

# U. S. ISSUES OF 1861-1868

Essays, proofs, specimens, issued stamps unused and used, multiples, varieties and uses

**Purpose:** Documenting the development of the National Bank Note Company (NBN Co.) stamps from the issues of 1861-1866 through the early grill experiments, which culminated in the 1867-1868 grilled issues. **These are the most important, complex and difficult issues in all of classic U.S. philately.**

**Background:** The Civil War caused the issues of 1861. The Union ordered new stamps to stop the Confederacy from selling supplies of existing stamps to finance their war efforts. A contract was put out for bids. The NBN Co. was low bidder. They had problems producing acceptable work samples in the time frames required in the contract. Design and color changes were made after the contract was signed to put all new dies under government ownership and to produce better results. These changes resulted in the much debated "Premiere Gravures." They are shown with the issued stamps.

**Archival Material:** Progressive die essays and trial colors of first and second designs explain the development of these issues. All values are shown as large die proofs. Plate proofs are in blocks of 4 on India paper, specimen and control numbers in singles, with representative blocks of each. The only recorded complete set of imperforates on stamp paper is shown. Referred to as presentation copies, many examples bear manuscript defacements. No more than 3-5 exist of any of the values. The 1 cent is recorded as unique.

**The Issued Stamps 1861-1866:** Are shown with emphasis on rare shades. Mint and used blocks of 4 of all values are shown. **Only one other such holding can exist and has never been exhibited before.** Representative fancy cancels are also displayed. Uses include rates for which each stamp was issued, stressing rare rates, routes, markings, **destinations** (in **bold**) and combination frankings.

**Essays to Prevent Reuse:** Documented by key examples of every type of essay tried by the company. The Post Office was concerned about loss of revenue from reuse of stamps. A new contract was up for bid for 1869. The NBN Co. tried to acquire a patent acceptable to the Post Office. They licensed patents and ran many experiments to prevent reuse. Successful grill experiments were included in the bid specifications, guaranteeing them the contract. The first experiments and patent submissions plus only recorded examples of 10 of the 12 points-up and points-down "C" grill essays are shown along with several only recorded and discovery examples of grill essays. **No comparable holding of essay material can exist.** Many items shown were not known to the Earl of Crawford or Clarence Brazier.

**The Grilled Stamps of 1867-1868:** The issued grills are shown following the essays that preceded each change in orientation and size. Once the contract was assured, the company focused on producing grilled stamps as quickly and inexpensively as possible. Many of the early grills are only recorded in quantities of 2-8 each. Emphasis is placed on production varieties, including continuous marginal grills, double and triple grills, quadruple split grills, inverted and fold-over grills. Uses still stress the rare rates, routes, markings, **destinations** (in **bold**) and combination frankings.

**Condition and Rarity:** The highest level of rarity of any U.S. issues in the best available condition. **Very rare items** are indicated in **blue**. **Expertized items** are marked **e**.

**Research and Personal Study:** The exhibitor is the authority with 35+ years of contributions to understanding these issues including expertizing for all the major services, catalog changes and courses taught for the American Philatelic Society. Research is pervasive.

## Forerunners: the Toppan, Carpenter & Co. Submissions - Contract Holders 1851 - 1861

Completed die essays modifying previous designs on 1861 proof paper, cut to shape as usual - an attempt to retain the stamp contract.



progressive die essay, cut out corners, numerals drawn in  
**only recorded example**

The 10 cent and 30 cent values were not modified for submission.

e



# First NBN Co. Designs for Contract Submission

## Die and Plate Essays

Exhibit Plan	
Title Page and Forerunners	Fr I: Pp 1 - 2
Archival Material	Fr II: Pp 3 - 16
Issued Stamps 1861-1866	Fr II: Pg 1 - Fr V: Pg 11
Essay Grills, Stamps & Uses 1867 - 68: A, C, D & Z	Fr V: Pg 12 - Fr VI: Pg 6
Later Essays to Prevent Reuse	Fr VI: Pg 7 - Fr VII: Pg 5
Production Grills & Uses 1868: E & F	Fr VII: Pg 6 - Fr VIII: Pg 11
Epilogue - Post Issue Material	Fr VIII: Pp 12 - 16



die essays on thin paper



trial color die essays on split card

finished plate essays, perforated on stamp paper, with trial cancels



plate essay  
on card

plate essay on  
stamp paper e

trial color  
plate essay on  
stamp paper



2 examples  
recorded  
e



3 cent decline opinion  
as to contemporary  
cancel e



2 examples  
recorded  
e

## First Designs - "Premiere Gravures"



24 recorded e

35 recorded e

16 rec'd "new" e

e

30 recorded e

22 recorded e

## The Issued 1861 Stamps - Second Designs



2 cent and 15 cent designs were added in 1863 and 1866 respectively.

e



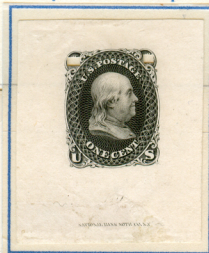
# Archival Material

## Large Die Essays and Proofs - 1 Cent

### Six or Less Large Die Proofs Recorded of Each Denomination

trial color - numeral cutouts

only recorded example



issued blue

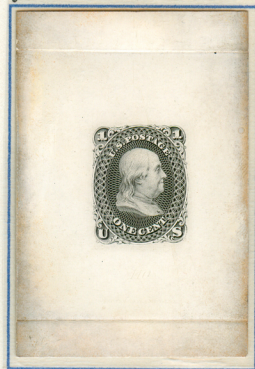


progressive die essay on glazed card  
numerous lines recut or added

only recorded example

NBN Co. SPECIMENS

from salesmen's sample books



first design - only exists as a hybrid

SPECIMEN  
POSTAGE STAMP  
FIRST CLASS  
NATIONAL BANK NOTE COMPANY  
170-1 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK





trial color

die I



partial scan of cover dated Nov. 2, 1863

trial color plate proofs on India paper - trial cancel of  
Washington, DC - confirmed by scan of cover above



SPECIMEN  
POSTAGE STAMP  
FROM THE  
NATIONAL BANK NOTE COMPANY  
170-1 WALL STREET  
NEW YORK

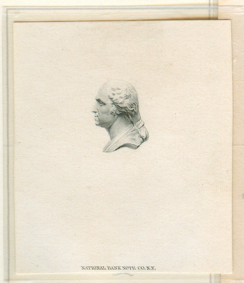


stage 2

no scrollwork or ornaments on 3's or U and S

stage 1

head only



stage 3

finished  
first design  
die essay



stage 4

scrollwork is almost  
completely removed  
ornaments on 3's, U and S remain  
only recorded working example



stage 5

additional frame  
ornamentation  
discovery example



stage 6

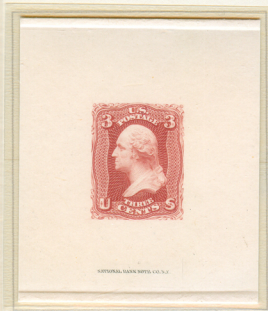
completed large die  
trial color proof







trial color large die on glazed card  
only recorded example



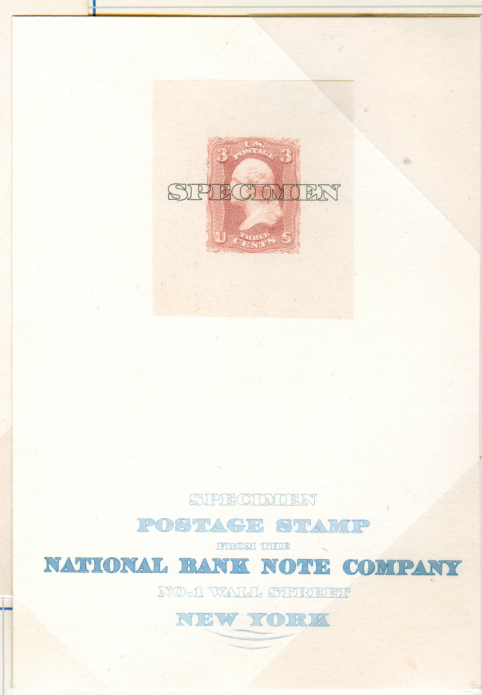
issued rose



scarlet trial color  
3 examples recorded



manuscript "Specimen"  
one of each denomination recorded  
National Bank Note Company embossing



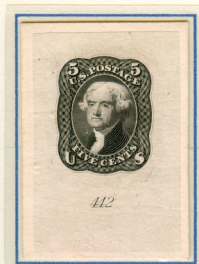


## Archival Material

## Large Die Essays and Proofs - 5 Cent

first design trial color die essays - trimmed

only 2 sets recorded



black



dark orange e



blue e



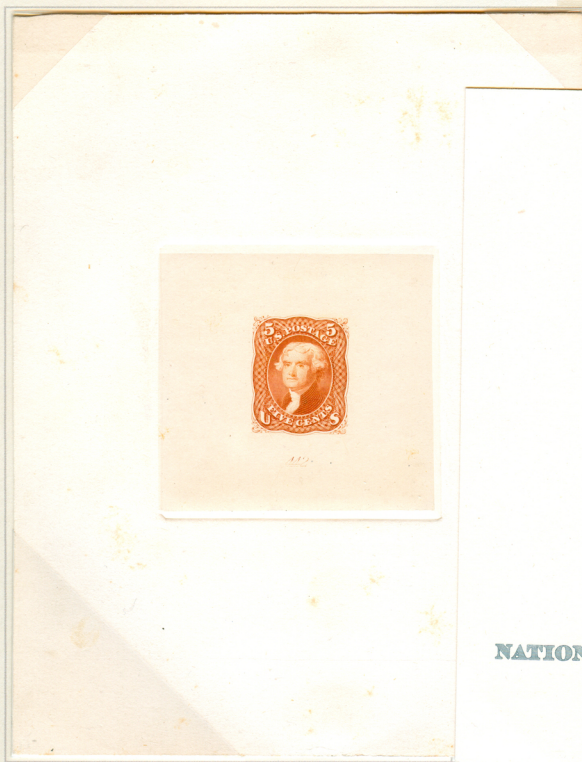
green e

first design progressive die essay

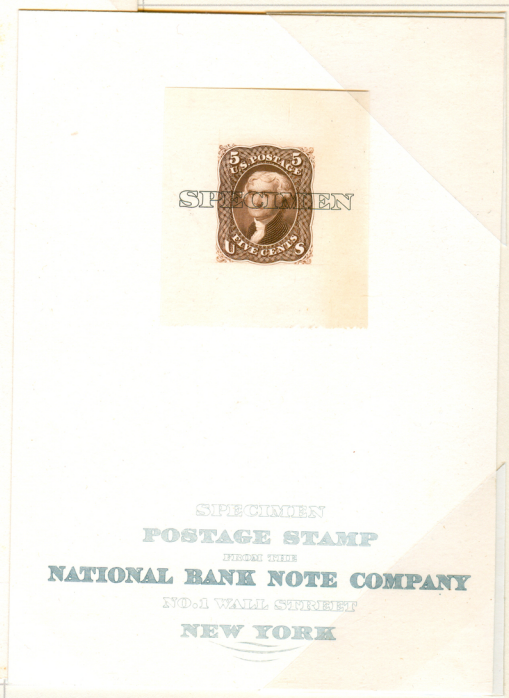
only recorded example



issued brown



trial color for issued red brown shade

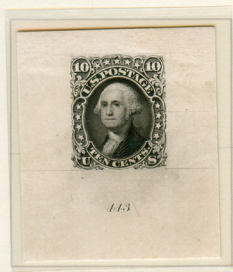






first design progressive die essay

two recorded examples



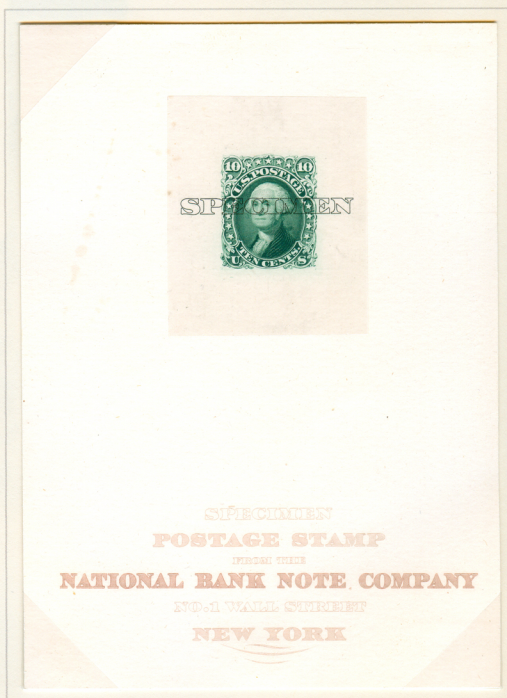
trial color

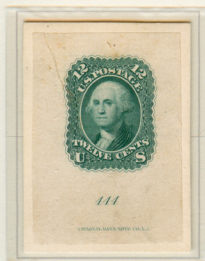


trial color



issued green





first design

trial color die essay



trial color



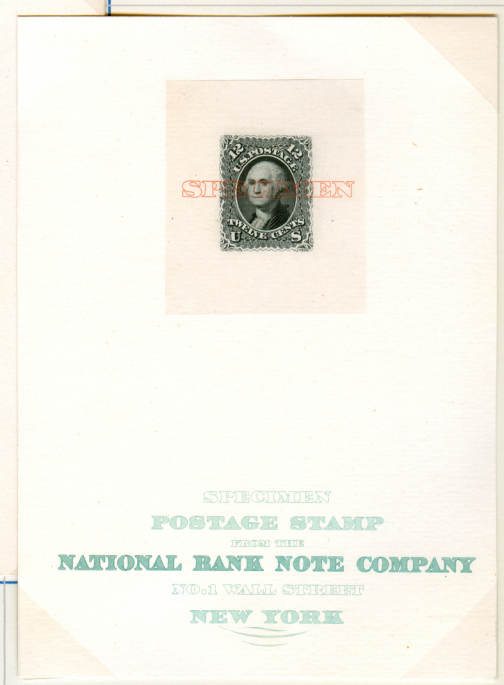
issued black



manuscript "Specimen"

one of each denomination recorded

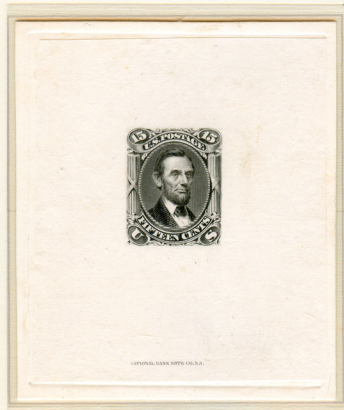
National Bank Note Company embossing







trial color plate proof  
forehead flaw



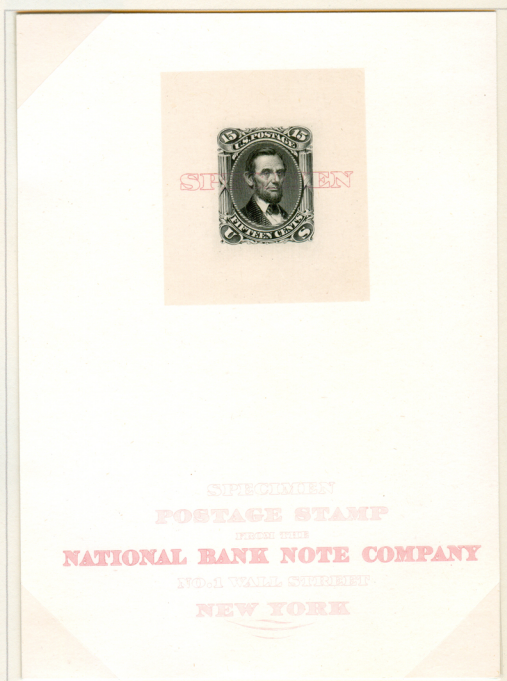
issued black



trial color plate proof  
trial cancel



trial color



Archival Material

Large Die Proofs - 24 Cent  
No design changes - color change only



orange yellow



red violet

India paper

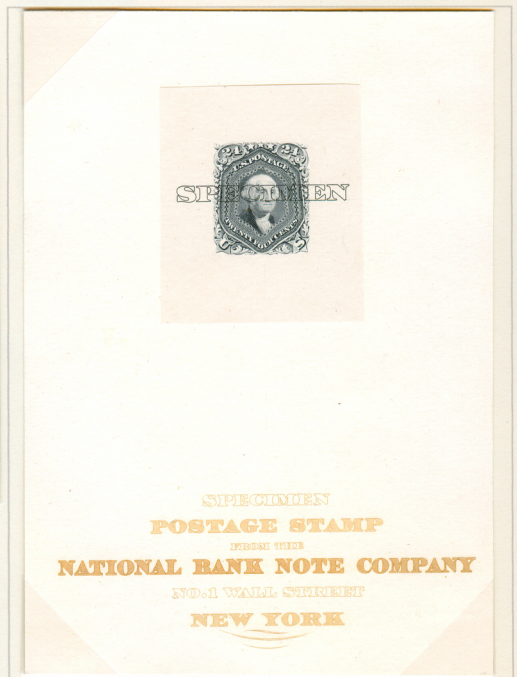
discovery example e



gray

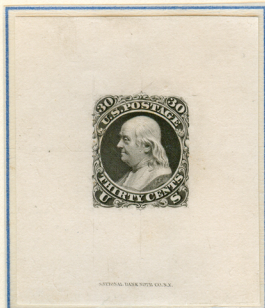


issued red lilac





## Archival Material



first design progressive die essay  
pencil suggestion of additional dot UR  
only recorded example



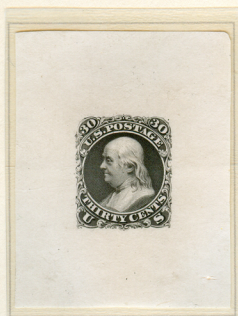
color of "Premiere Gravure"



blue trial color  
plate proof on card



issued orange



black trial color



lemon yellow



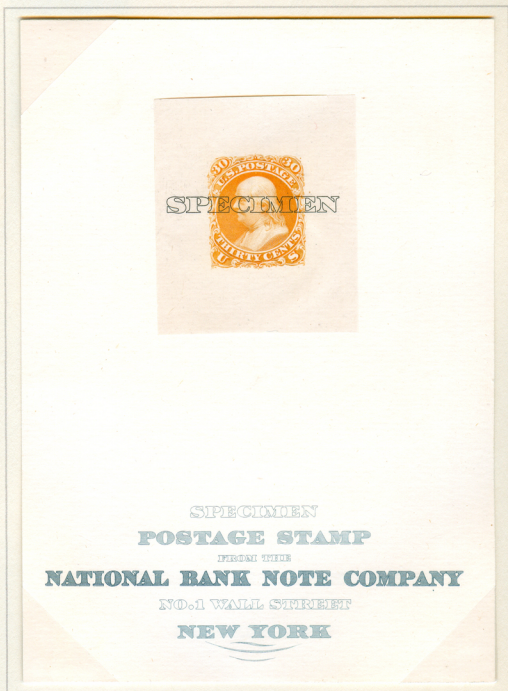
deep red orange

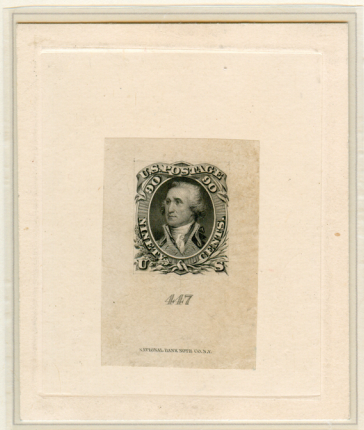


blue trial color

## Large Die Essays and Proofs - 30 Cent

No design changes - color change only





first design trial color die essay



red brown trial color



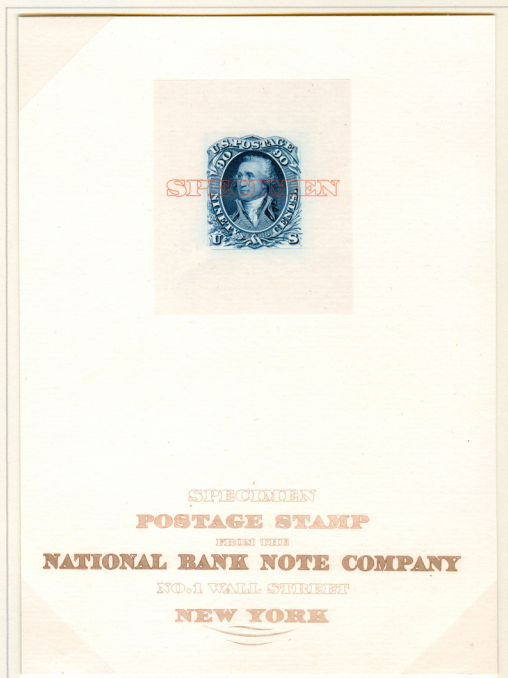
issued blue



first design trial color die essay

dim dusky blue

Brazer classification





Only 2 complete sets of blocks could be formed



indigo

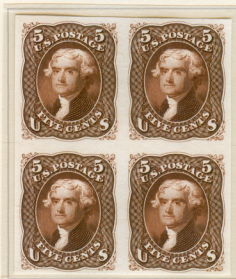


ultramarine

1 cent ultramarine plate block is the only  
recorded example







lake

scarlet





## Specimen Type B



the 12 cent is  
always faint

## "Specimen" Type A



The control numbers were prepared just prior to the issuance of the 15 cent value. **Only one half pane of each value was overprinted using bond coupon numbering machines.** Recent research shows that blocks of 40 of each denomination, sold in the auction of the Mandel holdings, are the source of most recorded examples. 41 examples of the 2 cent are recorded.