

UNITED STATES ENCASED POSTAGE STAMPS. ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING SERIES OF "NECESSITY MONEY" EVER ISSUED.

By EDGAR H. ADAMS.

The discovery recently of a new variety of the curious encased postage stamp money, which for a limited time circulated freely in New York City in particular, and in several other sections of the United States during 1862, brings the number of varieties of these pieces of currency known to be in existence up to about 180. The latest addition to this interesting series is of the denomination of ten cents, and was issued by John W. Norris of Chicago. Hitherto but the one-cent stamp had been credited to this source, and at the Green sale, held some time ago in Chicago, a local collector thought so well of this insignificant substitute for a ten-cent piece that he paid over \$30 for its possession.

New York City was the birthplace of this peculiar sort of money, which was formed by placing regular United States postage stamps in flat, circular brass cases, with the faces protected by a thin sheet of mica. The encased stamps consisted of the denominations of 1, 3, 5, 10, 12, 24, 30, and 90 cents, and this method of protecting the stamps so that they could withstand the wear of circulation was the invention of John Gault, who did business at Park Place, in New York City. He manufactured many varieties to be used by business houses in lieu of small change, and the badly mutilated and worn postage stamps that answered the purpose of practical money for a while at the beginning of the war. Many of the encased stamps bore the name of the issuing firm on the back, and not only served the purpose of a fractional currency but advertised the firm of issue in a thoroughly and yet inexpensive fashion.

The patent dated from July and August, 1862, and the stamps used in the metallic cases were the regular postage stamps of the period—the one-cent blue, and the three-cent orange, showing the portrait of Franklin; the five-cent brown, bearing Jefferson's portrait, and the ten-cent green, twelve-cent black, twenty-four cent violet, and ninety-cent blue, all with the portrait of Washington.

Collectors of both stamps and coins regard this series of necessity currency as being one of the most interesting of the numerous issues of United States, which has been especially conspicuous for its various freakish circulating mediums and some of the premiums now paid for these homely substitutes for real money actually exceed those commanded by any of the far more pretentious and handsome coins struck at the United States mints during and since the war.

Some firms issued the encased stamp pieces of nearly every one of the denominations mentioned above, while others are credited with but a single one. Often the latter specimens are the rarest and command the highest premiums, as not infrequently they were but little more than samples and were issued in quite limited number. In nearly every instance it is found that the denominations of twelve, twenty-four, thirty, and ninety cents are the rarest, and in the case of the highest denominations it is thought their rarity is due to the fact that some of the firms ordered but a single specimen each of the denominations above ten cents, and before deciding upon their issue the law was passed forbidding the use of anything of the

semblance of money by private persons.

The medicine house of Ayer issued the greatest variety of the encased stamp, there being no less than fourteen varieties, of the denominations of one, three, five, ten and twelve, twenty-four and thirty cents, which bore on the back the inscription "Ayer's Sarsaparilla."

One of the rarest of this series is that of the denomination of thirty cents, of which only one specimen is known, this bringing \$25.25 at the Green sale in Chicago in 1907.

Next to this, and also supposed to be unique, is the twenty-four cent stamp, with the same inscription, which brought \$25.

There are at least nine varieties of the stamps bearing the inscription "Ayer's Cathartic Pills" on the back, the rarest of this lot being that of the denomination of five cents, with short arrows in the design, which is worth \$5.00.

Still another series issued by the same house is represented by denominations of one, three, five, ten and twelve cents, inscribed "Take Ayers Pills," a fine specimen of the last-named having brought \$8.

John Gault of New York City issued at least nineteen varieties bearing his name, which included denominations of one, three, five, ten, twelve, twenty-four, thirty, and ninety cents. The rarest of these, and probably the highest priced of all the encased stamps, is that of ninety cents, which has a record price of \$121. The thirty-cent stamp of the same issue also is rare, and has sold for \$20, while the twenty-four cent stamp has brought \$15.

The New York firm of Kirkpatrick & Gault issued as many as nine varieties, which consisted of the denominations of one, three, five, ten, twelve, twenty-four, thirty, and ninety cents. The rarest of these is the last named stamp, a very fine specimen of which was bid in at \$75 at the Green sale in 1906. At the same sale a thirty-cent stamp brought \$20, and a twenty-cent specimen \$18.

There were eight varieties of encased stamps showing the words, "Burnett's Standard Cooking Extracts," of the denominations of one, three, five, ten, twelve, twenty-four, and thirty cents. The last variety is extremely scarce and has brought \$36 at a sale. A perfect specimen of the twenty-four-cent stamp of this house has sold for over \$30.

This firm also issued five varieties with the wording on the back, "Burnett's Cocaine Kalliston," which were of the denomination of three, five, ten and twelve cents, a very rare and perfect specimen of the latter having sold for \$20.

Six varieties were issued by the North American Life Insurance Company, each bearing the name of the company on the reverse. The denominations were three, five and ten cents. These stamps are quite common, as compared with some of the other issues, yet one variety of the three-cent stamp is valued at \$6.

Lord & Taylor of New York City issued seven varieties of the denomination of one, three, five, ten, twelve, twenty-four and thirty cents. Nearly every one of these stamps is now scarce. The twelve-cent stamp is held at the highest figure, it having a record premium of \$25. Both the twenty-four and thirty-cent varieties have sold for \$20.50, the

three-cent at \$9.25, and the lowest valued of the whole series, the ten-cent stamp, at \$5.75.

Hunt & Nash of New York, whose stamps are inscribed on the reverse "Hunt & Nash, Irving House, N. Y., City," are credited with at least nine varieties, the denominations being one, three, five, ten, twelve, and twenty-four cents. The rarest is the twenty-four-cent stamp. There is only one specimen known of this denomination, which sold for \$30.50. The twelve-cent stamp has brought over \$11.

The eight varieties of stamps bearing the inscription of "Drake's Plantation Bitters," of the denominations of one, three, five, ten, twelve, twenty-four, thirty and ninety cents, are rather low-priced and common for all the denominations up to and including the twelve-cent stamp, which has sold for \$5, but the three highest denominations—twenty-four, thirty, and ninety cents—are each believed to be unique, and command extremely high premiums. The twenty-four and thirty-cent stamps have each sold for \$60, and the ninety-cent stamp has brought \$73.

Gage Brothers and Drake, Tremont House, Chicago, issued five varieties of stamps—one, three, five, and ten cents—all of which are common, the scarcest being the three-cent variety, which has sold for \$5.

Six stamps bear the name of "Mendum's Family Wine Emporium, Broadway, Cor. Cedar St., New York." These are of the denominations of one, three, five, ten, and twelve cents. Fine specimens of the two latter have brought \$10 each.

The inscription "Jos. L. Bates, Fancy Goods, Boston," is shown on six varieties of stamps of the denomination of one, five, ten, and twelve cents. The five-cent stamp, the twelve, and one variety of the ten-cent, have each brought \$10 and more.

"Brown's Bronchial Troches" is the title borne by encased stamps of the denominations of one, three, five, ten, and twelve cents. The last named is regarded as the rarest of the series, and has sold for \$10.

Stamps of the denomination of one, three, five, ten, and twelve cents show the name of "F. Buhl & Co. of Detroit." The five-cent stamp has sold for \$10.75, and the ten-cent for over \$8.

Four varieties are placed to the credit of Schapker & Bussing, Evansville, Ind., of the denominations of one, three, five, and ten cents. The first named is supposed to be the only one in existence, and \$25.50 was paid for it when offered for sale.

The Cincinnati firm of John Shillito & Co. has its name on four known varieties of encased stamps, one and three cents, two varieties of five cents, and one of ten cents. The latter may be regarded as the scarcest of this series, although the varieties have all brought \$5 or more each.

"White, the Hatter of New York" is responsible for the issuance of four varieties of stamps. These are of the denominations of one, three, five, and ten cents. The two latter have each brought \$25.

Three varieties were issued by Pearce, Tolle & Holton of Cincinnati—three, five and twelve cents. The latter stamp is very rare, and has brought a record

premium of \$30.

"N. & G. Taylor & Co." of Philadelphia issued one, three, five and ten-cent stamps, the last named of which having sold for \$20.

The stamps of "Dougan the Hatter" of New York City showing the design of a hat, were of at least three denominations—one, three and five cents. Perfect specimens of the latter two denominations have brought \$16 each.

There are three varieties of encased stamps, of the denominations of one three and five cents, which were manufactured by G. G. Evans, "California Wines," of Philadelphia. These pieces were said to infringe on the patent of Gault, but the work was inferior to that of the New York manufacturer. A fine specimen of the one-cent stamp by the Philadelphia maker, bearing his name on the reverse, sold for \$9, while a fine three-cent specimen of the same kind has brought \$5.

Bailey & Co., jewelers, of Philadelphia, had stamps of one, three, five and ten cents. The five-cent variety is the scarest, having recently sold for \$11.50.

The three, five, ten and twenty-four-cent stamps of Ellis, McAlpin & Co. of Cincinnati, have each sold for \$20; the one, three and five-cent stamps of

L. C. Hopkins & Co. of Cincinnati, have brought, respectively, \$11 and \$20, while the three and ten-cent issues of Weir & Larminie of Montreal, Canada, have fetched \$30 and \$20, respectively. This firm also issued stamps of the denomination of one and five cents.

There were several firms which issued only one or two varieties each, such as the five and ten-cent stamps of "Sands Ale," which have brought over \$8; the one-cent stamp of "S. Steinfeld," of New York City, which has sold for \$6; the one-cent stamp of "Arthur M. Chaffin," Hopkinton, R. I., and "Aerated Broad Co." of New York City, which respectively have brought \$16 and \$6.75, and the five and ten-cent stamps of H. A. Cook, of Evansville, Ind., which have sold for \$11, and the one-cent stamp of B. F. Miles of Peoria, Ill.

An interesting specimen of the encased stamp money is one of the odd denomination of nine cents. There being no postage stamp of this value, the denomination was produced by placing three three-cent stamps in an oblong copper case, with the usual covering of mica. The back bore no name, but the piece evidently was intended for circulation in New York City, for the

reverse bore an embossed representation of an eagle and snake, the same as that shown by the New York cents struck in German silver by Dr. Lewis Feuchtwanger of New York City, which were issued in 1837. Around the central device was scroll work. Nothing is known of the piece's history, but it is thought to have been a product of Gault, on account of the New York device. This curious bit sold for \$9.

Another equally interesting piece associated with the encased postage stamp money is an essay for a five-cent piece. In a frame of silver had been placed a stamp cut from a five-cent note of the first issue of the postage currency. This was protected by mica both back and front. This specimen, which is believed to be unique, recently sold for \$15.50.

Probably other varieties of this little known currency will soon be brought to notice, now that so much interest is being taken in the pieces by collectors, for there is no known record in existence to show how many varieties originally were issued or how many specimens were put into circulation.—*Mehl's Numismatic Monthly*.