

Designs and uses of the USA 3c denomination: 1861 – 1869

Purpose

The purpose of this exhibit is to show the designs and uses of the USA 3c denomination in the period 1861 to 1869. The exhibit covers the development and use of the 1861 stamp until its replacement in 1869; and the multiple tests of patents, inks, papers, and printing methods that used both the issued stamp and various designs for the 3c denomination.

Importance

The United States Post Office (USPO) faced a number of significant challenges in the 1860's. On the one hand, it had been forced to demonetize the earlier issues to prevent Civil War rebels from selling stamps for use in the North. And on the other, it was under significant pressure to meet the new cross-continental 3c letter rate, to preserve revenue and cut costs. As a result, revenue preservation and cost reduction became the dominant themes of the decade.

The 3c denomination was at the centre of these efforts because of its importance to the postal service. This exhibit integrates the development and use of the 1861 3c stamp with the search for methods, based on designs for the 3c, to preserve revenues and reduce costs.

Exhibit Plan

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Original research

The exhibit is backed by extensive original research and discoveries (highlighted in **blue text**). These include:

- A revised, accurate description of the National Bank Note Company's '3c first design' essays;
- The discovery of the Harmon patent (1864) for 'bedspring' essays;
- A new method to describe the safety network overprints of 1867 that proves that there are only three types;
- Extensive original research to prove the link between previously unlinked essays and their underlying patents;
- A rewrite of the history of surface printed experiments and grill development.

Noteworthy items

There are many unique or rare items (boxed in **black and blue**). They include:

- Three unique, rejected American Bank Note Models for the 1861 contract;
- The only two recorded examples of the earliest known use of the 1861 3c on cover;
- The agenda setting letter from MacDonough to Zevely, detailing patent and surface printing experiments;
- Many patent essays signed by their inventors or designers (e.g. Loewenberg, Jones, Ronaldson, Steel);
- The 'grill' patent essay on which Steel lays claim to his patent;
- The only known F-grill used and printed on both sides.

References

Brazer, C.W. (1977), [Essays for U.S. Postage Adhesive Stamps](#), Quaterman Publications, MASS

Hofmeyr, J. (2015), '3c 1861 First Design Essays: An Analysis of the Dies,' *The Chronicle*, 67:4

Hofmeyr, J., J. Lee (2016), 'Linking Essays of the Washington 3c (1861-69) to their Patents,' *The Chronicle*, 68:2.

Hofmeyr, J., R. Drews, J. Lee (2017), 'Types of Safety Network Overprints on the 3c 1861 Essays,' *The Chronicle*, 69:1

US Patent Office (www.uspto.com) - patent documents can only be found by number: 28,767; 37,175; 40,489; 41,118; 41,505; 42,207; 45,057; 45,568; 48,389; 51,782; 52,869; 53,081; 53,722; 63,723; 70,147; 86,952; 95,624

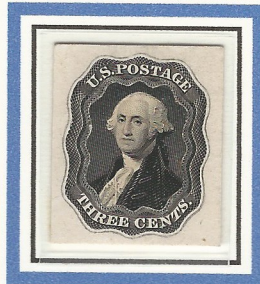
Chapter 1: Competition for the 1861 contract

In March 1861, the US Post Office advertised for new stamps to prevent the Confederates from raising money by selling the existing stamps. This section focuses on the competition for the contract. It shows:

- Unsuccessful essays by the American Bank Note Company and Toppan, Carpenter & Co.
- The evolution of the National Bank Note Company's bid from 'first design' to the issued 3c stamp

Models by the American Bank Note Company for the 1861 contract

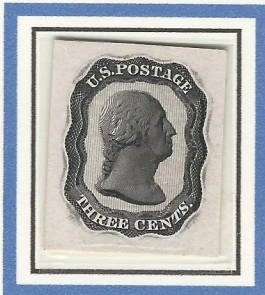
Only recorded example



e: PF

Model: Engraved frame, pencil border. Center mounted over vignette. India on card.

Only recorded example



Model: engraved frame, pencil border. Center mounted on ruled background. India on card.

Vignette from die V 36953.

Only recorded example



Model: Bald, Cousland & Co. vignette. Numbers mounted in place. India on card.

Additional essays

Frames for an unused design

Only known example

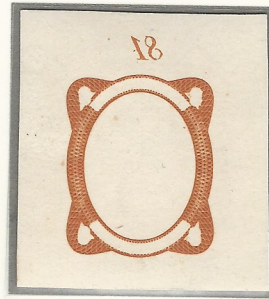


Lathework frame on India on card

Master die 81 frame on card



Orange red



Brown yellow



Dark green

A.B.N.C. design based on Danforth, Bald & Co. vignette: essay and progressive dies

Stage 1: incomplete design and drawing

Stage 2: complete design, empty value tablets

Only recorded example



Essay on India; pencil additions to frame.

Danforth, Bald & Co. vignette from die V-39907.

Green die on India



Brown Purple die on India



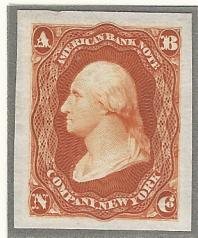
Black die (62 x 52 mm) on India sunk on card (65 x 56 mm)

A.B.N.C. design based on Danforth, Bald & Co. vignette: additional essays and plate proof

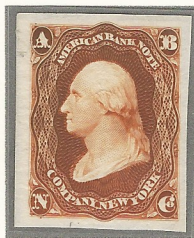
Stage 3: Capital 'A', 'B', 'N', 'C' in corners



Blue cut down die (33 x 37 mm) on India



Orange brown



Brown

Cut down die (28 x 23 mm) on India



Brown red



Dull purple

Cut down die (28 x 23 mm) on India



Red brown cut down die (33 x 28 mm) on India

The marginal strip proves that plate proofs were printed in columns of four



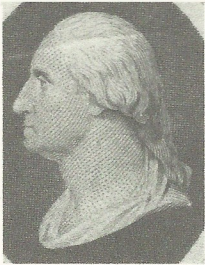
Plate proof: imperf, ungummed, bottom margin strip of four

The A.B.N.C. essays were derived from vignettes V 36953 and V-39907

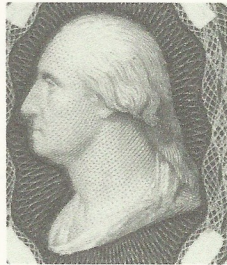


Bald, Cousland & Co. die V-39907

On India pasted on card.

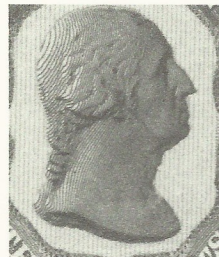


Scan of the die
(V-39907)



Scan of the essay
(Scott 65-E7A)

Brazer writes that the model uses a Bald, Cousland & Co. vignette. This is an instance of the vignette.



Scan of the model
(Brazer 56E-C)



Scan of the die
(V 36953)

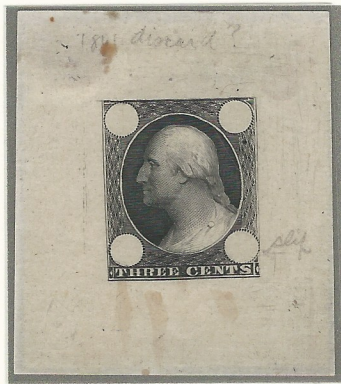
Vignette V 36953
Die on India, stuck on card



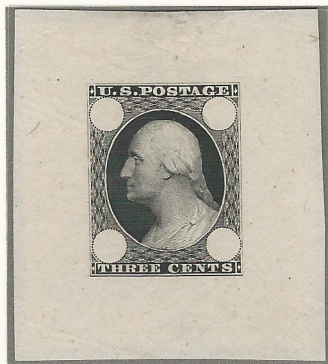
Vignette V 36953 isn't catalogued in Mason, Brazer, or Scott. It should be as it serves as the basis for the head of the **model essay** (Brazer 56E-C, Scott 65-E6).

These vignettes were released for auction by the A.B.N.C. at various times in the 20th century.

Toppan, Carpenter progressive essays based on the 1857 design



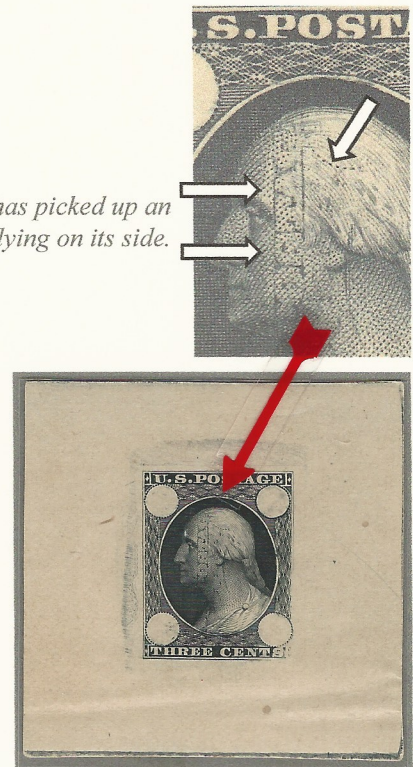
e:PF
Black: Die on old proof paper without top label



Black: on old proof paper



Brown Red: on old proof paper



Rare die error: The die has picked up an image of the design lying on its side.

Black: on old proof paper

Carmine: Die on India (20 x 25 mm) cut to shape



Carmine: Die on India, sunk (75 x 76 mm) on card (78 x 79 mm)



Designer: Edward Purcell. Engravers: Joseph Pease (portrait); Cyrus Durand (lathe border); Henry Earl (lettering).

The portrait is from a drawing by Jean Houdon which hangs in the Washington museum at Mount Vernon.

Toppan, Carpenter & Co. held the 1857-61 contract. When they merged with the A.B.N.C. in 1858, a unit was spun off to service the original contract. This unit competed for the 1861 contract under the name of Toppan, Carpenter & Co. The design was wholly based on the existing stamp, except that it included numerals as required by the new contract.

The N.B.N.C. submission: Washington vignette engraved by Joseph P. Ourdan

The N.B.N.C. were the successful bidders for the 1861 contract

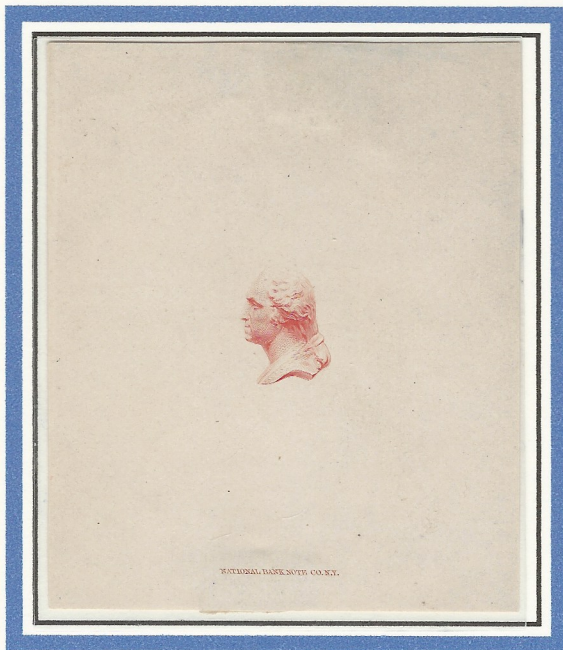
Two recorded



Carmine

Die on India (49 x 60 mm)
stuck on card (58 x 70 mm)

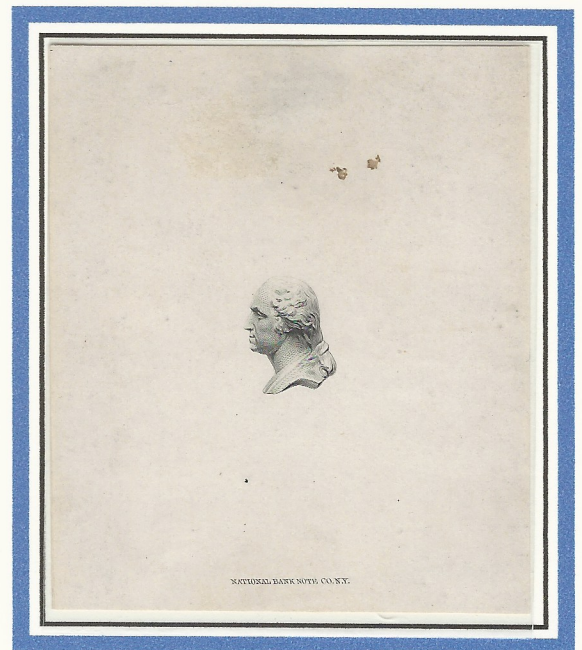
Four recorded



Scarlet

On glazed paper
(62 x 75 mm)

Five recorded



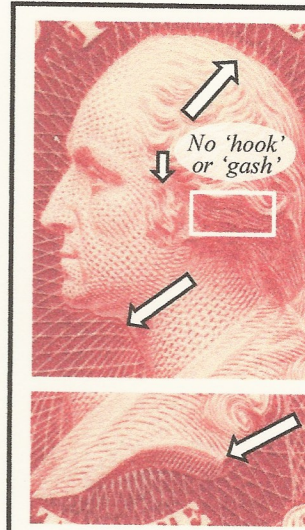
Black

On glazed paper
(63 x 75 mm)

The **National Bank Note Company** was formed in 1859 when three bankers and four dissatisfied staff of the A.B.N.C. joined Danforth, Wright & Co. Danforth, Wright & Co. had stayed independent when the A.B.N.C. was formed in 1858.

The N.B.N.C. submitted a first design for the stamp in April, 1861

Research: on this page I show that the current cataloguing of the 'first designs' is wrong. Although there are two types, neither conforms to the current Brazer or catalogue descriptions.*



From: Hackett (1956), Finkelburg (1999); Lake Shore 4 (2006).

Described in all three sales as Brazer T 2.

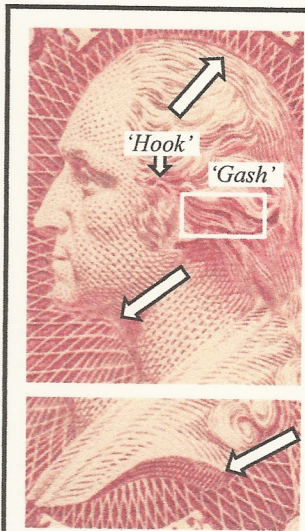
Characteristics

Dark orange red. With imprint, die 441. Die on India sunk on card: 59 x 55 mm.

No silhouette on top of the head, wispy hair. The top set of vertical lines at the base are light, clean, and well defined.

This is the Primary Die.

Like Brazer T 1 the primary die has the imprint and die. But like Brazer T 2 it has a clearly defined chin and well-defined lines at the base of the bust.



From: Lake Shore 3 (2005)

Described as Brazer T 2 in the sale.

Characteristics

Oxidised scarlet. No imprint. Die on India sunk on card: 62 x 75 mm.

Silhouette on top of head, thick hair lines. 'Hook' and 'gash' in hair around ear. Poor definition under chin and at the base of the bust.

This is the Secondary Die.

Like Brazer T 1 the secondary die has lines under the chin; and at the base of the bust lack definition. But like Brazer T 2 there are strong hair lines with a silhouette on top of the head.

Clarence Brazer describes **two types** of the first design with full ornamentation.

Type 1: die no. 441 with printer's imprint; no silhouette under the chin. **Type 2:** design changes include the silhouette on top of the head, lines added to the hair and the chin. Thicker lines around the ear. Three lines at the base of the bust extend to the back. No imprint or die number.

My research shows that the descriptions are wrong: these items have been misclassified in auctions since Hackett (1956). I know of 15 sold on auction since 1956. I show **ten of the fifteen** in this collection.*

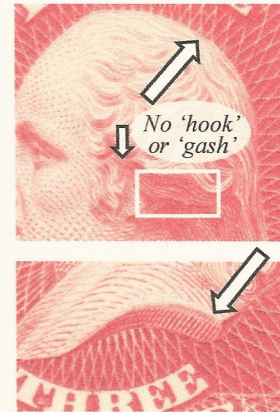
* Hofmeyr, Jan (2015), '3c 1861 First-design Essays: An Analysis of the Dies', Chronicle 67: 4, November

Essays for the N.B.N.C.'s first design

On this page I show **three additional examples** of what I call the **Primary Die**.

From: Finkelburg (1999).
Described as Brazer T 2.

Scarlet. Die on India sunk on card: 59 x 55 mm.



From: Hackett (1956),
Finkelburg (1999).

Described as Brazer T 2.

Dark orange red. Die on India sunk on card: 59 x 55 mm.



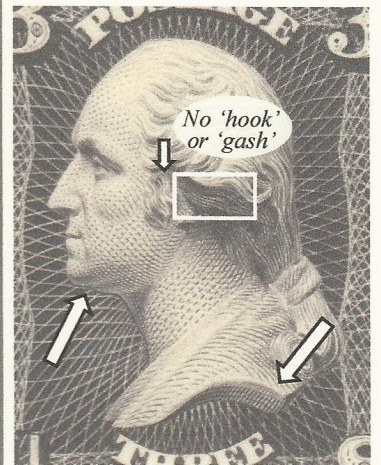
From: Lake Shore 2 (2005).
Described as Brazer T .

Dark orange red. Die on India sunk on card: 59 x 55 mm.

Defining characteristics of the **primary die**: imprinted with die 441 and company name. Wispy hair. No silhouette on top of the head. No 'hook' or 'gash' in the hair around the ear. Chin outline is well defined. Top set of lines at the base of the bust are well defined. It's the smaller of the two dies.

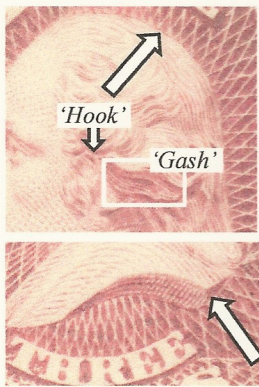
Essays for the N.B.N.C.'s first design

Primary die (55 x 55 mm) sunk on card (full size: 140 x 220 mm: protective tissue still attached)



Essays for the N.B.N.C.'s first design

On this page I show **three additional examples** of what I call the **Secondary Die**.



From: Lake Shore 2 (2005). Described as Brazer T 2.

Oxidised Pink. Trimmed die in large sunk area (62 x 75 mm) on India pasted on card: 73 x 85 mm.



From: Hackett (1956), Finkelburg (1999); Lake Shore 2 (2005).

Described as Brazer T 2.

Pink. Die (46 x 52 mm) on India pasted on card: 60 x 71 mm.



From: Lake Shore 2 (2005). Described as Brazer T 2; expertized by the PF as Scott 65-E15c.

Oxidized Pink. Trimmed die in large sunk area (62 x 75 mm) on India pasted on card: 76 x 82 mm.

Defining characteristics: no imprint or die number. 'Hook' and 'gash' in hair around ear. Poorly defined lines at the base of the bust and under the chin. Appears to be from a bigger die (62 x 75 mm).

Essays for the N.B.N.C.'s first design

On this page I propose new descriptions for the two types. I've designated them 'Primary' and 'Secondary' because the primary die became the basis of the issued stamp.



Dull pink

Deep orange red

Dim red

Various shades on semi-transparent stamp paper with **primary die** characteristics

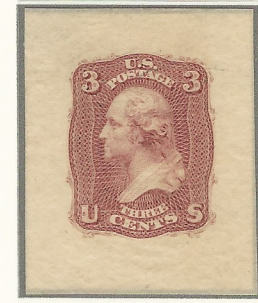


Dim orange red

Dim deep red

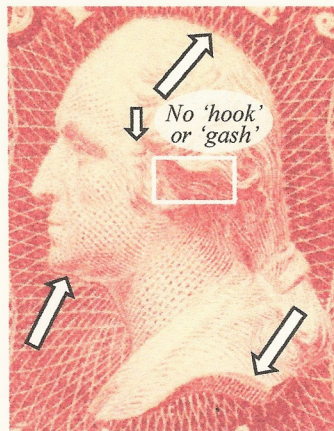
Dim violet red

Deep red orange

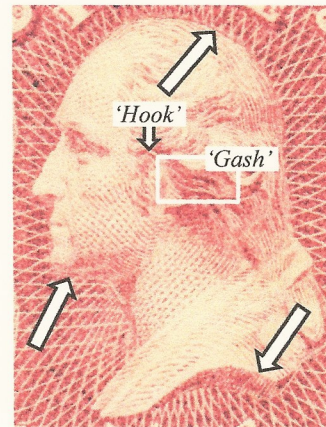


Dim deep red

Rare die on pelure paper with **secondary die** characteristics



Scan of stamp paper die: clearly shows primary die characteristics.



Scan of pelure paper die: clearly shows secondary die characteristics.

Primary Die: no silhouette on the top of the head, but well defined outline under the chin. Fine wispy hair around the ear – no 'hook', no 'gash'. Well defined lines at the base of the bust. **Imprint and die number 441.** A smaller die.

Secondary Die: silhouette on the top of the head. Poorly defined outline under the chin. A 'hook' and 'gash' in the hair around the ear. Poorly defined lines at the base of the bust. **No imprint or die number.** Apparently a bigger die.

Essays for the N.B.N.C.'s first design

Primary die: plate proofs and experimental, perforated stamps

Vignette engraved by Joseph P. Ourdan

Frame engraved by Cyrus Durand

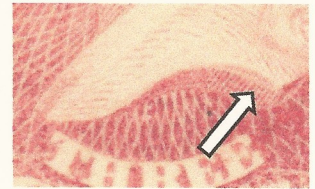
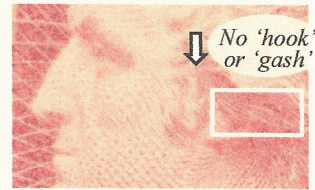
Imperf plate proofs on India



Scarlet



Red



Enlarged scan of the red proof

Essays perfed and gummed on semi-transparent stamp paper



Brown rose



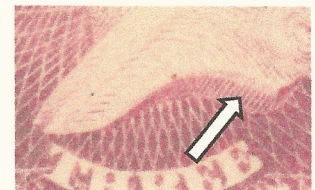
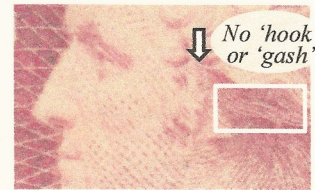
Dim deep red



Pink



Deep pink



Enlarged scan of the brown rose essay

Enlarged scans of both the **imperf plate proofs** and the **perforated essays** show the distinctive characteristics of the **primary die**: no 'hook' or 'gash' around the ear; thin lines at the top of the base of the bust.

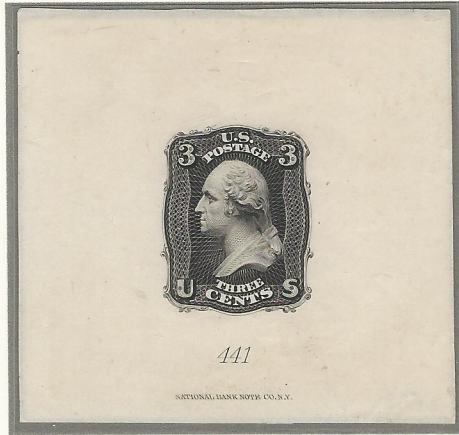
Evolution from First design to the Issued Stamp

The issued stamp has a vignette based on the **Primary Die** but with a strengthened silhouette around the chin

Basic First Design: no frame, no ornaments in 'US' or '3'



Complete First Design: elaborate scrolls for frame: ornaments in 'US' and '3'



Transitional Die: scrolls and ornaments partially removed



Basic First Design



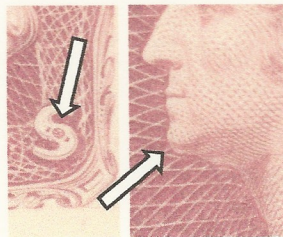
Complete First Design



Transitional Die

Die for the issued stamp

New frame, strengthened silhouette around the chin; and simpler ornaments in 'US' and '3'



The Issued Stamp with new frame

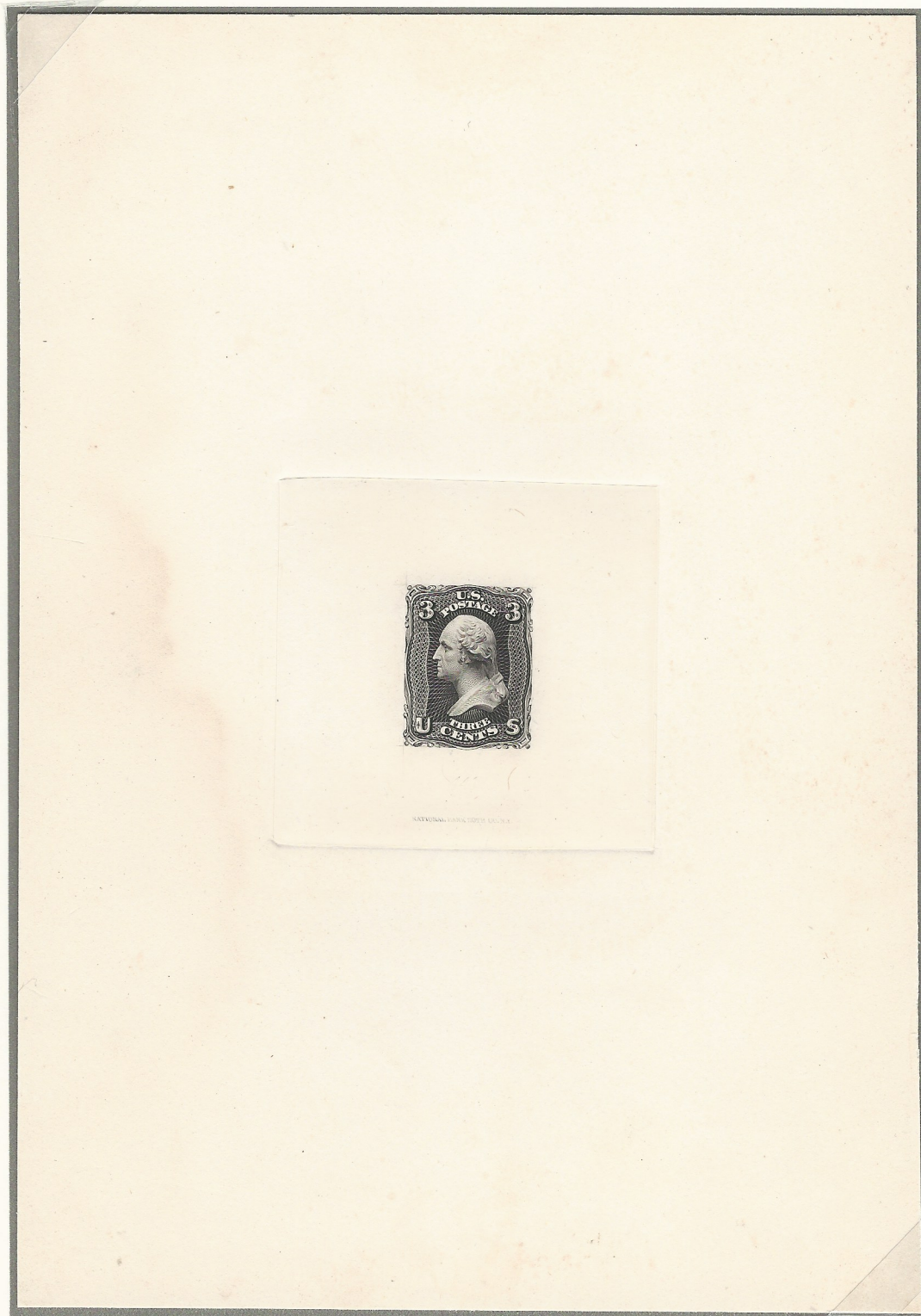


Chapter 2: Approved design

In this section I show:

- Color trials and plate proofs of the approved design including the rare **Carmine Pink**
- Die proofs of the approved colors including the rare die proof in **Pink**

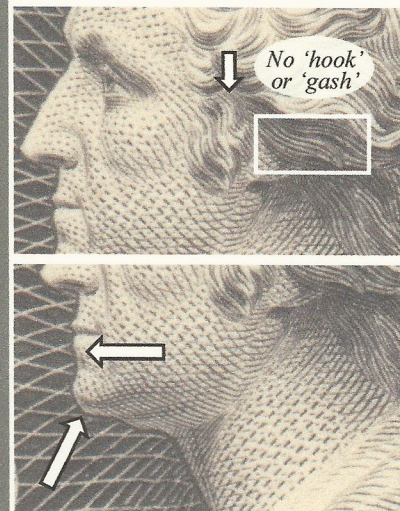
Large die on India (58 x 55 mm) sunk on card (139 x 199 mm)



Black

Albino die no. 441.

Printer's imprint in **Black**.



The approved design is from the primary die with the silhouette extended.

Ex- Earl of Crawford

Large die color trial: die on India (58 x 55 mm) sunk on card (139 x 206 mm)



Lake

Die no. 441 and printer's imprint in **Lake**.