

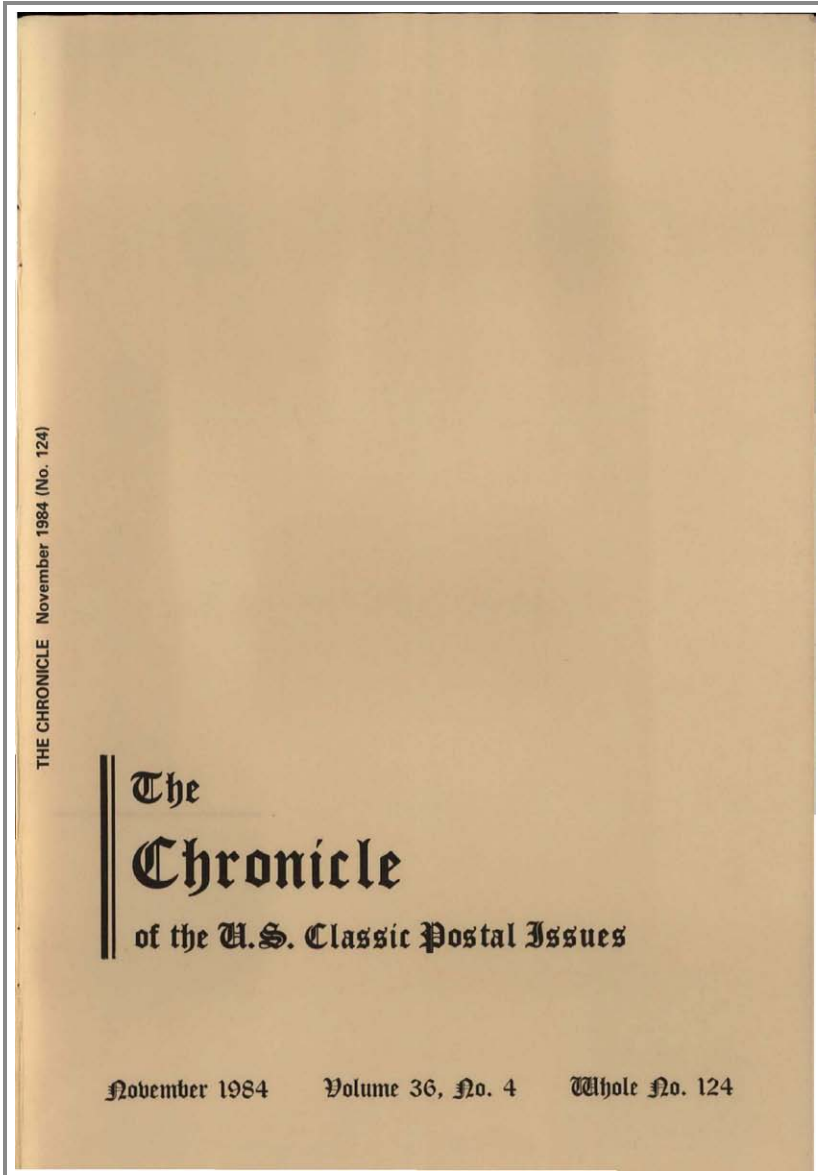


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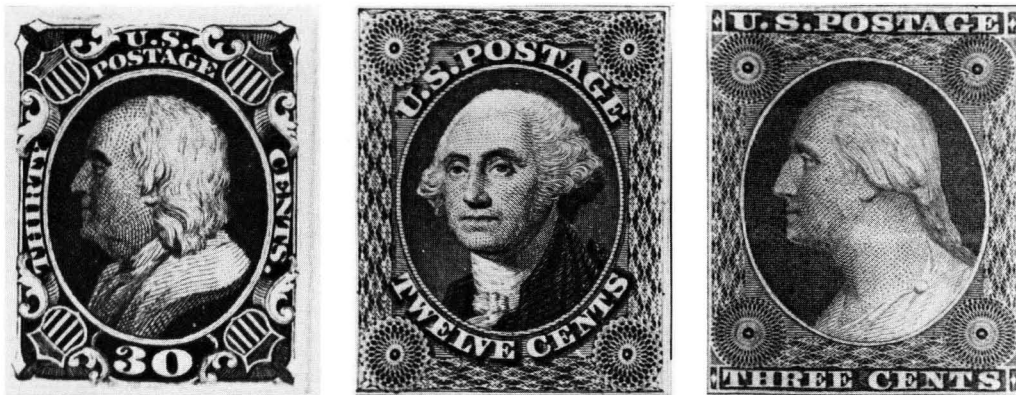
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**FRANKLIN AND EAGLE CARRIER STAMPS****DONALD B. JOHNSTONE***(Continued from Chronicle 123:162)***HYBRID DIE PROOFS**

When plate proof impressions on thin India paper are cut to shape, impressed on heavy paper, and a false die sinkage is added, the result is known as a hybrid die proof. Hybrid proofs of the Franklin carrier in blue were made to resemble original large die proofs, and were used for official presentations. They can be distinguished from original die proofs by the lack of top and bottom stamp frame lines, feeling the edge of the India paper close to the edge of the design, by examining this edge with a hand lens, and by noting a stamp size welt on the reverse side. The false die sinkage was made by a steel block in a press. The size of the sinkage varied, but none are known with the same sinkage dimensions as the original large die proof. Hybrid die proofs of the Franklin carrier are known in blue, and made from India plate proofs in this color.

**SMALL DIE PROOFS**

One of the most interesting and somewhat bizarre episodes in the chronology of the Franklin carrier involves the creation of the so-called small die proof. In 1903, the Post Office Department produced 83 leather-bound albums on the pages of which were mounted die proofs of all United States stamps that had been issued up to and including 1902.<sup>20</sup> The Bureau of Engraving and Printing had in its possession the original dies from which the stamp printing plates had been made. These dies were used to print die proofs on white wove paper. They were trimmed to have 3-5 mm. margins, and then glued down on grey card pages. The albums were given to various officials in Washington, and as this occurred during President Theodore Roosevelt's administration, philatelists have referred to them as the Roosevelt Album of United States Small Die Proofs.



**Figure 7. Source of the composite die of 1903; vignette from the 30¢, corner rosettes from the 12¢, and the tessellated frame from the 3¢ stamps.**

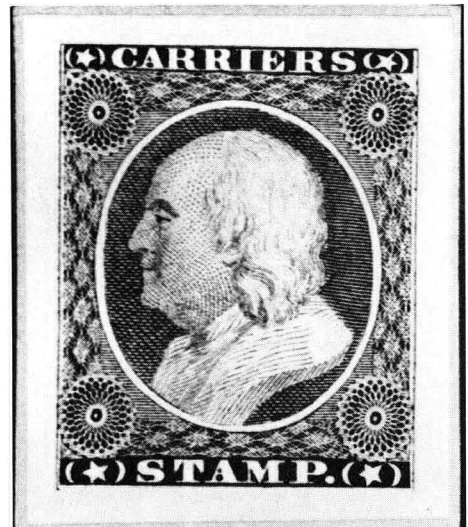
The Bureau was unable, it seems, to locate the die for the Franklin carrier. It was necessary, therefore, to create a new one. As the original plate had been used on occasion to print plate proofs on card, it had always seemed strange that the Bureau did not make a new die from a plate impression. The answer to this came when Elliott Perry indicated to me he

20. Allan M. Thatcher, "The Roosevelt Album of United States Small Die Proofs," *Essay Proof Journal* 38: 67:71, 1953.

had seen documentary evidence that this plate had been destroyed some time between 1897 and 1903.

In order to reconstruct a die to print the Franklin carrier, they made a composite from the dies of three other stamps.<sup>21</sup> They used the Franklin head from the 30¢ stamp of 1860, the rosettes from the 12¢ stamp, and the tessellated lathe work from the 3¢ stamp of 1851. (Figure 7). New top and bottom labels with star ornaments were engraved, and a number of lines were added. They failed, however, to add the top and bottom stamp frame lines that appear on the original large die proof, presumably because they were copying one of the stamps. These frame lines had been removed from the transfer roll when the plate had been made. This new composite die looked something like the original to the casual observer, but the small die proofs that resulted show a number of errors. The proof is wider than the original and also shorter. One major difference to my eyes is the clear white oval around the vignette in the composite die proof. The original die proof and all subsequent plate proofs show remnants of the tessellation within this oval. As the small die proofs were glued down firmly to the Roosevelt Album pages, most copies that have been removed from an album were cut out with part of the album page showing as a grey border. (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Small die proof, composite die proof, of the Franklin carrier from the Roosevelt Album of 1903.**



#### SCHERNIKOW PRINTINGS

The early years after the turn of the century saw not only the appearance of the new composite die proof of the Franklin carrier, but also another Franklin carrier die proof. When the original contract was written for the 1851 issue, it provided for the firm of Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. to turn over to the U.S. Treasurer the dies and plates after their use had been completed. This was done, and later such items were turned over to the Post Office Department. The contract failed, however, to say anything about the disposition of the transfer rolls, and it is presumed that these remained with the bank note company. As years went by, and bank note firms absorbed each other, there was an accumulation of various stock dies as well as transfer rolls passed from one firm to another. Around 1900, a man by the name of Ernest Schernikow came into possession of some transfer rolls that included some of the 1851 issue.<sup>22,23</sup> Either he or someone in his employ made some dies from the transfer roll of the Franklin carrier, and printed a number of die proofs in various colors on 300 micron card stock, stamp paper, and on very thin proof paper (Figure 9). He not only made die proofs of the complete Franklin carrier, but ground down one of his dies in such a

21. Chase, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

22. Chase, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

23. Neinken, *op. cit.*, p. 26.



**Figure 9. Schernikow die proof of the Franklin carrier. Note the die sinkage of 50 x 50 mm. as compared to the original large die proof.**

manner as to show only the vignette of Franklin. Proofs of this incomplete die show evidence of the original border tessellation within the oval frame (Figure 10). The steel dies used by Schernikow differ in size and shape from the original large die by being approximately 50 mm. square, whereas the original die was 50 mm. high and 57.5 mm. wide. Moreover, the original die proof shows layout lines and rosette impressions as discussed previously under *Large Die Proof*. In any event, Schernikow printings came on the market, and have often been described and sold, intentionally or not, as original large die proofs.



**Figure 10. Schernikow breakdown die proof showing only the vignette. Note the remnants of the tessellation within the oval border.**

The final chapter of the Schernikow episode involves the late Dr. Clarence Brazer, who, after acquiring one of Schernikow's complete dies of the Franklin carrier, had a number of prints made. These were in several colors on white 300 micron card stock. Since the die sinkage is the same, one of the features to distinguish Brazer's die proofs on card from those made by Schernikow on card, is the card size. Brazer's measure 9.5 x 9.5 mm., and Schernikow's approximate 7.5 x 7.5 mm. The number that Dr. Brazer made or had made for him is not known, but he indicated to me that only a very few were struck. One of these which I acquired from him is numbered 8 and is printed in red ink. He presented the die to the Post Office Department in 1953.

### IMITATIONS

I prefer to use the term, imitation, for the following items, as being more appropriate in this case than such designations as forgery, counterfeit, bogus stamp, fake, etc. There are,

however, no very good imitations of the Franklin carrier stamp. The one which most resembles the original is shown in Figure 11. It looks to me as though it had been a photograph of an original and printed in ultramarine on paper with a very pale pink surface. The size is almost identical to the original stamp. The word, *Facsimile*, is printed in red across the lower portion. This spelling as well as some faint printing on the reverse side in French, lends support to the thought that this may have been made in France.



Figure 11. "Facsimile" in red on blue imitation of the Franklin carrier on pink paper.



Figure 12. Franklin carrier imitation, possibly from a wood block.

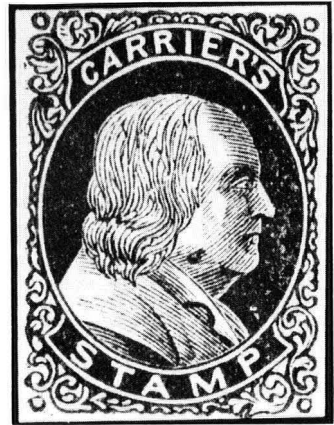


Figure 13. Franklin carrier imitation attributed to S. A. Taylor.

Another imitation shown in Figure 12 is a crude impression in blue from a wood block or similar preparation. One other variety is shown in Figure 13 with Franklin facing right. The latter is known in blue and black, and probably exists in other colors. It has been attributed to the well-known stamp imitation fabricator of Boston, S. Alan Taylor.

#### THE EAGLE CARRIER

It has been known since the appearance of the "Steinmetz Miscellany" in 1913 that John C. Montgomery, Assistant Postmaster and Superintendent of Letter Carriers of Philadelphia, was concerned about the confusion that could arise from use of the Franklin carrier stamp due to its similarity to the one-cent regular issue then in use. It has also been known that he was involved in suggesting a carrier stamp with an eagle motif to replace the Franklin stamp.<sup>24</sup> Some of the specific details were not made clear until the recent publication by Robert Meyersburg<sup>25</sup> of Montgomery's letters to Nathan K. Hall, Postmaster General. These illuminating letters show that Montgomery conceived the idea of using an eagle design, and the letters were dated on September 27 and October 5, 1851. This was just prior to the October 10, 1851, order from J. Marron, Third Assistant Postmaster General, to the Toppan, Carpenter and Casilear Company for one million Eagle carrier stamps.

The reason Mr. Toppan was so interested in supplying the Eagle carrier stamps in such a short period of time was that the eagle to be employed as the central design was already a stock die in use by the company for printing banknotes (Figure 14), thereby eliminating the time and expense of a new engraving. It was the late Dr. Julian Blanchard who proved that the small eagle stock die existed prior to its use on the Eagle carrier stamp.<sup>26</sup> The small eagle die had been in use on banknotes since 1843 by Draper, Toppan & Company, as well as Toppan, Carpenter and Company, both of whom were predecessors to the Toppan, Carpenter and Casilear Company.

24. Julian Blanchard, "History of the Vignette on the 1851 Eagle Carrier Stamp," *Essay Proof Journal* 51: 173-176, 1956.

25. Meyersburg, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

26. Blanchard, *op. cit.*, p. 173.



Figure 14. Eagle stock die was used to print banknotes by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. prior to use on Eagle carrier stamps.

### THE PLATE AND PLATE VARIETIES

The plate of the Eagle carrier was composed of two panes, one above the other with 100 impressions each. There was an 11 mm. gutter and a horizontal dividing line midway between panes. The imprint of "Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. BANK NOTE ENGRAVERS Phila., New York, Boston, & Cincinnati" appeared just below both upper and lower panes. Some time after the first stamps were printed, a plate "No. 1" was added to the plate just below the "EN" of ENGRAVERS. For some time it was thought that only the upper pane received the number, but we now have evidence that the number was also added to the lower pane as shown in Figure 15. Just when the number was added has not been determined.

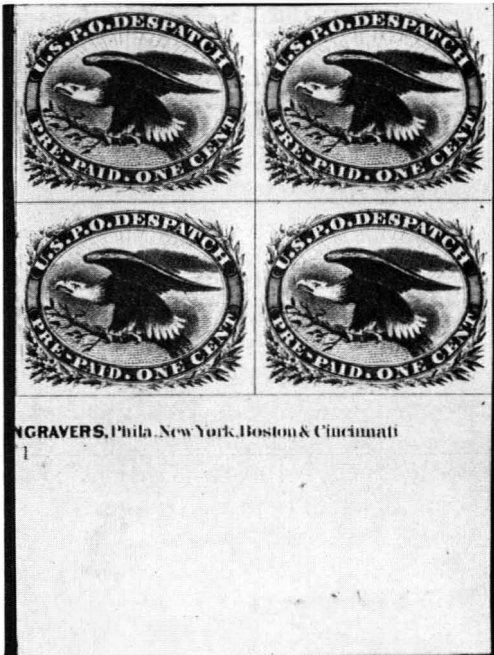


Figure 15. Eagle carrier block of reprints from the lower pane which shows the plate number 1 beneath the imprint.

The plate was prepared by rocking in the impressions from the transfer roll which contained four reliefs oriented side by side circumferentially.<sup>27</sup> Position dots were placed on the plate to assist the siderographer in positioning the transfer roll. With the exception of the upper row of ten stamps, positions 1 to 10, there are position dots showing in the upper left corner of the first left vertical row of stamps, and in the upper right corner in the fourth and seventh vertical rows. The dots also appear below the lower row of stamps in the first, fourth, and seventh vertical rows. There is a dot just outside and opposite the center of each corner stamp. Some dots are evident in the vertical and horizontal separation lines, and were used to rule in these lines.

27. Perry, 1973, *op. cit.*, p. 68.



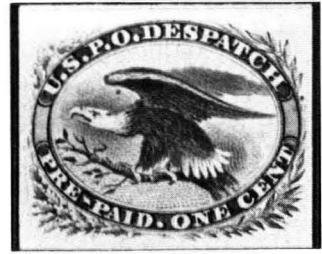


Figure 16. Eagle carrier with the spot under the wing, a plate flaw in position 83 of the upper pane.



Figure 17. Eagle carrier with a dash over the S of DESPATCH, a plate flaw in position 79 of the upper pane.



Figure 18. Eagle carrier with the pronounced double transfer showing in the right rectangular panel, position 7 of the upper pane.

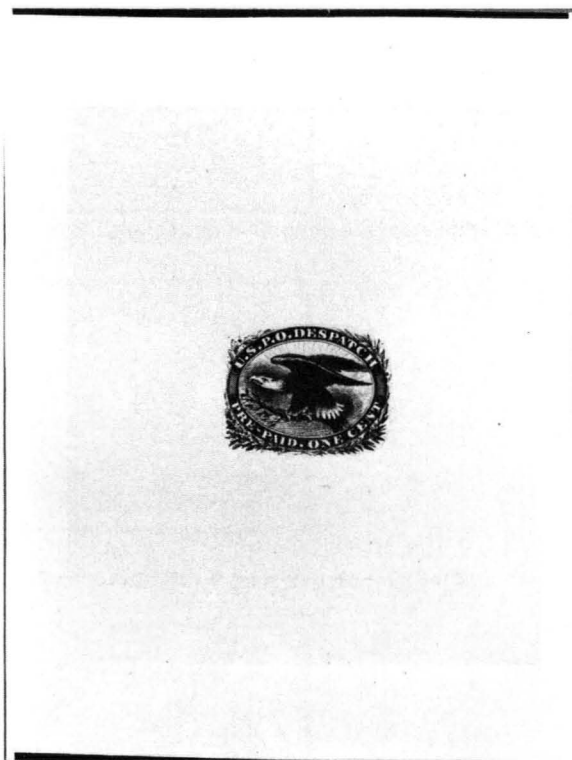


Figure 19. Eagle carrier of position 1 of the lower pane is recognized by the separation line in the upper left corner.

The position dots appear to be more evident in the upper pane of stamps than in the lower. The presence of such dots enable a person to position certain stamps or blocks within a sheet. They have helped me to identify the position of several plate flaws. The most obvious flaws in the upper pane include the spot of color under the wing in position 83, (Figure 16), a dash over the “S” of DESPATCH in position 79, (Figure 17), and a pronounced double transfer in the right rectangular panel in position 7 (Figure 18). The upper left corner vertical separation line of Position 1 of the lower pane was completed with a noticeable short slanted line (Figure 19). Finally, one of the transfer roll reliefs produced all of the stamps in the seventh vertical row of both panes with a dot just above the tip of one of the leaflets on the right. With the existence of complete upper and lower panes, the task of identifying some positions is made easier than it is with the Franklin carrier.

## EAGLE CARRIER PROOFS

A large die sunk proof, the ink and paper impression of the completed die, is always a choice collectors' item, and is due primarily to the very few that were made on the way to preparing the plate with which to print stamps. Although I was able to illustrate an original large die proof of the Franklin carrier earlier in this article, this will not be possible for the Eagle carrier. Dr. Clarence Brazer wrote in 1951,<sup>28</sup> "No large die proofs of the Eagle carrier stamp are known." My files, however, contain a description of an original large die proof of the Eagle carrier in the Miller collection that was on display in the New York Public Library. Recent efforts to substantiate this have been unsuccessful.



**Figure 20. Hybrid die proof of the Eagle carrier prepared from a plate proof and simulated die sinkage.**

Plate proofs in colors as well as varieties parallel those of the Franklin carrier. There are plate proofs in blue and in green on India paper and in orange on wove stamp paper. There are card proofs in blue that were produced at the same times as were the Franklin carrier card proofs. Similarly, the Atlanta proofs of 1881 are seen in the same five colors of scarlet, brown, green, blue, and black. The distinguishing features such as paper thickness are indicated in the Franklin carrier section of this article. Hybrid large die proofs in normal color were prepared in the customary manner by use of a normal color plate proof on India paper and impressing this on a card or proof paper with a steel plate to resemble die sinkage (Figure 20). Since the Eagle carrier design has no border frame line, it is easy to discern the edge of the plate proof in a hybrid. Unfortunately, some of these hybrids have been misdescribed on occasion in auction catalogues as large die proofs. The Miller collection had a plate proof in blue on card with "Specimen" overprinted in red, as well as a similar one overprinted in black ink.

28. Brazer, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

(To be continued)