THE ESSAYS, PROOFS AND PATENT EXPERIMENTALS OF THE UNITED STATES 3¢ BANKNOTE

RONALD BURNS

AS RECEIVED BY

THE EXHIBITION PHOTOCOPY COMMITTEE

OF THE

U.S. PHILATELIC CLASSICS SOCIETY, INC.

MARCH 2006

The ESSAYS, PROOFS and PATENT EXPERIMENTALS of the UNITED STATES 3¢ BANKNOTE

The Ronald A. Burns Collection as exhibited at INDYPEX 2000, July 21, 22,23, 2000 at the RCA Dome, the 500 Ballroom.

A single subject stamp collection, it contains 223 items as of July, 2000, of which 55 items or 25% are unlisted in the stamp catalogs.

The collection was assembled between 1990 and 2000.

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The ESSAYS, PROOFS and PATENT EXPERIMENTALS of the UNITED STATES 3¢ BANKNOTE



Unique pencil and wash drawing of a frame design with a pasted on carmine engraved vignette portrait of George Washington by Joseph P. Ourdan, circa October 1869.

Ex Earl of Crawford

The one thing in common the stamps of this exhibit will have is that they all show the vignette of Washington engraved by Joseph P. Ourdan (1828-1881), a picture and portrait engraver with the National Bank Note Company.

The vignette engraving was probably started in September of 1869, for by October, Butler Packard (1838-1913), a designer and engraver at National had a carmine proof pulled from the incomplete vignette engraving to which he modeled a frame design.

From this model Douglas S. Ronaldson (1825-1902), a ornamental and letter engraver with National engraved the frame and lettering as seen on the finished Issue of 1870 3¢ die.

Outline

Title Page---original 3¢ banknote model.
Outline------artist's proof.

I. National Bank Note Co. essays & proofs.

Die Proofs	8 pages
Plate Proofs	5 pages
Experimentals & Patents	4 pages
Presentation Specimens	1 page
1872 Envelope Essays	15 pages
I.R.S. Essay Design	1 page

II. Continental essays & proofs.

Die Proofs	3 pages
Plate Proofs	3 pages
Experimentals & Patents	5 pages
Issue of 1877 Design	1 page
The 3¢ Officials	1 page

III. American essays & proofs, 1879 design.

Die Proof, Hybrid	1 page
Plate Proofs	3 pages
The 1890 Model	1 page

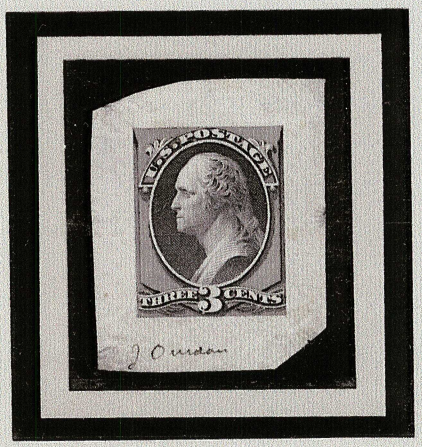
IV. American essays & proofs, 1881 design.

Die Proofs	12 pages
Plate Proofs	3 pages
Experimentals & Patents	3 pages
Specimen & Sample Overprints	2 pages
The 1883 Model	1 page
American Posthumous Essays	2 pages

V. Bureau of Engraving & Printing Die Proofs.

Trial Color "Roosevelt"	1 page
"Roosevelt" small die proofs	1 page
"Pan-Pacific" small die proofs	1 page

Artist's Proof



Signed J Ourdan, the vignette engraver. Black proof in the November 4th. 1869 die state. It appears that at one time this proof may have been mounted in a scrapbook. Until recent years it was customary for the artist to keep samples of their own work.

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Watch for the BLUE DOT it marks the essays & proofs not yet listed in the UPSS catalogue or the Scott Specialized Catalogue.

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For The Record: The essays and proofs in this exhibit and study come from many sources, such as the archives of the Post Office Dept., the files of the National, Continental, and the American Bank Note Companies. In the 20th. Century the Bureau of Engraving and Printing would produce at least 480 die prints from the two 3¢ banknote dies.

A number of items in the exhibit are samples kept by the various artists involved in the production of these stamps. Plus there are many types of presentation items that were produced and given away to various officials, the Press, or were made available to the public who requested specimens for their stamp collections.

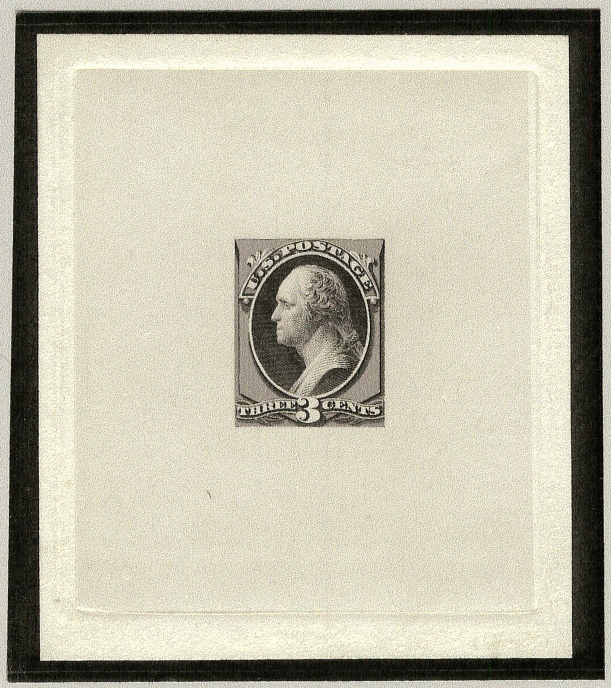
I. The National 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Die Proofs of November 1869

On November 4th. 1869 the National Bank Note Company essayed the newly engraved dies of the 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 6¢ & 10¢ stamps of this new "Bust Series" using 67 different colors on those five dies, there being at least 13 colors used on the 3¢ die.

On November 16th. 1869 the 1¢, 2¢, 3¢ & 6¢ dies were approved at the Cabinet meeting held that day. The 10¢ was rejected and it was also suggested that the 12¢, 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ & 90¢ be of a bust design. Although approved, the 1¢, 2¢ & 6¢ designs were later changed.

The 3¢ had some additional engraving done to the vignette of the die by December of 1869, but was the only design to remain basically the same as it was approved on November 16th.

black



The November 1869 Die State

yellow orange



deep red



red brown



yellow brown



dark red brown

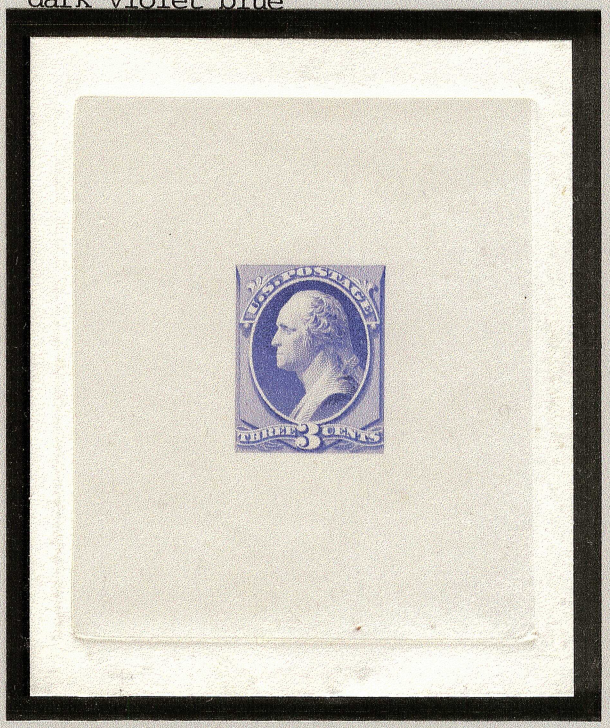


The November 1869 Die State

brown



dark violet blue



dull red violet



dusky blue green



The November 1869 Die State

dark blue



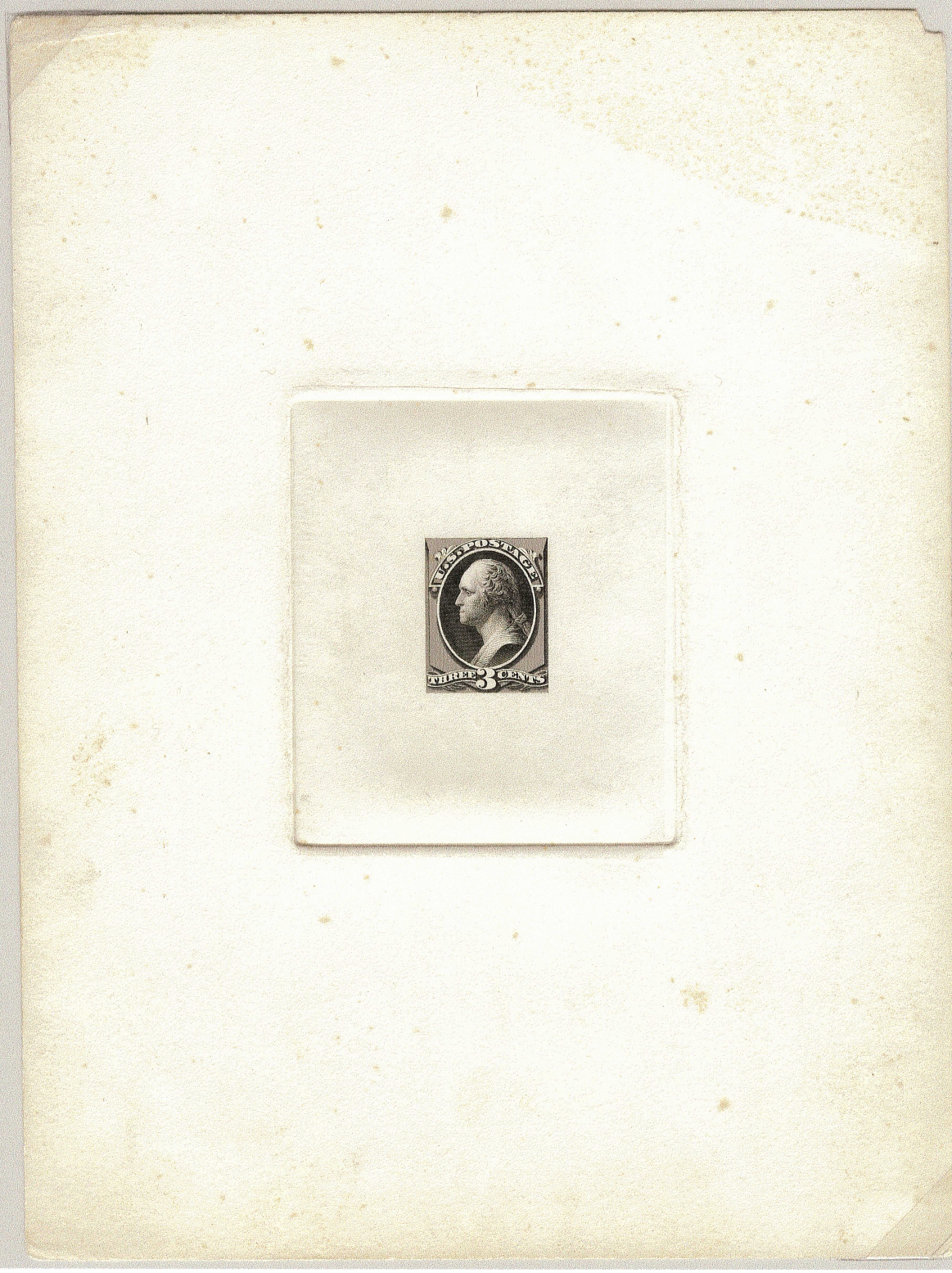
Postage blue

The National 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Die Proofs of December 1869

By December 1869 Joseph P. Ourdan had done some additional engraving on the vignette of the still unhardened die with mainly cross-hatching added to the collar and shoulder plus some additional minor lines added to the nose, chin, forehead and parts of the hair.

Trial color proofs in at least eight different colors were pulled from this finished state of the die engraving.

black



The December 1869 Die State

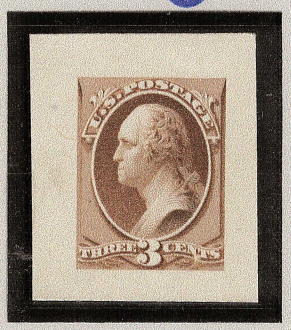
dull red violet



yellow brown



red brown



brown



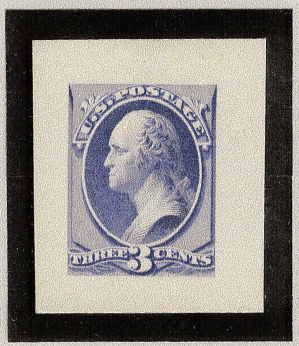
yellow orange



dark red



greyish blue



The National 3¢ Banknote Proofs from the Unhardened Die

These die proofs from about December of 1869 in the adopted color the National Bank Note Company called milori green, a deep to dark green shade were pulled from the finished but still unhardened die of the 3¢ banknote. These two die proofs lack the engraved National Bank Note Co. New York imprint that would be added to the die below the stamp design before the die was hardened.

deep green, w/o imprint



dark green, with embossed NBC seal



The National 3¢ Banknote Proof from the Hardened Die

In mid to late December 1869 the 3¢ die had been hardened, transfer rolls made and the process of laying down the plates begun.

green

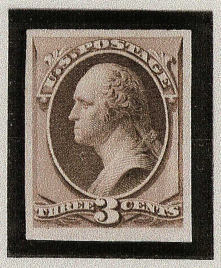


The National 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Plate Proofs of 1870

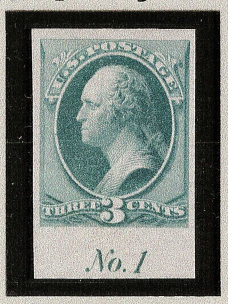
By mid January 1870 the 3¢ stamps were probably on press with the plates numbered 1 to 11 in use. Sometime after the first of these plates were made a group of trial color plate proofs on india paper were pulled, either to fix the color for the 3¢ stamp or to determine colors still to be used on one or more of the other values in this series.

The transfer roll or rolls used to make these plates had the relief altered by removing some dots and lines of shading that extended across the bottom frame line below the numeral "3" of the design.

dark brown



greyish green



greyish blue



brown



yellow orange



dark red



red brown



yellow brown



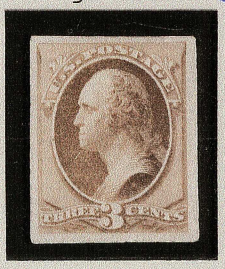
dull red violet



violet brown



orange brown



dull violet



The National 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Plate Proof on Bond Paper

This unlisted trial color plate proof is on a bond paper, a thin crisp paper made from linen. This type of paper usually does not produce the clearest impressions.

Exactly when this proof was made is yet unknown but the plate used, number 10, was one of the earliest plates made. Either in late December 1869 or very early January 1870.

deep red brown

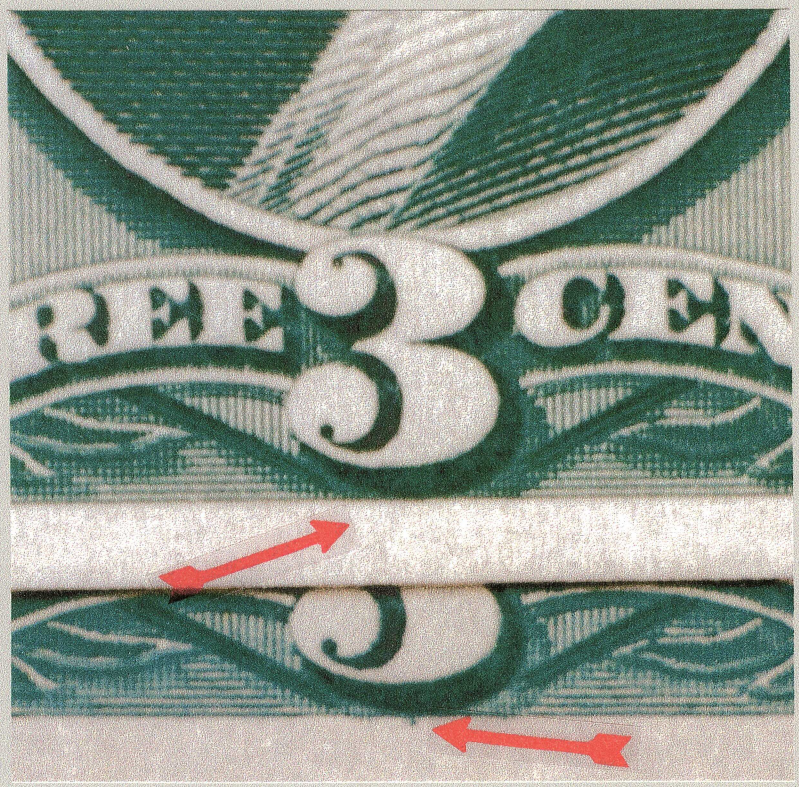


The National 3¢ Banknote Plate Proofs, Types I & II

Not many collectors realize that the 3¢ banknote stamps printed by the National, Continental and American Bank Note Companies can be found in two types.

These two types arise from the fact that sometimes the relief rolls were altered. On the 3¢ relief rolls they would remove some dots and lines of shading that extended below the bottom frame line below the numeral "3" of the stamp design. All die proofs and about half of the plates made show the dots and lines of shading and are the **Type I** design. On the other half of the plates, and plates only show the dots and shading lines removed, they are the **Type II** design.

Illustration below shows,
Type II (top)
Type I (bottom)



National Type I



National Type II



The National 3¢ Banknote Plate Proofs on India Paper

In late June 1870 the Post Office Department made a special order for "20,000 impressions on india proof paper" which consisted of ten sheets of 200 stamps each for the ten denominations of the 1870 issue. In January 1871 1000 india proof paper stamps of the 7¢ denomination were ordered.

dark green



The National 3¢ Banknote Plate Proofs on India Paper

These plate blocks show the second type of the National Bank Note Company plate imprint. This type of imprint came into use around late 1871 or early 1872.

Both of these plate blocks, plate 41 and plate 55, have stamps that are Type I stamps.

blue green



yellowish green



The National 3¢ Banknote with the Charles F. Steel Patent, The Grill

Charles F. Steel was the Superintendent in charge of postage stamp production at the National Bank Note Company. He also held the patent, #70,147 and dated Oct. 1867 for the grilling process.

The Truncated "H" Grill. In early 1873 the "H" grill roller was recut. This new state of the old "H" grill showed that the few outer rolls of pyramid points had been truncated. At least one sheet of gummed and imperforate 3¢ banknote stamps from a worn plate #44 was grilled to test this recut roller.



The Essay 11 x 14 Points "H" Grill.

points down



points up



Ex Earl of Crawford
Ex Col. Green

These grills were probably produced from a small experimental grill roller with at least three grill units.

These two 3¢ banknotes with this essay grill come from a group of 19 stamps, all National prints, namely the 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 6¢, 7¢, 10¢, 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ & 90¢, each showing points up and points down, except no 24¢ points up has been seen and no 12¢ stamps were in this group.

These essays may have been prepared by Mr. Steel just prior to Feb. 7th. 1873 when the Continental Bank Note Co. paid Mr. Steel for the use of his patent for grilling. Mr. Steel left National for Continental on April 1st. 1873.

It has been stated that when this group of stamps was in the Earl of Crawford collection the source was reputed to be the files of the National Bank Note Co. It is also known that on July 22nd. 1889 Mr. Steel submitted to the Post Office Dept. "experiments on embossed stamps" and these could have included grilled stamps produced many years before and from his files.

The National 3¢ Banknote with the Henry Lowenberg Patent



This patent, #42,207 and issued in April 1864 was experimented with on the 3¢ banknote in 1870.

The patent was for a method of covering the stamp paper with a size and then printing with the usual ink so that the latter would wash off if any attempt were made to remove the cancellation.

The National 3¢ Banknote with the William Thorpe Patent

The William Thorpe patent, #95,624 and dated October 1869 was experimented with on the 3¢ banknote, probably in early 1870.

This patent required the printing of stamps on a heavily sized paper (thick paper) using two printing inks of different colors and of Materially different chemical affinities, one for acids and the other for the alkalies, so any attempt to clean the cancelling ink from the stamp would destroy the sizing and one or the other of the printing inks.

full underprinting



full underprinting



top stamp,
partial underprinting

bottom stamp,
missing underprinting



The underprinted ink on the green stamps has a nondescript pattern of spots, olive gray in color and can be found with full, partial, or missing underprinted ink.

The National 3¢ Banknote Trial Colors with the Thorpe Patent

The underprinted ink on the dull orange, dim red and brown stamps is of the nondescript pattern, olive gray in color. National plate # 25 was used to print these three colors of the Thorpe patent.

top row, shows full underprinting





bottom row, missing the underprinting

dull orange & dim red with faint 6mm-high horiz. bar trial chemical cancel.



dim red, top stamps missing underprinting, bottom stamps with partial underprinting.



The National 3¢ Banknote Presentation Specimens of 1870

On April 4th. 1870 the National Bank Note Company sent to the Post Office Department in Washington, D.C. two sheets of 200 stamps each the 1¢ through 90¢ stamps of this new Issue of 1870 series, they having been requested to help fill the demands of the Press and stamp collectors who wanted specimens of these new stamps.

Before the stamps would be given away a pen stroke obliteration or a specimen handstamp would be applied to the stamp, sometimes both, so the postage stamps could not be postally used and create a loss to the Department.

3¢ National, with a unlisted type of Specimen handstamp.





3¢ National, with pen stroke obliteration.



The Philatelic Foundation has given this 3¢ stamp and the others of this set, illustrated below, certificates as genuine mint presentation copies. The 2¢ & 15¢ are with grill.

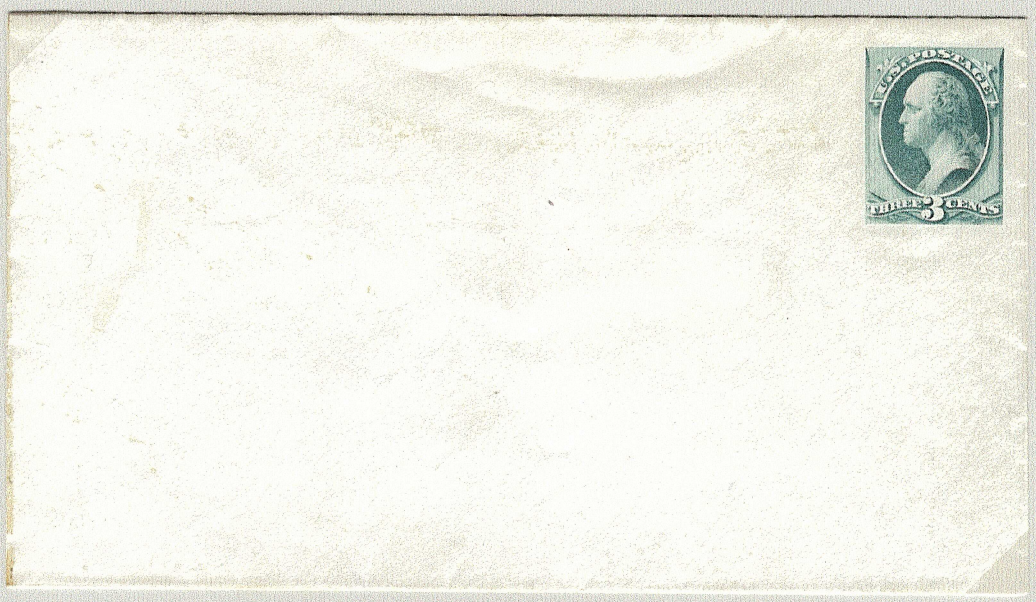


The National 3¢ Banknote on the Plate-Printed Envelopes of 1872

On March 1st. 1872 the National Bank Note Company submitted to the Post Office Department two cases containing specimens of plate-printed envelopes.

This new proposed style of stamped envelope came in denominations of 1¢ to 90¢ like the issued embossed envelopes of the period.

The 1¢, 5¢, 10¢ and 30¢ envelopes showed designs taken from 1869 essay dies, with the 2¢, 12¢, 15¢, and 90¢ designs coming from unfinished or unadopted dies of the 1870 issues. The 3¢ envelopes show the stamp in the adopted design from the Issue of 1870 series.



green
147x83mm
white, wove

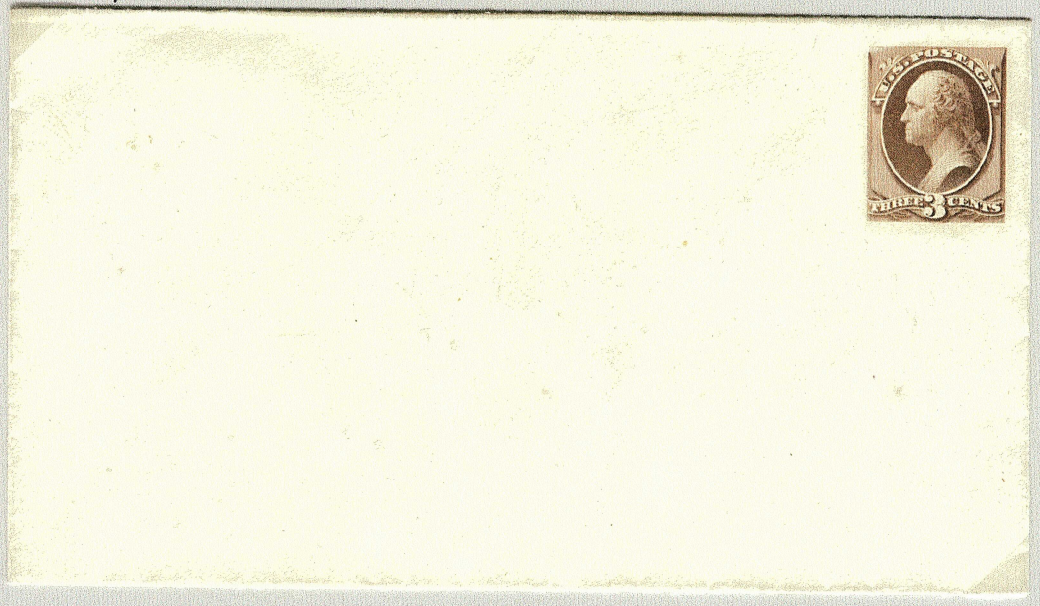
Current research shows that 34 varieties of this envelope are known to exist and can be found with six stamp colors on four envelope sizes with seven paper colors either laid and or wove.

NOTE: the 15 pages of the Plate-printed envelope are copied at 91% of actual size. Stamp colors also added to exhibt pages.

The 147 x 83 mm Envelopes

amber,laid

brown



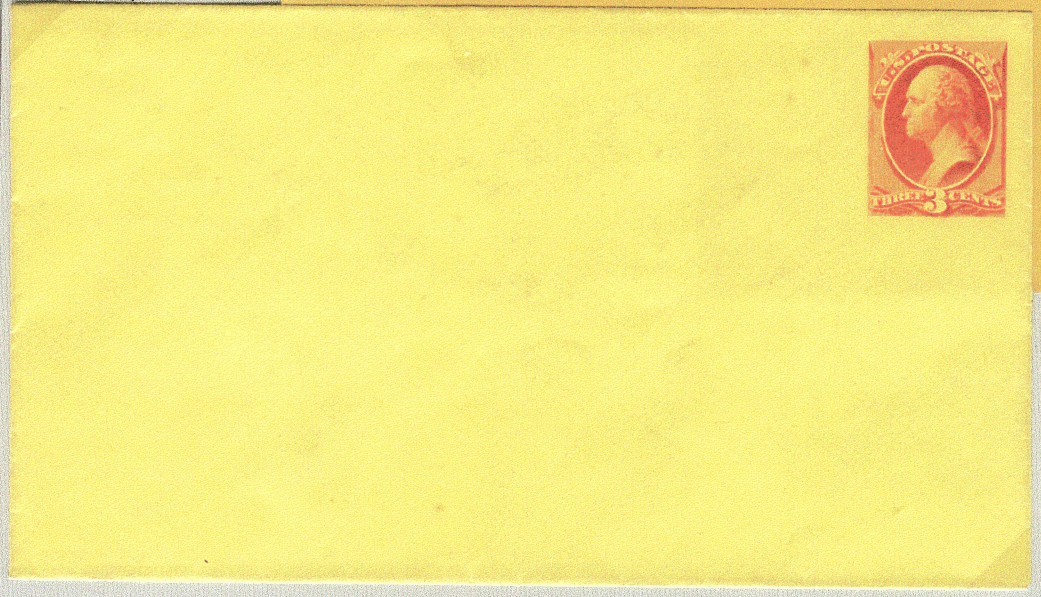
manila,laid

brown



carmine

canary,laid



The 147 x 83 mm Envelopes

amber,laid

carmine



brown

white,wove



canary,laid

green



LINDNER A 804 I

The 147 x 83 mm Envelopes

canary,laid

brown



manila,laid

purple



The 150 x 85 mm Envelopes

white,laid

carmine



pale canary,laid

brown



LINDNER A 804 i

The 150 x 85 mm Envelopes

white,laid

steel blue



white,laid

green



LINDNER A 804 i

The 150 x 85 mm Envelopes

pale canary, laid

brown



pale canary, laid

steel blue



The 159 x 89 mm Envelopes

orange, wove

carmine



brown
canary, laid



white, laid

green



LINDNER A 804 i

The 159 x 89 mm Envelopes

orange,wove

green

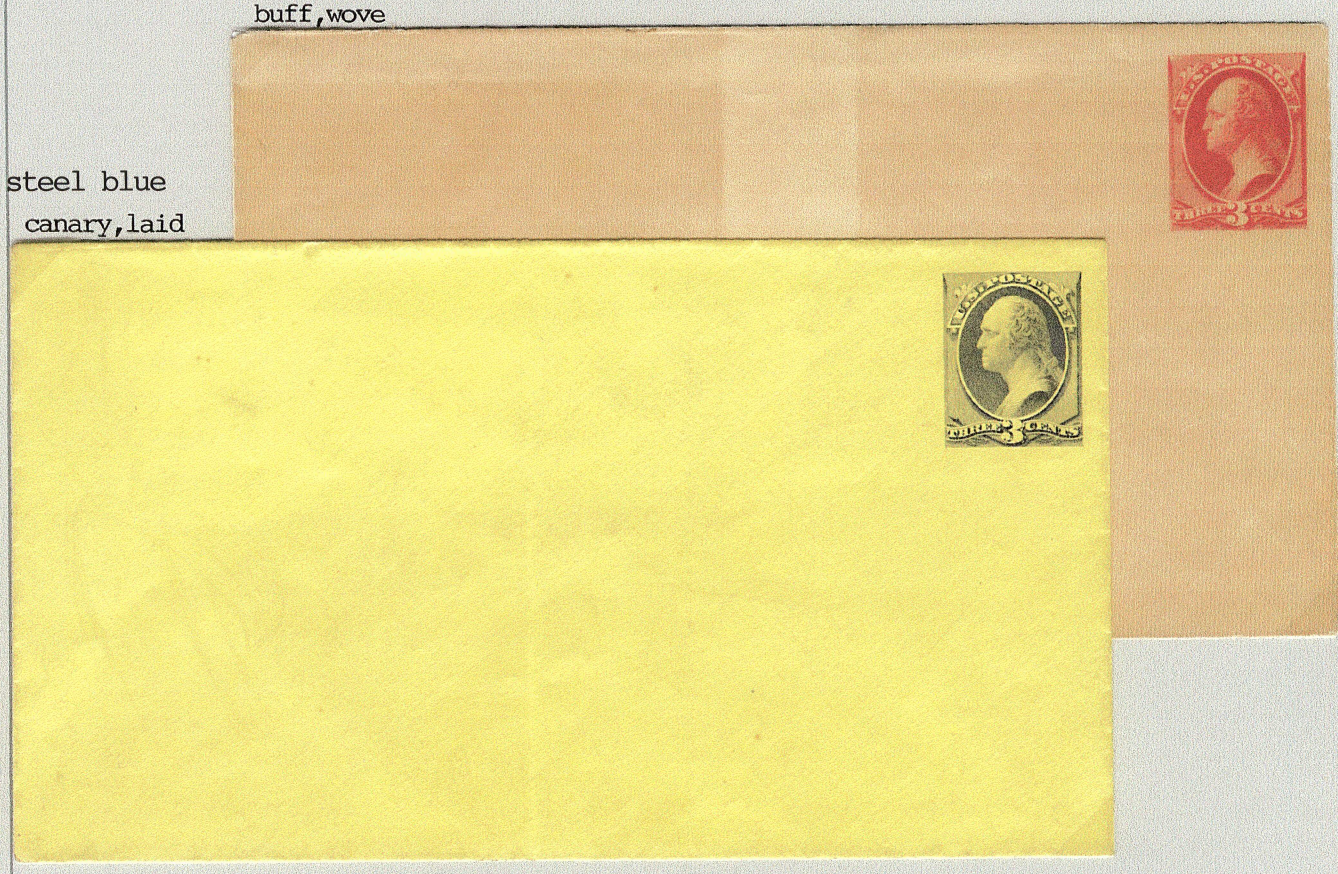


buff,wove

carmine

steel blue

canary,laid



The 159 x 89 mm Envelopes

orange,wove

purple



yellow brown

buff,wove



Cut Squares from Envelopes of Unknown Size

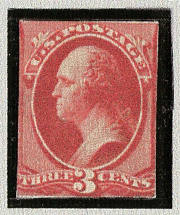
yellow brown on white,laid

carmine on white,laid

carmine on amber,wove (cut to shape)



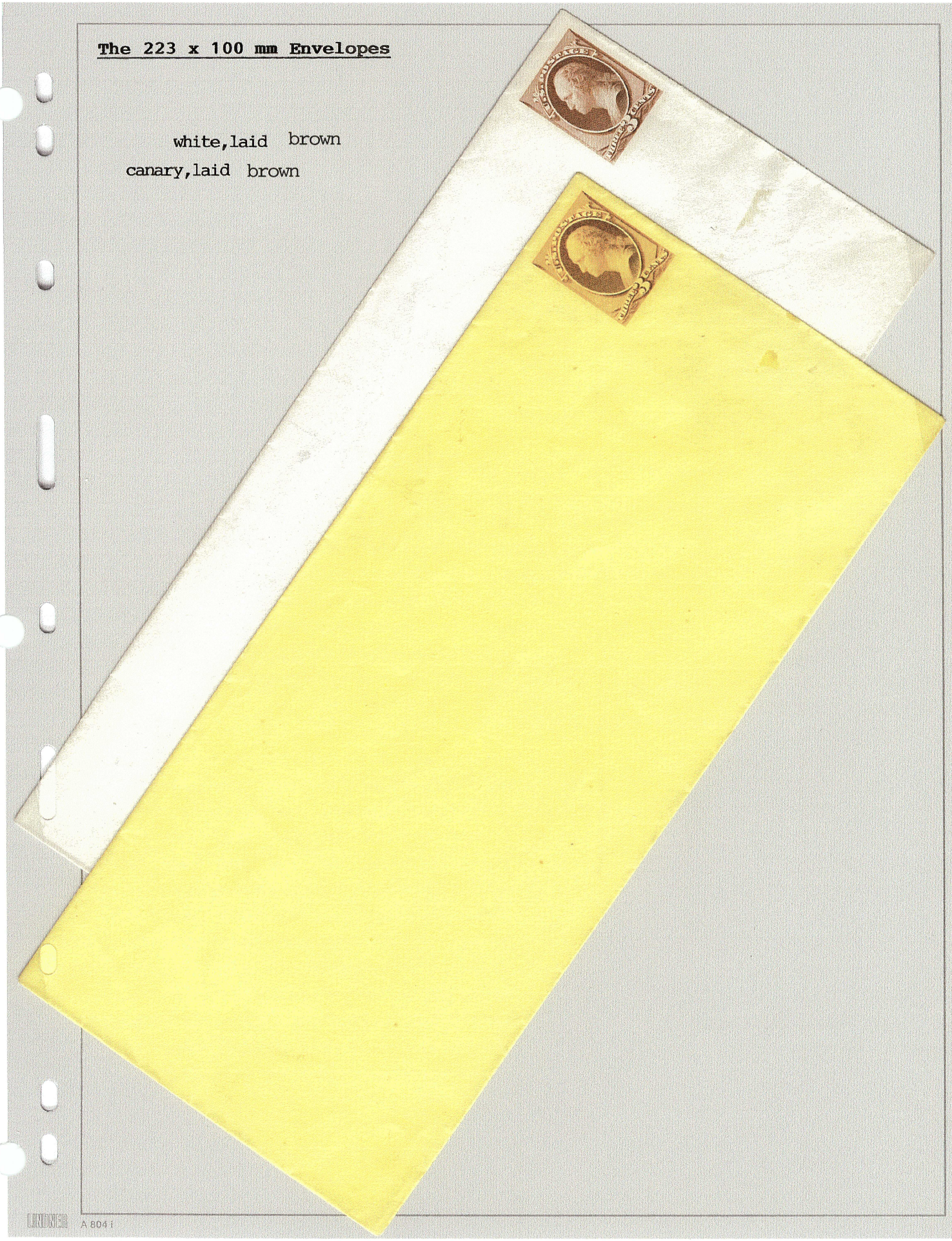




The 223 x 100 mm Envelopes

white,laid brown

canary,laid brown



The National 3¢ New Design Plate-Printed Envelopes of 1872

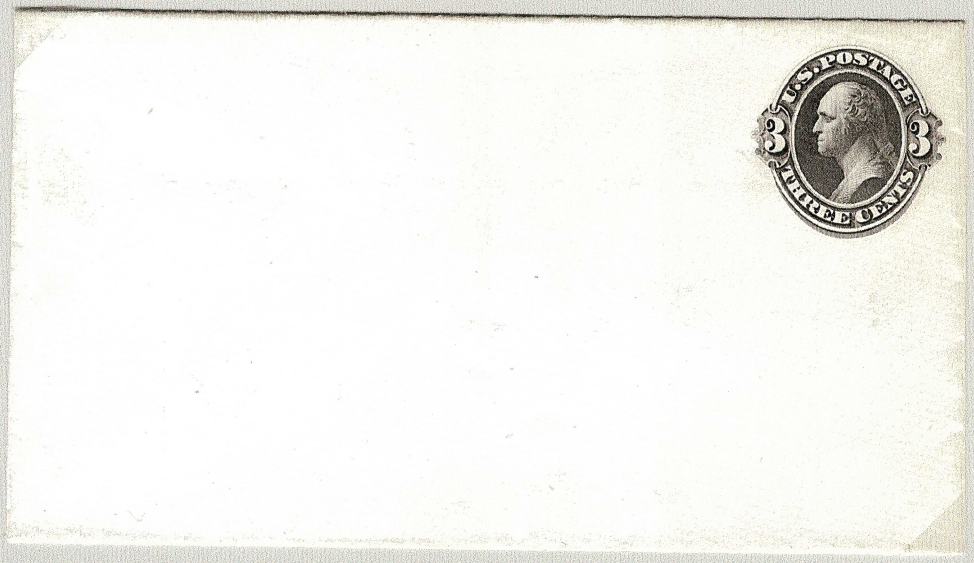
By late 1872 the National Bank Note Company had prepared a new engraving for use on their on-going experimentation of plate printed envelopes.

The design on this new die was by Butler Packard with the vignette coming from the Issue of 1870 3¢ banknote.

Current research shows that at least 65 varieties of this essay plate-printed envelope are known to exist and can be found with about 15 stamp colors, including some albino impressions, on 6 envelope sizes with 8 paper colors either on laid and or wove paper, also reported are some thin tissue paper varieties.

brown carmine



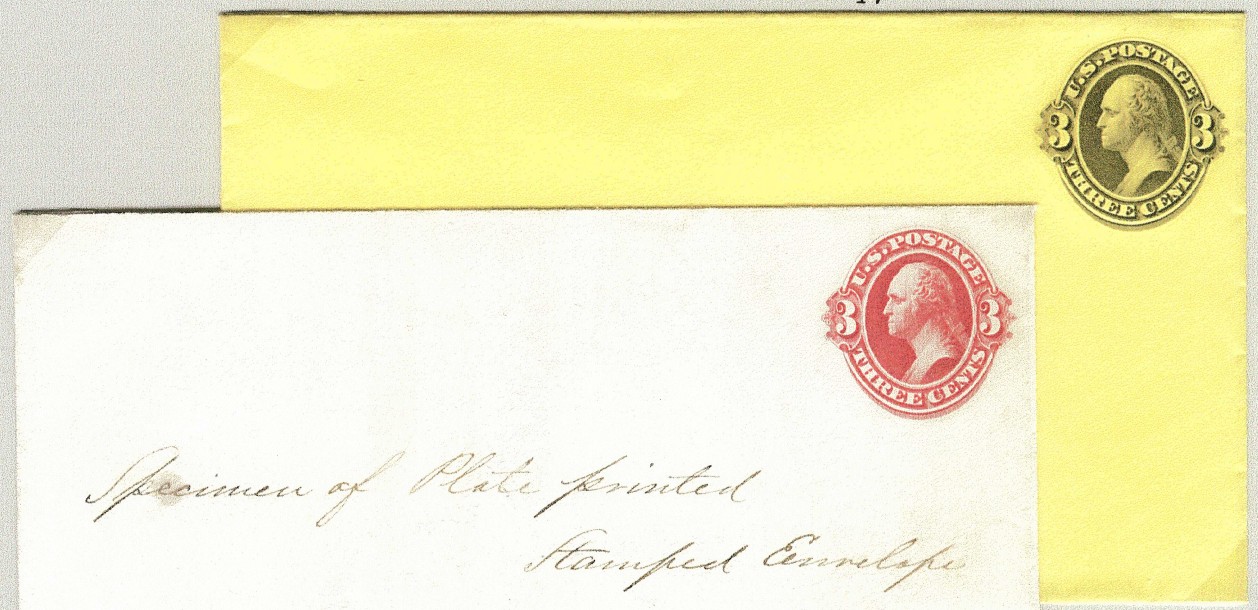


black
138x78mm
white, laid

The following three pages contain some miscellaneous examples of these essays.

LINDNER A 8041

150x85mm canary,laid black



Specimen of Plate Printed
Stamped Envelope

147x83 white,wove carmine

147x83 amber,laid steel blue



147x83 white,wove brown

LINDNER A 804 i

137x77 orange,wove purple



147x83 white,wove green

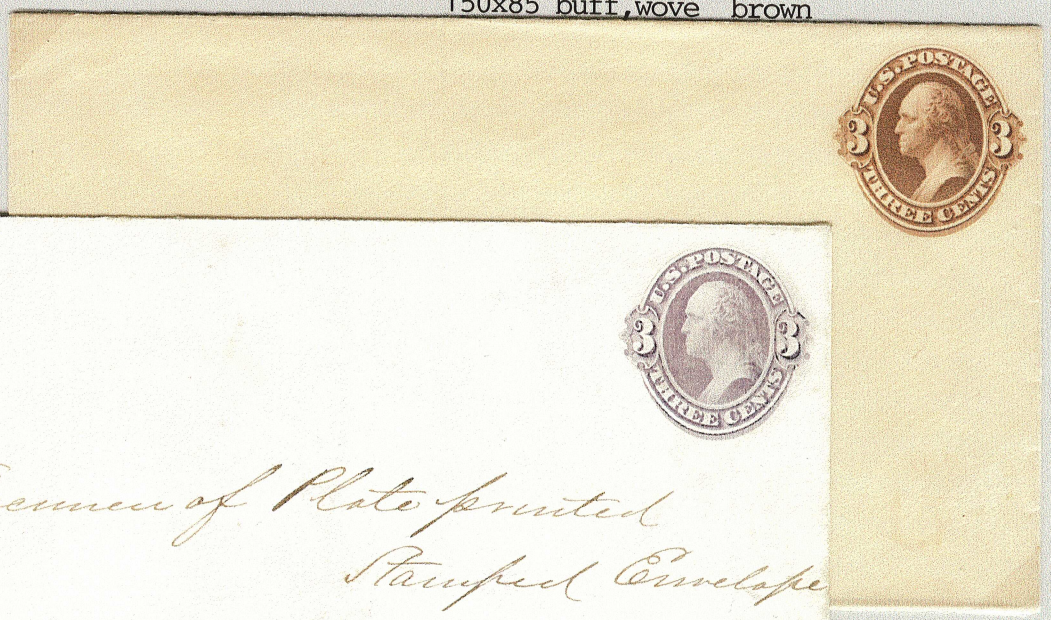
150x85 buff,wove black



147x83 amber,laid carmine

LINDNER A 804 i

150x85 buff,wove brown



147x83 white,wove dull lilac

150x85 white,wove orange



138x77 orange,wove carmine

LINDNER A 804 I

The National 3¢ Banknote on the Internal Revenue Essay

In 1875 the National Bank Note Co. began printing Internal Revenue proprietary stamps. These essays were probably prepared prior to that date. The frame around the 3¢ banknote vignette comes from the 1872 essay envelope design.

Combination Essay Die, surface printed frame (reddish violet) and engraved vignette with frame (black).



Combination essays, different surface printed frame (colorless center) and engraved vignette with frame.





II. The Continental 3¢ Banknote Die Proof of 1873 with Secret Mark

On April 1st. 1873 the Continental Bank Note Company had Charles Skinner (1841-1932), a picture and portrait engraver at the company add what he called "secret marks" to the 11 dies of the Issue of 1870 series that National turned over to Continental that same day.

Mr. Skinner acid etched the secret marks to various areas of the different dies, although some questions remain about the secret marks on the 2¢ and 15¢ dies.

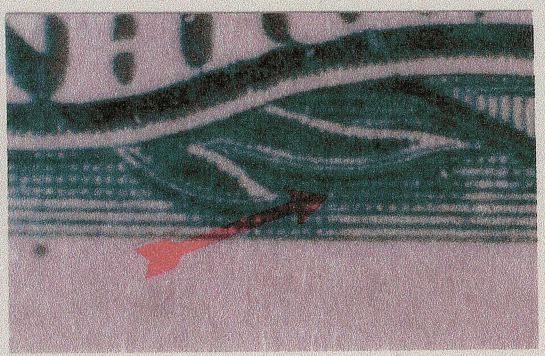
dark green



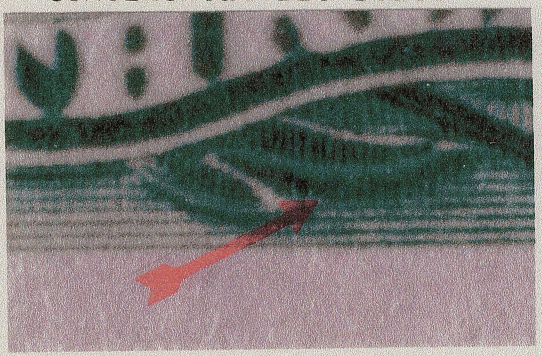
The 3¢ Die Secret Mark

The under part of the tail of the left ribbon is heavily shaded.

National Die State



Continental Die State



The Continental 3¢ Banknote Mat Printed Die Proof

The Continental Bank Note Company prepared a set of die proofs printed through mats in order to block the printing of the National Bank Note Co. N.Y. imprint that was on all the 1870 dies turned over to them in 1873. They probably thought that it was not a good idea to give away die proofs with their competitor's name on them.



The Continental 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Die Proofs

orange red



Very few trial color large die proofs are known for any of the Continental dies for Series of 1873 stamps. Scott's only lists the 3¢ in black, but it is a proof printed in 1903 by the B.E.P. to check the state of the die before the printing of the small die proofs.

Ex Finkelburg

The Black Hybrid

This 3¢ banknote hybrid trial color large die proof that shows a 61 x 81mm block sinkage is out of a group of like proofs, namely the 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 5¢, 6¢ & 7¢ hybrid die proofs from the Falk Finkelburg Collection.



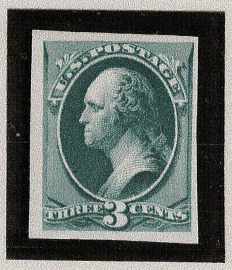
Ex Finkelburg
&
Ex Earl of Crawford

The Continental 3¢ Banknote Plate Proofs on India Paper

The Continental Bank Note Company from 1873 to 1879 would prepare 113 printing plates for the 3¢ stamp, each plate having 200 subjects.

The early plates have the Type I stamps, they show the dots and lines of shading across the bottom frame line below the numeral "3" of the stamp design. The later made plates appear to be mostly Type II stamps.

Current research shows the earliest known use of the Type II stamps being in November 1874.



deep blue green
Type I

dark green
Type II



deep yellow green
Type I



The Continental 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Plate Proofs

On April 7th. 1873 the Continental Bank Note Company completed their first printing plate, probably the 3¢ plate *No.* 1.

Twelve 3¢ plates were made in April, 1873 and were numbered 1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19 & 20. All the stamps on these plates are the Type I stamps. The next group of 3¢ plates made started at No. 129.





The Continental 3¢ Banknote Trial Color Plate Proofs

Although listed in the catalog as trial color plate proofs, these black proofs are just proofs of the plate pulled using black ink to help show the fine engraved lines of the engraving to proof the sheet for any re-entry of the transfer roll needed or any other correction needed to finish the printing plate.





The Continental 3¢ Banknote with Various Patents 1873-1879

Many patent experiments were carried out during the period that the Continental Bank Note Company held the stamp production contract.

The A. J. Gibson patent, #41,198 and dated Jan. 1864, was experimented with on the 3¢ banknote. The patent was for a method of printing stamps in a fugitive ink that would wash off if wet. This stamp shows a red colored filigree border of P-O-D- and foliage design.



****

The S. W. Francis patent, #48,387 and dated June 1867, was for a method of applying to a stamp, before or after printing, a substance colorless in itself that would turn black if moistened.



****

The A. C. Fletcher patent, #175,242 and dated March 1876, was for a stamp weakened in the center by designs punched through them in slits so they would tear if the attempt were made to remove the stamp from the envelope.

Unknown type of Fletcher patent punched design.



Fletcher "Cogwheel" punch, 10,000 ordered in June 1876.

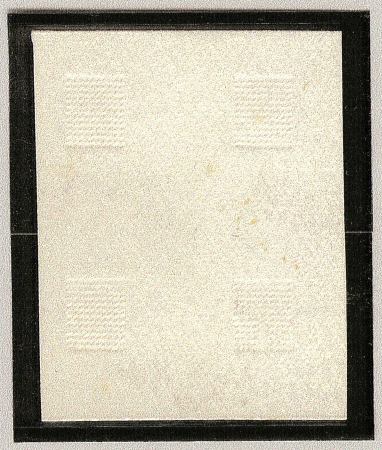


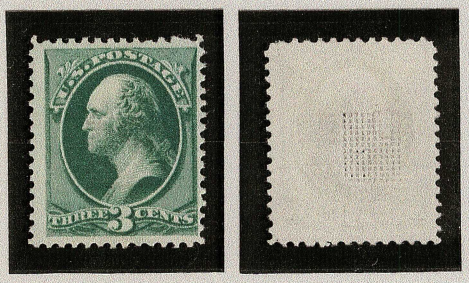
The Continental 3¢ Banknote with Patents of Charles F. Steel

The "J" Grill

In 1874 and 1875 this patent, #70,147 and dated Oct. 1867 was used to grill a small number of stamps with a new size grill of 10 by 12 points with truncated pyramids that show rectangles for points instead of crosses.

four "J" grills on card blotter.





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The Double Paper

This patent, #86,952 and dated Feb. 1869 was used during the first half of 1875 to produce 28,000,000 stamps on double paper. The method of making stamps on double paper had the face of thin and absorbent paper, the back on harder less absorbent paper. When cleaned the face would come off.

Imperf. double paper bond paper used as backing paper.



****

The Starch Paper

This patent, #169,125 and dated Oct. 1875 was for printing stamps on water leaf or other soft absorbent paper. The back was also coated with a filling and then gummed.

The ink of the cancel soaks into the front and the paper comes to pieces if the stamp is cleaned.



The Continental 3¢ Banknote with the Joseph Schnoble Patent

The Joseph Schnoble patent, number 171,871 and dated Dec. 1875 was experimented with on the 3¢ banknote, probably in early 1876.

This patent was for a method of preparing paper for printing postage stamps upon a sizing compound of glue, sugar, glycerine, muriatic acid, and water and applying it to the paper, so that any attempt to clean the cancelling ink from the stamp would wash away the sizing and or the stamp design printed upon it.

Unlisted trial color, gray blue, on a vivid dark pink surface coating.



3¢ greens on various surface colored papers, rose, pinkish white, dark pink, dark red, and carmine paper (surface coated both sides, back shown).







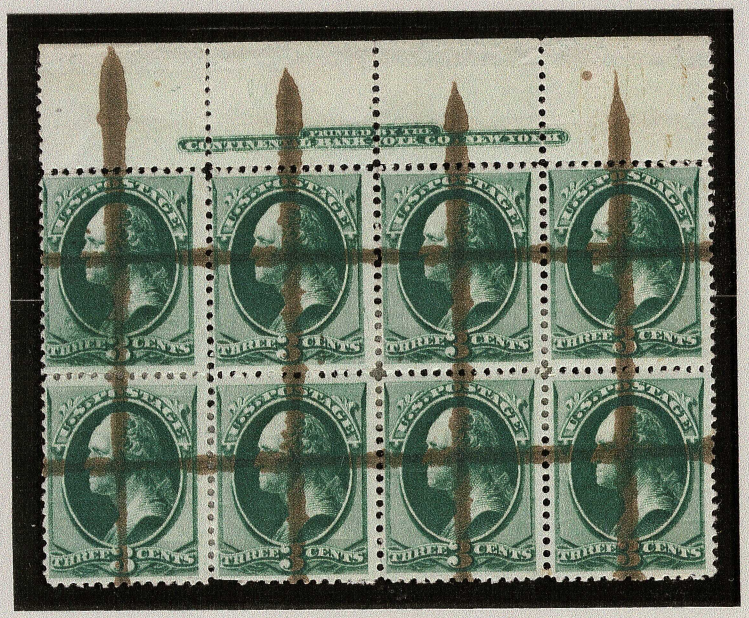






The Continental 3¢ Banknote with Various Patents

The D. G. Beaumont patent, #192,893 and dated May 1877, was for a stamp composed of two superposed layers, the top layer carrying the printed design, having incisions therein, and would come apart if cleaned to remove cancel.



seen from back



****

The K. Wheeler patent, #212,416 and dated Feb. 1879, was for a stamp with a cogwheel type punch but with a colored coating of fugitive ink on the punch cuts, stamp would tear if any attempt was made to remove them, or the fugitive ink would wash out if cleaned.

This stamp is printed on the Continental soft paper used in late 1878 and early 1879.



The Continental 3¢ Banknote Experimentals of circa 1875-76

What patents may have been involved in the production of these experimental essays is yet unknown.

Continental 3¢ on Campbell, Hall & Co. safety paper, c.1876. This stamp is on a paper tinted with a sensitive ink on a heavily laid paper, and is found on the Continental 1¢, 2¢ vermilion, 3¢, 5¢, 10¢, 15¢, 30¢ & 90¢ stamps.



****

Continental 3¢ c. early 1875, on double paper tinted with a yellow sensitive ink and corner punch and experimental cancel, probably a paper strength and poracity tests. Known on the Continental 1¢, 2¢ brown, 3¢, 6¢, 7¢, 12¢, 15¢, 30¢ & 90¢ stamps. The 3¢ being the only one of the group on double paper.



****

Continental 3¢ on hard paper with perfin punch "5" and experimental cancels (indigo & black). Probably a paper strength and Poracity tests. Only known on the Continental 2¢ brown, 3¢, 6¢ & 15¢ stamps.



The Continental 3¢ Banknote New Design for the Series of 1877

By December 1876 the Postmaster General had adopted this design change in the Three Cent stamp. The engraved background of the vignette being removed to allow for better cancellation of the postage stamps.

The 30¢ stamp was also changed before this new design was abandoned for the old design stamps which continued to be printed under the 1877 four year stamp printing contract.



Incomplete engraving of frame, no veins in trileafs in upper corners.
This frame was worked over by George W. Downs, the vignette worked over by Charles Skinner.

Finished design as approved by the P.M.G., c. December 1876.



The Continental 3¢ Banknote Vignette on the Officials of 1873

In April 1873 the Continental Bank Note Company started to prepare new dies for the Official Postage stamps due to be issued on July 1st. 1873.

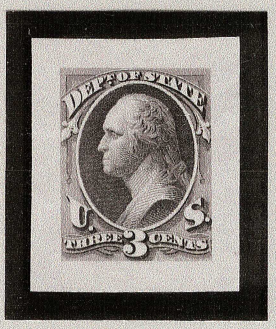
The nine U.S. Departments had their own series of stamps, with the three cent stamp having the George Washington vignette from the ordinary series of stamps. The Post Office Dept. set first had the Washington vignette, but by May 1873 the vignette was replaced by the large numeral design.

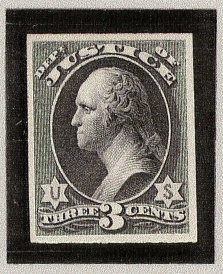


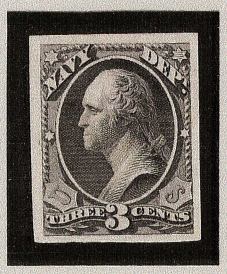


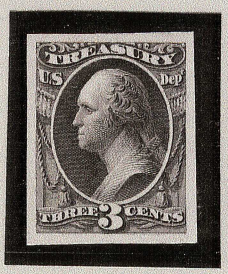


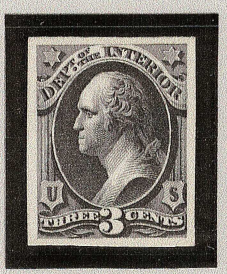






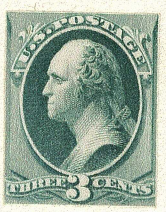






III. American Hybrid Large Die Proof of the 3¢ Banknote, 1879 Design.

At least three times between 1879 and 1895 the American Bank Note Company had prepared sets of hybrid die proofs (simulated large die proofs) bound into albums and they were probably made for presentation purposes. The different printings can be identified by the size of the block sinkage on the die proof, with this example being the 61 x 61mm block size.



The American 3¢ Banknote Plate Proofs, 1879 Design.

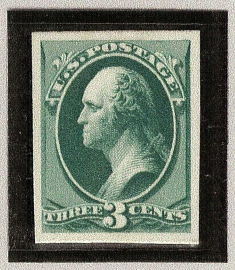
1879 Plate Proof on India

Plate 335, the tenth plate of 26 plates made for the 3¢ denomination between 1879 to 1881.



1879 Plate Proof on Card

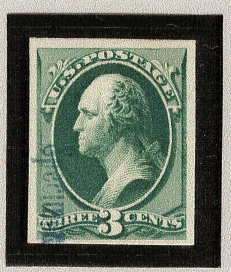
1879 American design from 1st. printing, 500 issued.



For the Record: The Post Office Dept. bill books record the 1st. printing of these card proofs.

"October 31st. 1879. Specimen postage stamps furnished during the month ending as above. The American Bank Note Company of New York contractors. Bill approved Dec. 10, 1879--Printing 500 sets of 171 stamps each comprising all stamps issued by U.S. Post Office Department."

1879 card proof with *Specimen* handstamp in blue ink, unique.



One set of the 171 card proofs of the 1879 printing is known with this blue "roman type" handstamped specimen overprint. Little is known of it's history.

The American 3¢ Banknote "Atlanta" Trial Color Plate Proofs

At the 1881 International Cotton Exposition held in Atlanta, Georgia the Post Office Dept. exhibit included one pane of trial color plate proofs on thin card stock of all U.S. postage stamps issued between 1847 and 1880. Each pane comes in five colors, namely scarlet, brown, green, blue and black.

Sometime after the close of the exposition these card proofs became available to collectors, mostly as singles but two sets in blocks of 4 are known to exist.











The American 3¢ Banknote Vignette on the Model of 1889

This 1889 model was prepared by or ordered to be prepared by Alfred S. Major the Foreman of the Modeling Dept. of the American Bank Note Co.

This model for the 2¢ stamp for the Issue of 1890 series had a vignette taken from a 3¢ banknote on india paper of the design of 1879. The vignette was pasted to the hand drawn water color frame design.

We know it is from the design of 1879 due to the lack of vertical shading lines that had been added to the vignette background on the 1881 re-engraved die and the later plates made from that new die.



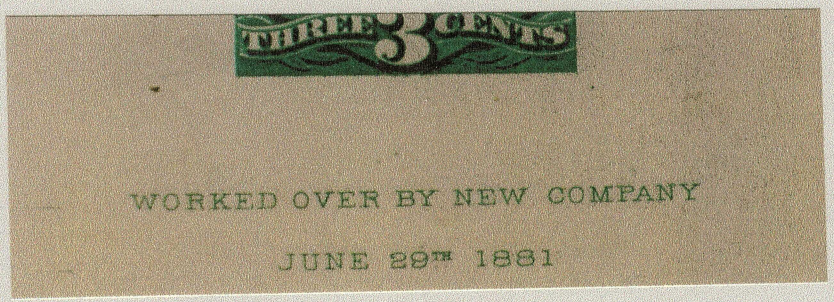
IV. The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) the Unhardened Die State

In June 1881 the American Bank Note Company had a secondary die laid down that was then worked over by George H. Seymour. Added to this die were vertical lines to the vignette background plus heavy shading to the bottom of the ribbon tails and a short horizontal dash below the "TS" of "CENTS".

turquoise green

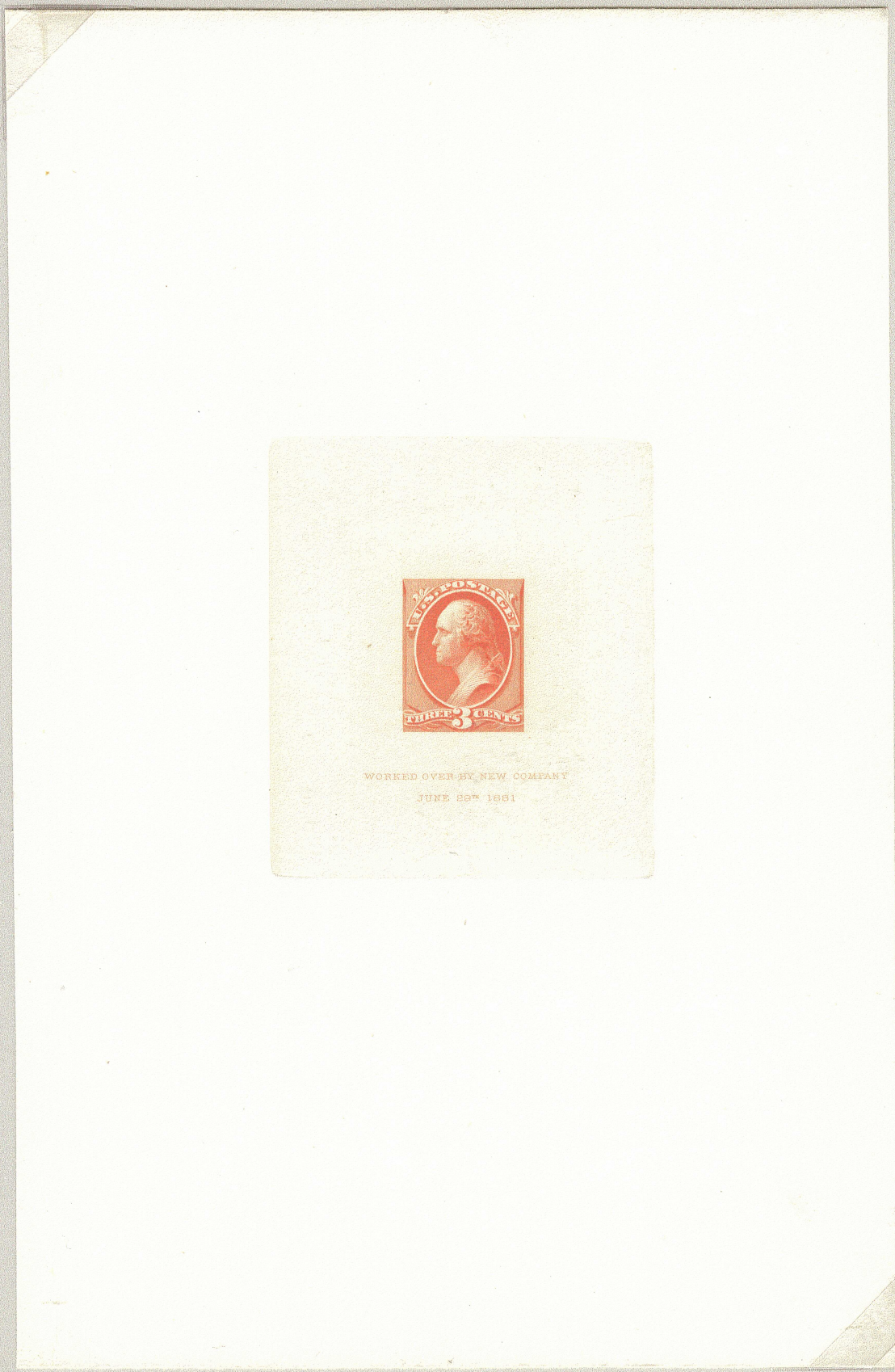


This proof was pulled before the die was hardened and before the words "WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY JUNE 29th 1881" was engraved onto the die as illustrated below.



The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Large Die Proof of 1887

vermilion



American Hybrid Large Die Proof of the 3¢ Banknote, Issue 1887

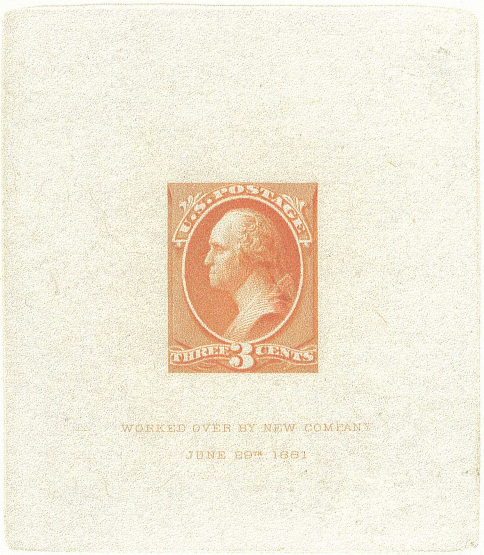
The hybrid large die proof from the 59 x 72mm size block sinkage issue.



The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Trial Color Die Proofs of 1889

deep dull orange

13



May, 1889 is the date of printing given by Clarence W. Brazer for these die proofs prepared to select the colors for the SAMPLE over-printed stamps attached to the specifications governing proposals for the 1890 issue.

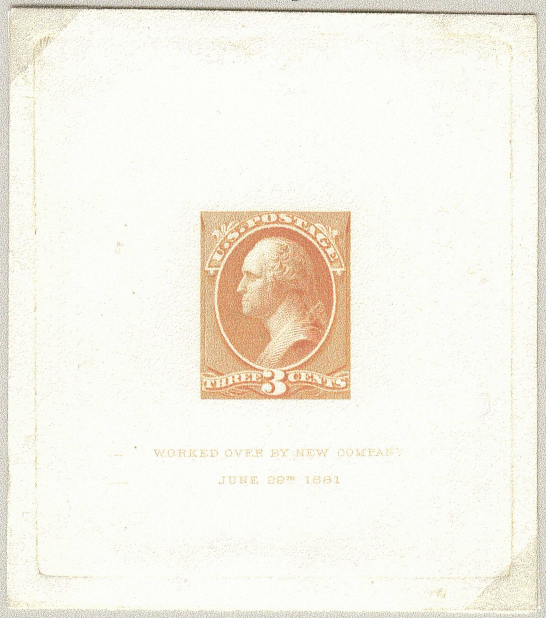
Two formats for these proofs are known. The first come from a bound book of 60 die proofs that are die sunk on india paper on thin (.009" to .010") card that has a carmine page number at the top of the card. This book of 60 had 6 proofs of each of the 10 denominations of the ordinary stamps (1¢ to 90¢) in use in 1889.

1¢ stamp pages 1-6, 2¢ pages 7-12, 3¢ pages 13-18., etc., there being at least 15 different trial colors used in this printing.

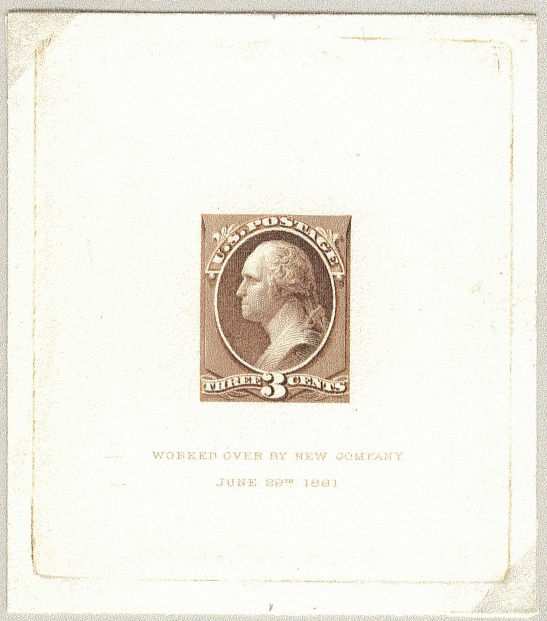
The second format shows the same trial colors printed directly onto a thicker (.012" to .014") card without the use of india paper.

No full size cards of this second type are known to confirm the use of carmine page numbers on the top of the cards.

deep dull orange

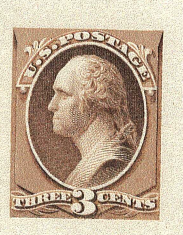


dark brown



dark brown

14



WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY
JUNE 29TH 1881

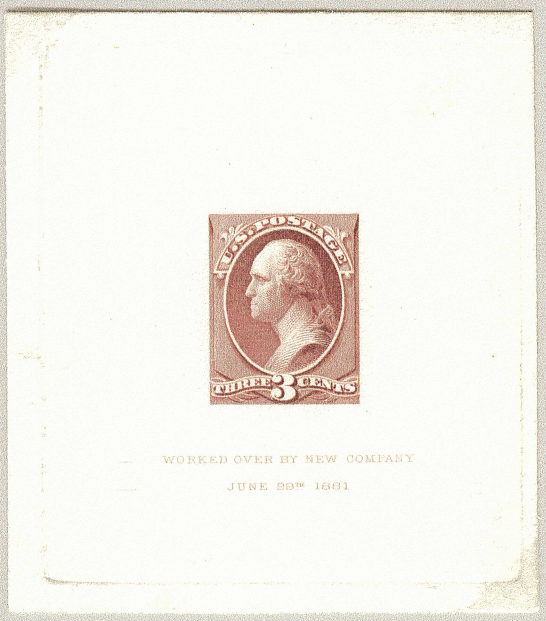
dull red brown

15

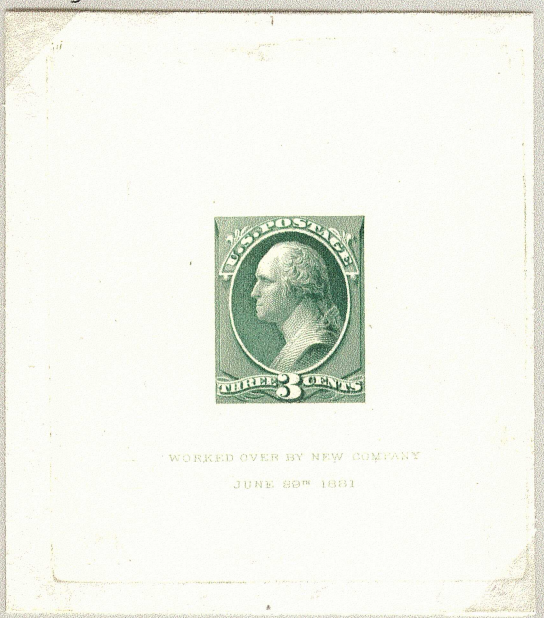


WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY
JUNE 29TH 1881

dull red brown



green



green

16



WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY
JUNE 25th 1891

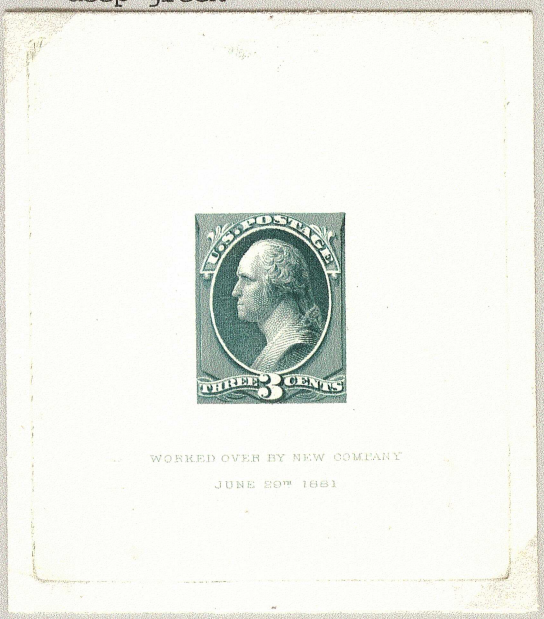
deep green

17

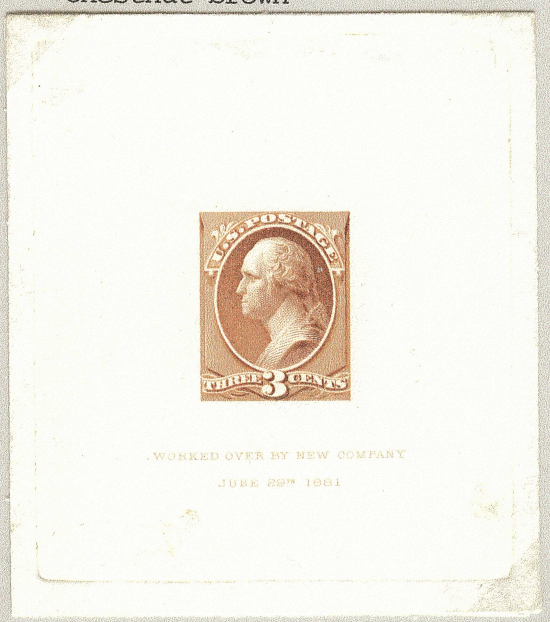


WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY
JUNE 29TH 1881

deep green



chestnut brown



chestnut brown

18



WORKED OVER BY NEW COMPANY
JUNE 20TH 1881

The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Plate Proofs on India

Plate No.416, one of 34 plates of the re-engraved 3¢ banknotes made by the American Bank Note Company between 1881 and 1883.

blue green, 1881



green, 1881



dark green, 1881



vermilion, 1887

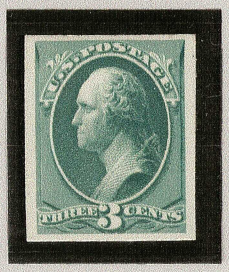


The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Plate Proofs on Card

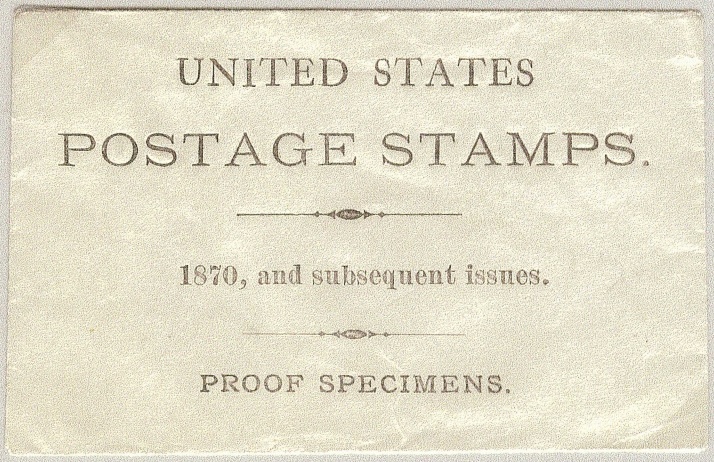
The American Bank Note Company on orders of the Post Office Dept. prepared five printings of cardboard plate proofs of all U.S. stamps issued from 1847 to the date of issue of the five printings. The 1st. printing was in 1879 and the 3¢ banknote in that printing was of the 1879 design. The last four printings, done in 1882, 1890, 1893 & 1894 used the 3¢ re-engraved banknote.

Full sheets were printed then cut into single stamps and placed by sets into presentation envelopes. Each printing consisted of 500 of each stamp except the 1882 printing that had 1000 sets.

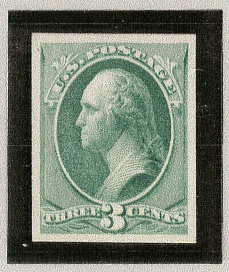
1882, 2nd. printing



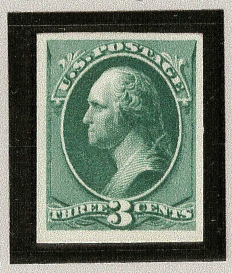
Issue of 1870, 2nd. printing envelope



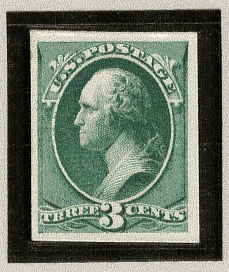
1890, 3rd. printing



1893, 4th. printing



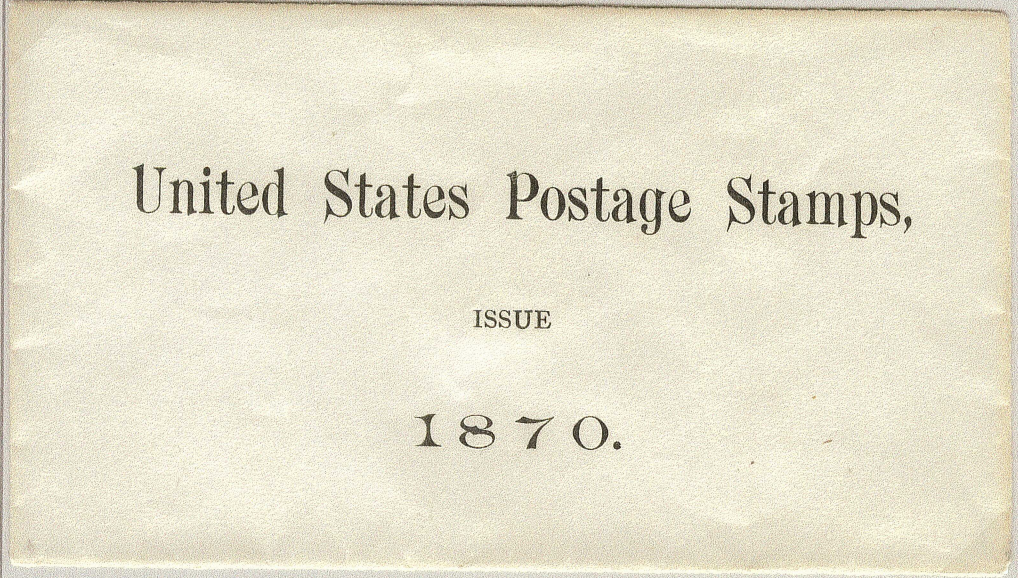
1894, 5th. printing



1890, 3rd. printing



Issue of 1870, 5th. printing envelope



1893, 4th. printing



1894, 5th. printing



The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Plate Proofs on Card

Multiples of the plate proofs on card are scarce, being they come from the remainders of the various card proof printings.

Plate No.421, the last plate made for the 3¢ banknote, and the only 3¢ plate not destroyed in 1885 when the American Bank Note Co. destroyed all the plates not needed anymore for stamp production.

pale blue green, 1881



vermilion, 1887



1887 Trial Color Plate Proof on Card

The new discovery below is the first plate proof of the re-engraved stamp in a trial color known to exist. On the back of the proof is the large pencil number "6" that may hint that other test colors may exist.

deep orange brown



Ex Finkelburg

The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) with the Massey Patent

The Gideon B. Massey patent, number 250,376 and dated Mar. 1881 was experimented with on the re-engraved 3¢ banknote, probably around September of 1881.

This patent which has for years been called the "Douglas Patent" and is also similar to the "Spencer M. Clark Patent" of Dec. 1869, patent number 98,031, is in reality the Massey Patent.

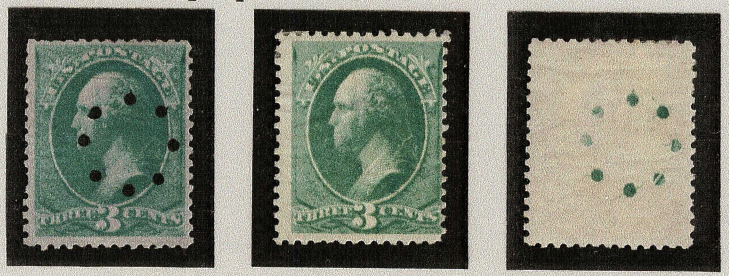
This patent required printing on a double paper of which the thin paper of the top layer had holes punched out in some type of pattern. This top sheet is then joined to the bottom thicker sheet by a paste or other cohesive applied to areas between the punched pattern of the top sheet. The sheets then have the stamps printed upon the sheet so that the design of the stamp prints through the holes to the bottom sheet.

Any attempt to clean a cancel from this stamp would cause it to come apart in the area of the punch pattern.

First experimental pattern, 9 small holes in a circle.



Adopted pattern, 8 small holes in a circle. On Sept. 27th. 1881 the P.O.D. had ordered 10,000 of these stamps printed.



Second experimental pattern, large holes 7mm in size.







All three of these varieties were printed from the 3¢ banknote plate number 367, confirmed by the existence of plate blocks seen for each.

New Discovery. The plate block of 16 seen below shows a printing from the American Bank Note Co. plate number 368 with the large 7mm holes.



The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) On Chemical Paper

The three cent stamps below are on reputedly a chemical paper that is of a variety quite unlike previous chemical paper types.

The 3¢ blue green was seen in the Falk Finkelburg Collection as a mint single. He called it "on salmon paper".

The 3¢ vermilion was seen in the Caspary Collection as a plate block of ten from plate #421, lower right plate block.

blue green, on salmon paper



vermilion, on a chemical paper



The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Overprinted Specimen



This 1881 3¢ re-engraved banknote was over-printed with a red "Type D" specimen overprint.

It is believed that it comes from a group of "Specimens of U.S. Postage Stamps in use in 1886" that were enclosed in small envelopes so marked.

This group of specimen stamps contained 42 different stamps and there may have been about 500 sets issued.



The above 1887 3¢ re-engraved banknote with a purple SPECIMEN handstamp "Samuel Type NA2" as certified by the B.P.A. Expert Committee of London, England comes from a ledger book of the Natal Post Office.

About 1888 the U.S. Post Office Dept. sent to the Universal Postal Union 500 copies of all stamps in use as of 1888.

The U.P.U. would later send three copies of each to the member nations.

Upon receipt the Natal Post Office applied this handstamp and mounted one copy in the official ledger.

This item is believed to be unique.

The American 3¢ Banknote (re-engraved) Special Printing of 1889

About June 1889 the American Bank Note Company prepared sets of normal and trial color stamps of the ten ordinaries (1¢ to 90¢) that were in use at that time.

The first set were overprinted with the word SAMPLE, these were to be attached in strips of five to the Post Office Department's proposals for furnishing adhesive postage stamps for the four year contract of 1889. This first set were for the colors to be used if the P.O.D. stayed with the current large size stamps.

The second set, overprinted SAMPLE A were in the proposed colors for small size stamps. The bidders were required to submit bids for printing postage in both sizes. Of course the P.O.D. went with the new small size stamps for the Issue of 1890 series.



vermilion, proposed color for stamp of the large size.



royal purple, proposed color for stamp of the small size.

The American 3¢ Banknote Re-engraved Vignette on the Model of 1883

This model dated Feb. 27, 1883 was one of at least five models prepared showing proposed designs for the new 2¢ stamps to be issued on Oct. 1st. 1883.

The credit for the design of these models is given to Thomas F. Morris and William M. Smillie.

The 3¢ banknote vignette on this model and mounted to the hand drawn frame design comes from probably a die proof pulled from the American 1881 re-engraved die. The vignette does show the vertical shading lines that were added to the vignette background of that die.



The American Posthumous Essay Die Proofs of c.1892

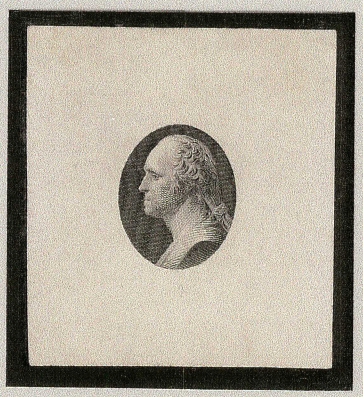
About 1892 the American Bank Note Company had books of proofs with 1847 to 1890 essay die prints prepared. These books were given to the Directors of the American Bank Note Company.

All of these essay die proofs are found in the same four colors, Black---Black Brown---Scarlet---Blue, and on the same white glazed surface (with yellowish back) wove plate paper, (Ivory paper).

Five of the essay dies from this book had the Washington vignette taken from the Issue of 1870 3¢ stamp design.

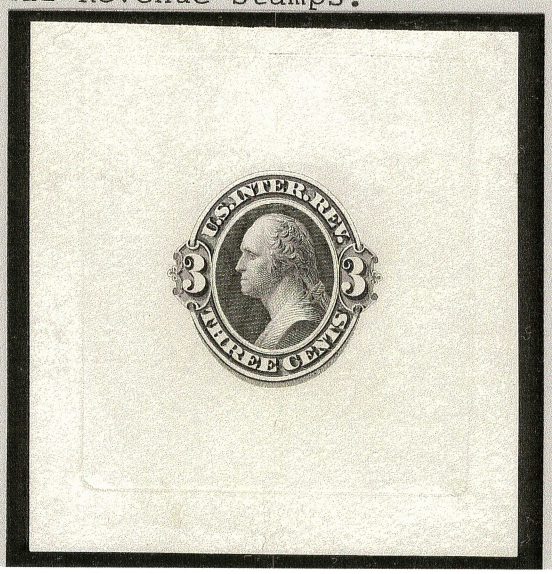
National 1872 Breakdown Die

This die of the Washington vignette with background was used in the preparation of the 3¢ new design plate-printed envelope die of 1872. Later this envelope die was altered to make the nearly identical 3¢ U.S. Internal Revenue stamp essay die.

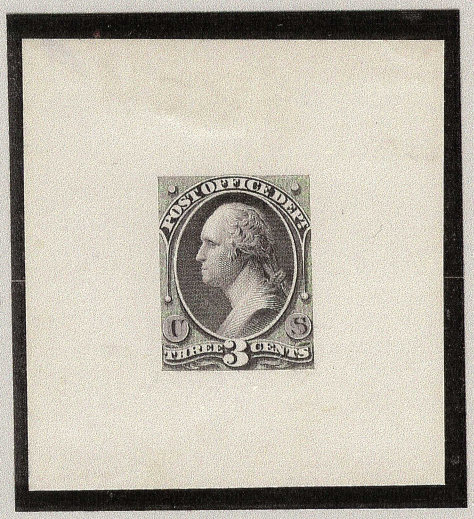


National 3¢ Internal Revenue Die

The date of preparation of this die is yet unknown. It was likely after 1872, maybe around 1875 when the National Bank Note Co. was printing U.S. Internal Revenue stamps.



Continental 3¢ Unadopted P.O.D. Official Die



This die made in April 1873 was replaced when the large numeral official stamp die was approved on May 3rd. 1873.

Continental 1876 Breakdown Die

This die of the Washington vignette with the background removed was used in the preparation of the new design 3¢ banknote with white background.



Continental 3¢ 1876 New Design Die

By December 1876 the Postmaster General had adopted this change in the three cent stamp, but by 1877 it was abandoned for stamps of the old design.

This proof is signed by George W. Downs who worked over the frame design.



V. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing 3¢ Banknote Die Proofs

On July 27th. 1897 the Bureau of Engraving and Printing received both 3¢ banknote dies, they having been in the possession of the Office of the Third Assistant Postmaster General since 1894 when the American Bank Note Co. had delivered the U.S. stamp dies at the end of their contract with the Post Office Department for the production of U.S. postage stamps.

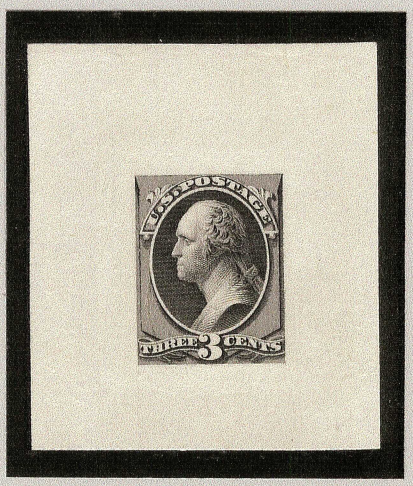
On November 17th. 1897 the B.E.P. assigned serial numbers to these two dies in their Post Office Die Series. The original National Bank Note Co., Issue of 1870 3¢ die, as altered in 1873 by the Continental Bank Note Co. with the addition of the secret mark, became P.O. Die 137 in this series.

The second 3¢ die, the one made in 1881 by the American Bank Note Co. (the re-engraved die) became P.O. Die 138.

The Black "Roosevelt" Die Proof of 1903

P.O. Die 137

The only recorded copy.



This little known and extremely rare group of proofs made their first known appearance in 1910 when Joseph E. Ralph, Director of the B.E.P. presented 17 miscellaneous black die proofs to a friend.

Research now shows that a very small number, one or two proofs each, were pulled in black ink, india on card, from a number of the 293 dies used to print the 1903 "Roosevelt" small die proofs.

This proof is likely one of the 67 prints pulled on January 14th. 1903 from P.O. Die 137, and it was probably pulled to check the state of the die before additional prints were made.

The Bureau 3¢ Banknote "Roosevelt" Small Die Proofs of 1903

On December 13th. 1902 the Post Office Department ordered 75 sets of die prints mounted in presentation albums. This order to the B.E.P. was revised on Dec. 29th. with the addition of the Newspaper and Periodical stamps. On Feb. 4th. 1903 ten more albums were ordered from the B.E.P.

These presentation albums held 308 small die proof prints, mounted on gray card pages of all U.S. stamps 1847 through 1902 issues.

P.O. Die 137

Bureau production records show that 67 prints were pulled on Jan. 14th. 1903, 24 prints pulled Feb. 10th. and 84 more on Feb. 11th. for a total of 175 proof prints.

Issue of 1870



P.O. Die 138

Bureau production records show that 4 prints were pulled on Feb. 9th. 1903, 110 prints on Feb. 10th., 33 on Feb. 24th. and 70 more on Feb. 26th. for a total of 217 proof prints that were in the green and vermilion colors.

Issue of 1881



Issue of 1887



The Bureau 3¢ Banknote "Panama-Pacific" Small Die Proofs of 1914

On September 8th. 1914 the Post Office Department ordered a set of mounted die proofs for exhibition at the Panama-Pacific Exposition to be held at San Francisco from February to December 1915.

This set contained 413 die prints of all U.S. stamps from 1847 to 1914, and were made using 368 different dies.
Printing began September 14th. 1914 and ended February 2nd. 1915.

On March 20th. 1915 a second set of proofs, unmounted, was presented to the Smithsonian Institution. About 1932 the nearly four complete sets of remainders would come into public hands.

P.O. Die 137

New research now shows that no prints from this 1870 3¢ die now exists.

The Bureau pulled three proofs from this die in December 1914, but all three copies were later destroyed. This forced the Bureau to use the 1881 re-engraved die (Die 138) to print the 3¢ stamps in two shades of green, one shade for the Issue of 1870 stamp and another shade for the 1881 re-engraved issue.

P.O. Die 138

Issue of 1870
yellowish green



Issue of 1881
blue green



Issue of 1887
vermilion

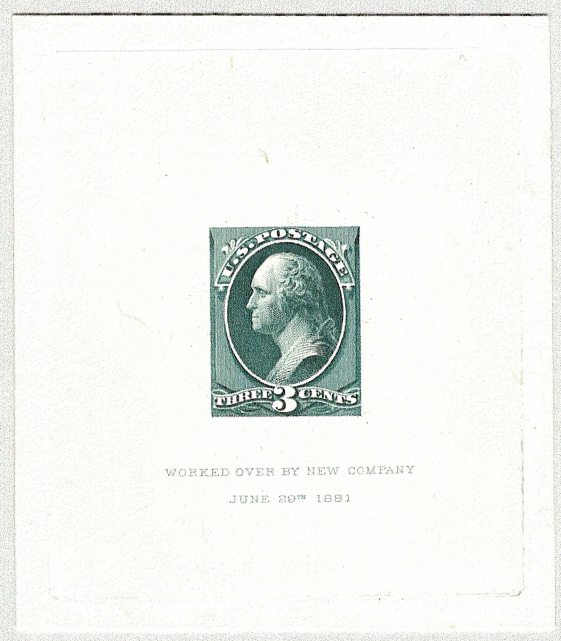


Bureau production records show that between November 20th. 1914 and December 2nd. 1914 the Bureau pulled a total of 32 proof prints from Die 138. Of these 14 were ink test proofs, all later destroyed, and 18 prints went into stock. Of the 18 in stock, 12 were in the two shades of green and 6 were in vermilion. Only four each of the above proofs are in public hands.

For The Record: P.O. Die 138 by 1914 had developed rust damage in the area of "CE" of "CENTS" in the stamp design.

The Continental 3¢ Banknote Special Printing of 1875

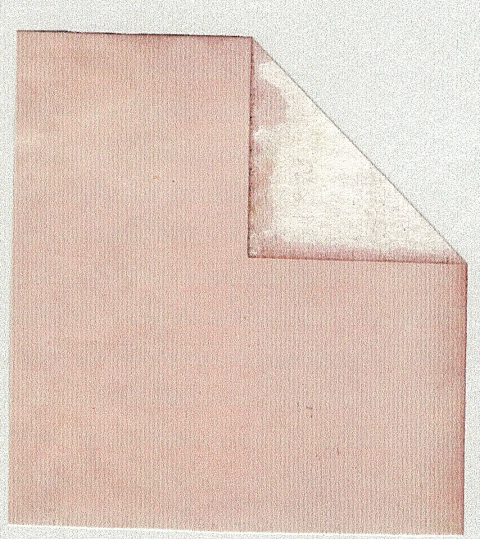




(207 P1) from hardened die, has workover by new company added to die.



(158 P4) 1879 card proof printing pair. P.F. cert.



Joseph Schnoble patent # 171,871, Dec. 1875 Rose surface colored paper.

E37k bl. Undersander.
222x100mm Manila,wove carmine



E37K b. 120x68
white,wove carmine





150x85mm white,laid reddish brown, unlisted color