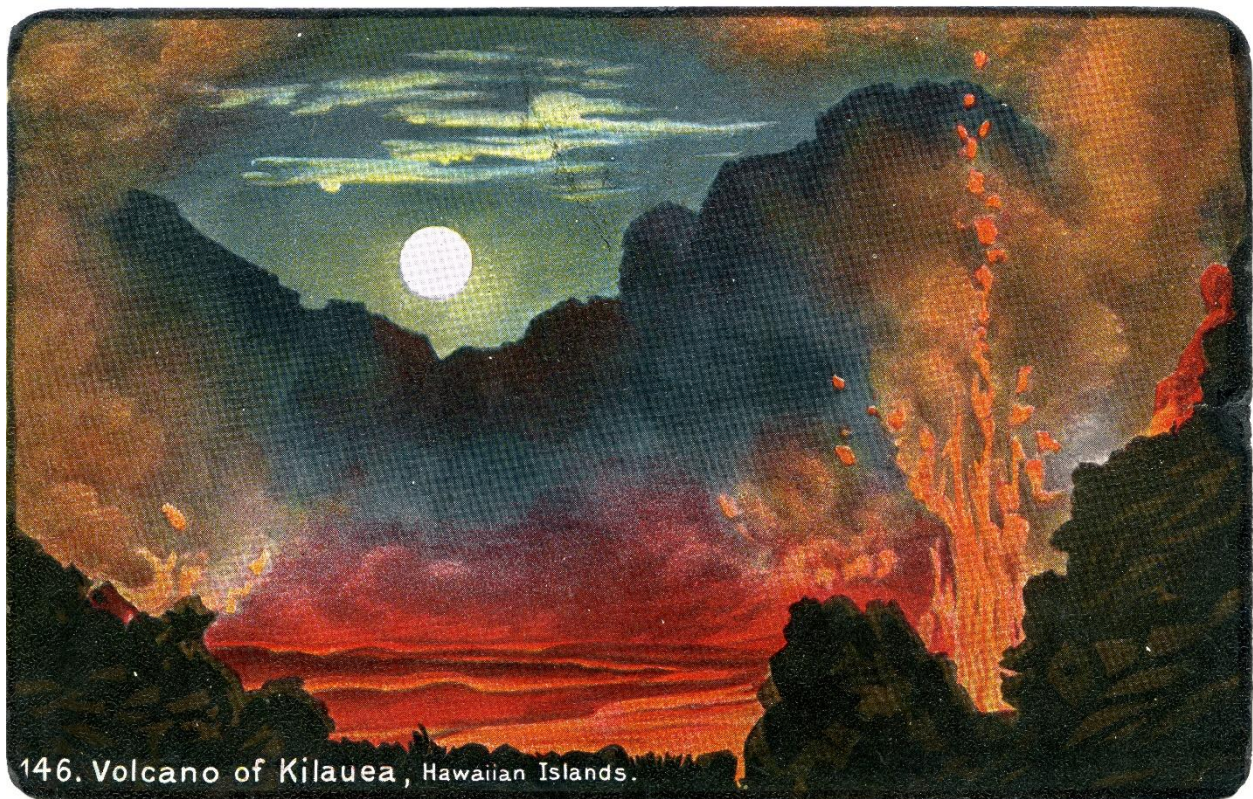
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KILAUEA VOLCANO IN ERUPTION ON POSTALS

By David A Anderson

We are currently hearing news reports about the eruption of Kilauea Volcano, Hawaii. These reports tell about lava flows burning homes in the Leilani Estates area, as well as more violent explosions at the summit which are somewhat reminiscent of some of the pre-May 18, 1980 eruptions from Mount St. Helens.

Post cards and their usage can tell us a lot about activity at active volcanoes which attract curious tourists who wanted to tell friends and relatives about what they saw!



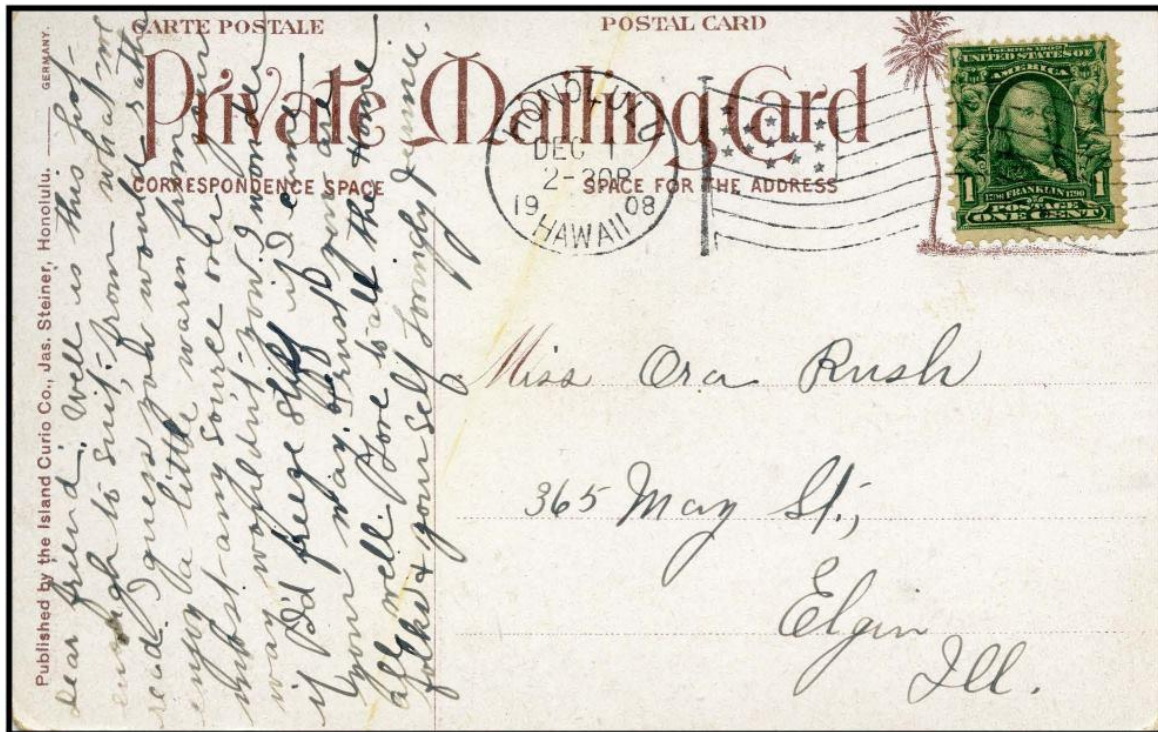
Singeing postals was a favorite activity for tourists who would want to prove to friends and relatives that they had indeed seen the volcano. This card exhibits evidence of singeing. The image is from a 1909 painting of Kilauea's lava lake by Grace Woodward.



The message tells a bit about the volcanic sights, in addition to some gentlemen met!

In the 1830s Kilauea caldera had a broad dome near the site of what is now called Halemaumau crater. The crater at the top of the dome held an active lava lake that was fairly easily accessible to tourists. The lava lake was given the name of Halemaumau (House of the *ma'u ma'u* fern) in 1838 by a Count Strzelecki, and that name for the spot has remained in use since.



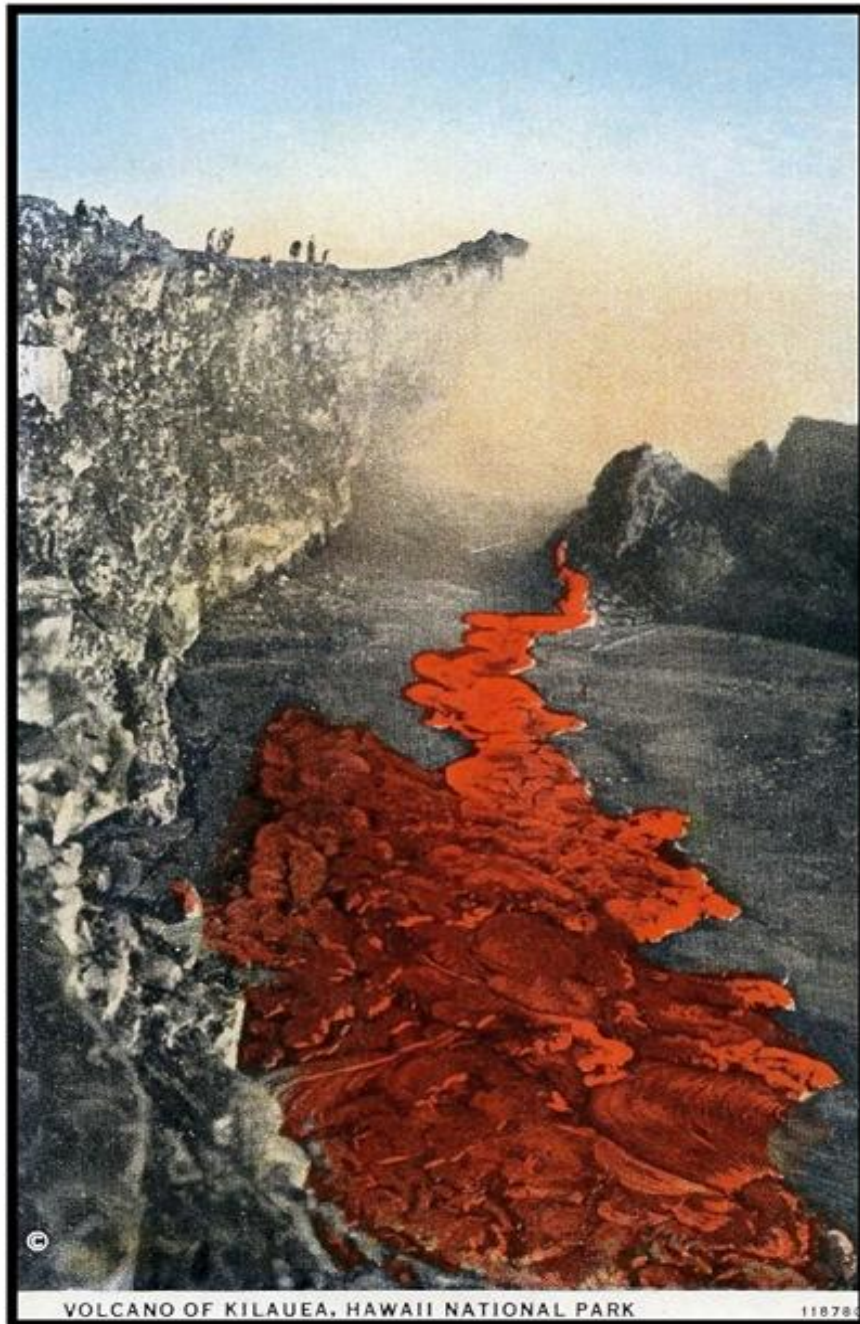


The sender brags about the warmth of the volcano to someone enduring an Elgin, Illinois winter!

Between 1823 and 1894 activity at Kilauea was almost continuous with rises and collapses of the caldera floor, in addition to some flank eruptions that occurred on the East, or South-West Rift zones. (Current activity in the Puna District is on the East Rift Zone). Between 1894 and 1907 Kilauea was fairly quiet with only some activity in the Halemaumau pit. From 1907 until 1924 Kilauea was almost continuously active with a lava lake being prominent at Halemaumau.



Singing or Toasting the corners of your postcard prior to mailing proved that you indeed had visited Kilauea Volcano!



Tourists stand at the edge of Halemaumau Crater to watch the hypnotic volcanic activity.

In early 1924 the lava lake was almost overflowing on to the crater floor. In April a swarm of earthquakes began. The epicenters of the swarm moved down the east rift indicating magma (molten rock not yet erupted) was moving away from the summit eastwards along the rift. It is thought that the magma did erupt, but underwater east of Cape Kumukahi (the eastern cape on Hawaii)

On May 18, 1924, following subsidence of Halemaumau and smaller explosions, the great 1924 explosion occurred. It sent ash and rocks up to four miles high. An 8-ton boulder thrown out during this eruption landed where, in time, the parking lot for the Halemaumau overlook would be constructed. During the mid-2018 activity, the overlook has fallen into the crater, while the parking lot is being torn apart by subsidence and faulting.



A rustic Volcano House in 1861.

At first accommodations at the summit of Kilauea were a bit rustic. The hotel, known as Volcano House, was first located a bit away from the crater's edge.



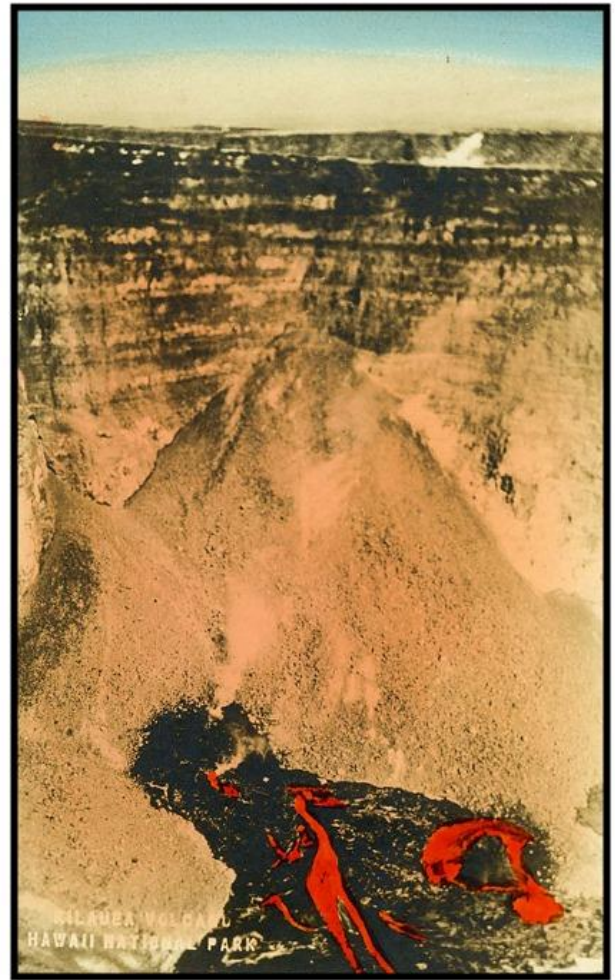
The hotel's location was moved to its current location on the edge, and with a view, of Kilauea Caldera. The new hotel was a touch more comfortable and spacious than the original.



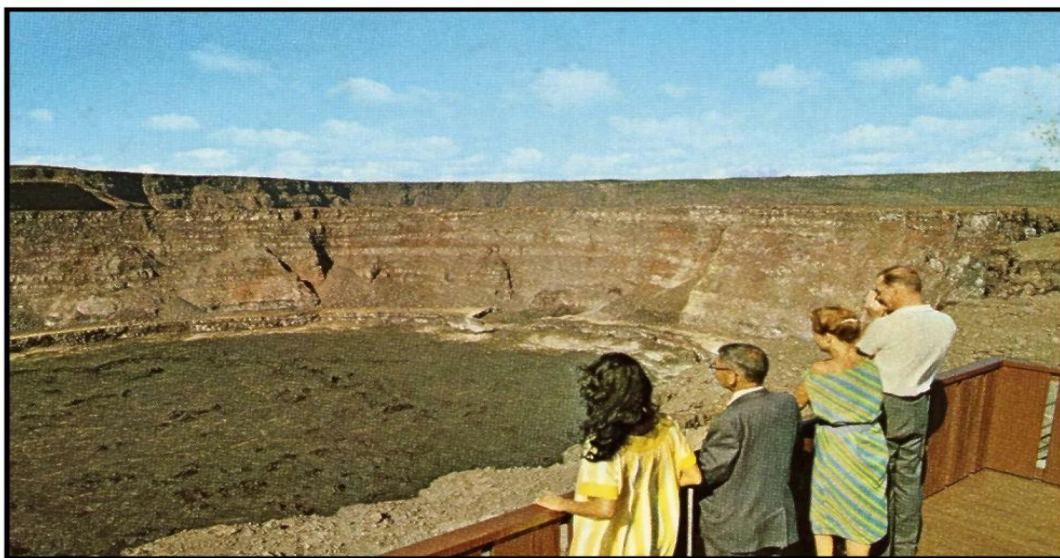
The author first saw Kilauea erupting in 1973 at Mauna Ulu.



And then again, the author returned in December 2016, visiting the summit and witnessing the active lava lake in Halemaumau Crater.



As a result of the 1924 eruption, Halemaumau went from a 1400 foot diameter crater to one of 3,000 in diameter and over 1300 feet deep. Benchmarks re-surveyed after the May 1924 explosions showed that the summit of Kilauea sunk about 4 feet at Volcano House and 11 feet at Halemaumau's edge!



Starting in July 1924 seven short eruptions filled Halemaumau to about 700 in depth. From 1934 to 1952 Kilauea was quiet, with no eruptions. It rested. In June 1952 intermittent eruptive activity returned and raised the floor of Halemaumau.

UPCOMING SHOW IN PORTLAND

A vintage sepia-toned photograph of three people with motorcycles in a field. A man in a dark suit stands in the center, leaning on the handlebars of a motorcycle. To his left, a woman in a light-colored dress sits on another motorcycle. To his right, another woman in a light-colored dress sits on a third motorcycle. The background shows trees and a field.

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