Crawford 1517

NEW YORK
POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONAL

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No. 44

O. H. Hart

SOME NOTES

ON THE

New York Postmaster's Provisional Five Cents, Black, 1845.

By

O. S. HART.

With an Introduction

By

HIRAM E. DEATS.

A Foreword, An Historical Note and Chapter on Reprints

By

JOHN N. LUFF.

1911.

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INTRODUCTION.

The publisher has asked me to write something to help make this book a success. He asked me because I was the first collector to make any serious attempt to plate the stamp. It was about 1890 that the purchase of several collections gave me some fifty copies. In sorting out the duplicates I noticed several minor varieties and hence decided to keep them all until further research might enable me to reconstruct the plate. Mr. F. W. Hunter discovered a number of additional varieties and together we made an effort to discover relative positions but without success. I then began to accumulate pairs, especially vertical pairs. About three years ago Mr. Hart came forward with his accumulation which was the equal of my lot. This did not bring us much nearer the goal until we enlisted the interest of our friend Luff, who has had considerable experience in plating. To Mr. Luff belongs most of the credit for defining the position of the stamps in the sheet. Mr. Hart's persistence and Mr. Luff's knowledge of plating together with my twenty years accumulation of nearly three hundred copies of the stamp have finally brought success. Mr. Mann is entitled to credit for securing this material for publication in his paper and the thanks of the collectors of U. S. stamps are due him for putting it before them in the present handy form.

HIRAM E. DEATS.

FOREWORD.

I have much pleasure in complying with the Publisher's request that I write a foreword for this book because I always welcome the appearance of any work that has something new to tell us about stamps and because I have long been interested in this particular subject.

When gathering material for my History of United States Postage Stamps, I naturally looked for information about the New York Postmaster's stamp and was surprised to find how little was really known about it, even to the number of stamps in a sheet. It was generally claimed that there were one hundred, but there was not, so far as I could discover, any proof of this and the statement was apparently founded on a report that some one had seen strips of ten of the stamps. The records of Messrs. Rawdon, Wright & Hatch, who made the plate and printed the stamps, showed a charge of $40.00 for the plate. The opinion of experts was that, considering prices at the period, that amount would represent the cost of a very small plate, probably one of not more than twenty-five stamps, and I accepted that conclusion.

About the same time, I learned that Mr. H. E. Deats was gathering pairs and strips of the stamp with the idea that it could be plated. It was plain that there were about half a dozen marked varieties in the sheet but, after they were spread out, the rest of the stamps seemed very much alike and I confess to having had very grave doubts that the

plating could be accomplished. Here the matter rested until a few years ago, when I decided it was time that the plating should be done, if it were possible, or else we should determine to the contrary and admit the fact. With this intention, I borrowed the several hundred stamps which Mr. Deats had gathered and soon found that I had undertaken a most difficult and eye-straining task. As I have just said, there were some half-dozen prominent varieties, caused by double transfers or recutting of some of the lines. In addition to these there were marks on the stamps but they were very minute and often hard to distinguish even after one had learned what to seek and where. These small defects were not in the design nor due to accidents in making the plate or touching it up. They were defects in the plate itself which were there before the designs were transferred to it and were evidently the remains of some former engraving which had not been thoroughly removed from the plate. None the less, they were some of the things which made the plating of the stamps possible. Many of the stamps also showed a vertical line of fine dots close to the left side or through the left edge of the design. It was evident that these represented guide lines drawn by the platemaker to assist him in placing the transfer roll. When the sheet was restored, it was seen that one of these lines extended from the top to the bottom close to the left side of the first vertical row and another passed through the left edge of the stamps of the fourth vertical row. There were traces of a

line through the right side of the third row but it was usually indistinct and often not to be seen at all. Faint scratches appear at the sides of many of the stamps and occasionally at the top and bottom. I believe these marks were on the die and were transferred to the plate. Some effort seems to have been made to remove them from the latter. When this was not successfully carried out, the remains of the scratches were often of assistance in plating. By locating these various marks in pairs of the stamps which over-lapped one another, the sheet was built up.

It did not take long study to show that the stamps had been arranged in horizontal rows of five. This seemed to help the theory of a plate of twenty-five stamps, in five rows of five, but that was soon upset by the discovery that there were more than five horizontal rows. Eventually, after much fatigue to my eyes, I was able to prove that the stamps had been printed from a plate of fifty, arranged in ten horizontal rows of five. As the stamps were much taller than broad this made a sheet of awkward and unusual shape. It is possible that two impressions were printed side by side to make a sheet of one hundred and thus we may, perhaps, account for some blocks of twenty (double strips of ten) which are described in the "Metropolitan Philatelist" for March, 1894. From Mr. Deats' material I was able to restore a sheet, complete except five copies (Nos. 12, 20, 23, 24 and 25), a second sheet nearly as complete, and he had also many pairs and strips on original covers which

confirmed my plating. As the whole work was verified by over-lapping pairs, both vertical and horizontal, I am satisfied it was correctly done. This has been confirmed by Mr. Hart's researches. I believe there is only one stamp that may not be correctly placed, that is No. 15. Mr. Deats had it only as a single stamp, with a margin proving it to belong at the right of the sheet; but both he and Mr. Hart are lacking two other stamps from the right side of the sheet, Nos. 20 and 25, and the one we have called No. 15 may prove to be one of the two other numbers. Doubtless, I had some reason for placing the stamp as No. 15 (possible some mark in the margin at the left or top which I found also on the margin of stamps adjacent to No. 15) but I have now forgotten it and, Mr. Deats' stamps having been returned to him, I cannot refer to them as I write.

About the time that I had completed my study of the New York stamps, so far as was possible with the material then available, I learned that Mr. O. S. Hart was engaged in the same task. We exchanged letters and had some conferences and it was finally decided that, as Mr. Hart was willing to devote more time and eyesight to the subject than I could afford, he should put the matter in shape for publication. I congratulate him heartily on the successful manner in which he has carried out the task and also on finding a publisher with the liberality to bring out the work in the shape it deserves.

JOHN N. LUFF.

HISTORICAL NOTE.

The five cent stamp issued in 1845 by Robert H. Morris, Postmaster of New York City, was the first of the interesting group of United States stamps known as the Postmasters' Provisionals. These stamps were used before the appearance of the first regular issue of the United States Post Office Department, in 1847, and were prepared by various Postmasters, on their individual responsibility and as a convenience to their patrons and themselves. We reproduce the following letter from the copy book of Postmaster Morris:

Post Office, New York, July 12, 1845.

My dear Sir:—I have adopted a stamp which I sell at 5 cents each. The accompanying is one. I prefer losing the cost of making them to having it insinuated that I am speculating out of the public. Your office of course will not officially notice my stamp, but will be governed only by the post office stamp of prepayment. Should there by any accident be deposited in your office a letter directed to the City of New York with one of my stamps upon it, you will mark the letter unpaid the same as though no stamp was upon it, though when it reaches my office I shall deliver it as a paid letter. In this manner the accounts of the offices will be kept as now, there can be no confusion, and as each office is the judge of its own stamps, there will be no danger from counterfeits.

Robt. H. Morris, P. M.

To Postmasters—
Boston, Philadelphia, Albany, Washington."

This letter apparently proves that the New York stamp was in use on July 12th, 1845. The

following advertisement appeared in the "New York Express" of July 14th, 1845:

"Post Office, New York, July 14, 1845.

The public is respectfully informed that the undersigned has caused to be prepared stamps for the prepayment of postage, made for five cents each, which will be sold in parcels of five and upwards. To prevent counterfeits they will be sold only at this office and at the branch office. The public may therefore be assured that any stamps which may be offered for sale at any other than the two post offices are spurious and will not be considered as prepayment.

Robt. H. Morris, P. M."

In the year 1846, by authority of Cave Johnson, Postmaster General of the United States, Mr. Morris sold some of his stamps to the Postmasters of Albany, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, to be used as a test of the practicability of postage stamps. Copies used in Boston are occasionally found and others used in Washington have been reported but, so far as we are aware, none are known with the Albany or Philadelphia post marks.

The die was engraved by Messrs. Rawdon, Wright & Hatch, 48 Merchants Exchange, New York, wno also made the steel plate and printed the stamps. It was long supposed that the plate contained one hundred designs, in ten rows of ten. Investigations of the Author and others have proved that there were only fifty designs in the plate, arranged in ten horizontal rows of five. The original die is now in the possession of the American Bank Note Co., successors to Rawdon, Wright &

Hatch, but the plate is not known to exist. It was probably destroyed after the stamps had been replaced by the Government issue of 1847.

The stamps were at first issued unsigned but it was soon decided to endorse them as a safe-guard against counterfeiting. Postmaster Morris undertook this work but apparently found it required too much of his time and delegated the task to his assistants. Copies endorsed "R. H. M." (the initials of Postmaster Harris) are scarce. The endorsement reads upward or downward in a slightly diagonal line. It is believed that the two varieties represent two sheets of stamps and that these are all that received the personal signature of Mr. Morris. Most of the stamps bore the endorsement "A. C. M.", the initials of Alonzo Castle Monson, brother-in-law of Robt. H. Morris. It is understood that these initials were usually written by himself but sometimes it was done by his brother Marciana Monson and, possibly, by certain clerks in the post office.

The stamps were usually printed on thin wove paper of a bluish or grayish tint. The paper is sometimes almost pelure and copies are known which appear to be on ribbed paper and others which show portions of a papermaker's watermark of double-lined capital letters. The stamps also exist on white and deep gray blue paper, but these varieties are scarce, especially the latter. Reprints from a new plate were made about 1862. They will be described elsewhere.

JOHN N. LUFF.

Some Notes on the New York Postmaster's Provisional, Five Cent, Black, 1845.

THE writer had been much interested in this stamp for a number of years and had given it more attention than any other issued in the United States, when about two years ago he was informed by an eastern philatelic friend, that Mr. H. E. Deats was the possessor of a very fine specialized collection of this particular one, and that with the valuable expert assistance of Mr. John N. Luff, he had been endeavoring to plate the same, and had it nearly completed. Some very interesting correspondence with Mr. Luff resulted in the identification of a number of the writer's copies, since which time it has been the writer's pleasure to study this stamp with the same end in view, viz: to identify each copy as to its position in the plate.

It must be borne in mind that many of the distinguishing marks are very faint and impossible of identification without a very good light and a strong glass.

It will be the writer's endeavor, however, to describe these marks so that by the assistance of illustrations made from a retouched photograph, they may be readily located.

Obviously it is not possible to retouch a photograph clearly enough to show many of these points in a cut without showing them much more distinctly than they appear on the stamps themselves.

The plate is built up by means of stamps from the corners and margins of the sheet, identified by the extra margins, and from them by overlapping pairs, blocks or strips.

For instance, a stamp with wide margins at the top and left side would be from the top left hand corner of the sheet and would be number one in the plate—a horizontal pair, of which the left stamp was number one would be numbers one and two—a vertical pair of which the upper stamp was number one would be numbers one and six, and so on.

The complete sheet consists of fifty stamps—five horizontal by ten vertical, commencing with number one at the left of the top row and counting from left to right. They are set 1½ mm. apart, although there are slight variations from this measurement. Any stamp with a margin of over 1½ mm. which shows no trace of the adjoining stamp, may be safely regarded as from the edge of the sheet, although the writer has a pair of numbers three and four which are 1¾ mm. apart. Some of the stamps appear to be imperfectly aligned in the plate,which may serve to assist in identification, as for instance in horizontal pairs: Number four is set slightly higher than number five; number eight higher than numbers seven or nine; number nine than number ten; eighteen than nineteen; twenty-

eight than twenty-nine; thirty-three than thirty-four; thirty-four than thirty-five; thirty-seven than thirty-eight; forty-two than forty-one; forty-three than forty-two or forty-four; forty-four than forty-five; forty-six than forty-seven; forty-eight than forty-nine and forty-nine than fifty.

Horizontal pairs of numbers one and two, two and three, three and four, eleven and twelve, seventeen and eighteen, twenty-six and twenty-seven, thirty-one and thirty-two, forty-seven and forty-eight, are all quite accurately aligned, but a horizontal pair of number six and seven shows a perfect alignment at the bottom, while the number six appears a little higher at the top, the right side of number six being a trifle longer than the left side of number seven. Numbers fourteen and fifteen show regular alignment at the top, the bottom of number fifteen, however, being slightly higher than number fourteen.

In vertical pairs the alignment seems no more accurate, as numbers thirteen and eighteen; thirty-two and thirty-seven; thirty-five and forty; thirty-nine and forty-four; forty-one and forty-six; forty-three and forty-eight are evenly placed, while numbers eight and thirteen; thirty-seven and forty-two; thirty-eight and forty-three are not, the bottom of number eight being shorter than the top of number thirteen, and the two latter examples being unevenly set. Number eleven is set slightly to the right of number sixteen, which is directly under it in the plate and twenty-one to the right of twenty-six; thirty-three is also slightly to the right of thir-

ty-eight, and forty-four to the right of forty-nine.

Information as to the vertical alignment is not easily obtained as vertical pairs are obviously not as common as horizontal pairs.

The discrepancies in alignment appear to be due to the fact that the opposite side lines or top and bottom lines of many stamps are not exactly the same length.

There is also considerable variation in the outside measurements of some stamps which are undoubtedly the same number in the plate, no doubt due to uneven shrinking or stretching of the paper.

Let us consider the perceptible marks which will serve to accurately identify a stamp as to its position or number in the sheet. Many of them are so indistinct that a stamp showing a single mark that serves to identify it, may not show others that it is known to possess. Especially is this true in the case of some of the later prints, probably on account of the plate being worn. However, all of the identification marks noted, do appear in perfect prints.

The numbers twenty, twenty-three, twenty-four and twenty-five are omitted, as the writer is unable to identify them, having none of them before him, and no knowledge as to their distinguishing characteristics.

The writer is very much indebted to Mr. H. E. Deats for the loan of his numbers twenty-one, twenty-two, thirty-one and thirty-six, without which the descriptions of these numbers would have to be omitted from these notes.

Number 1.

Number one shows a very faint line at the top of the right side in the margin, which extends about ½ mm. above the top border and running parallel to the right line of the design, joins it about half way down.

This line is very close to the right border line—in fact, so close that it is hard to distinguish. In some copies this line is discerned nearly the full length of the stamp and also shows as a double line at the top. There is a small break in the right-hand border line at the lower end.

Number 2.

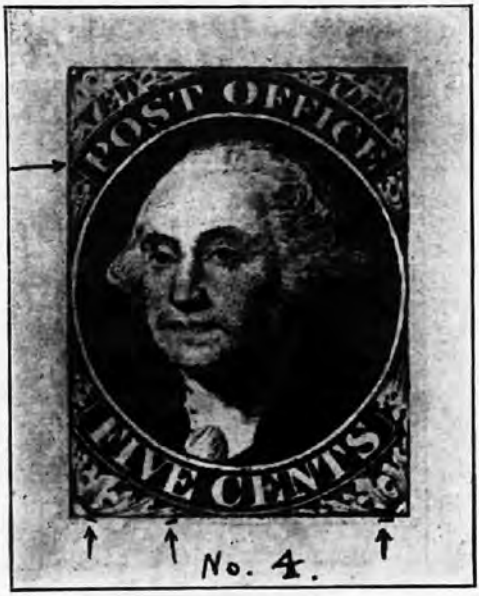
Number two is the well known shifted die variety, readily identified by the blurred appearance of the white letters composing the value FIVE CENTS, and the curved line which shows below the center of the bottom line—also three marks or dashes in the lower margin as shown in the cut.

Number 3.

Number three has a hair line extending down into the design across the top line about ¾ mm. from the right side. This line can be followed down to the dot in the corner ornament, which is nearly 2 mm. from the top, and in a very clear print can be traced for some distance down through the stamp, parallel to the right border line.

A small dot appears in the lower part of the letter P of POSTAGE, also in N of CENTS and in the white oval above and between T and S of CENTS.

Number 4.



Number four has three short horizontal dashes in the bottom margin similar to those on number two, but not located in exactly the same places.

The most distinct one starts 1 mm. from the right hand corner, is about 1 mm. in length and its right end is joined to the lower line of the design.

There is a smaller one 1 mm. from the left corner and another under the letter E in FIVE.

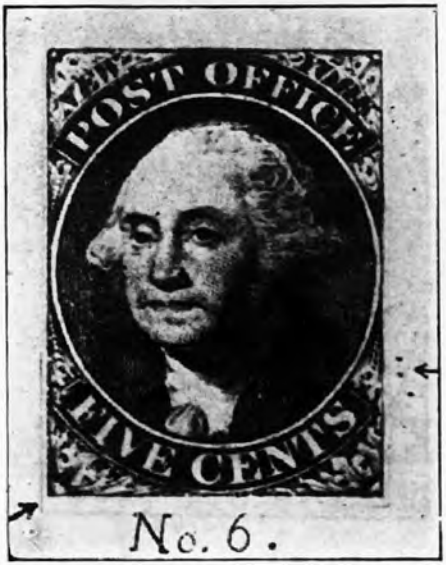
There are also two small dots, quite distinct, in the lower part of P in POST.

Number 5.

Number five has a vertical line in the top margin which joins the top line of the design about ¾ mm. from the left end, a faint smudge in the left margin, just above the end of the label of value, a faint dot in the right margin opposite the northeast corner and another opposite the extreme right curl of Washington's hair.


BRITISH
MUSEUM

Number 6.



Number six shows a hair line at the left, similar to that on number one, except that it is distinguishable only on the lower quarter of the stamp. There are three very faint small dots in the right margin, which would be very difficult to locate without the aid of the illustration.

Number 7.

The cut of number seven is reproduced from a number seven stamp, which is apparently a shifted transfer, as there is a nearly continuous double line at the top, a line across the lower part of the letters OF of OFFICE, and one across the bottom of the letters E CE of FIVE CENTS.

Other distinguishing marks appear on number seven, but those noted are so apparent that a more minute description would be superfluous.

Number 8.

Number eight exhibits a minute dot, quite clear, ½ mm. to the right of the southeast corner.

The lower end of the right hand border line is broken, as in number one.

There is a short vertical line in the right margin, ½ mm. from the lower corner of the label of value.

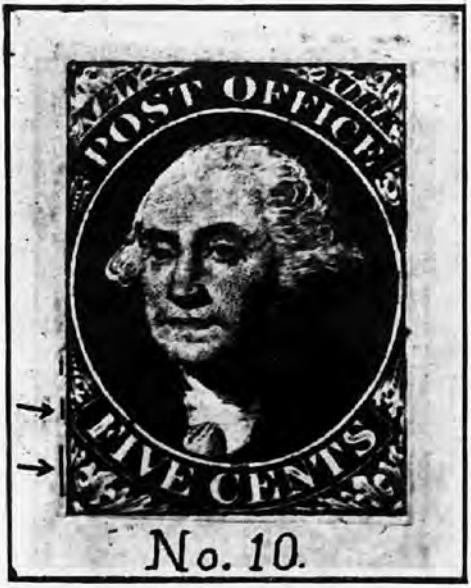
Number 9.

Number nine is recognized by a fine dotted line running down through the stamp, ½ mm. inside the left edge.

It runs across the bottom margin, down through number fourteen, which is directly under it in the plate and through number nineteen, which is under number fourteen, thus making it very difficult tc differentiate.

The right lower corner line is broken, as in number one and eight, which does not occur in numbers fourteen and nineteen.

Number 10.



Number ten has traces of a vertical line in the left margin, about ⅓ mm. from the outside line, showing only opposite the lower third of the stamp, quite similar to number six. The border line of the background of crossed lines which surrounds the portrait is uneven on the right side, just opposite the extreme right curl of the hair.

There is a very small indistinct dot in the white oval, just over the junction of the letters F I in the word FIVE.

Number 11.

Number eleven shows a dotted line down the left side extending the full length of the stamp, about ¼ mm. outside the border line. It has also a hair line on the right side, which is so faint and so close to the design that it is useless to attempt to reproduce it in the engraving.

Number 12.

Number twelve has a vertical line 1½ mm. in length, in the left margin, ¾ mm. from the left outer line of the stamp, the lower end of which is about 12 mm. from the lower corner.

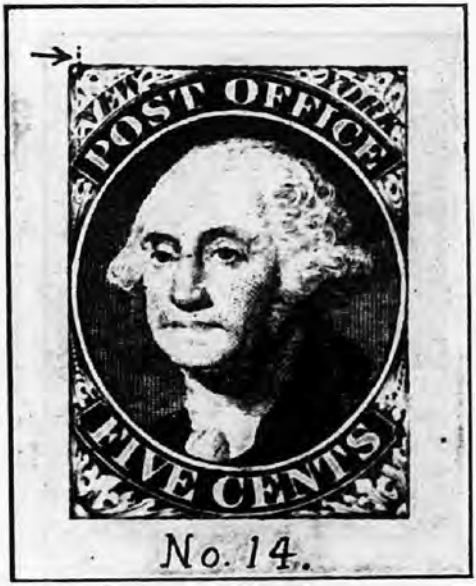
Number 13.

In number thirteen appears a faint vertical line in the left side of the white oval surrounding the head, opposite the left side of Washington's mouth.

A diagonal line shows across the white oval on the right side, northeast of the right curl of the hair.

There is a faint spot in N of CENTS like that described in number three.

Number 14.



We may distinguish number fourteen by the vertical dotted line noted in the description of number nine, which shows in the top margin and enters the design of the stamp close at the right of the white dot in the left upper corner. It runs down to the top of the label inclosing the word POST.

Number 15.

Number fifteen is located by a small dot in the lower margin, close to the bottom line and ⅔ mm. from the right hand corner.

Number 16.

Number sixteen has the dotted line in the left margin almost touching the upper corner and showing a little further away (nearly ½ mm.) at the bottom corner, being not quite parallel to the left side of the stamp.

On a clear print there is also a similar line on the right side, which joins the east line of the stamp about half way down.

Number 17.

There is a dash in the margin at the right of number seventeen, a short, nearly horizontal line, about 1 mm. in length, about 9 mm. below the top corner.

A spot on the left of the northwest corner is indistinct and appears like a fly speck.

Number 18.

Number eighteen shows in the left margin the dash noted in the description of number seventeen, together with a vertical dotted line in the lower right corner, ½ mm. from the lower right end and extending up through the design of the stamp for about 4 mm.

Number 19.

Number nineteen has a dot in the left margin opposite the end of the label of value, a nearly horizontal dash across the white oval, opposite the left curl of the hair and a nearly vertical line in the white oval under the letter P of POST.

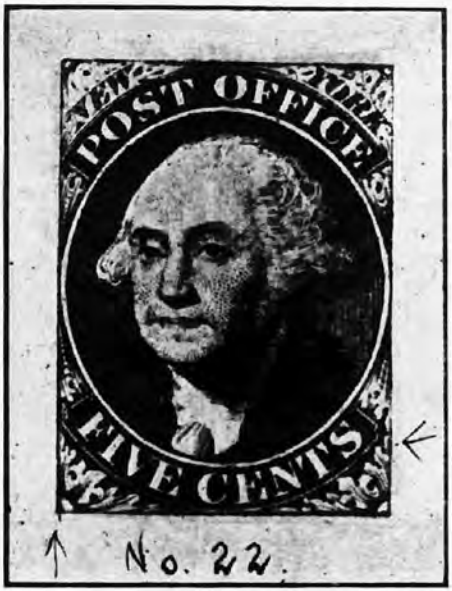
Number 20.

Number 21.

The vertical line running down the left side of number twenty-one is a trifle farther away from the border line of the stamp than in number eleven and about the same distance as that of number sixteen, but the upper line in the left corner is broken above the white spot.

Number twenty-one is extremely difficult of identification in the absence of pairs which would establish its location beyond question.

Number 22.



Number twenty-two has a faint dot in the right margin, ½ mm. from the edge and 4½ mm. above the lower corner. It shows also a very faint vertical line extending from the bottom of the stamp close at the right of the left hand corner.

Number 23.

Number 24.

Number 25.

Number 26.

Number twenty-six possesses a very fine line running down the right side, outside and very close to it, almost the entire length of the stamp, also a very faint horizontal dash under the lower right corner ornament.


POST OFFICE
ONE CENT
BRITISH
MUSEUM

Number 27.

A very fine vertical line extends down from the bottom left corner of number twenty-seven to the top left corner of number thirty-two. The outside line over the white spot in the top left corner appears to extend slightly above the rest of the top border line of the stamp.


POST OFFICE

Number 28.

Number twenty-eight has a vertical line running into the left lower corner about the same distance from the edge as that in numbers nine and fourteen and also a similar line on the right lower corner about ⅔ mm. from the right side.

Number 29.

Number twenty-nine shows the same line at the left as that shown by number nine (see cut of number nine) but the right margin line is intact at the bottom, not having a break like that of number nine.

Number 30.

Number thirty has two short dashes and a dot over the upper left corner, two dots in the left margin about 2 mm. from the bottom and several marks in the white letters in both the upper and lower labels around the vignette, which give number thirty the appearance of a slight double transfer.

Number 31.

Number thirty-one shows parts of the guide line which runs down the left side of the sheet, which is quite similar in the stamps of the left hand vertical row, viz: numbers one, six, eleven, sixteen, twenty-one, twenty-six, thirty-one, thirty-six, forty-one and forty-six.

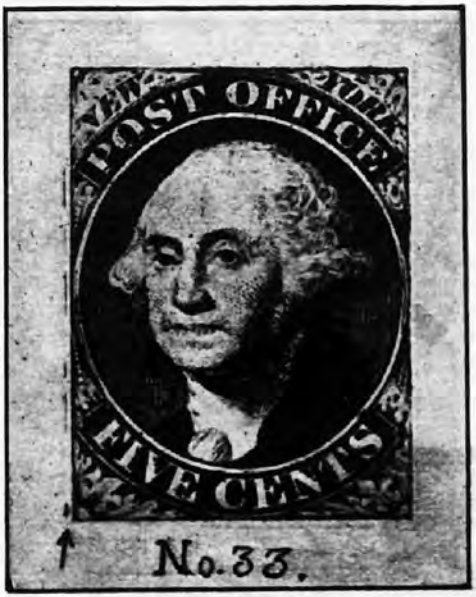
Therefore thirty-one can not be definitely illustrated and can be authenticated only by comparison with a known copy of this variety.

Number 82.

Number thirty-two. A vertical line extends to the northwest corner of number thirty-two, like that shown in the cut of number nine. There is also a similar line at the southwest corner, but it joins the bottom of the stamp nearer to the corner.

On this variety the top line of the design appears thicker over the white dot in the northwest corner, as if the end of it was slightly raised above the level of the line, like that in number twenty-seven.

Number 33.



Number thirty-three has a broken line in the left margin which shows in four or five places.

There are well defined lines in both the right and left sides of the white oval surrounding the vignette. There are also quite distinct marks in the white letters of P and O of POST, in I V of FIVE and in N T S of CENTS, also a short dash in the white oval just over S of CENTS, all of which would indicate a slight double transfer.

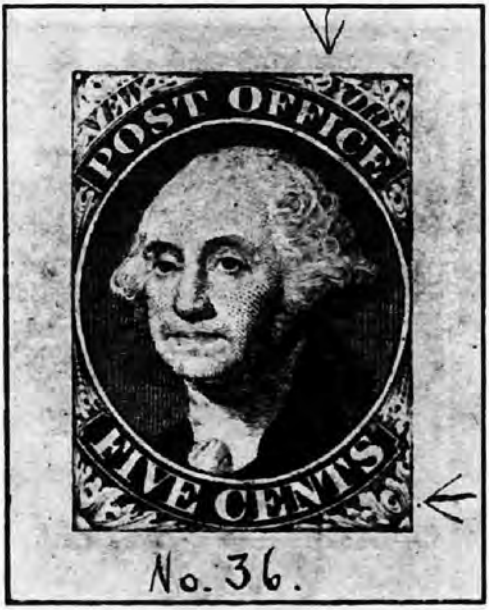
Number 34.

Number thirty-four. A distinct mark shows in the left margin, ½ mm. from the left end of the label of value and a less distinct one in the right margin, close to the border line at the right end of the label of value. The lower end of right margin line is broken at the bottom, as if it were cut away or rubbed off.

Number 35.

Number thirty-five shows a minute dot ½ mm. above the white dot in the northwest corner and another in the lower margin ½ mm. from the lower line, under the extreme left end of E in CENTS, also a faint mark in right side of letter O of POST.

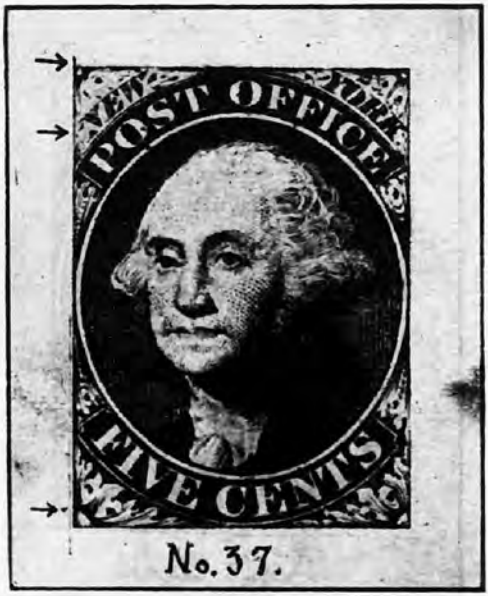
Number 36.



Number thirty-six has a break in the top border line just over the horizontal curved line at the left of the word YORK.

It has a dot (very faint) in the right margin, ½ mm. from the edge and about 1½ mm. above the lower corner.

Number 37.



Number thirty-seven. A vertical line at northwest corner, same as number sixteen, a line at lower third of left side, a dot in left margin, outside of said line, a distinct dot in right side of O of POST and a dot in white line directly under it.

Number 38.

Number thirty-eight. Three dots or marks in left margin opposite lower corner and a distinct diagonal line running southeast from the extreme upper right corner; also a spot on neck between the two shadings under point of chin.

Number 39.

Number thirty-nine has a vertical line scarcely ½ mm. in length close to left lower corner, also three dashes in the margin, below the lower line *, quite like those shown in number four, but not located exactly the same, and a horizontal dash through upper left white corner ornament.

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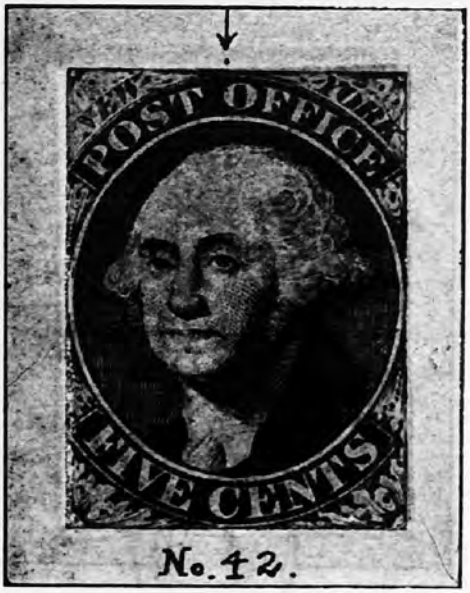
* See illustration of number forty-four.

Number 40.

Number 41.

Number forty-one has a double line at the bottom and is readily distinguished without a particular description or illustration.

Number 42.



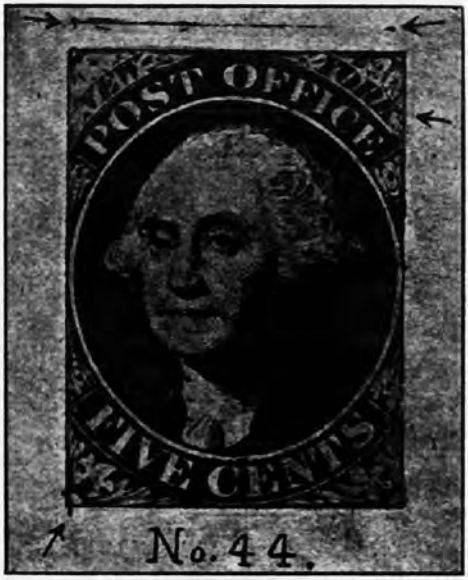
Number forty-two shows a distinct dot in upper margin, about ⅓ mm. from the edge, directly over the left side of O in OFFICE.

Number 43.

Number forty-three. A vertical line extends from the left lower corner about the same distance from the corner as that in number nine; a line across the white oval similar to that in number thirteen and a fine hair line, nearly vertical, in the lower part of the left side of O in POST.

Number 44.

Bottom line of Number Thirty-nine.



Number forty-four exhibits a vertical line like that in forty-three, but nearer to the corner, a dot in the white oval under the second F in OFFICE, and a blur over lower right ceriph of I in the same word.

Number 45.

Number forty-five displays a vertical line entering the left end of the top line, about the same as number fourteen, also a dot in top margin, over right ceriph of W in NEW.

This number may have other identification marks on the right side, but as the writer's only copy, at the right of a 44-45 pair, is cut close on the right side, they cannot be located at this writing.

Number 46.

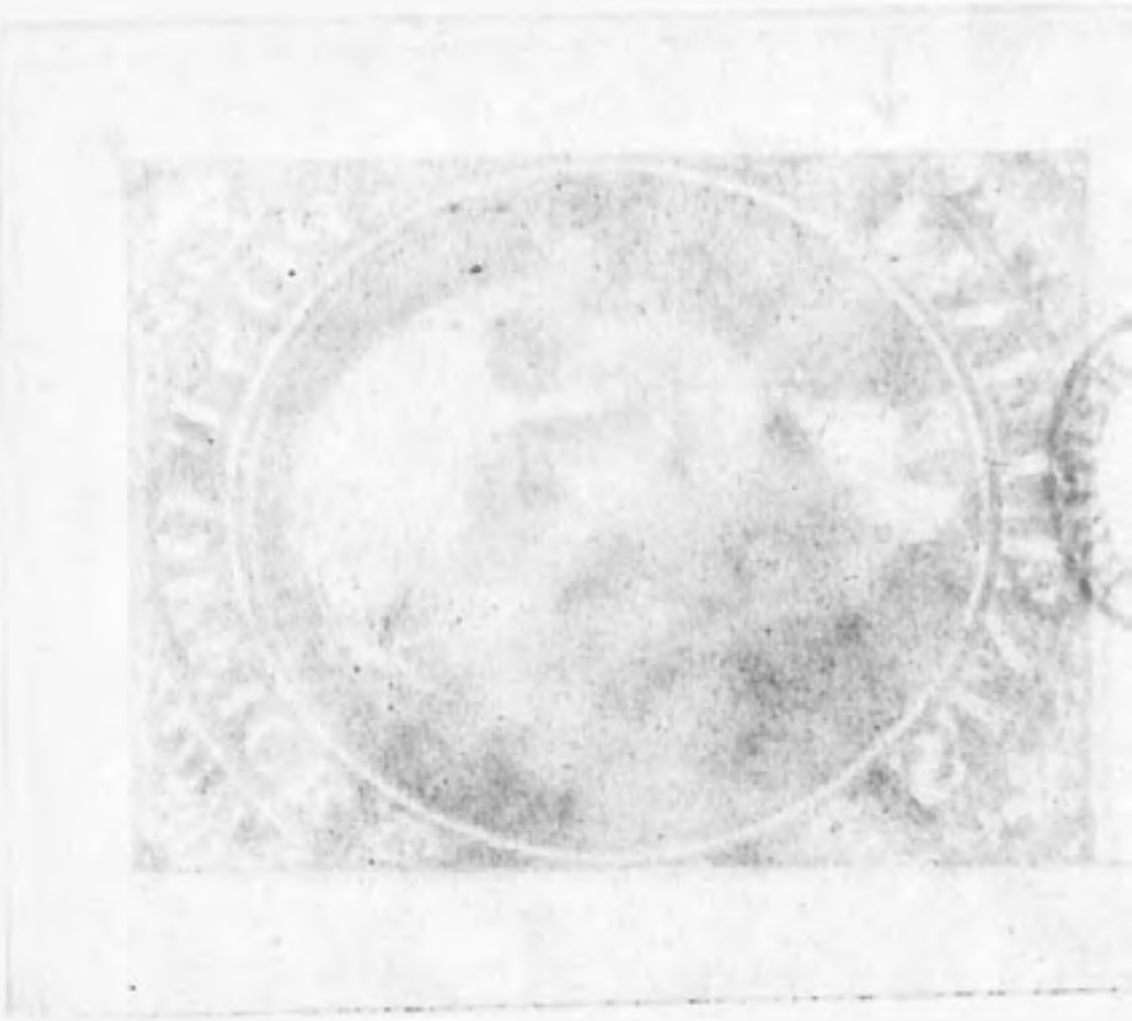
Number forty-six has a recut line at the top. This line is cut a little farther into the design than the original border line, traces of which are distinctly visible above the new line.

Part of the circular line above the label POST OFFICE has been cut away, leaving a break in the center of about 2½ mm. This number has also a line in the left margin quite similar to that in number six.

Number 47.

Number forty-seven shows a hair line in the left margin, about the same distance from the stamp as that shown in number sixteen.

It shows also a mark in the letter F of FIVE and a hair line from lower right corner similar to that of number eleven.



Number 48.

Number forty-eight has a vertical hair line joining the left of the top line, ½ mm. from the end.

This line joins number forty-three and is noted in the description and illustration of that variety.

There is also a very faint dot in the right side of the white oval, directly over and joining the top of the first vertical line of the crossed lined background.

Number 49.

Number forty-nine. There is a dotted line at the top left corner, very much the same as that portrayed in number fourteen.

(For a further description of number forty-nine see number fifty).

Number 50.

There shows between numbers forty-nine and fifty a vertical smudge, which is heavier close to the left side of number fifty.

The smudge shows for about half the length of the stamps, and was probably caused by a high ridge or hump on the plate between the stamps. If it were printed from electrotypes we would describe it by saying that it was not routed deeply enough.

The writer is hardly enough of an artist to reproduce this smudge in an illustration, as it prints as a gray instead of black.

A SHEET OF THE REPRINTS.

Illustration made through the kindness of Mr. Luff who loaned the stamps for the purpose.

REPRINTS.

The Publisher has asked me to supply a few notes on the reprints of the New York Postmaster's stamp, which I am happy to do.

The reprints were first made about 1862. Records have not been found to confirm this date but it is given on the authority of leading collectors of years ago who are known to have been careful students and investigators of such matters and whose statements have always proved reliable. The reprints were made for George A. Hussey of New York, proprietor of the well known Hussey's Post and also an extensive dealer in stamps, especially of the Local Posts. He supplied the trade and collectors with large quantities of originals, reprints and even imitations when more desirable things were not available. We do not know what authority Mr. Hussey had for ordering these reprints, since the original owner of the stamps, Postmaster Robt. H. Morris, had died in 1855. Possibly it was not considered that any authority was needed, in view of the fact that the stamps had long been superseded by the regular Government issues and the reprints could not be used for any purpose except to amuse stamp collectors.

A new plate was made for the reprints. It has been said the work was done by the American Bank Note Co. but they have denied it. The new plate

contained nine stamps, arranged in three rows of three. The original stamps are set 1½ mm. apart; in a few instances 1¾ mm. The reprints are spaced 2½ mm. between horizontal pairs. Between the first and second horizontal rows there is a space of 2 mm. and between the second and third horizontal rows there is a space of 1½ mm. Like the originals, all these stamps show slight defects and also fine scratches alongside the stamps.

The most marked variety is No. 8 in the plate, which shows a strong double transfer. On the white stock appears a shading of crossed diagonal lines forming diamonds, evidently a repetition of the shading on the coat collar. In the left margin there is a large and a small colored dash and there are marks across the word "FIVE" which are repetitions of the heavy shading of that word.

No. 6 also shows traces of a double transfer, in the shape of a line across the pearl in the upper left corner, small marks on some of the letters of "FIVE CENTS", and three small dashes below the stamp. The latter marks are very like some which distinguish double transfers in the original sheet.

Nos. 1 and 4 have two very curious marks: first, a semi-circular line starting on the chin and curving downward across the white stock; and, secondly, a faint scratch extending from the lower left to the upper right side of the "I" of "FIVE". I find it difficult to account for these marks. They are identical in the two stamps and thus must represent something more than plate defects. If they were in the die they should appear on all stamps,

but neither the stamps nor die proofs show any such defects. The only conclusion I can reach is that the marks represent an injury to the transfer roll in the course of making the reprint plate and that this injury was in the shape of something that adhered to the face of the roll, because it is necessary to have a raised line on the roll to make a sunken line on the plate and a colored line on the stamp.

The other stamps in the sheet of reprints do not present varieties of sufficient prominence to be described.

The reprints were usually printed in black on thin wove paper of a deep gray-blue color. They also exist printed in black on very thin, transparent, white paper and in four colors (green, brown, blue and vermilion) on stout white paper, usually called bond paper. In an article by Mr. F. W. Hunter in the "Metropolitan Philatelist" for March, 1894, it is stated: "It will be remembered that George A. Hussey, of Hussey's Post, had the above stamps on sale at 64 Pine Street, for $5.00 the set consisting of six stamps." I think it probable that this may have been so at some time but not always. In my experience the reprint on gray-blue paper is much the commonest, while that on thin white paper is very scarce. I do not think the reprints in colors were printed until some time later than the other two. In the "Stamp Collector's Magazine" for November 1st, 1863, page 152, in "Addenda to Mount Brown's Catalogue of Postage Stamps" we find:

"New York Post-Office, large rect.

This stamp, well known to collectors by the designation of 'big-head', was formerly supposed to be a government issue, but is now ascertained to prove one of Mr. Hussey's legions of postal offspring. Having been exceedingly rare for some time, it now makes appearance both on white and blue paper."

This seems to point to the reprints on white and blue paper but says nothing of colored impressions. It also touches on Mr. Hussey's connection with the stamps and may be accepted as some confirmation of the date 1862 for the reprints. The original stamps measure 20¾x28 mm., the reprints on blue paper measure 20½x28½ mm., those on thin white paper 20¼x28½ mm., and those in color on stout white paper 21x28 mm. The variations in size are, of course, due to irregular shrinkage of the different papers after being wet for printing.

JOHN N. LUFF.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

It will be noticed that in presenting this work by Mr. Hart, we have endeavored to make it as comprehensible as possible in book form. This our first "Handbook" is on a subject which has never before been placed before the public in a complete manner. To Mr. Deats, who has been of considerable assistance in the plating of these stamps; to Mr. Luff, who so kindly contributes a short but concise Historical Note and who has favored us with a chapter on Reprints and to Mr. Hart, who as the author has presented the description of the various stamps which go to make up a complete sheet, thereby making this book a possibility, our sincere thanks are tendered.

Blank pages are placed in their regular order, and when the descriptive matter is procured, and when the stamps can be illustrated, it will be our pleasure to furnish the matter in the form of labels which can be arranged in their proper places in conformity to the rest of the book. This additional matter will be free to all subscribers to the Edition De Luxe, and will be supplied to the possessors of the Regular Edition upon the payment of a nominal price.

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