

# NEW SERIES OF ADHESIVE POSTAGE STAMPS.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *February 19, 1890.*

The Department has had in contemplation for nearly a year past a full revision of the designs and styles of postage stamps used in prepayment of postage on matter passing through the mails. The subject was necessarily delayed to await an impending change of the contract for furnishing adhesive stamps, through which the new standards might be fixed. The new contract was executed in November last, and the work of designing and engraving the new stamps was immediately begun. All needful preparations having been completed, the new stamps will be issued at once; and they will be placed on sale at the principal post offices on Saturday, the 22d inst.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW STAMPS.—Issue of 1890.

The new series comprises the same denominations as the series in present use, to meet existing rates of postage. The stamps differ somewhat in form from those in present use, and are about one-eighth smaller in size, the engraving measuring three-fourths by seven-eighths of an inch. The designs contain, as the leading feature, portraits of personages of great eminence in American history. The portraits are in medallion, with a heavily-shaded background, and set in an ornamental frame containing the words and figures expressive of the object and value of the stamps. The stamps will be printed in suitable and attractive colors from engraved steel plates. The following is a description of each stamp in the new series, namely:

**One Cent.**—Profile bust, after Rubriecht, of Benjamin Franklin, looking to the left, on an oval disk, with dark background and narrow white border, immediately above which, set in a panel conforming to the curve of the disk, are the words "United States Postage," in white capitals, and below which, in slightly larger and shaded letters, arranged in a wavy line running nearly the whole width of the stamp, are the words "One cent." Just above these latter words, on either side, is a white numeral of denomination—the Arabic figure "1"—in a small oval space, surrounded by an ornate scroll, the upper portion of which is connected with and serves as a support to the panel around the medallion. The whole is placed upon a distinctly lined oblong tablet, seven-eighths of an inch high by three-quarters of an inch wide, with beveled sides and bottom. The color is ultramarine blue.

**Two Cents.**—Profile bust, after Houdon, of George Washington, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the one-cent stamp, with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, carmine.

**Three Cents.**—Profile bust, after Powers, of Andrew Jackson, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the one-cent stamp, with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, purple.

**Four Cents.**—Portrait of Abraham Lincoln, after a photograph from life, three-quarters face, looking to the right, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the one-cent stamp, with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, velvet brown.

**Five Cents.**—Portrait of U. S. Grant, after a photograph from life, three-quarters face, looking to the right, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the one-cent stamp, with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, light brown.

**Six Cents.**—Portrait of James A. Garfield, after a photograph from life, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the one-cent stamp, with the necessary change of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, light maroon.

**Ten Cents.**—Portrait of Daniel Webster, after a daguerreotype from life, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk, with dark background and narrow white border, around the upper half of which, set in a panel conforming to its curve, are the words "United States Postage," in small white capitals, the words "Ten Cents" in somewhat similar letters being placed in a like panel below the medallion. Below this again, in the two lower corners of the stamp, are plain Arabic numerals of denomination, "10," set in circular spaces surrounded with ornate scrolls not unlike those in the one-cent stamp. The whole is placed upon an oblong tablet, seven-eighths of an inch high by three-fourths of an inch wide, with beveled sides and bottom. The color is milori green.

**Fifteen Cents.**—Portrait of Henry Clay, after a daguerreotype from life, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are substantially the same as in the ten-cent stamp, with appropriate changes of figures and letters representing the denomination. Color, deep blue.

**Thirty Cents.**—Profile bust of Thomas Jefferson, after Ceracchi, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are the same as in the ten-cent stamp, with the necessary change of the letters and figures of denomination, the latter, however, being of block form. Color, black.

**Ninety Cents.**—Profile bust of Commodore O. H. Perry, after Wolcott's statue, looking to the left, on an oval disk. The surroundings of the medallion are substantially the same as in the thirty-cent stamp, with the necessary change of the letters and figures of denomination. Color, orange.

The issue of the new four and five-cent stamps will be delayed for a short period on account of the difficulty experienced in producing acceptable portraits of Lincoln and Grant. It is expected, however, that the new series will be completed by the issue of these two denominations in March. Meanwhile, the Department will continue to furnish four and five-cent stamps of the old style as called for.

## DISPOSITION OF STAMPS OUTSTANDING.

The stamps remaining in post offices must be sold; and postmasters must not make requisition for the new stamps so long as they may have a sufficient supply of stamps of the old style.

The old stamps must not be returned to the Department for exchange or redemption.

Postmasters must not exchange or redeem stamps of the old style remaining in the hands of the public.

## VALID STAMPS.—Issues of 1861, 1869, and 1870.

The stamps of the style now in use will continue to be recognized equally with those of the new issue in payment of postage. The stamps of past issues which are still valid consist of three different styles, and are known as the series of 1861, 1869, and 1870, respectively.

## OBSOLETE STAMPS.—Issues of 1847 and 1851.

The two several issues of stamps made before the War of the Rebellion, and designated as the series of 1847 and 1851, were long since declared to be valueless. Many of the stamps of the latter issue are believed to be still outstanding; and they must not be accepted by postmasters in payment of postages. Matter bearing these stamps and offered for mailing must be treated as "held for postage." For the guidance of postmasters in making the proper discriminations, a description of the obsolete stamps is annexed to this circular.

## NO CHANGES IN OTHER CURRENT STYLES.

There will be no changes in the current Special-Delivery, Postage-Due, or Newspaper and Periodical, stamps; neither will the stamps on the Stamped Envelopes or on the Letter-Sheet Envelopes be changed, for the present, at least.

## SPECIMENS.

Collectors and others desiring specimens of the new postage stamps may obtain them by purchase at the leading post offices, at which a supply of all the denominations will be kept on hand.

No specimens of present or past issues are furnished directly by the Department.

JOHN WANAMAKER,  
*Postmaster General.*

## OBSOLETE STAMPS.

The following is a description of stamps which are no longer recognized in payment of postages. Matter offered for mailing, and bearing these stamps, must be treated as "held for postage."

### OBSOLETE ISSUE OF 1847.

**Five Cents.**—Portrait of Franklin, after painting by John B. Longacre, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk with dark ground—white neckerchief, and fur collar to coat—the whole surrounded with a faintly-engraved wreath of leaves, on which in the two upper corners are the letters "U" and "S," and in each of the two lower corners a large figure "5." In a curved line around the upper portion of the medallion are the words "Post Office," and around the lower part the words "Five Cents." A border of fine straight lines goes around the entire stamp. Color, light brown.

**Ten Cents.**—Portrait of Washington, from Stuart's painting, three-quarters face, looking to the right, on an oval disk with dark ground—white neckerchief and black coat—faint wreath of leaves around all, on which in the upper corners are the letters "U" and "S," and in each of the lower corners a large Roman numeral, "X." In a curved line around the upper and lower parts of the medallion, as in the case of the five-cent stamp, are the words "Post Office" and "Ten Cents." Color, black. A border of fine straight lines goes around the whole stamp.

### OBSOLETE ISSUE OF 1851.

**One Cent.**—Profile bust of Franklin, looking to the right, on an oval disk with dark ground—the words "U. S. Postage" in outline capitals on a curved panel above, and the words "One Cent" in similar letters on a curved panel below. On the corners, and partly surrounding the two panels, are convolute scroll-work ornaments, nearly meeting in points on the sides. Color, indigo blue.

**Three Cents.**—Profile bust of Washington, after Houdon, facing to the left, on an oval disk with very dark ground and a white line border. Around this oval is a beautifully tessellated frame, terminating in each of the four corners with a fine lathe-work rosette. At the top of the stamp is a straight panel, with a piece at each end cut off, bearing the words "U. S. Postage" in white capitals; at the bottom of the stamp, in a similar panel and with similar letters, are inscribed the words "Three Cents." A fine line incloses the stamp, forming a rectangle. Color, brick-red.

**Five Cents.**—Portrait of Jefferson, after a painting by Stuart, three-quarters face, looking to the right, on an oval disk with dark ground and a distinct white border, on the upper and lower portions of which are four irregular-shaded segmental spaces. Around the whole is a four-sided oblong frame, with rounded corners terminating in slight incisions, the whole filled in with two rows of geometric lathework, and bearing in a wavy line at the top the words "U. S. Postage" in white capitals, and at the bottom the words "Five Cents," similarly displayed. Color, brown.

**Ten Cents.**—Portrait of Washington after the painting by Stuart, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk with very dark ground, and a border which is white below and slightly shaded above. Around the upper portion of the medallion, on a dark ground, are thirteen white stars, above which again in a white panel are the words, in small solid capitals, "U. S. Postage," connecting two circular spaces on the corners, each containing the Roman numeral "X." Below the medallion, in a wavy panel, are the words "Ten Cents," in large white capitals. The whole is surrounded with shaded scroll-work of a highly ornate character. Color, dark green.

**Twelve Cents.**—Portrait of Washington, after the painting by Stuart, three-quarters face, looking to the left, on an oval disk with dark ground and a fine shaded line border. Above the medallion and conforming to its curve, on a light background, are the words "U. S. Postage" in white shaded capitals, and below the medallion, similarly inscribed and displayed, are the words "Twelve Cents." Around the whole, and inclosed in a fine double-lined rectangle, is a beautifully tessellated frame, separated at each of the four corners by a lathe-work rosette. Color, black.

**Twenty-four Cents.**—Portrait of Washington, after the painting by Stuart, three-quarters face, looking to the right, on an oval disk with very dark ground, surrounded by a solid curved border, bearing above the words "U. S. Postage," and below the words "Twenty-four Cents," in white capitals—the two inscriptions being separated on each side by a small triple rectangle. Around the whole of this is a mass of badly-mixed lathe-work, forming a frame of irregular oblong form, with rounded corners and curved incisions, all inclosed by a fine outer line. Color, very dark lilac.

**Thirty Cents.**—Profile bust of Franklin, looking to the left, on an oval disk with a very dark ground, and with a slightly-shaded border. In an irregular panel at the top are the words "U. S. Postage" in two lines of white capitals; at the bottom, in a panel, are the Arabic numerals "30"; on the two sides are the words, "Thirty" and "Cents," respectively, in white capitals; at each of the four corners is a shield, placed obliquely, with fine radiations, and connected with ornate shaded scrolls. The two sides and the top of the stamp are inclosed by a fine double line, ending in six spear-points. Color, orange.

**Ninety Cents.**—Portrait of Washington, in general's uniform, after the painting by Trumbull, three-quarters face, on a very dark oblong ground with arched top. In a solid panel, conforming to the curve of this arch, are the words "U. S. Postage" in white capitals, while at the bottom of the portrait, in a straight panel, with rounded ends, are the words "Ninety Cents." Connecting these two panels, and forming an oblong frame for the portrait, are scroll-work ornaments, resting on a sort of pedestal. Color, deep indigo blue.

**One-cent Carrier Stamp.**—Profile bust of Franklin, looking to the left, on an oval disk, with very dark ground and a distinct white border. Around this disk is a tessellated frame, separated at the four corners by lathe-work rosettes, similar to those in the twelve-cent stamp. In straight panels at the top and bottom of this frame are the words "Carriers" and "Stamps", respectively—a white star on a dark circle being at the beginning and end of each word. The whole is inclosed in a fine single-line rectangle. Color, indigo blue, on rose-colored paper.

**One-cent Carrier Stamp.**—Picture of an eagle on the branch of a tree, poised for flight, looking to the left, on an oval disk, partly filled with clouds and sun-rays. Around this disk is a solid band, separated on the right and left sides by a lined panel, and bearing above the words "U. S. P. O. Despatch," and below the words "Prepaid. One Cent"—all in white capitals. Above and below the band, and forming corners to the stamp, are laurel and oak leaves—oak to the left and laurel to the right. Color, indigo blue. This stamp, unlike all other stamps in the series, is of less height than width.

The following general statements, in addition to the foregoing technical descriptions, will enable any one to readily distinguish the two obsolete series of stamps from all others:

1. The 5-cent stamp of the 1847 series bears a portrait of Franklin, in three-quarters face, after a *painting* by ~~Stuart~~. All other stamps bearing portraits of Franklin are *profiles* from *busts*.
2. The 10-cent stamps of both the 1847 and 1851 issues bear the Roman numeral "X." No other stamps of any series bear Roman numerals.
3. The 1, 3, 5, 12, 24, and 90-cent stamps, and the eagle carrier stamp of the 1851 issue, have the denominations indicated *solely by words*. All other stamps have the denominations indicated by *both words and numerals*, except the Franklin carrier stamp of 1851, which has no indication at all of the denomination.
4. The 30-cent stamp of 1851 is the only stamp ever issued bearing four shields.

Longacre.