

NEW YORK POSTMASTER'S PROVISIONAL 1845-1847



INTRODUCTION

The New York Postmaster's Provisional was the first proper postage stamp issued in North America, and although it was issued only to be used in New York City, it was actually also used on mail from a number of places in the United States to New York City, as well as from New York City to other countries, including a number of destinations in Europe. So, unlike all the other US Postmasters' Provisionals, which were mainly used locally, the New York Postmaster's Provisional was a true national and international stamp!



BACKGROUND

On 3 March 1845, Congress passed the Post Office Reform Act, which greatly simplified and reduced postal rates, effective from the 1 July 1845. In simple terms, the Act created two letter rates: 5 cents per half ounce for distances up to 300 miles, and 10 cents per half ounce for any distance over 300 miles within the United States.

The profound changes in the nation's postal system effected by the 1845 Post Office Reform Act set the stage for the introduction of adhesive stamps to prepay postage, a concept initiated in Great Britain in 1840 and proposed in Congress by Senator Daniel Webster the same year, but not authorized until 1847. In the two years between the 1 July 1845, when the 5 cents and 10 cents rates took effect, and the 1 July 1847, when the first United States General Issue stamps were issued, adhesive stamps and specially-marked envelopes valid for government postage, were provided by postmasters. These stamps and envelopes are known as Postmasters' Provisionals - "Postmasters" because they were the people who issued them, and "Provisionals" because the stamps filled a need until the government's first general issue became available.

Eleven post offices are known to have issued provisionals and they were valid only at the issuing post office. The use of provisional stamps in New York was carefully observed by Postmaster General Cave Johnson and paved the way for the 1847 General Issue.

New York City's former mayor and progressive new postmaster, Robert H. Morris (1802-1855), took office on 21 May 1845, and quickly organised his staff. Morris hired his brothers-in-law, Marcena Monson Jr. and Alonzo Castle Monson, to help manage the enormous post office operations, which had recently been relocated to the "New Post Office" inside the Dutch Reformed Church building on Nassau Street. Morris served as New York's postmaster for the next four years, a period of great change in the nation's postal system.

Postmaster Morris embraced the idea of using stamps for prepayment, and he is also on record stating that he issued envelopes with his name and rate stamped on them. Morris decided to issue adhesive stamps sometime prior to the 12 July 1845. His letter book contains an announcement to postmasters in the four cities: Boston, Philadelphia, Albany, and Washington. The 14 July 1845 edition of the New York Express carried the following advertisement:

"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."

From Morris' letters and announcements it seems certain that the new 5 cents stamps were in his hands by Saturday the 12 July, and placed on sale the following Monday, the 14 July 1845. The earliest documented use is from the 15 July. Therefore, the New York (and Baltimore) issues were the first Postmasters' Provisionals to be issued.

The New York provisional is the most elegantly executed and widely used among the group of provisionals issued by eleven different offices between 1845 and 1847, and it is the only stamp among the 1845-47 provisionals known to have been distributed to other cities. The stamp, printed in black from an engraved plate of 40 subjects, bears George Washington's portrait, based on an oil painting by Gilbert Stuart. The Rawdon, Wright and Hatch firm's success in engraving and printing the New York provisional earned them the contract for the first General Issue in 1847. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the New York provisional is how it demonstrated the efficacy of adhesive postage stamps to the public and to Congress, paving the way for the Post Office Department's General Issue.

THE EXHIBIT - PLAN AND DETAILS

This exhibit is a very comprehensive study of the New York Postmaster's Provisional, starting by showing mail from New York City before the introduction of the Provisional, examples of alternative services available during the period, essays and proofs of Washington's head (including use of the same die in other printed products) and the stamp design, examples of the issued stamp unused, used and on cover, including different papers and signatures, and finally the postal use of the stamp to and from different US states, as well as to and from a number of foreign destinations.

FORERUNNERS, ALTERNATIVE SERVICES & PROOFS (frame 1-2)

Mail from New York City pre July 1845 showing the rates in use before the Post Office Reform Act, later prepaid inland and foreign mail without the Provisional, **US City Despatch Post** and **Boyd's City Express** used both within New York City and beyond the city, showing the alternative services available during the Provisional period. **Engravings** of Washington's portrait as used for the Provisional, showing how it was also used on contemporary bank notes. **Essays**, **Die Proofs**, **Plate Proofs** and **Colour Proofs** of both Washington's head and the complete stamp.

THE ISSUED STAMP AND ITS VARIETIES (frame 2-3)

During the two years of use of the Provisional, a large number of printings were carried out, so therefore the stamp exists on several different types of papers, and examples of these are shown: Bluish paper (Scott 9X1, unused, used, pairs, on cover), Blue paper (9X2), Grey paper (9X3). The stamps were normally signed by the Postmaster or his assistants, so a number of different signatures or signature varieties exist and these are shown used, and on cover: ACM all connected (9X1), ACM with AC connected (9X1a), A.C.M. and A C M unconnected (9X1b), RHM (9X1d), unsigned (9X1e). Also one of **only five known combination pairs of 9X1 and 9X1a**. Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated, and a number of the different positions are shown on cover, and described. Sperati's forgery of the Provisional is also shown, both in the form of a die proof and of stamps "unused" and "used".

POSTAL USE WITHIN THE USA AND ABROAD (frame 3-4)

Examples of the 5 cents rate (below 300 miles) to: Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York state, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington DC. The 10 cents rate (over 300 miles) to: Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, upper New York state, Ohio, Tennessee and underpaid taxed mail. Also one of **three known 15 cents triple rate** (below 300 miles) covers, one of **five known 20 cents double rate** (over 300 miles) covers, one used on cover **from Boston to New York (rare)**, one used on cover **from Cincinnati to New York, re-directed** to Connecticut with a Provisional added, and one used on **registered cover** to Philadelphia (**very rare**). The foreign usages include one on a cover **from Mexico to France**, one from **Florida to Scotland**, and examples **to England, Belgium, France, Trieste** (one sent under cover from London, as well as one sent through the mails all the way). The last page in this frame shows the use of the 1847 General issue stamps from New York City after the withdrawal of the Provisional.

REFERENCES

Literature used includes the Scott USA Specialized Catalogue, "The New York Postmaster's Provisional" by Stanley Piller (1991), "The New York Postmaster's Provisional" by Philip T Wall (the USPS Chronicle no.s 97-116, 1978-82), Robert A Siegel auction catalogues, the Philatelic Foundation certificate archive, and much personal research.

PROLOGUE - WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE JULY 1845

Before July 1845, the internal US postal rates were charged according to five different zones based on the distance: up to 30 miles 6 cents; 30-80 miles 10 cents; 80-150 miles $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents; 150-400 miles $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents; over 400 miles 25 cents. These charges were for single page letters, double and multiple letters were charged pro rata.

1845 (13 June) from New York City to Hartford, Connecticut (117 miles) charged " $12\frac{1}{2}$ " cents



Rate: Marked PAID and " $12\frac{1}{2}$ " cents (rate for 80-150 miles)

$12\frac{1}{2}$ cents rate for 80-150 miles

1844 (14 October) from New York City to Washington City (230 miles) charged " $18\frac{3}{4}$ " cents



Rate: Marked PAID and " $18\frac{3}{4}$ " cents (rate for 150-400 miles)

$18\frac{3}{4}$ cents rate for 150-400 miles

THE 1845 POST OFFICE REFORM ACT - INLAND MAIL

The 1845 Post Office Reform Act, effective from the 1 July 1845, simplified and reduced the internal US postal rates which were charged according to two different distance zones only: 5 cents per half ounce for distances up to 300 miles, and 10 cents per half ounce for any distance over 300 miles.

1845 (26 November) from New York City to Mohawk, New York (228 miles) charged "5" cents



Rate: Marked "5 cts" (rate up to 300 miles)

5 cents rate up to 300 miles

1846 (10 September) from New York City to Bangor, Maine (444 miles) charged "10" cents



Rate: Marked "10 cts" (rate over 300 miles)

10 cents rate over 300 miles

THE 1845 POST OFFICE REFORM ACT - FOREIGN MAIL

The internal rates charged on foreign mail were also affected by the 1845 Post Office Reform Act, and the rates charged to the port of departure were the same: 5 cents per half ounce up to 300 miles, and 10 cents per half ounce over 300 miles.

1846 (12 February) from New York City to London, charged "5" cents from New York to Boston (216 miles)



Rate: Marked "5" cents (rate up to 300 miles) and "1/-" (British Packet letter rate)

To England: 5 cents inland rate up to 300 miles + foreign charges

1845 (15 December) from New York City to France, charged "5" cents from New York to Boston (216 miles)



Rate: Marked "5" cents (rate up to 300 miles) and "19" decimes (=190 centimes) (French ship and inland charge)

To France: 5 cents inland rate up to 300 miles + foreign charges

UNITED STATES CITY DESPATCH POST

By an order of the 1 August 1842, the Postmaster General established a carrier service in New York City known as the "United States City Despatch Post". The service delivered mail within New York City and the rate for this was 3 cents for normal letters. Stamps were used to indicate that the postage had been paid. The service was discontinued in November 1846.

1845 (12 July) within New York City with 3 cents US City Despatch Post (Sc 6LB5) tied by red "U.S." in octagon



Rate: 3 cents (local city rate)

3 cents US City Despatch Post within New York City

1845 (12 June) from New York City to Philadelphia (98 miles) with 3 cents US City Despatch Post (Sc 6LB5) tied by red NEW YORK datestamp, and charged "12½" cents



Rate: 3 cents (local city rate from a letter box to the main Post Office) + marked "12½" cents (rate for 80-150 miles)

3 cents US City Despatch Post from New York City to Philadelphia, charged 12½ cents

BOYD'S CITY EXPRESS

Boyd's City Express was established as a local post on 17 June 1844 by John T Boyd. The service delivered mail within New York City and the rate for this was 2 cents for normal letters. Stamps were used to indicate that the postage had been paid. The service was in operation in one way or another all the way up to 1883.

1846 (19 July) within New York City with 2 cents Boyd's City Express (Sc 20L4) postmarked with black grid



Rate: 2 cents (local city rate)

2 cents Boyd's City Express within New York City

1848? (18 July) from New York City to Woodbury, Connecticut (91 miles) with 2 cents Boyd's City Express (Sc 20L7) postmarked with black grid and tied by red NEW YORK datestamp, charged "5 cts"



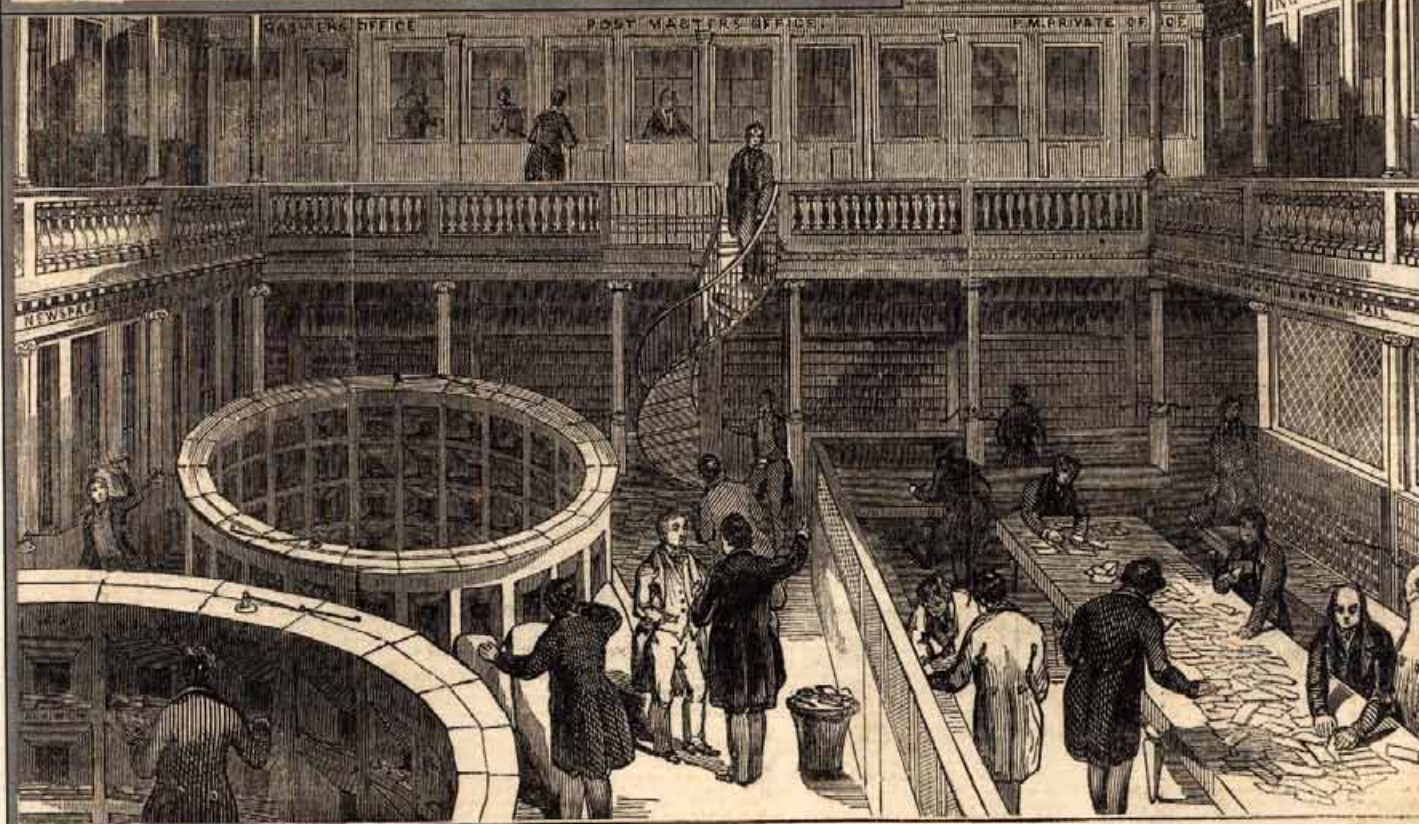
Rate: 2 cents (local city rate from Boyd's to the main Post Office) + marked "5" cents (rate up to 300 miles)

2 cents Boyd's City Express from New York City to Woodbury, charged 5 cents

THE NEW YORK POST OFFICE

In 1844, the New York Post Office moved to the former Dutch Reform Church building at Liberty and Nassau streets, and it stayed there for some 20 years. It was in this building that the New York Postmaster's Provisional was issued and sold, although they were also sold at the branch in the Merchants Exchange Building on Wall Street, the same building in which Rawdon, Wright and Hatch had their offices and plant, and where the stamps were produced.

Contemporary print showing the New York Post Office in 1845



INTERIOR OF THE NEW YORK POST-OFFICE, 1846

1846 print from the Pictorial Times showing the interior of the New York Post Office

MASTER DESIGN OF WASHINGTON

The portrait of George Washington used for the New York Postmaster's Provisional, was based on an oil painting by Gilbert Stuart. The printers Rawdon, Wright & Hatch (RW&H) of New York City, had a stock die which was often used by the firm in the production of banknotes, and this was used for the Provisional.

Die Proof of the Master Design



Vignette Proof



Vignette Proof



MASTER DESIGN OF WASHINGTON

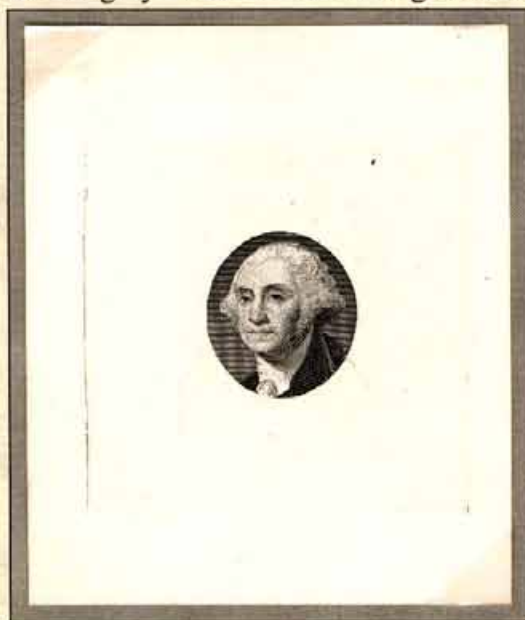
The portrait of George Washington used for the New York Postmaster's Provisional, was based on an oil painting by Gilbert Stuart. The printers Rawdon, Wright & Hatch (RW&H) of New York City, had a stock die which was often used by the firm in the production of banknotes, and this was used for the Provisional.

Proofs of Banknotes showing the use of the Master Design**Issued \$50 Bank of Augusta note showing the use of the Master Design**

VIGNETTE ESSAYS OF WASHINGTON

From the Master Design Die, a secondary die of the head and neck was made. This essay shows a scar running from Washington's lip to the bottom of the chin. The secondary die was then retouched to remove the scar on the chin. The large Die Proof on thin white glazed card, die sunk, only exists in grey black.

Large Die Proof in grey black on thin white glazed card, die sunk



Large Die Proof on glazed card

VIGNETTE ESSAYS OF WASHINGTON

From the Master Design Die, a secondary die of the head and neck was made. This essay shows a scar running from Washington's lip to the bottom of the chin. The secondary die was then retouched to remove the scar on the chin. The small Die Proofs on white Bond paper exist in grey black, dull scarlet, dull brown, dull green and dull blue.

Small Die Proof in grey black on white bond



Small Die Proof in dull scarlet on white bond



Small Die Proof in dull brown on white bond



Small Die Proof in green black on white bond



Small Die Proof in dull blue on white bond

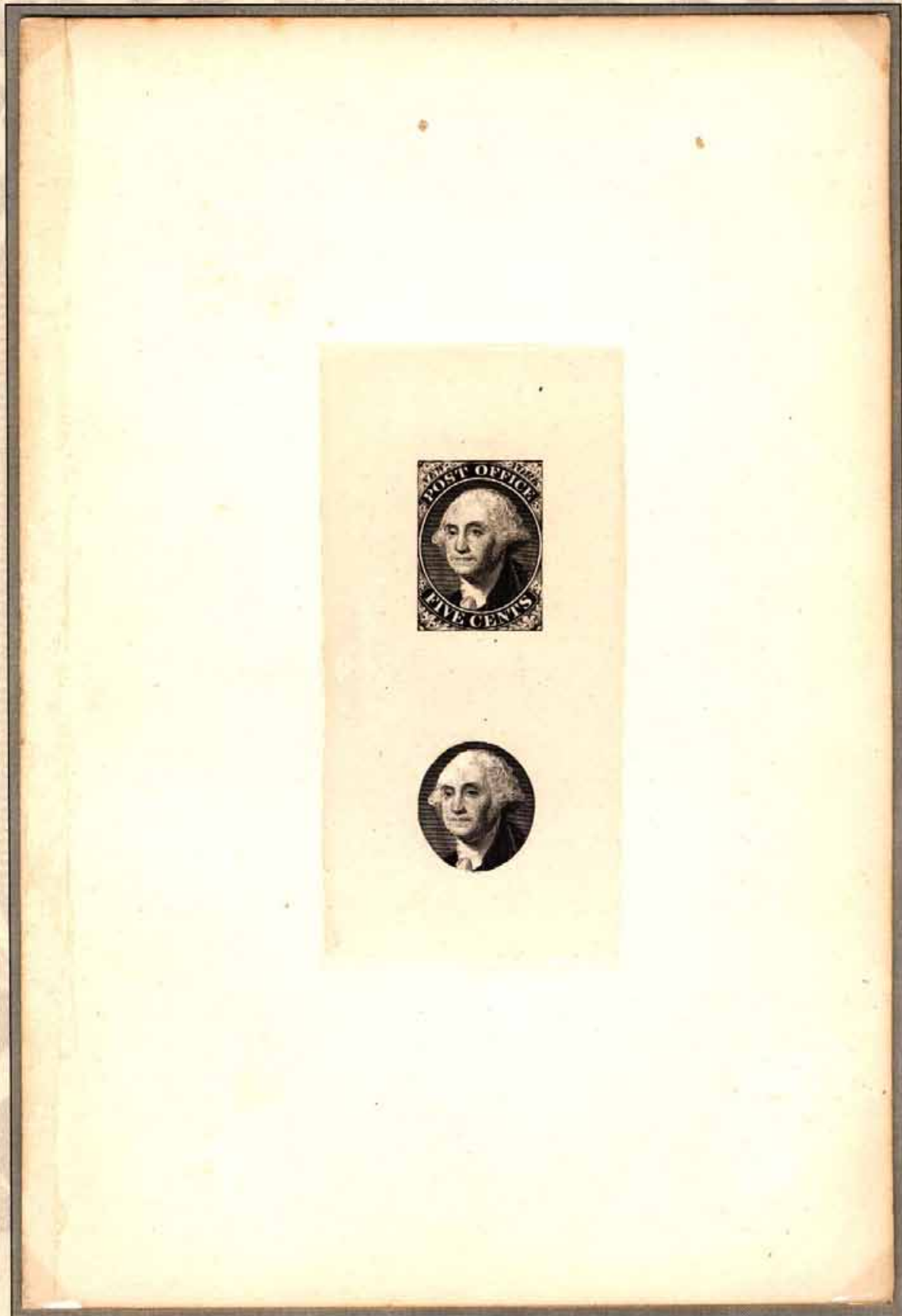


Small Die Proofs on white Bond paper

COMBINATION DIE PROOFS

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in black

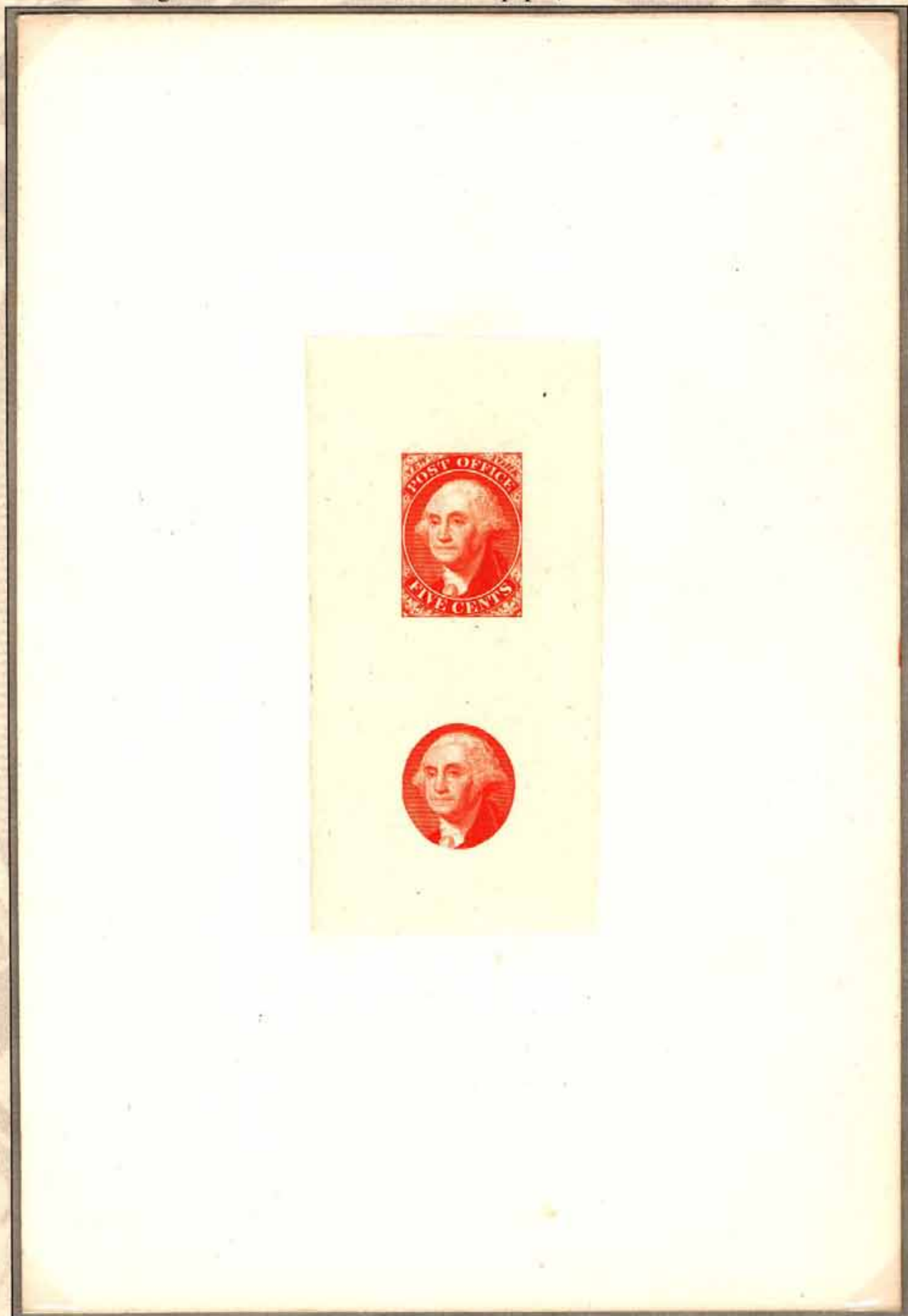


Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in black

COMBINATION DIE PROOES

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in red

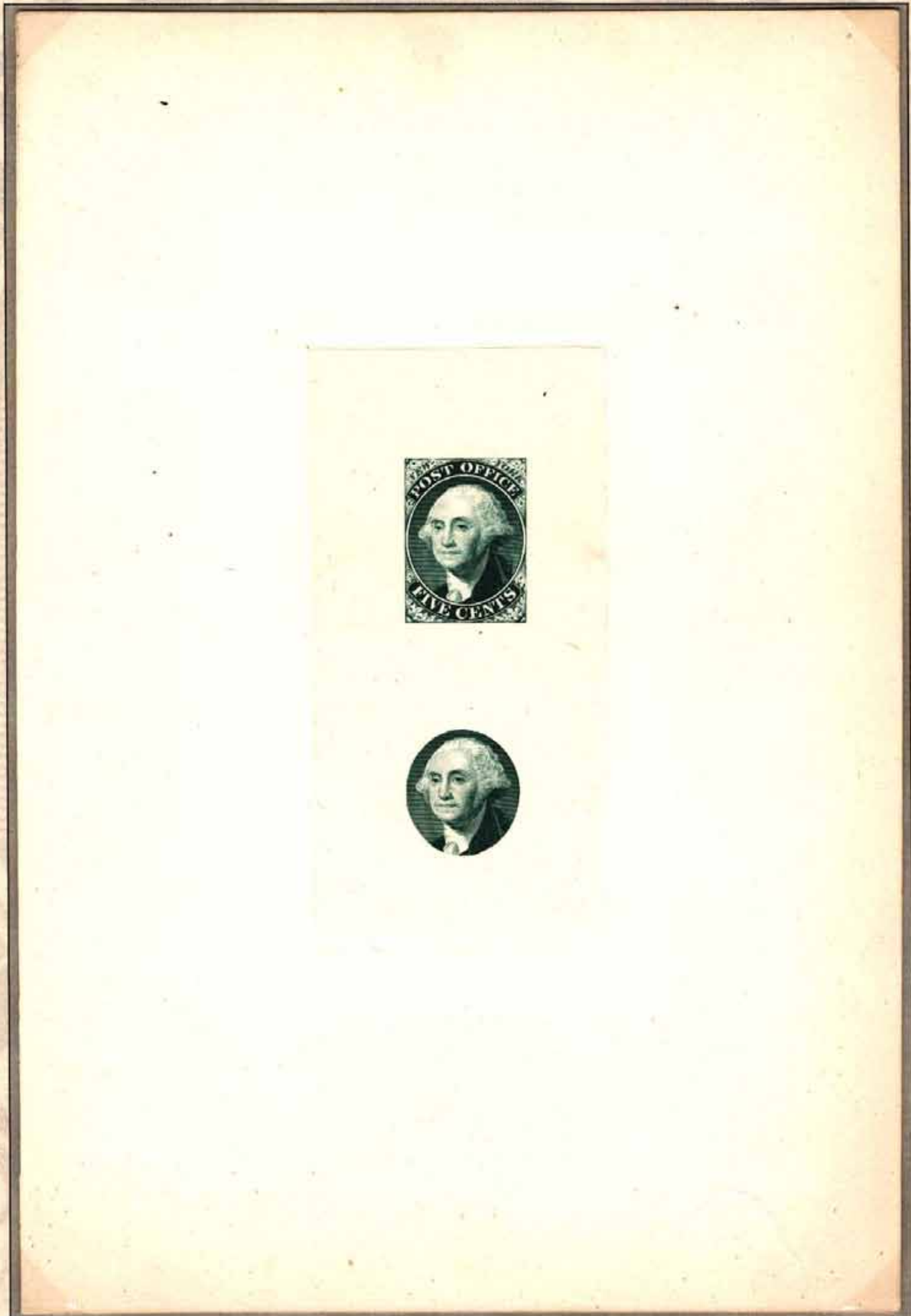


Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in red

COMBINATION DIE PROOFS

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in green

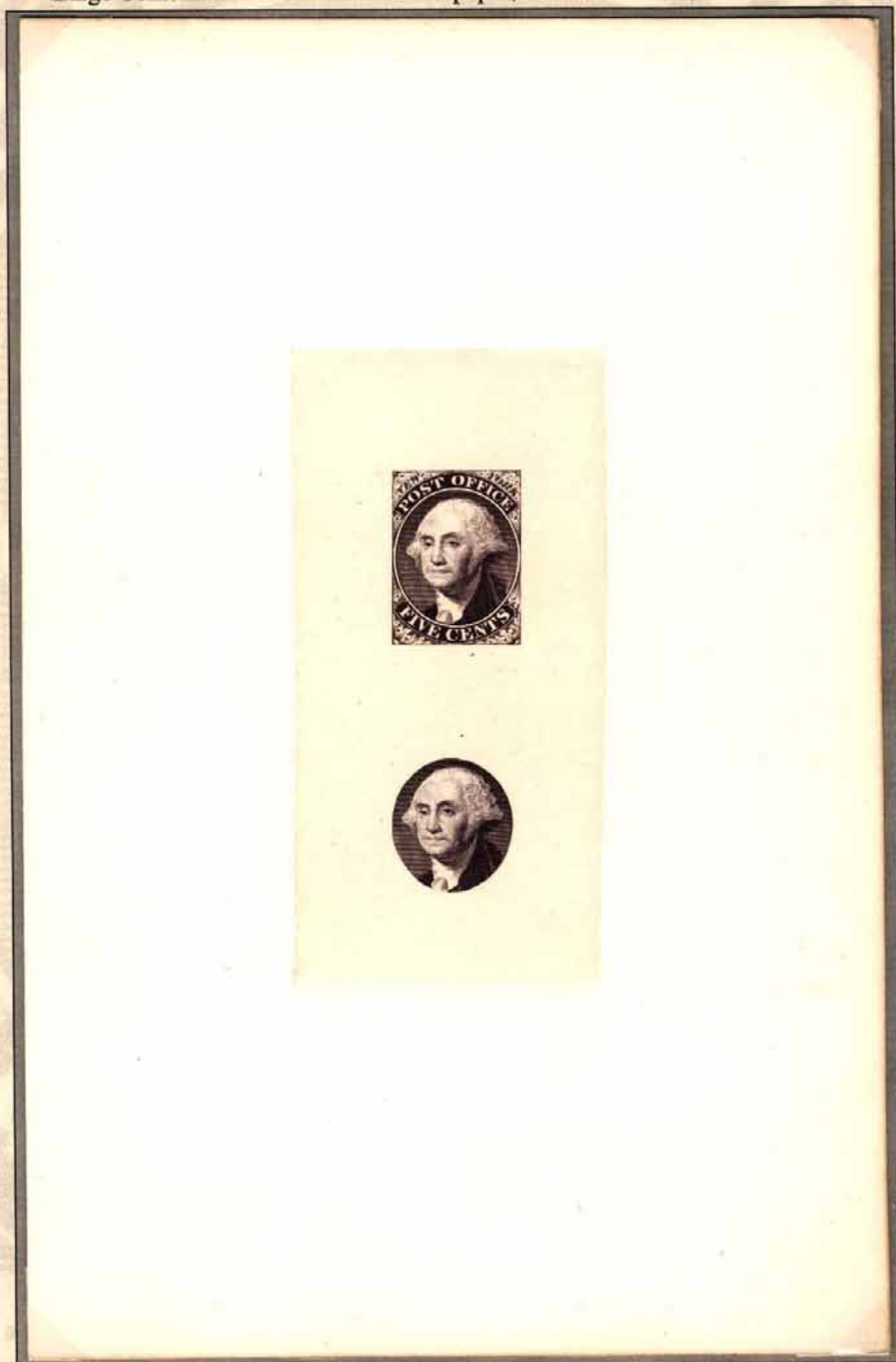


Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in green

COMBINATION DIE PROOFS

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in violet black

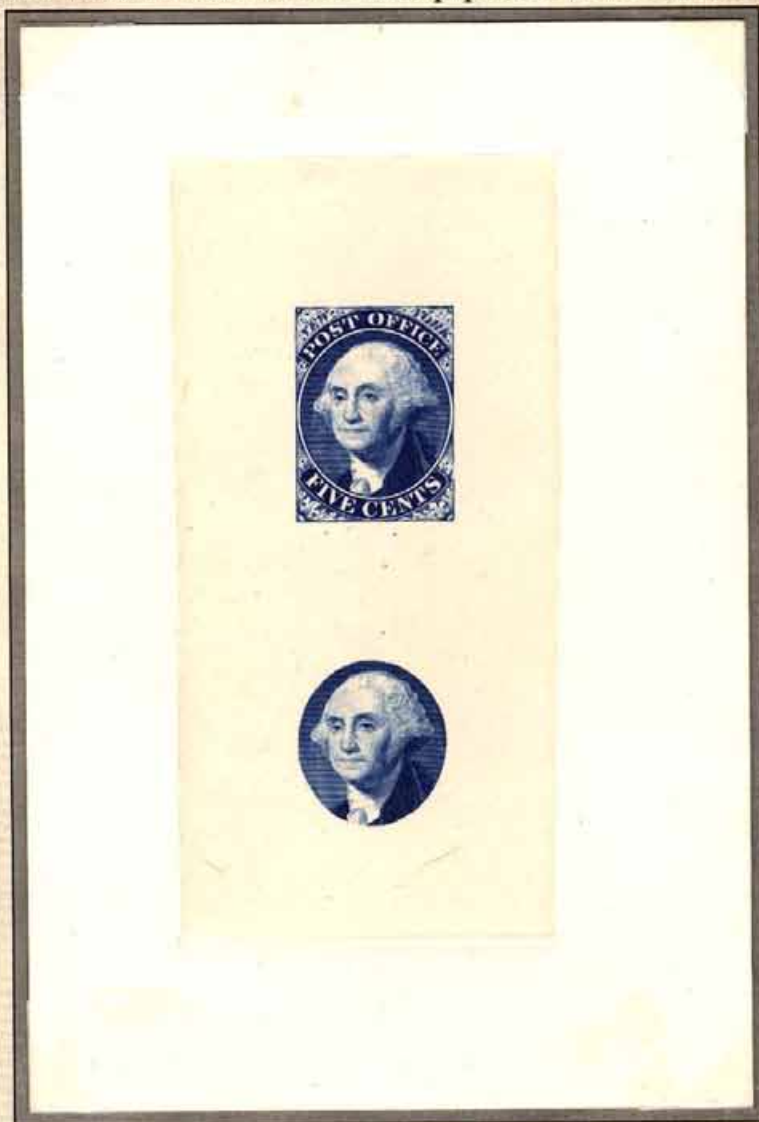


Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in violet black

COMBINATION DIE PROOFS

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in blue

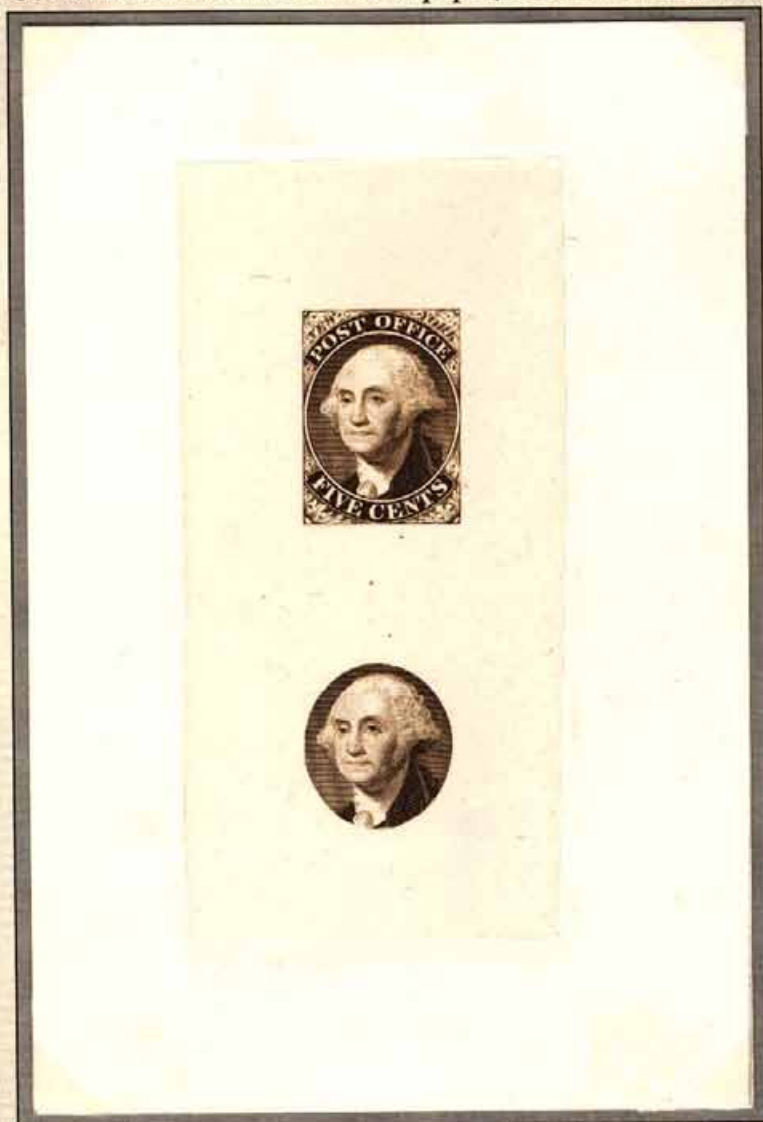


Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in blue

COMBINATION DIE PROOFS

Combination Die Proofs show the vignette as well as the finished stamp design. The vignette shows the scar below Washington's lip, and the stamp design shows a dot in P of POST OFFICE as well as a white scar in Washington's neck, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate.

Large Combination Die Proof on India paper, die sunk on card, in brown



Large Combination Die Proof on India paper in brown

COMBINATION DIE PROOES

Small size Combination Die Proofs were also produced. They show the same flaws as the large proofs and exist on both India and Bond paper in a number of different colours. They may have been produced as salesmen's samples.

Small Combination Die Proof
on India paper, in black



Small Combination Die Proof
on India paper, in red



Small Combination Die Proof
on India paper, in blue



Small Combination Die Proofs on India paper

Small Combination Die Proof in dull brown on white bond



Small Combination Die Proof on white Bond paper

LARGE DIE PROOFS OF STAMP DESIGN

The large Die Proofs of the stamp design show a dot in P of POST OFFICE, a white scar in Washington's neck as well as a Devil's horn on Washington's head, flaws which do not appear on the issued stamps, and this suggests that these Die Proofs were made after the production of the printing plate. The large Die Proofs exist in deep ultramarine, orange vermillion and brown black.

Large Die Proof in deep ultramarine
on thin white glazed card, die sunk



Large Die Proof in deep orange vermillion
on thin white glazed card, die sunk



Large Die Proof in brown black
on thin white glazed card, die sunk



Large Die Proofs on glazed cards

SMALL DIE PROOFS OF STAMP DESIGN - WITHOUT FLAWS

The small Die Proofs of the stamp design exist with or without the flaws dot in P of POST OFFICE, and white scar in Washington's neck. Die Proofs without these flaws could have been made before the production of the printing plate. The small Die Proofs were produced on Bond or India paper and exist in a number of different colours.

Small Die Proof in ultramarine on India



Small Die Proof in rose violet on India



Small Die Proof in dark violet on India



Small Die Proofs without flaws on India paper

Small Die Proof in deep blue on bond



Small Die Proof in dark violet on bond



Small Die Proofs without flaws on bond paper

SMALL DIE PROOFS OF STAMP DESIGN - WITH FLAWS

The small Die Proofs of the stamp design exist with or without the flaws dot in P of POST OFFICE, and white scar in Washington's neck. Die Proofs without these flaws could have been made before the production of the printing plate. The small Die Proofs were produced on Bond or India paper and exist in a number of different colours.

With flaw "white scar in Washington's neck":

Small Die Proof in black on bond



Small Die Proof in red on bond



Small Die Proofs with flaw "white scar in Washington's neck"

With flaws "dot in P of POST OFFICE" and "white scar in Washington's neck":

Small Die Proof in black on bond



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Small Die Proof in dull grey blue on India



Small Die Proof in deep blue on bond



Small Die Proof in deep green on bond



Small Die Proof in red on bond



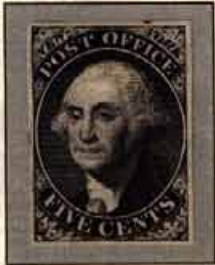
Small Die Proofs with flaws "dot in P of POST OFFICE" and "white scar in Washington's neck"

PLATE PROOFS

Prior to producing the final printing plate of 40, a preliminary plate of 9 was made. No proofs are known from the plate of 40, but the plate of 9 was proofed on bond in deep blue, dark green, brown, scarlet as well as in black on blue, grey and white papers. The positions of the plate of 9 can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Plate Proofs in black on Bond paper:

Black on white



pos.3

Black on grey



pos.5

Black on light blue



pos.4

Black on light blue



pos.5

Black on deep blue



pos.6

Plate Proofs in colour on Bond Paper (= Trial Colour Proofs):

Deep blue



pos.5

Dark green



pos.5

Scarlet (shades)



pos.6



pos.6



pos.6

Brown (shades)



pos.6



pos.9

Plate Proofs from the preliminary plate of 9

PLATE PROOFS - RECONSTRUCTED SHEET

Prior to producing the final printing plate of 40, a preliminary plate of 9 was made. No proofs are known from the plate of 40, but the plate of 9 was proofed on bond in deep blue, dark green, brown, scarlet as well as in black on blue, grey and white papers. The positions of the plate of 9 can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Reconstructed sheet of 9 of the dark green Trial Colour Proofs, positions 1 to 9



Reconstructed Trial Colour Proof sheet of the preliminary plate of 9

PLATE PROOFS - RECONSTRUCTED SHEET IN NEAR ISSUED COLOUR

Prior to producing the final printing plate of 40, a preliminary plate of 9 was made. No proofs are known from the plate of 40, but the plate of 9 was proofed on bond in deep blue, dark green, brown, scarlet as well as in black on blue, grey and white papers. The positions of the plate of 9 can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Partly reconstructed sheet of 9 in near the issued colour, black on white, positions 1 to 9



Reconstructed Plate Proof sheet of the preliminary plate of 9

PAPERS - 5 CENTS BLACK ON BLuish PAPER (9X1)

The New York Postmaster's Provisional was first used on 15 July 1845 and remained in use until the 30 June 1847. During this period there were 18 deliveries of stamps, and probably almost as many printings; in total 3,590 sheets (= 143,600 stamps) were printed. Almost all the printings were carried out on a bluish paper, which in most cases has faded to an off white colour.

Unused



Unused pair



Used pair cancelled with red grid Piece with four overlapping copies pen cancelled in blue



1846? (12 January) from New York to New Bedford, Massachusetts, with 5 cents cancelled with red grid



pos.13

5 cents black on bluish paper (9X1)

PAPERS - 5 CENTS BLACK ON BLUE PAPER (9X2) - 5 CENTS BLACK ON GREY PAPER (9X3)

The last delivery of the New York Postmaster's Provisional was delivered on the 7 January 1847. For some reason, this delivery contained some sheets printed on different papers, a blue paper (much more blue than the regular stamps) and a grey paper (distinctly grey compared to the regular stamps). Stamps on these papers are quite rare and they were only in use for a few months.

5 cents black on blue (9X2)
cancelled with red grid



E

5 cents black on blue paper (9X2)

1847 (3 April) 5 cents black on grey (9X3), from New York to East Hampton, Connecticut, cancelled with red grid and NEW YORK datestamp



E

pos.16, with wide left margin

5 cents black on grey paper (9X3)

PAPERS - 5 CENTS BLACK ON GREY PAPER (9X3)

The last delivery of the New York Postmaster's Provisional was delivered on the 7 January 1847. For some reason, this delivery contained some sheets printed on different papers, a blue paper (much more blue than the regular stamps) and a grey paper (distinctly grey compared to the regular stamps). Stamps on these papers are quite rare and they were only in use for a few months.

1847 (1 March) 5 cents black on grey (9X3), from New York to Hudson, New York State, cancelled with red grid and NEW YORK datestamp



pos.22

1847 (6 March) 5 cents black on grey (9X3) vertical pair, from New York to Geneva, New York State, pen cancelled in blue and with red PAID and NEW YORK datestamp



pos.32+37

5 cents black on grey paper (9X3)

CONTROL INITIALS - "ACM" ALL CONNECTED (9X1)

Control initials were written on almost all of the stamps. The initials were applied in different shades of magenta ink before the stamps were sold, and served as a control or authentication device. "ACM" all connected were the initials used by Alonzo C. Monson, and probably also by several other clerks. Alonzo died in 1902, 80 years old.



"ACM" all connected (200%)

Unused



pos.39

Unused pair



pos.33-34

Used pen cancelled in blue



pos.23

Used pen cancelled in blue and New York cds



Alonzo C. Monson



and large part of British "1/-" charge marking

1846 (25 July) from New York to New Haven, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



pos.6

"ACM" all connected (9X1)

CONTROL INITIALS - "AC M" WITH "AC" CONNECTED (9X1a)

The initials "AC M" with "AC" connected were not used by Alonzo C. Monson, but by one of the clerks in the Post Office, W.C.R. Engrist, when he signed stamps. Apparently he also signed some of the "ACM" all connected initials.



"AC M", "AC" connected (200%)

Unused



pos.19

Used pair pen cancelled in blue



pos.24-25

1846 (25 July) from New York to New Haven, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



pos.37

"AC M" with "AC" connected (9X1a)

CONTROL INITIALS - COMBINATION PAIR "AC M" (9X1a) AND "ACM" (9X1)

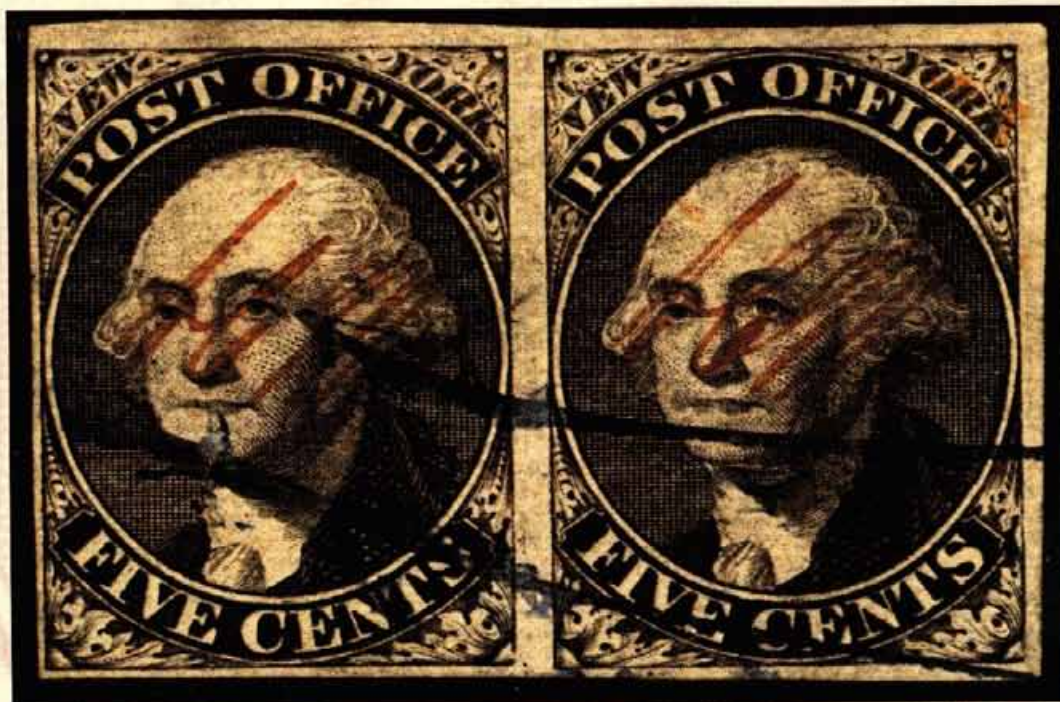
The two versions of initials, "ACM" all connected (9X1), and "AC M" with "AC" connected (9X1a), can occasionally be found in se-tenant pairs. Only five such combination pairs have been recorded.

"AC M" (9X1a) in combination with "ACM" (9X1)
Used pair pen cancelled in blue and part of red cancel



E

pos.8-9



Scan of the pair above (300%)

Combination pair "AC M" (9x1a) and "ACM" (9X1) - Rare, only five known!

CONTROL INITIALS - UNUSED COMBINATION PAIR "AC M" (9X1a) AND "ACM" (9X1)

The two versions of initials, "ACM" all connected (9X1), and "AC M" with "AC" connected (9X1a), can occasionally be found in se-tenant pairs. Only five such combination pairs have been recorded, and of those examples known it is believed that only one is an unused pair.

"AC M" (9X1a) in combination with "ACM" (9X1)
Unused vertical pair, both stamps showing major double transfers



E
pos.2+7
(lower stamp repaired)



Scan of the pair above (300%)

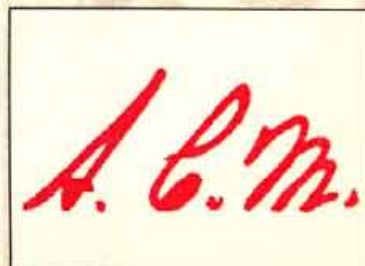
Unused combination pair "AC M" (9X1a) and "ACM" (9X1) - Possibly the only known example!

CONTROL INITIALS - "A.C.M." OR "A C M" UNCONNECTED (9X1b)

The initials "A.C.M." and "A C M" unconnected were surprisingly not used by Alonzo C. Monson, but by his brother Marcena Monson Jr. It is not known why Marcena used his brother's initials rather than his own, especially since Marcena is known to have signed some stamps with his own initials as well. Marcena died in 1870, 47 years old.

"A.C.M." unconnected (9X1b1)

1845 (1 November) from New York to Hartford, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



"A.C.M." unconnected (200%)

Used pen cancelled in blue



E

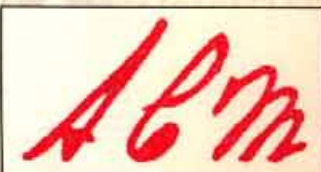
pos.3



pos.5

"A C M" unconnected (9X1b2)

1845 (19 September) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



"A C M" unconnected (200%)

Used pen cancelled in black and blue Baltimore "5"



pos.1

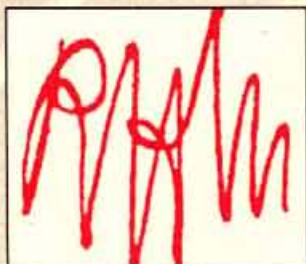


pos.20

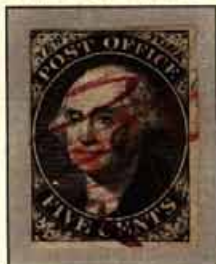
CONTROL INITIALS - "RHM" (9X1d)

The initials "RHM" were used by Robert H. Morris, the Postmaster during the entire Provisional period. His initials are quite rare since he is only supposed to have signed a few sheets of stamps in total. Robert died in 1855, 53 years old.

Used cancelled with red PAID



"RHM" (200%)



pos.6



Robert H. Morris

A rare stamp - about 20 examples recorded.

1846 (19 March) from New York to New Bedford, Massachusetts, with 5 cents cancelled with red PAID



pos.39 - Provenance: Colonel Green & Weill Brothers

A rare stamp on cover - only 6 examples recorded sent from New York.

"RHM" initials (9X1d)

CONTROL INITIALS - NONE (9X1e)

A small number of stamps are found without any initials at all. Whether they were sold deliberately like that, or if it was an oversight caused by rush during a busy period, is not known, but they appear throughout the Provisional period. However, it is known that during the first period after the stamp was issued, none of them were initialled.

Used pen cancelled in black



pos.40

1845 (25 July) from New York to New Haven, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black and tied by red NEW YORK datestamp. Early use - 10 days after the first day of use.



pos.34

No Control Initials (9X1e)

VARIETIES - PRE-PRINTING PAPER FOLDS

Pre-printing paper folds are folds which are present in the paper before the printing is carried out. When these folds are unfolded after the printing has been completed, white unprinted lines appear across the stamps.

Used pen cancelled in blue



E

9X1

Used pair pen cancelled in magenta



9X1 pos.14-15

1846? (November) used cancelled with red PAID, on front to which it may not belong, to Canada West via Utica, NY



9X1a

Used with two paper folds, pen cancelled in blue



9X1 (top left corner repaired)

Pre-printing paper folds

STAMPED ENVELOPES

According to newspaper reports of July 1845, Postmaster Morris also issued envelopes. The design was not stated and it is possible that these items were envelopes to which Provisional stamps had been affixed, as those shown below.

1846? (7 December) from New York to Lake View, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.29



Stamped envelopes

Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.27

1847 (16 February) from New York to Lake View, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue

EARLY USE - JULY 1845

The earliest known use of the New York Postmaster's Provisional is from the 15 July 1845, and all of the earliest dates show stamps without control initials. The initialling of stamps only became a regular feature some time later.

1845 (21 July) from New York to Towanda, Pennsylvania, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black



No initials (9X1e) pos.26

1845 - No initials (9X1e) used on the 7th day (21 July)

1845 (30 July) from New York to New Haven, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "A.C.M." (9X1b) pos.40

1845 - Initials "A.C.M." (9X1b) used on 30 July

PLATING THE POSITIONS

Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Position 8

1846 (24 August) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue and with red PAID



Position 8



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.8

Position 9

1845 (26 July) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents cancelled with red PAID



No initials (9X1e) pos.9



Position 9

PLATING THE POSITIONS

Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Position 16

1845? (28 July) from New York to Norwich, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black



Initials "A.C.M." (9X1b) pos.16

Position 17

1845 (9 August) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "A.C.M." (9X1b) pos.17

PLATING THE POSITIONS

Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Position 19

1846 (18 June) from New York to New Haven, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.19

Position 23

1845 (6 October) from New York to Boston, Massachusetts, with 5 cents pen cancelled in black



No initials (9X1e) pos.23

PLATING THE POSITIONS

Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Position 28

1846? (28 January) from New York to Norwich, Connecticut, with 5 cents cancelled with red PAID



Position 28



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.28

Position 31 (major double transfer)

1846? (29 June) from New York to New Bedford, Massachusetts, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.31



Position 31

PLATING THE POSITIONS

Every position of the printing plate of 40 stamps can be plated by using the various small flaws found on each position.

Position 34

1846 (17 January) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Position 34



No initials (9X1e) pos.34

Position 39

1846 (12 October) from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.39

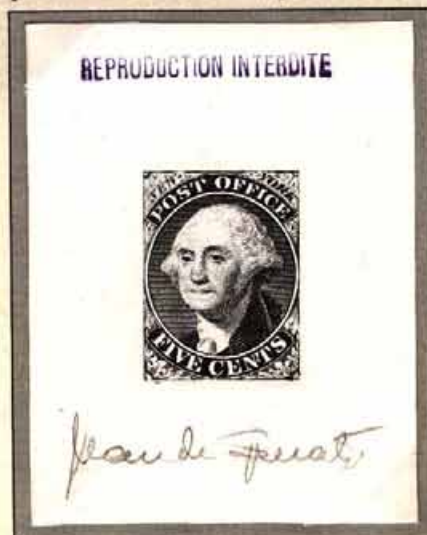


Position 39

SPERATI'S FORGERIES

Jean de Sperati (1884-1957) was among the most noted stamp forgers of the world. Even professional stamp experts attested to the genuineness of his stamps. A printer and engraver by profession, he was able to mimic the details of design and the paper with great accuracy. His forgeries of the New York Postmaster's Provisional were made as copies of position 29.

Die Proof signed "Jean de Sperati" and handstamped "REPRODUCTION INTERDITE"



Sperati Forgery type A "used", signed Sperati



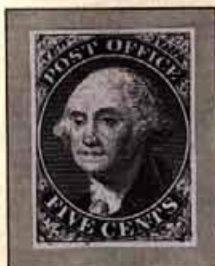
BPA type A was probably mass produced by Sperati after World War II. Type A is less clean and the impression is less fine, and the whole stamp makes a more flat appearance than type B.

Sperati Forgery type B "unused"



BPA type B was produced in limited numbers by Sperati before World War II. Type B is a somewhat cleaner and relatively finer impression and the stamp makes a deeper appearance than type A.

Sperati Forgery type B, without initials, on blue paper, "unused" with "SPERATI REPRODUCTION" handstamp on reverse



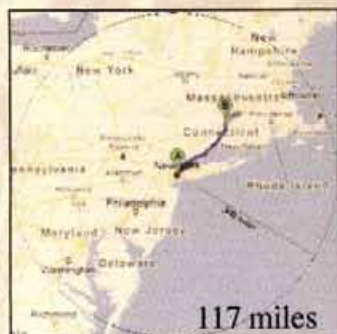
Sperati Forgeries

THE 5 CENTS RATE (UP TO 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination up to 300 miles was 5 cents per half ounce. This included all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Connecticut

1846 (24 May) to Hartford, Connecticut, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.18

To Maryland

1846? (18 October) to Baltimore, Maryland, with 5 cents pen cancelled in brown



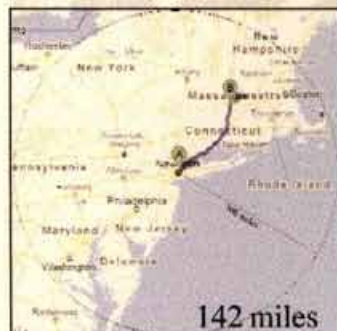
Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.35

THE 5 CENTS RATE (UP TO 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination up to 300 miles was 5 cents per half ounce. This included all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Massachusetts

1846? (1 September) to Springfield, Massachusetts, with 5 cents cancelled with red grid



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.33

To New Jersey

1845 (8 November) to Elizabethtown, New Jersey, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.1

THE 5 CENTS RATE (UP TO 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination up to 300 miles was 5 cents per half ounce. This included all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To New York State

1847 (11 March) to Durhamville, New York, with 5 cents on grey paper cancelled with red grid



5 cents on grey paper (9X3) pos.24

To Pennsylvania

1846 (2 July) to Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.27

THE 5 CENTS RATE (UP TO 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination up to 300 miles was 5 cents per half ounce. This included all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Rhode Island

1846 (5 August) to Providence, Rhode Island, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.30

To Vermont

1846? (16 September) to Brattleboro, Vermont, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.4



THE 5 CENTS RATE (UP TO 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination up to 300 miles was 5 cents per half ounce. This included all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Washington DC

1846 (11 March) to Washington DC, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue



Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.16

Misrated "10 cts", corrected to "5 cts", to Boston (216 miles)

1846 (11 November) to Boston, with 5 cents, misrated "10cts", corrected to "5cts"



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.1



THE 10 CENTS RATE (OVER 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination over 300 miles was 10 cents per half ounce. This included all US States except all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Indiana

1845 (22 December) to Indianapolis, Indiana, with 5 cents pair pen cancelled in blue



Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.31 (major double transfer) -32

To Louisiana

1847 (17 January) to New Orleans, Louisiana, with 5 cents pair cancelled with red grid



Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.22-23

THE 10 CENTS RATE (OVER 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination over 300 miles was 10 cents per half ounce. This included all US States except all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Michigan

1847 (28 January) to Detroit, Michigan, with 5 cents x2 cancelled with red grid



Initials "ACM" (9X1)

To New York State

1845 (21 December) to Waddington, New York, with 5 cents pair pen cancelled in brown



Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.11-12

THE 10 CENTS RATE (OVER 300 MILES)

The rate for any destination over 300 miles was 10 cents per half ounce. This included all US States except all destinations in Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Washington DC, and some destinations in New Hampshire, New York state, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Virginia, see area on the map below.

To Ohio

1847 (29 January) to Lancaster, Ohio, with 5 cents vertical pair cancelled with red grid

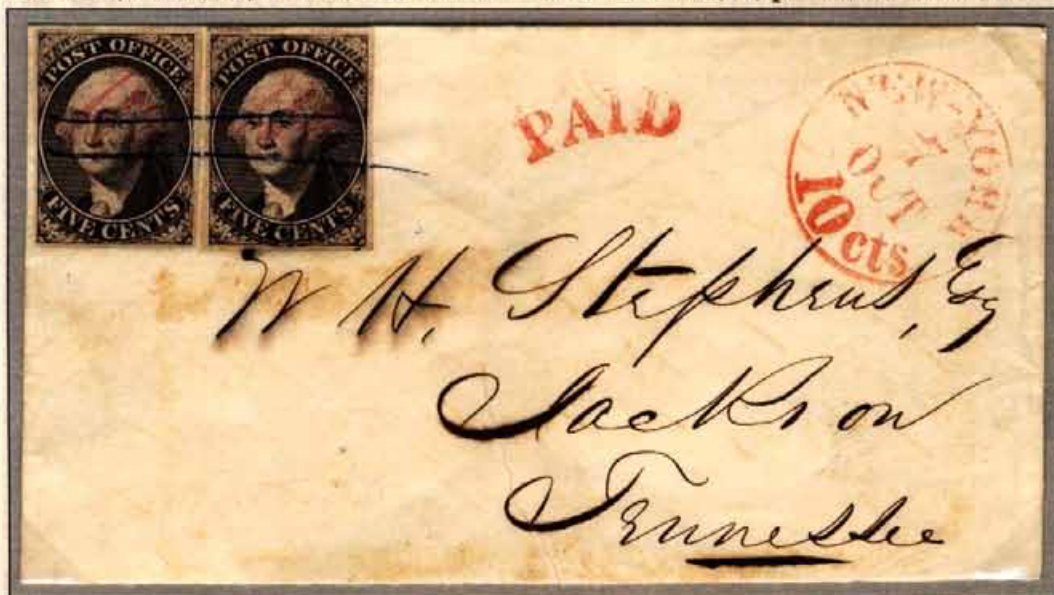


E

Initials "ACM" (9X1) pos.6+11

To Tennessee

1846? (7 October) to Jackson, Tennessee, with 5 cents (x2) pen cancelled in blue



Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.3+2 (major double transfer)

THE 10 CENTS RATE (OVER 300 MILES) - UNDERPAID MAIL

The rate for any destination over 300 miles was 10 cents per half ounce. It was not compulsory to prepay the full postage on mail, the addressee could pay part or all. In some cases the sender paid only half the rate, whether deliberately or by mistake, and the letter was marked "Due 5" cents, which the addressee had to pay.

1846(25 June) to Champlain, New York, with 5 cents (9X1, pos. 20) cancelled with red PAID, and blue "Due 5"



To New York State "Due 5" cents

1846(10 January) to Plattsburgh, New York, with 5 cents (9X1, pos. 26) cancelled with red dots, and black "Due 5"

**To
Plattsburgh
NY, "Due
5" cents**



1846(28 January) to Plattsburgh, New York, with 5 cents pair (9X1a, pos. 23+28) cancelled in black



**To Plattsburgh, NY, fully paid.
Same correspondence as
the cover above!**

E

THE 10 CENTS RATE (OVER 300 MILES) - POSTAGE PAID PARTLY IN CASH

The rate for any destination over 300 miles was 10 cents per half ounce. It was not compulsory to prepay the full postage with stamps, the sender could pay part or all in cash. In some cases the sender paid only half the postage with stamps, and the other half in cash. Such letters would still receive the red 10 cts postmark.

To Kentucky, postage 10 cents with 5 cents paid by stamp and 5 cents in cash

1845 (13 August) to Louisville, Kentucky, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue and with red PAID



E

Initials "A.C.M." (9X1b) pos.10

1850 Late use to New York State, postage 10 cents with 5 cents paid by stamp and 5 cents in cash

1850 (15 January) to Lockport, New York, with 5 cents pen cancelled in blue and red 10cts



1850 - late use. Very rare!

Initials "AC M" (9X1a) pos.31 (major double transfer)

THE 15 CENTS RATE (TRIPLE RATE UP TO 300 MILES)

With the rate for letters sent up to 300 miles being 5 cents per half ounce, the rate for a letter weighing between half and one ounce was 10 cents, and between one and one-and-a-half ounces was 15 cents. Only three letters are known with strips of three of the New York Postmaster's Provisional, and strips of three off cover are equally rare.

1845 (16 October) Triple rate cover from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents strip of three, pen cancelled in blue, with red PAID marking and red NEW YORK OCT.16 datestamp, and manuscript "15" cents in blue



E

9X1, pos.36-38

Strip of three on triple rate cover (up to 300 miles) - Rare, only three known!



Scan of the strip of three (pos.36-38) on the cover above (200%)

THE 20 CENTS RATE (DOUBLE RATE OVER 300 MILES)

With the rate for letters sent over 300 miles being 10 cents per half ounce, the rate for a letter weighing between half and one ounce was 20 cents. Only five such letters are known with the New York Postmaster's Provisional, and all except one bear a strip of four, whereas the cover below bears two pairs which originally formed a block of four before being affixed to the cover.

1847 (27 January) Double rate cover from New York to Mobile, Alabama, with 5 cents (two pairs, which originally formed a block of four), cancelled with red grids, with red PAID and NEW YORK JAN. 27 cds, and manuscript "20" cents in blue



9X1, pos. 6-7 + 11-12

Two pairs (which originally formed a block of four) on double rate cover (over 300 miles) - Unique!
Provenance: Caspary



Scan of the two pairs (pos. 6-7 + 11-12) on the cover above (150%).
 Originally they formed a block of four before being affixed to the cover.

USE ON MAIL TO NEW YORK

The New York Postmaster, Robert H. Morris, informed his colleagues in other cities and states, that we would accept mail addressed to New York, bearing his Provisional, as prepaid. All such use is very scarce and it is known from a number of different places of origin.

1846? (18 March) from Boston to New York, with 5 cents cancelled with red PAID and BOSTON 18.MAR "5" cents



E

9X1, pos.13. Addressee's name reconstructed.

From Boston to New York - Very scarce.
Provenance: "Georgian", Stanley Piller

USE ON MAIL THROUGH NEW YORK

A small number of covers to New York, re-directed to another city or state, with a Provisional added in transit, are known.

1846 (3 June) from Cincinnati, Ohio, to New York, re-directed to Norwich, Connecticut, with a 5 cents added pen cancelled in blue. Postmarked CINCINNATI JUN.3 and manuscript "10" cents (under the stamp), and NEW YORK 8 JUN and PAID



E

9X1, pos.12



From Ohio to New York, re-directed to Connecticut with a 5 cents added - Rare!
Provenance: "Georgian"

REGISTERED (RECORDED) MAIL

Recorded mail (an early form of Registration) with the Provisional is known to Philadelphia only. A blue "R" was applied in Philadelphia upon arrival to indicate that the letter was Recorded. Very few examples are known.

1845 (3 December) Recorded from New York to Philadelphia, with 5 cents pen cancelled in brown and with red PAID and NEW YORK 3.DEC 5 cts, and blue "R" applied in Philadelphia to indicate that the letter was Recorded



E

9X1b, pos.39

Recorded (Registered) letter to Philadelphia - Rare!

1846 (7 February) Recorded from New York to Philadelphia, paid in cash, with red NEW YORK 7.FEB 5 cts, and blue "R" applied in Philadelphia to indicate that the letter was Recorded

**Recorded (Registered) letter to Philadelphia, paid in cash**

FORWARDING AGENTS MAIL - FROM MEXICO TO FRANCE

Mail from Latin American countries, forwarded via New York, with a New York Postmaster's Provisional added, is known. Countries of origin include Cuba, Mexico and Puerto Rico. They are all very rare.

1845 (October) from Mexico to New York, forwarded by Forwarding Agent Juan de la Granja to Paris, France, with 5 cents Provisional (9X1) added cancelled with red PAID marking, and NEW YORK 22.OCT 5 cts datestamp



E

Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "15" decimes (=150 centimes) (French ship and inland charge)

Transit markings: New York 22.OCT 5 cts; London 19.NO.1845; Colonies &c ART.12, Paris 21.NOV.45

Forwarding Agent: Manuscript "Encam.a por SSS Juan de la Granja, Nueva York Octr 22 de 1845"

(Forwarded by SSS Juan de la Granja, New York Oct.22 1845)

From Mexico to New York, forwarded to France with a 5 cents added - Unique!

FORWARDING AGENTS MAIL - FROM FLORIDA TO SCOTLAND

At least two covers from Apalachicola, Florida, to New York, forwarded to Scotland, with a New York Postmaster's Provisional added, are known. Both covers were handled by the same New York Forwarding Agent.

1846 (19 January) from Apalachicola, Florida, to New York, forwarded by Forwarding Agent Collomb & Iselin to Greenock, Scotland, with 5 cents Provisional (9X1a) added pen cancelled in blue, and with red PAID and NEW YORK 30 JAN 5 cts datestamp



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "1/-" (British Packet letter rate)
 Transit markings: New York 30 JAN 5 cts; America Liverpool FE.14.1846; Greenock FE.16.1846
 Forwarding Agent: Cachet "Forwarded by Collomb & Iselin, New York"

From Florida to New York, forwarded to Scotland with a 5 cents added - Rare!

FOREIGN MAIL - TO ENGLAND AND BELGIUM

The New York Postmaster's Provisional is the only U.S. Postmasters' Provisional used extensively on foreign mail. Great Britain is among the most common destinations found and some 30 covers have been recorded. Belgium, on the other hand, is not at all a common destination; only four covers, and one part cover, are recorded.

1846 (13 November) from New York to London, England, with 5 cents (9X1) pen cancelled in blue, and with red PAID and NEW YORK 13 NOV 5 cts datestamp



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "1/-" (British Packet letter rate)

To England

1845 (15 August) piece from New York to Belgium, with 5 cents (9X1b, pos.29, with interesting inking flaw in top left hand corner) cancelled with red NEW YORK 5 PAID AUG.15 and part of Belgian accountancy marking



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "1/11" (1s.11d.) (British Packet letter rate + rate from GB to Belgium)



Illustration of a cover from the same correspondence to Monsieur H(enry) J Vanderlinden, Anvers. (55%)

To Belgium - Rare, only five known!

FOREIGN MAIL - TO FRANCE

France is also among the most common destinations found and some 30 covers have been recorded. Covers to France may have been charged either according to Article 12 (up to the end of 1845) or Article 13 (from 1846).

1845 (15 September) from New York to Lille, France, with 5 cents (9X1b, pos.21) pen cancelled in blue, with red PAID and NEW YORK 15.SEP 5 cts datestamp, and COLONIES &c ART.12 accountancy marking



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "14" decimes (=140 centimes) (French ship and inland charge)

1846 (28 February) from New York to Marseille, France, with 5 cents (9X1a) cancelled with red NEW YORK 5 PAID 28.FEB datestamp, and COLONIES &c ART.13 accountancy marking



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "27" decimes (=270 centimes) (French ship and inland charge)

To France

FOREIGN MAIL - TO TRIESTE, AUSTRIA

Trieste, now located in Italy, was part of the Austrian Empire until the end of World War I. A correspondence of covers with the New York Postmaster's Provisional to Trieste, via London, is known. Some of the covers were carried in the mail all the way to Trieste, whereas others were sent under cover from London to Trieste.

1846 (15 July) from New York to Trieste, Austria, via London, with 5 cents (9X1, pos.33) cancelled with red NEW YORK 5 PAID JUL.15 datestamp, with London arrival marking of 1.AU.1846, carried under cover from London to Trieste



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles) and charged "1/-" (British Packet letter rate). No charge from London to Trieste.

To Trieste, Austria, via London, carried under cover from London to Trieste

1845 (30 August) from New York to Trieste, Austria, via London, with 5 cents (9X1b, pos.15) pen cancelled in blue, with red PAID and NEW YORK 30.AUG 5 cts datestamp, and TRIESTE 24.SEP.1845 arrival marking, carried in the mail all the way



Rate: 5 cents to Boston (rate up to 300 miles), charged "1/-" (British Packet letter rate) and "38" kreuzer (Austrian charge for London to Trieste)

To Trieste, Austria, via London, carried in the mails all the way to Trieste

EPILOGUE - WHAT HAPPENED AFTER JUNE 1847?

On 1 July 1847 the first general United States stamps were issued, 5 cents and 10 cents. They were valid in all the States and replaced all the Postmasters' Provisionals. The rates remained unchanged, 5 cents per half ounce up to 300 miles, and 10 cents per half ounce over 300 miles. These rates and the 1847 first stamp issue were in use until the 1 July 1851. 1851 (31 May) from New York to Albany, New York State (150 miles), with 5 cents 1847



**1847 5 cents from New York
to Albany, NY (150 miles)**

1847? (13 September) from New York to Knoxville, Tennessee (706 miles), with pair of 5 cents 1847



**1847 5 cents pair from
New York to Knoxville,
Tennessee (706 miles)**

E

1848 (23 March) from New York to Richmond, Virginia (335 miles), with 10 cents 1847



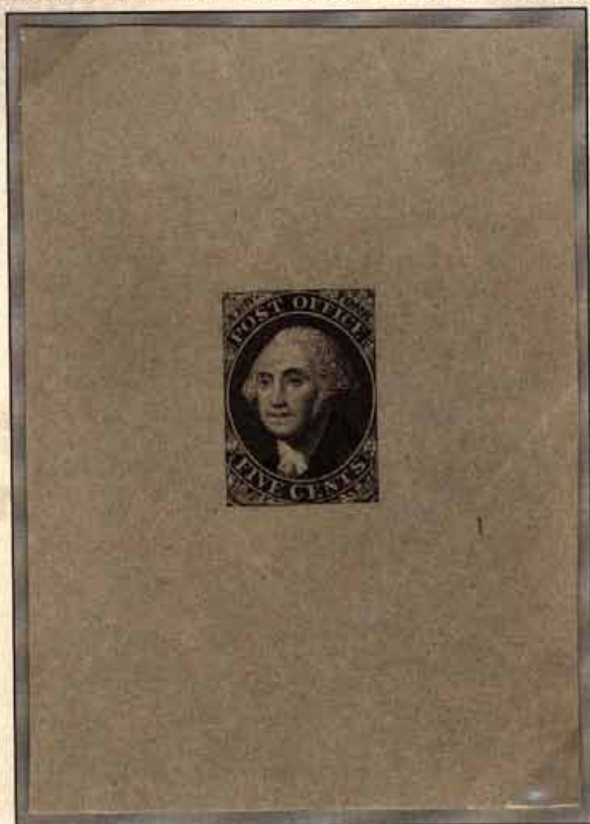
**1847 10 cents from
New York to Richmond,
Virginia (335 miles)**

E

GERMAN FORGERIES

When stamp collecting was still a young hobby in the 19th century, many of the more elusive stamps were forged, or rather imitated, by the stamp trade. This was not done to deceive collectors, but as a service to fill the gaps in their collections. The imitation below is of German origin and the word "FALSCH" (forgery) appears no less than three times within the design.

Die Proof with the word "FALSCH" three times in the design



Imitation "unused"



Imitation "used"



German Forgeries