



# United States

Postage Stamps, 1870-1893.

By

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Before re-engraving.



Re-engraved.



Before re-engraving.



Re-engraved.



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

**T**HE present work supplements the earlier work, *United States Postage Stamps, 1847-1869*, and carries on the history of the adhesive postage stamps of the great republic to the termination of the American Bank Note Company's contract for printing the stamps.

Immediately following this book, by special request, the volume dealing with the productions of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Washington will be issued. This will cover the period from 1894 to 1910, and will include an illustrated account of the methods of engraving and printing the current stamps of the United States.

The usual bibliography is not included here, as it is largely covered by that published in the first part of the work.

We again gladly accord our indebtedness to the writings of Mr. John N. Luff, notably his exhaustive monograph, *The Adhesive Stamps of the United States* (New York, 1902).

Several eminent philatelists in the United States have assisted us with suggestions and information, and we tender them our best acknowledgments.

Our thanks are due to Mr. W. H. Peckitt and to Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, Ltd., for the loan of a number of the stamps used for the illustrations to this work, and Mr. L. W. Crouch has very kindly assisted us in the revision of the proofs.

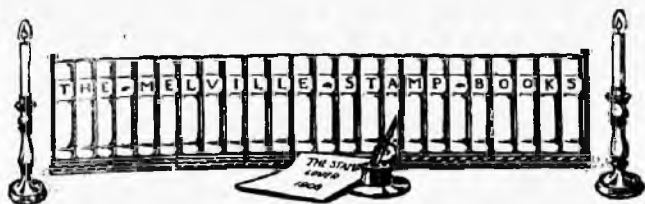


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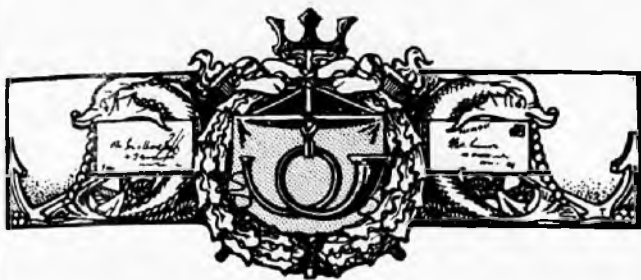
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# United States Postage Stamps 1870-1893.

## CHAPTER I.

Issue of 1870-1871. The National Bank Note Co.

**T**HE small square stamps of the 1869 issue for the United States, although they have always held a high place in the esteem of philatelists, did not find favour with the American public at the time of their use. So we find a new Postmaster-General in 1870 attributing their failure to give satisfaction to "their small size, their unshapely form, the inappropriateness of their designs, the difficulty of cancelling them effectually, and the inferior quality of the gum used in their manufacture."

The new Postmaster-General planned a new issue, reverting to the old size of stamp, and to the use of portraits of the illustrious dead.

The stamps were engraved and produced by the National Bank Note Co., of New York, in sheets of two hundred stamps, divisible into two post office sheets of one hundred each. There are eleven stamps in the series, including one of a new denomination, seven cents, and each value bears a different portrait.

The stamps, with the exception of the seven cents, appeared towards the end of March, 1870, or at the beginning of April. The seven cents appeared nearly a year later.

All values were issued with the grille embossing, but the use of this process was discontinued, as, except when a large portion of the surface was covered with it, the postmark scarcely penetrated into the paper, and the large grille so weakened the paper that the stamps tore. The claim that the embossing increased the adhesive qualities of the stamp was not substantiated in the case of the previous issue, so after its use for a time on the stamps now under consideration, the grille was dispensed with, and so the stamps of this issue are obtainable both with and without the grille. The varieties of grille known on this issue measure  $8 \times 8$  mm.,  $8 \times 10$ ,  $8 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $9 \times 11$ ,  $9 \times 12$ ,  $10 \times 12$ , and  $10 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  mm.

The perforation of the stamps gauges 12.

All the portraits in this series are turned to the left.



The Grille  
Embossing.



The One Cent, ultramarine, has a large profile portrait of Franklin from a marble bust by Rubricht, enclosed in an oval. An enscrolled panel at the top bears the inscription, "U.S. POSTAGE," in white letters, and the value is expressed in words and a numeral below, "ONE 1 CENT." The panels at top and bottom are linked together by a graceful scroll-work design.

The Two Cents, red brown, bears a portrait in profile of Jackson, after the statue by Powers, in an oval mounted on a shield, covering nearly the whole of the stamp. A curved tablet at the top contains the inscription, "U.S. POSTAGE," and a curved band below intersects the base of the shield with the words, "TWO" and "CENTS," separated by the numeral "2."



The Three Cents, green, shews a bust of Washington from Houdon's statue of the first President. This is in an oval mounted on a shield of more angular design than the shield on the two cents value. The inscriptions are similarly placed above and below, thus, "U.S. POSTAGE" at top, and "THREE 3 CENTS" below.

The Six Cents, carmine, has a portrait bust of Lincoln, after Volk, in an oval mounted on an irregular shaped shield, with long projections on both sides, and the inscriptions above and below in white letters on curved bands and scrolls, "U.S. POSTAGE" and "SIX 6 CENTS."



The Seven Cents, vermilion, which was added to the set later than the other values, was intended for use chiefly on letters conveyed to Germany, the rate having been established at seven cents in April, 1870. By the time it appeared, however, the rate had been reduced to six cents, and consequently there was but little use for the value until Denmark came under that rate on January 1, 1872. The portrait on this handsome stamp is that of Edwin M. Stanton, United States Secretary for War. The portrait oval is mounted on an almost rectangular tablet, but the corners have been rounded off into small ball-shaped ornaments. The inscriptions are placed similarly to the others of the series, and read, "U.S. POSTAGE" at top, and "SEVEN 7 CENTS" below.

The Ten Cents, brown, shews a portrait bust of Thomas Jefferson, after Powers, in an oval on a large shield, covering nearly the whole surface of the stamp. A tablet conforming to the upper curve of the oval bears the inscription, "U.S. POSTAGE," in white letters, and a band below has the value, "TEN 10 CENTS." The ends of the bands are turned under, and fill the corners left uncovered by the shield.



The Twelve Cents, violet, has a portrait bust of Henry Clay, after Hart. A broken oval band extends round the portrait disc, with the inscriptions, "U.S. POSTAGE" and "TWELVE 12 CENTS." Triangular designs fill up the corners, giving a rectangular appearance to the design.

The Fifteen Cents, orange, has a portrait bust, in an oval, of Daniel Webster, after Clevenger, enclosed by curved bands for the inscriptions, the bands being connected round the oval by ornaments. Small dark triangular designs fill out the corners. The inscriptions are "U.S. POSTAGE" on the upper band, and "FIFTEEN 15 CENTS" on the lower one.



The Twenty-four Cents, purple, has a portrait of General Winfield Scott, after the bust by Coffee. This is in an oval. The framework of this has been spoilt by over-ornamentation. The inscription, "U.S. POSTAGE," is minutely engraved in letters of colour on a row of thirteen white stars, conforming to the upper curve of the oval. The top angles have tablets with the figures "24," and the words, "TWENTY-FOUR CENTS," in two lines of white capitals appear below the oval. The lower half of the stamp outside the oval is occupied by a flag, a cannon, and a pyramid of balls on the left, and a stack of muskets on the right.

The Thirty Cents, black, has a portrait on an oval disc of Alexander Hamilton, after Cerrachi. This is mounted on a shield with straight sides, a curved base, and with prominent angular projections in the top corners. A waved band at the top has the words, "U.S. POSTAGE," in white capitals. A tablet at the bottom of the shield has the white figures "30," with the value expressed in words, consisting of letters of colour on white scrolls on each side:—"THIRTY" and "CENTS."



The Ninety Cents, carmine, shews the bust of Commodore O. H. Perry, after Wolcott, and is surrounded by nautical emblems. A cable borders the upper part of the oval, and suspends by means of two rings the lower tablet, with the value, "NINETY 90 CENTS," in white letters. Above the cable is a curved band, with "U.S. POSTAGE" in white capitals. The top angles each contain a star, and the lower angles each contain an anchor.





## CHAPTER II.

### Issue of 1873. The Continental Bank Note Co.

**T**HE contract with the National Bank Note Company being due to expire in 1873, tenders were invited by public advertisement for supplying the Government with postage stamps during the four years, from May 1, 1873, to May 1, 1877. The successful competing firm was the Continental Bank Note Company, and as the stamps previously printed by the National Bank Note Company had been satisfactory, no change of design was called for, so the dies and plates were transferred into the hands of the new contractors.

The Continental Company started to print the stamps in April, 1873, and their productions were to some extent recognisable from those of their predecessors by the difference in the shades of their colours. But as the stamps were identical in design, and only varied slightly in colour from the earlier productions, and as occasional complaints had been made against the products of the National Company, the Continental Company added secret marks to the stamps printed by them, so that they would be able to identify their work with certainty in the event of complaints being lodged which might be due to the work of the old contractors.

These secret marks, which are detailed in the descriptions to follow, form a useful means of identifying the stamps of 1873 from those of 1870.

One new stamp was added to the series about June, 21, 1875. The treaty of Berne had established five cents (2½d.) as the uniform rate for international postage, and as no stamp of that denomination existed in this series, one was added. Mr. Tiffany quotes from a New York daily the story of the selection of the portrait for grafting into this series of illustrious Americans.



Mr. Jewell, the Postmaster-General at the time, suggested to President Grant the propriety of having his portrait on the new stamp of the required value. General Grant did not agree with his Cabinet officer. Finally, he suggested that if Mr. Jewell would insist upon consulting his wishes he (General Grant) would be well pleased if the portrait of old Zack Taylor, with whom he served in the Mexican war, could be used on the new stamp. Instead of instructing the then contractors to prepare a portrait of General Taylor, which would be in harmony with the other stamps, Mr. Jewell found in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing a portrait of Taylor, which had been used in the old tobacco strip series. This portrait was transmogrified into the five cent stamp. It was badly engraved and of a wretched colour.

The Two Cents stamp underwent a change of colour from brown to vermilion in June, 1875. This stamp, therefore, appears in this series in two distinct colours.

The general descriptions of the designs (with the exception of the five cents stamp) are the same as the last issue, and it would serve no useful purpose to

repeat them. Details of the secret marks are, however, given in the order of the denomination on which they appear.



1870 Issue.



1873 Issue (with secret mark).

One Cent, dark ultramarine. In the white circle next the serif of the numeral "1" a short thick curved line has been added.



1870 Issue.



1873 Issue (with secret mark).

Two Cents, brown. A short diagonal line has been cut underneath the white ball of the scroll, immediately to the left of the letter "s" of "U.S." Of this Mr. Luff says it can only be seen on very clearly printed copies. He adds:—"But if, at this point, the space between the ornamental outline of the panel which is inscribed, 'U.S. POSTAGE,' and the first vertical line of the background (counting toward the left) is blurred or partly filled with colour, it may be accepted as an indication of the presence of the line. On all the stamps printed by the National Bank Note Company the space is quite clear and white."

Two Cents, vermilion. All the printings of this stamp in this colour are of the Continental type, and shew the same peculiarity as in the two cents brown just described.



1870 Issue.

1873 Issue (with secret mark).

Three Cents, green. The upper tail of the ribbon underneath the word "THREE" has the bottom outline thickened.

Five Cents, blue. A new stamp added to the series in June, 1875 (and consequently without a secret mark), shews the portrait of General Zachary Taylor taken from a six cents tobacco stamp used for revenue purposes in 1871. The portrait is on a oval disc mounted on a shield, with a tablet curved above, with the words, "U.S. POSTAGE," in white capitals, and below a scroll inscription, "FIVE 5 CENTS." The frame is similar to that of the ten cents stamp.



1870 Issue.

1873 Issue (with secret mark).

The Six Cents, rose, has the first four vertical lines of shading in the left ribbon strengthened. The lines are to be seen just at the point where the left ribbon is turned under.



1870 Issue.



1873 Issue (with secret mark).

The Seven Cents, orange vermilion, has two small semi-circular lines added round the ends of the lines, which define the knob-shaped ornament in the lower right-hand corner.



1870 Issue.



1873 Issue (with secret mark).

The Ten Cents, brown, has a small crescent-shaped cut added in the ball of the scroll immediately following the letter "E" of "POSTAGE."



1870 Issue.



1873 Issue (with secret mark).

The Twelve Cents, violet, has the two white balls of the figure 2 cut into by the outline of the numeral, giving them a crescent-shaped appearance.

The Fifteen Cents, orange yellow, has in the lowest angle of the top left-hand triangular ornament some



1870 Issue.

1873 Issue (with secret mark).

lines of shading strengthened, forming a heavy and elongated v. The v is almost level with s of the "U.S."

The Twenty-Four Cents, purple, was not issued with a secret mark, so it can only be distinguished from the earlier printing by the difference in shade, and by the gum, which is more yellow in the Continental Company's stamp.

The Thirty Cents, black, was also issued without any secret mark, and may only be distinguished by the same features as the previous stamp.

The Ninety Cents, rose-carmine. The same remarks apply to this as to the twenty-four cents and thirty cents stamps.

The Continental Bank Note Company made use for a short time of the grille embossing, but without achieving any more success with it than did their predecessors. During their contract various other methods of treating the paper to render the stamps printed upon it impervious to illicit cleaning were tried. Chemically prepared papers of a yellow brown wove, a violet wove, and a violet laid, are said to have been tried, but the known specimens are regarded as essays.

Mr. Charles F. Steel, the inventor of the grille, patented two prepared papers which were used. The first was a double paper. The paper was formed of two laminæ, one being comparatively thick, and the upper one being very thin and porous, this forming a printing surface which it was believed would be readily

affected by any attempt to clean off the cancellation. Stamps printed on this paper were placed on sale for a time at one or more United States Post Offices.

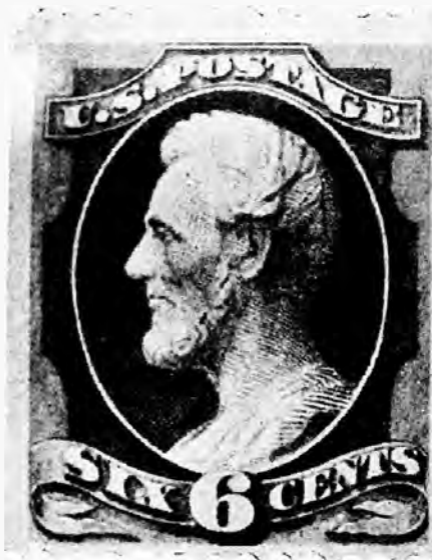
Mr. Steel's other scheme was to print on what is known in the paper-making world as the "waterleaf," that is to say, the paper before it has been sized, in which state it is very absorbent. After printing on the "waterleaf," and allowing the ink to dry, he treated the back with a coating of starch which filled the interstices between the fibres in the paper. This gave the paper the necessary firmness, and left the face of the printed paper very ready to absorb the obliterating ink; the soft surface too was liable to be rubbed away with any attempt to remove a cancellation. Specimens of the stamps on this paper must also be regarded as essays.

The varieties listed in Scott's catalogue as "paper cut with a cog wheel die," were made under the Fletcher patent device, which consisted in making eight U-shaped cuts in the stamp in the form of a circle with the openings inwards so that once the stamp was gummed on to an envelope it could not be removed without tearing the stamp. These varieties, a number of which were put on sale at the Washington Post Office, are scarce.

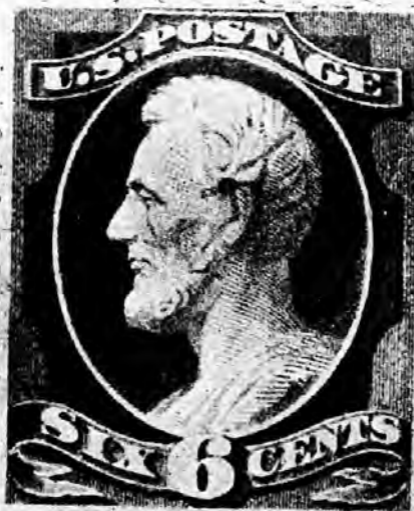
Yet another device was a double paper of which the upper and softer surface was penetrated by a series of short cuts. The 3 cents stamp is said to have been put on sale treated in this manner.

The special printings made for stamp collectors of the stamps of this and the following series are all on a very white paper, instead of being of a yellowish tinge.





Before re-engraving



Re-engraved.



Before re-engraving.



Re-engraved.



### CHAPTER III.

## Issues of 1879-1888. The American Bank Note Co.

**D**URING the term of a second contract, the Continental Bank Note Company became incorporated with the American Bank Note Company, and took the name of the latter. The new Company carried out the contract of the old one, and secured a renewal of the agreement on its expiry.

The change is marked on the stamps only by a difference in the paper used for the manufacture of the stamps. The Continental Company had used a thin hard paper, but the new Company adopted a soft porous paper, which took the impression of these fine engravings much better.

All the stamps, except the seven, twelve, and twenty-four cents values, of the previous series were printed on this new paper. The ten and thirty cents stamps were also printed by this Company from the National Bank Note Company's plates, the former being without the secret mark, and the latter being printed in grey black instead of full black. All the stamps printed up to 1881

only differ in the paper from the previous issue. But in 1881 the American Bank Note Company made several alterations in the dies of the one cent, three, six, and ten cents stamps. The differences in the designs are as follows :—

One Cent, ultramarine. The lines of shading in the upper half of the stamp have been deepened until they make the background appear almost solid. A short semi-circular cut of colour has been added in the ball of the ornament in the top left-hand angle opposite the period between U. and S. The base of the bust is almost solid, the white lines being very faint. (See frontispiece.)

Three Cents, blue-green. The shading of the outer rim of the oval medallion appears to be only one-half the width. A short straight dash has been cut below the letters TS of CENTS. (See frontispiece.)

Both the one and three cents stamps were printed and issued experimentally on a double paper (Douglas' patent), the upper surface of which was punctured by a number of small holes.

Six Cents, rose. The vertical lines between the side extremities of the shield and the sides of the stamp only number three in the re-engraved stamp, while there were four in the original. The band on which the denomination is inscribed has been heavily shaded to the left of the word SIX. (See p. 23.)

Ten Cents, brown. The very faint shading on the shield in the previous stamp of this denomination has been considerably deepened, and the secret mark (*i.e.*, the crescent in the ball of the scroll following E of POSTAGE) has been omitted. The ball is also much smaller. (See p. 24.)

The five cents stamp, with the portrait of Zachary

Taylor, had failed to give satisfaction, it having been hurriedly prepared for the exigencies of the new international rate in 1875. So the assassination of President Garfield led to a desire in 1882 that a stamp, printed in black as a sign of mourning, should be issued bearing his portrait. Proofs, Mr. Tiffany tells us, were submitted to Mrs. Garfield, who chose a deep Vandyke brown instead of black.



The stamp was ready for use early in February, and although it was not put on sale until April 10, 1882, it must strike one as incongruous that remembering the original mourning idea, a few of the stamps were issued by special favour for use on St. Valentine's day.

The description of the new stamp is as follows :—

Five Cents, brown, shewing a profile portrait of Garfield turned to left in a beaded oval. This is on a shield with straight sides. A six-pointed star with the white numeral "5" is at the base of the shield, and extends a short way into the oval. The words "FIVE" and "CENTS," in white letters, appear on scrolls of colour on the left and right of the numeral. Below, in small elongated capitals of colour, is the inscription, "U.S. POSTAGE."

The minimum rate for inland letter postage was reduced to two cents per half-ounce in 1883, and this rendered the then current three cents stamp (shewing the portrait of Washington) of but little use. Considering that "the dropping of Washington from portraits forming the distinguishing feature in the series of postage stamps" would be regarded with disfavour, the

Postmaster-General decided to replace the old two cents stamp by one bearing the picture of the first President. This was done, and the stamp was issued on October 1.

The change of rate also rendered a stamp of the new denomination of four cents (for double letters, *i.e.*, letters of one ounce weight) necessary, and so the portrait of Andrew Jackson on the old two cents stamp was transferred to the new four cents one. The descriptions of these two new stamps are as follows :—



Two Cents, red brown, bearing profile of Washington in oval, bordered by a colourless line. The lower part of the oval has an outer rim of beads, and the upper part has an outer border formed by a band, on which is inscribed, "UNITED STATES POSTAGE," in white capitals. At the base of the shield on which the oval is mounted is a large white numeral, "2," with the words "TWO" and "CENTS" in white capitals at the sides.



Four Cents, blue green, has a portrait of Andrew Jackson on an oval disc. A band above, conforming to the curve of the oval, has the inscription in white capitals, "UNITED STATES POSTAGE," while the lower part of the oval has an outer border of beads. The oval is mounted on a rectangular panel, and in the lower part, at each side of the oval.



is a large figure "4." Across the bottom of the stamp the value is expressed in words, "FOUR CENTS."

On June 15, 1887, a new one cent stamp was issued, rather less ornamental than the one previously in use. It still bore the picture of Franklin. As a New York paper had said some years before: "There was a fitness of congruity in putting the head of the old thrifty economist on the one cent stamp."

The description of the new one cent stamp is as follows:—

One Cent, ultramarine, with a profile bust turned to left of Benjamin Franklin after Cerrachi, on an oval disc. A band above gives the inscription, "UNITED STATES POSTAGE," conforming to the upper part of the oval, while a border of beads extends round the lower portion. The oval is mounted on a shield-shaped panel



with a truncated pyramidal base. The value is expressed on the base in words and a numeral, "ONE 1 CENT."

On September 12, 1887, the colours of the two cents and three cents stamps were changed, and in 1888 the colours of the four, five, thirty, and ninety cents stamps were altered. The new colours were as follows:—

- Two Cents, green.
- Three Cents, vermilion.
- Four Cents, carmine.
- Five Cents, indigo.
- Thirty Cents, orange brown.
- Ninety Cents, purple.

The stamps with the numerous minor changes printed by the American Bank Note Company are summed up in the check list in Chapter VI.



2c variety with "capped" numerals.



2c variety with left numeral only "capped."



## CHAPTER IV.

### Issue of 1890-1893.

**I**N June, 1889, the contract with the American Bank Note Company expired, and tenders were invited as prescribed for by the laws, from firms capable of supplying the Post Office Department with stamps. After some lengthy delays the award was again made to the American Bank Note Company. The specifications were for stamps of a smaller size, the measurements being almost the same as had been used in Great Britain.

The series as originally planned was for stamps of ten denominations, namely, one cent, two, three, four, five, six, ten, fifteen, thirty, and ninety cents. All of these, except the four and five cents values, were issued on February 22, 1890. The four and five cents stamps were issued on June 2 of the same year, and a new stamp of the denomination eight cents was added three years later, on March 21, 1893, for payment of the registration fee.

The designs were more uniform than on the previous portrait stamps. Each value has a different portrait, but there are only two different frames enclosing the portraits of the whole series.

The first, styled frame A in the particular descriptions hereafter, has a curved band round the upper part of the oval disc containing the portrait. On this band are the words, in white capitals, "UNITED STATES POSTAGE." On each side of the lower part of the oval is a tablet with the numeral of value, and across the bottom the value is expressed in words forming a waved line of white letters.

The background is formed by a rectangular-shaped shield, the ground of which is composed of horizontal lines. This frame A encloses the portraits on all the values up to the eight cents stamp, with only the inscriptions of values changed.

The second frame (B in the following descriptions) has curved panels above and below the oval portrait disc. The upper one bears the inscription, "UNITED STATES POSTAGE," similar to that in frame A. The lower one has the value expressed in words. White figures of value on tablets of colour fill up the lower angles. The background is formed by a rectangular shield similar to that of frame A. This second frame B is found on all the values from ten cents upwards.

The portraits are all fine specimens of engraving, though that of Franklin on the one cent scarcely proved satisfactory. It is related that the engravers were supplied with a portrait of Franklin turned to right, and it was necessary to turn it to the left. Thus the *New York Times* :— "While Franklin looked like himself while facing the right in the portrait, by no exertion of skill could his profile be changed to the left without entirely altering his expression and making him resemble the putty-faced personification of senility which now appears on the one cent stamp."

The whole series was an excellent one, though Postmaster John Wanamaker, one of the Whiteleys of America, was the butt of many severe criticisms. The colours of the stamps were not displeasing, though the quality of the ink for the two cents was improved on May 12, 1890. The *New York Sun* had, in particular reference to the "Smudgy Red Washington," complained that the Hon. John Wanamaker had "brought to bear on the selection of colours a taste educated in the hosiery department of his emporium, and the bargain counter instinct impelled him to impose upon the people an ink which is not only too florid, but is also too gummy. It rubs off. It won't wash. It isn't a fast colour."

The following is a description of the various denominations :—



One Cent, ultramarine. Shews a profile bust of Benjamin Franklin, after Rubricht, turned to left in frame A. Inscription of value reads, "1-ONE CENT 1."

Two Cents, lake (afterwards carmine). Profile of George Washington from bust, after Houdon, turned to left in frame A. Inscription of value reads, "2 TWO CENTS 2."

Some interesting and comparatively scarce varieties are to be found of this stamp. They consist in colourless lines forming "caps" over the numerals. In some cases both numerals are capped on one stamp, in others the left numeral or the right numeral only is capped. The enlarged illustrations shew the varieties clearly; they are said to have been caused by damaged transfer rollers. (See p. 30.)



Three Cents, purple, has profile bust of Andrew Jackson, after Powers. This is turned to left in frame A. The value reads, "3 THREE CENTS 3."

Four Cents, dark brown, three-quarters face portrait of Abraham Lincoln, from a photograph, turning to right in frame A. Inscription of value reads, "4 FOUR CENTS 4."

Five Cents, chocolate, has a three-quarters face portrait of Ulysses S. Grant, from a photograph from life, turning to right in frame A. The value reads, "5 FIVE CENTS 5."



Six Cents, rose brown, has a three-quarters face portrait, turning to left, of James A. Garfield, from a photograph. This is enclosed in frame A. Value reads, "6 SIX CENTS 6."



Eight Cents, lilac, has a full-face portrait from a photograph of General William T. Sherman, in frame A. The value reads, "8 EIGHT CENTS 8."

Ten Cents, green. The portrait on this stamp is from a daguerrotype of Daniel Webster, three-quarters face, turning to left in frame B. The lower curved band has the value in words, "TEN CENTS," and the bottom angles the figures, "10" and "10."





Fifteen Cents, blue, shews a three-quarters face portrait, also from a daguerrotype, of Henry Clay, turned to left in frame B. The lower band has the value, "FIFTEEN CENTS," and the bottom angles the figures, "15" and "15."

Thirty Cents, black. This shews Cerrachi's portrait bust of Thomas Jefferson in profile turning to left, in frame B. The value on the lower band is "THIRTY CENTS," and in each of the bottom angles are the figures "30."

Ninety Cents, orange, shews a profile of Commodore Perry from a statue by Wolcutt, turned to left in frame B. The value on the lower band reads "NINETY CENTS," and the bottom angles each contain the figures "90."





## CHAPTER V.

### Issue of 1893. Columbian Exposition Series.

**T**HE next series of stamps for use in the United States is the Columbus Issue, which has been more extensively discussed and is more familiar to the general public than any other series of the same class.

The desire for commemorations is almost as general among communities as the passion for collecting is among individuals. In connection with the Columbian Exposition at Chicago it was decided to issue, in the words of the report of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, "a special series of adhesive postage stamps of such character as would help to signalise the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus."

The new stamps were of a new size, and the subjects depicted upon them were illustrations of the life of Columbus, the 400th anniversary of whose greatest feat the Exposition and the stamps were to commemorate.

Under the terms of the current unexpired contract with the American Bank Note Company, the Postmaster-General had to place the contract for the new

and larger stamps with that firm, and an agreement was made to supply the new labels at a cost of seventeen cents per thousand, on the understanding that 3,000,000,000 were taken.

The series, comprising sixteen values, from one cent to five dollars, was placed on sale on Sunday, January 1, 1893, with the exception of the eight cents stamp, which was added on March 1 of the same year to meet a reduction in the rate for registration.

An official circular thus describes the issue :—

“The stamps are executed from line engravings on steel, the general design of the upper portion of all of them being substantially the same. The details of this design are, first, a white-faced imprint of the years 1492 and 1892, in the upper left and right-hand corners respectively ; then, in white shaded capitals beneath, in a wavy line, the words ‘UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,’ below which, in a narrow tablet conforming to the curved frame of the picture under it, are the words of denomination, for example, ‘POSTAGE TWO CENTS,’ ‘POSTAGE TWO DOLLARS,’ etc. These words end on either side of the stamp in a space of circular form with ornamental surroundings, within which are Arabic numerals of value, standing alone in the case of denominations under \$1, but accompanied by the dollar mark in denominations of \$1 and upwards, as ‘2’ (meaning cents), ‘\$2,’ etc. Underneath all this is the scene represented, enclosed in a plain white frame with arched top, extending nearly the entire length of the stamp, and taking up, in every case, probably three-fourths of its whole face, the appropriate designation of the picture being given in small white capitals at the bottom. The scenes represented are these :—

One Cent. 'Columbus in sight of land,' after the painting by William H. Powell. This reproduction is enclosed in a circle. On the left of it is represented an Indian woman with her child, and on the right an Indian chief with head-dress of feathers, each figure in a sitting position. Colour, Antwerp blue.



Two Cents. 'Landing of Columbus,' after the painting by Vanderlyn, in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington. Colour, purple maroon.



Three Cents. 'Flag-ship of Columbus,' the Santa Maria in mid-ocean, from a Spanish engraving. Colour, medium shade of green.





Four Cents. 'Fleet of Columbus,' the three caravels, Santa Maria, Nina, and Pinta, in mid-ocean, from a Spanish engraving. Colour, ultramarine blue.



Five Cents. 'Columbus Soliciting Aid of Isabella,' after the painting by Brozik, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Colour, chocolate brown.



Six Cents. 'Columbus welcomed at Barcelona,' scene from one of the panels of the bronze doors by Randolph Rogers, in the Capitol at Washington. On each side of the scene represented is a niche, in one of which is a

statue of Ferdinand, and in the other a statue of Balboa. Colour, royal purple.

Eight Cents. 'Columbus restored to Favour,' after a painting by Jover. Colour, magenta red. Issued March, 1, 1893.



Ten Cents. 'Columbus Presenting Natives,' after the painting by Luigi Gregori, at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. Colour, vandyke brown.



Fifteen Cents. 'Columbus announcing his Discovery,' after the painting by R. Baloca, now in Madrid. Colour, dark green.





Thirty Cents. 'Columbus at La Rabida,' after the painting by R. Maso. Colour, sienna brown.



Fifty Cents. 'Recall of Columbus,' after the painting by A. G. Heaton, now in the Capitol at Washington. Colour, carbon blue.



One Dollar. 'Isabella pledging her Jewels,' after the painting by Munoz Degrain, now in Madrid. Colour, rose salmon.

Two Dollars. 'Columbus in Chains,' after the painting by Leutze, now in Providence, R.I. Colour, toned mineral red.



Three Dollars. 'Columbus describing Third Voyage,' after a painting by Francisco Jover. Colour, light yellow green.



Four Dollars. Portraits in circles, separated by an ornate device, of Isabella and Columbus, the portrait of Isabella after the well-known painting in Madrid, and that of Columbus after the Lotto painting. Colour, carmine.





Five Dollars. Profile of head of Columbus, after a cast provided by the Treasury Department for the



souvenir 50 cent silver piece authorised by act of Congress. The profile is in a circle, on the right of which is the figure of America, represented by an Indian woman with a crown of feathers, and on the left a figure of Liberty, both figures being in a sitting posture. Colour, black."

The projectors of the issue were confident that large numbers of the stamps would be taken up by collectors, and would never be presented for postal duty. It was also anticipated by the Postmaster-General that "not only will they be purchased in single or partial sets by collectors, but in view of the limited time in which they will be issued, they will be accumulated in great quantities by dealers and others to meet future demands."

All this came about, though it is certain that the authorities over-estimated the demand which would arise from stamp collectors. Only 2,000,000,000 of the stamps were printed, instead of 3,000,000,000. Dealers purchased heavily, as was predicted, but up to the present the speculation can scarcely have been a satisfactory one. In general use the stamps were too large, and complaints from business men were frequent. The issue had not been intended to displace the last described series of smaller stamps, but to be used

concurrently with them. Stamps of both series were kept in the post offices, but unless specially asked for the old stamps the clerks invariably supplied the new ones. So that it came about that people objected to the "strain on the salivary glands," required to moisten the mucilage on the extensive backs of these "Columbian cartoons," as the handsome and artistic series was perhaps unreasonably described.

A resolution was moved in the Senate by the representative of the State of Colorado, Mr. Wolcott, instructing the Postmaster-General to continue the sale of ordinary postage stamps, and sell the Columbian ones only to those people who might call for them. This, however, was already provided for by the postal authorities, as it had been clearly stated that the old stamps were still on sale.

Senator Wolcott's remarks are of some interest to philatelists, inasmuch as they criticise the Post Office department for endeavouring to impose an undue tax upon the pastime of stamp collecting.

"I have been at a loss to understand," said Mr. Wolcott, as he is reported by a correspondent of Stanley Gibbons' *Monthly Journal*, "why the Columbian stamps were ever manufactured. I find upon referring to the report of the Postmaster-General, in which he asks, and very properly, for increased appropriations, appropriations aggregating some \$80,000,000 that he expects to receive \$1,500,000 extra profit out of these stamps by selling them to stamp collectors. This is a trick practised by the Central American States when they are short of funds. They get up a new stamp and sell to stamp collectors all the world over, and get money for it.

"It seems to me, Mr. President, that this is too great a country to subject 60,000,000 people to the inconvenience of using this big concern in order that we may unload a cruel and unusual stamp upon stamp collectors to fill in their albums. Since the joint resolution was introduced, I have been hearing from a great many persons reasons why the measure should not only be introduced, but carried. I have received letters from many railway clerks, who say that the resemblance of the new one cent stamp to the special delivery stamp is so marked that mistakes are constantly being made in spite of their vigilance. . . .

"I have received a letter this morning from a physician, who suggests that, if the sale of these stamps is abandoned, those on hand might properly be used as chest protectors. I hope the Committee on Post Offices and Post-roads will take some speedy action on this subject. I ask that the joint resolution be referred to the Committee on Post Offices and Post-roads."

A gentleman in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* complained that the pictures on the stamps "were not arranged in anything like historic order. Instead of beginning at the beginning and proceeding regularly to the end, there seems to be no order at all in the arrangement, but the scenes from the life of the great navigator are portrayed without any logical sequence."

The same individual discovered also an inconsistency in the portraiture of Columbus in the various scenes, though, considering the diversity of artists, some modern, some ancient, whose pictures were drawn upon for the designs, this was scarcely to be avoided. "In the scene representing the discovery of land he is smooth-faced, but on landing he is decorated with a full beard.

As the time between these two events was about twelve hours, it will be seen that Columbus must have been a wonderful hairgrower."

It was also noted by the critics that the letter "B" of "Columbus" at the bottom of the one cent stamp was formed like an "R" by reason of bad engraving; also that the flagship of Columbus on the three cents stamp is minus a mast, and is improperly trimmed, while the caravel on the four cents stamp has the sheet of the mizzen, or jigger, on the weather side.

Stamp collectors have complained against the introduction in this series of high values from \$1 to \$5, protesting that such denominations were useless for any postal purposes, and that they were therefore issued simply as a tax upon the stamp collectors' means. While, as is evident from the official reports, the postal authorities were looking forward to a good revenue from sales of the stamps for collections, and may have provided high value ones the more readily, inasmuch as stamp collectors must needs have them to complete their sets; yet it has been stated by an American writer that these values were to some extent in demand for postal purposes. "There is no limit of weight of a first-class package," he says, "a Saratoga trunk can be sent by mail at two cents an ounce in the United States, or ten cents an ounce to Europe. The high value will be extensively used in the shipment of bonds and railroad securities between the Stock Exchanges of New York and Europe. Packages of this kind requiring \$20 to \$100 are not uncommon."

On the whole, stamp collectors were by no means averse to receiving the beautifully-engraved Columbus series into their albums. They have added very

considerably to the general interest of a collection of the world's postage stamps, and to those who require an apology to their uninitiated friends for collecting postal emissions, this handsome and instructive series has proved of real utility. The only grievance philatelists can lay against the stamps is that they served as an impetus to the production of unnecessary issues by other and lesser Governments. Even this complaint, however, may be discounted by the fact that the Columbus issue had the effect of raising the pictorial standard of most of the subsequent issues of this nature.

It should be stated that at least one sheet of the four cents stamp was printed and issued in the wrong colour, blue, instead of ultramarine, the ink intended for the one cent stamp being, it is supposed, used in error for the sheet of four cents stamps.



## CHAPTER VI. Check List.

NOTE.—It may be observed that several imperforate varieties generally catalogued are omitted from the following check list. These may all be classed as finished proofs, and owe their catalogue distinction to the individual who prepared the so called "lilac-grey laid paper" varieties of the 1847 issue (see *United States Postage Stamps, 1847-1869, 2nd Edition, p. 18*). All of the varieties omitted originated as proofs in the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General, and were put on the market by a man who is now dead, but who, during his life enjoyed a good reputation.

1870-71.

**P**RINTED by the National Bank Note Co. No secret marks. Perforated 12. Hard paper. At first embossed with grille, which embossing was abandoned *circa* 1871.

VARIETIES OF GRILLE measuring in millimetres (a)  $8 \times 8$ ; (b)  $8 \times 10$ ; (c)  $8 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ ; (d)  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 9$ ; (e)  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$ ; (f)  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ ; (g)  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ ; (h)  $9 \times 11$ ; (i)  $9 \times 12$ ; (j)  $10 \times 12$ ; and (k)  $10 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$ .

1 cent blue. (Franklin.)

Shades.

Grille a, b, f, j, k.

Without grille.

2 cents red brown. (Jackson.)

Shades.

Grille a, b, f, j.

Without grille.

3 cents green. (Washington.)

Grille b, c, d, f, h, j, k.

Without grille.

Imperforate.

Impression on the reverse.

- 6 cents carmine. (Lincoln.)  
Grille e, j.  
Without grille.  
Double paper.
- 7 cents vermilion. (Stanton.)  
Grille f, j, k.  
Without grille.
- 10 cents brown. (Jefferson.)  
Shades.  
Grille j.  
Without grille.
- 12 cents dull violet. (Clay.)  
Grille f.  
Without grille.
- 15 cents orange. (Webster.)  
Shades.  
Grille f, j.  
Without grille.
- 24 cents purple. (Scott.)  
Grille f, i.  
Without grille.  
Double paper.
- 30 cents black. (Hamilton.)  
Shades.  
Grille j.  
Without grille.
- 90 cents carmine. (Perry.)  
Grille f, g, i, k.  
Without grille.

1873.—Printed by the Continental Bank Note Co.  
Same designs, but with secret marks added. Perforated

12.

1 cent blue.

Shades.

Double paper.

Cogwheel patent paper.

With grille.

2 cents brown.

Shades.

Double paper.

With grille.

3 cents green.

Shades.

Imperforate.

Double paper.

Double paper with horizontal cuts.

Cogwheel patent paper.

With grille.

Imperforate vertically.

6 cents dull rose.

Double paper.

With grille.

7 cents orange vermilion.

With grille.

10 cents brown.

Shades.

Double paper.

With grille.

Imperforate vertically.

12 cents blackish violet.

With grille.

15 cents yellow orange.

With grille.

24 cents bluish purple.

With grille.

30 cents grey black.

Shades.

Double paper.

90 cents rose carmine.



1875.—Change of colour.

2 cents vermilion.  
Imperforate.  
Double paper.  
With grille,

1875.—New denomination.

5 cents blue. (Taylor.)  
Shades.  
Double paper.  
With grille.

1879.—As before, but printed by the American Bank Note Co., on soft porous paper. Perforated 12.

1 cent blue.

Shades.

2 cents vermilion.

3 cents green.

5 cents blue. (Taylor.)

6 cents dull rose.

10 cents yellow brown.

[National Bank Note Co.'s plate.]

10 cents brown.

Shades.

15 cents orange.

Shades.

30 cents grey black.

[National Bank Note Co.'s plate.]

Shades.

30 cents black.

Shades.

90 cents carmine.

Shades.

1881-2.—Printed by the American Bank Note Co. from plates constructed from "re-engraved" dies. Perforated 12.

1 cent greyish blue. (Franklin.)

Shades.

Douglas patent paper.

3 cents blue green. (Washington.)

Shades.

Douglas patent paper.

6 cents dull rose. (Lincoln.)

Shades.

10 cents brown. (Jefferson.)

Shades.

Double perforation.

1882.—New design.

5 cents brown. (Garfield.)

Shades.

1883.—New designs.

2 cents red brown. (Washington.)

Shades.

Imperforate.

4 cents blue green. (Jackson.)

1887.—New design.

1 cent ultramarine. (Franklin.)

Imperforate.

Double perforation.

1887-8.—New colours.

2 cents green.

Imperforate.

Double perforation.

3 cents vermilion.

Double perforation.

4 cents carmine.

5 cents indigo.

On pink paper.

Double perforation.

30 cents orange brown.

90 cents purple.

Double perforation.

1890-3.—New and smaller designs. Printed by the  
American Bank Note Co. Perforated 12.

1 cent ultramarine. (Franklin.)

Shades.

Imperforate.

2 cents lake. (Washington.)

2 cents carmine, May 2, 1890. (Washington.)

Shades.

Both figures "capped."

Left figure "capped."

Right figure "capped."

3 cents purple. (Jackson.)

Shades.

4 cents dark brown. (Lincoln.)

5 cents chocolate. (Grant.)

Shades.

6 cents rose brown. (Garfield.)

8 cents lilac, March 21, 1893. (Sherman.)

10 cents green. (Webster.)

15 cents indigo. (Clay.)

30 cents black. (Jefferson.)

90 cents orange. (Perry.)

- 1893.—Columbian Exposition Series. Perforated 12.
- 1 cent deep blue. (Columbus in sight of land.)  
Shades.
- 2 cents violet. (Landing of Columbus.)  
Shades.
- 3 cents green. (Flagship of Columbus.)
- 4 cents ultramarine. (Fleet of Columbus.)  
Error of colour, 4 cents deep blue.
- 5 cents chocolate. (Columbus soliciting aid of Isabella.)  
Shades.
- 6 cents purple. (Columbus welcomed at Barcelona.)  
Shades.
- 8 cents magenta. (Columbus restored to favour.)
- 10 cents black brown. (Columbus presenting natives.)  
Shades.
- 15 cents dark green. (Columbus announcing his  
discovery.)
- 30 cents orange brown. (Columbus at La Rabida.)
- 50 cents slate blue. (Recall of Columbus.)
- §1 salmon. (Isabella pledging her jewels.)
- §2 brown red. (Columbus in chains.)
- §3 yellow green. (Columbus describing third voyage.)  
Shades.
- §4 crimson lake. (Portraits : Isabella and Columbus.)  
Shades.
- §5 black. (Profile of Columbus.)



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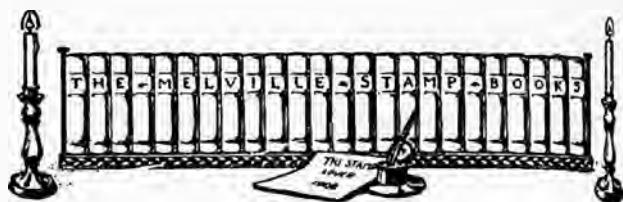
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