

United States: The 1847 Issue

5¢ orange brown & 10¢
(Harelip variety,
Position 57L).



Double weight
< 300 miles from
Charleston, SC to
Philadelphia, PA.

Purpose and Treatment of the Exhibit

This exhibit is a study of the two first regularly issued stamps of the United States. It looks at the production of the 1847 stamps and their varieties (including deliveries, colors and shades, double transfers and the bisects). As well, a detailed review is made of the many domestic and international postal and auxiliary services usages. All elements of a traditional exhibit, from concept to demonetization, are studied.

Most reprints of the essays, proofs and stamps came from the private dies of 1858 and the Bureau and Engraving dies made in 1875. During the 19th Century, both sets of dies were used to pull prints on numerous occasions. All these post-contemporary reprints are beyond the scope of this exhibit.

Research

The exhibitor has made use of the most up to date literature and consulted the classic works of the 19th and 20th Centuries. 10¢ stamps have been fully plated by researchers but positions are mentioned in the exhibit only where they are germane to the exhibit's development. However, the 5¢ has not been plated because of the rapid degradation of the plate due to the corrosive properties of the inks.

Research: A Note About Color

Stamp catalogues usually list four major shade groups of the 1847 5¢ stamp. The

exhibit subscribes to the recent study done by Wade Saadi who records 27 major shades incorporating 100 sub-classifications based on varying degrees of plate wear and printing deliveries for identification. The *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature* published in 1912 by Robert Ridgway (1850-1929) is the basis used for the color naming in this exhibit.

History

The Post Office Act of March 3, 1847, authorized the Postmaster General (PMG) to have postage stamps printed. The New York printing firm of Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson (RWH&E) was awarded the stamp contract.

The Franklin and Washington portraits selected for the 5¢ and 10¢ vignettes were engraved by Asher B. Durand (1796-1886) and were used previously for various banknotes in the 1830/40s. The frames were engraved by James P. Major (1818-1900). The first printing was completed on June 26. Four more printings were made during the life of the stamps (1847-1851).

The stamps were printed in sheets of 200 cut into panes of 100 on wove rag stock produced by Wilcox Ivy Mills, Chester, PA. A dextrine gum was applied to each sheet.

“e” – The letter “e” near an item in the exhibit indicates that the item has a certificate of genuineness issued by a recognized authority.

Plan of the Exhibit

Section One: Production History

- A. Contract & Contemporary Die Proofs
- B. Contemporary Plate Proofs
- C. Plate Make-Up
- D. Earliest Known Usage

Section Two: The Five Cents

- A. The Stamp
- B. Plate varieties
- C. Printing Variations
- D. Deliveries & Shades

Section Three: The Ten Cents

- A. The Stamp
- B. Plate Varieties
- C. Printing Variations
- D. Bisects

Section Four: The Domestic Usages

- A. Domestic Mail
- B. Auxiliary Postal Services
- C. With Carrier Services & Local Post
- D. Route Agents
- E. Non-Contract Steamboats

Section Five: Used Abroad

- A. British North America
- B. Panama

Section Six: Foreign Mails

- A. British North America
- B. Western Hemisphere
- C. British Isles
- D. Europe via the British Isles

Section Seven: Epilogue – After Demonetization

- A. Last Day of Validity & First Day of Demonetization.
 - B. Stamps Not Accepted for Payment
 - C. Stamps Accepted for Payment
 - D. Used in Canada
 - E. Used in the Confederacy
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Section One: Production History

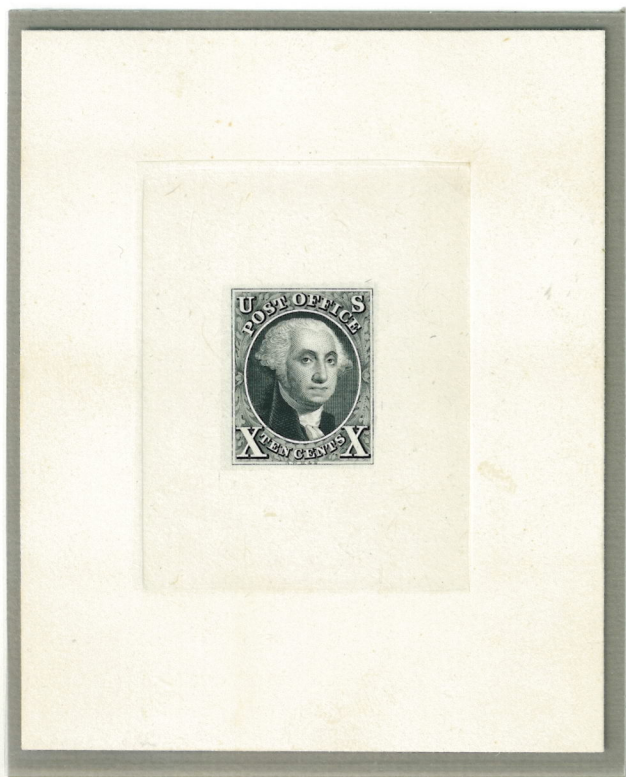
A. Contract and Contemporary Die Proofs

RWH&E Contract Small and Large Die Proofs

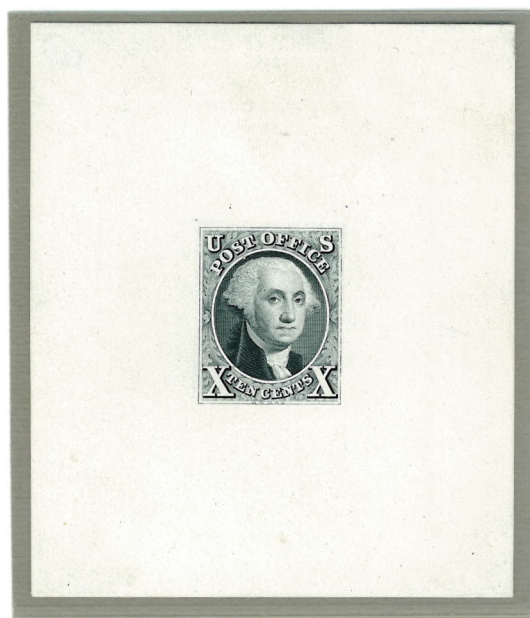
On March 3, 1847, the United States Congress passed an Act to authorize the first general issue of adhesive postage stamps. The Postmaster General, with the help of Robert Morris, Postmaster at New York City, contracted with Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson (RWH&E) for the production of a 5¢ and a 10¢ stamp to be issued July 1, 1847. The stamps were produced on steel plates in sheets of 200 subjects which, once printed, were cut to post office panes of 100 stamps.



The contemporary die proofs of the 5¢ value can be distinguished from those printed at a later date. The very fine impression of the printing is free of the minute defects found on the 1858 or later impressions.



On India paper sunk on card. e



On glazed light card.

The 10¢ die proofs show a not quite finished die with a faint engraver's guide line defining the arc of "TEN CENTS" and background engraved lines extending into the white oval behind Washington's head.

B. Contemporary Plate Proofs

Without "Specimen"
With "Specimen" - The Judge Emerson Block

Original plate proofs were printed in brown, black and orange on India paper mounted on card. Five-cent plate proofs are identified by the absence of a line through the left frame at the bottom of the "U". Ten-cent plate proofs differ from die proofs by having recut frame lines and position dots in the left trifoliate in all rows from 2 to 10.



Position 31R
"POST OFFICE"
Double transfer "B"
Faint red "Specimen" e



One of the largest multiples in existence

The Judge Emerson "Specimen" Block
The second largest "Specimen" multiple known of the issue



On India paper - Positions 35L-40L, 75L-80L.

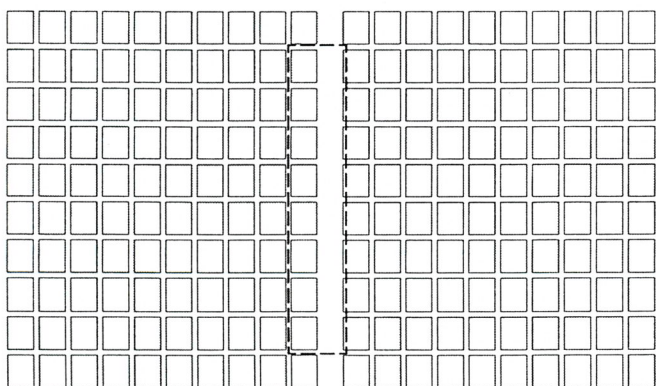
The 9th row (positions 39, 49, 59, 69 and 79), second to right in this block, show the Dot in "S" variety.

C. Plate Make-Up

Sheets of 200 - Panes of 100 The Three Recorded Straddle Pane Pieces

The printers, RWH&E, used a 200-subject plate to print the 5¢ and 10¢ stamps. Although this is not confirmed by contemporaneous documents, it is highly likely as the same printers printed Canadian stamps with the same plate size and layout in the same time period. The Canadian Postal Archives owns a complete sheet of proofs of Canada's first stamp to prove the point. The US sheets were later cut into panes of 100 for distribution to post offices. Until Elliot Perry discovered the 10¢ straddle pane copy it was widely held that the 1847 stamps were printed in sheets of 100. Both John Luff and Carroll Chase subscribed to this belief.

The layout of the sheet of 200 subjects



The Straddle Pane Stamps



Orange brown

From the 10th vertical row - left pane (L). *e*

There are two recorded copies of the 5¢ and one of the 10¢. All three are in this exhibit



Brown - From the 1st vertical row - right pane (R)
7.15 mm. center margin.

e (Stamp lifted and unfolded to show complete margin)

Position 1R with double transfer Type "A" with 8.5 mm. center margin and portion of left pane stamp (Position 10L). *e*



D. Earliest Known Usage of a
US General Issue Postage Stamp

July 2, 1847

Positions 71-72L



JY 2, 1847, to Indianapolis, IN.

The two 10¢ stamps partly pay the 30¢ triple domestic weight (10¢ per ½ oz. for letters travelling > 300 miles). The letter was discovered to be overweight and an additional 10¢ was charged to the recipient.

Section Two: The Five Cents

A. The Stamp

The Largest Recorded Multiples

Contrary to the 10¢, the 5¢ has never been plated – with the exception of constant plate variety positions – because the plate wore out quickly due to the degradation of the ink making impressions very inconsistent between sheets.

Largest recorded mint block



Red brown - Positions 21-24/51-54R.

Largest known reconstruction



Five horizontal pairs hinged together.
Dark brown - Early impression. *e*

Largest recorded unused strip



Orange brown *e*

A. The Stamp

Largest Recorded 1847
Issue Multiple on Cover



JU 9, 1851 to Waukegan, IL.

Quintuple 10¢ rate
(2-2½ oz) > 300 miles.

Left pane strip of ten red brown
stamps with no trace of the Dot in
"S" variety on the 9th stamp. e

A. The Stamp

Blocks



Deep brown
(Small repair at bottom left corner)



Dark brown e



Deep dark brown e

*There are three blocks on cover recorded, this being the only recorded domestic usage of the 5¢ block of the 1847 issue
The other two are to Canada and to England and are in this exhibit*



Orange brown e

AP 27, 18??, to Albany, NY. Double 10¢ rate (½ -1 oz.) > 300 miles.

A. The Stamp

Sheet Margin Copies



Position 10L
Red brown e



Position 91R
Vertical line at bottom left.
Red brown e



Position 100R



Clockwise from top left: **Positions 1R** (AP 24, 1851), **100R** (JA 10, 1849) and **91L** (MR 19, 1851) .

A. The Stamp

Sheet Margin Copies



Red brown
Left margin



Deep red brown
Position 92R



Brown
Right margin



AU 23, 1848 to Montgomery, AL. Position 41R



JU 12, 18?? to Philadelphia, PA. Only known 1847 cover from this town

B. Plate Varieties

Double Transfers Types "A-D"

Double transfers – plate varieties in which a portion of the design is doubled – were made on the plate by the transfer roll when it created an accidental doubling as the design was laid down. These transfers were discovered in the first half of the 20th Century and unlike "E" and "F", have not been given names.



Type "A", position 80R.
Doubling of frame lines
at top and bottom.
Deep red brown *e*



Type "B", position 90R.
Doubling of frame at bottom
and re-entry in left margin.
Red brown *e*



Type "C" (right stamp).
Doubling of frame line
at bottom left and right.
Red brown *e*



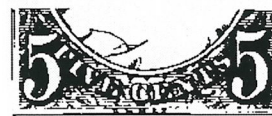
Type "A"



Type "B"



Type "C"



Type "D" in upper left position, late printing. - **Orange brown**
Frame lines doubled almost all around. *e*



*Only recorded block with
Type "D" double transfer*



Type "D"

B. Plate Varieties

Double Transfers Type "E" - The "Mower Shift" Type "F" - The "Wagshal Shift"

Recent research now indicates that the Type "E" or "The Mower Shift" may not be a double transfer but rather plate scratches or flaws caused by some foreign object on the plate as it does not show the constant doubling of the lines attributed to double transfers. Position unknown.



Brown *e*



Type "E"



Red brown *e*



JA 9, 18??, to Rochester, NY. "The Mower Shift" is in the upper stamp.

Only known vertical pair showing this variety



Type "F"

Type "F" – The "Wagshal Shift" – Double transfer of the top frame line and the upper part of side frame line, "U" and "Post Office". *e*

Six copies are recorded

B. Plate Varieties

The "T" Plate Crack - Position 69R

The **"T" Plate Crack** is found when the left branch of the "T" in "POST" is severed from the rest of the letter by a prominent line of color extending slightly at both top (to the margin) and bottom (to the oval) of the letter. The variety has been found on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th deliveries of stamps from the printers. It likely exists on copies from the 4th delivery but none have been recorded to date.



Deep brown
1st delivery



Pale red brown
Discovery copy
2nd delivery



Red brown
Light inking.
2nd delivery



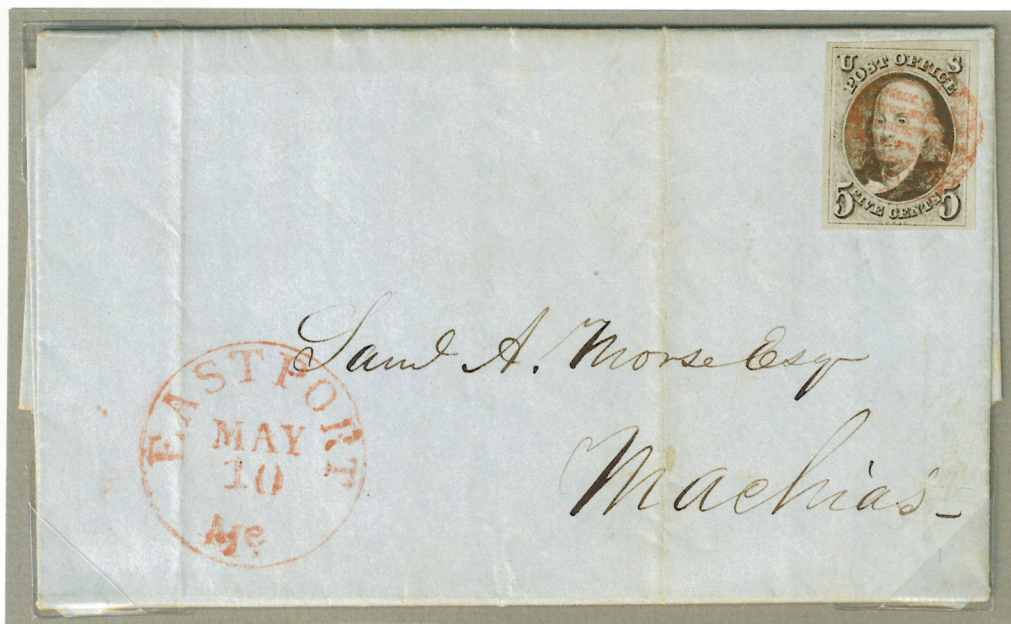
Red brown
Heavy inking.
2nd delivery



Red brown
Only recorded copy
5th delivery



Seal brown - 1st delivery
OC 23, 1847 to Milwaukee, WI.
Underpaid by 5¢ as distance was
more than 300 miles.



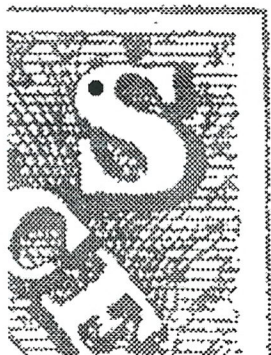
Red brown - 3rd delivery
MY 10, 1849 to Machias, ME.

Approximately 19 "T" Plate Cracks are recorded. This is one of two copies recorded missing the "tick" mark in the left margin beside the "U" on 1st and 2nd delivery copies.

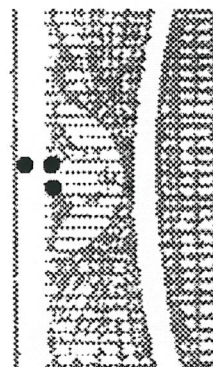
B. Plate Varieties

The Dot in "S" Variety - Position 69L

This variety is recognizable by the dot in the "S" of "US". The variety is found on the stamps of the 9th vertical row of the left pane. Only position 69L has three dots in the trifoliate as well. The dot in the "S" deteriorates as the printings progress.



Orange brown e



AU 30, 1848
Bister



MR 1, 1851
Light reddish brown



AP 20, 1849 to New York, NY via the Norwich & Worcester Railroad and Long Island Sound steamer. Overweight - 5¢ due.



Positions 69-70L - NO 28, 1849 to New York, NY. ^e
Posted from Canada during the period (MY 15, 1849-AP 5, 1851) where
US postage could be pre-paid (in cash or in US stamps) or left unpaid.

B. Plate Varieties

Other Plated Varieties - Position 1L, 91R and 100R & L
Unplated Varieties - Recuts



Position 1L - Red brown ^e
Curved vertical line top left corner.



Position 100L - Red brown ^e
Vertical guide line visible at right side.



Position 91R ^e
Extra vertical line at bottom left.



Recut left frame line upper right stamp,
broken line upper left stamp. **Red brown** ^e
Only recorded block with a recut variety



Position 91R
Dark brown ^e



Position 100R - Dark brown ^e
Horizontal line at bottom right of frame line.