

Some Notes on

The United States Five Cent Stamp of 1847

By Stanley B. Ashbrook (From Stamp Specialist #1, 1939)

SELDOM do we see any mention worthy of note in the philatelic press relating to the 5c and 10c stamps of 1847, yet these two stamps are exceedingly popular and are held in the highest esteem by all collectors who love the classic U. S. issues of the nineteenth century. What a fine field for specialization and philatelic research work they are, and what could be more interesting than a carefully formed collection of fine specimens on and off cover which is rich in the postal markings of the period 1847-1851, a period now some 90 years in the fast fading past.

In these brief notes no attempt will be made to go into details regarding many of the interesting features of the 5c 1847, but rather to pick out certain points, on which additional information will be welcomed I am quite sure, by those who collect the 1847's in a serious manner.

About two years ago I published an article in *STAMPS* (April 10, 1937), en-

titled, "The U. S. 5 Cent and 10 Cent 1847 — Copper vs. Steel Plates." In that article I attempted to demonstrate why I was fully convinced that the 1847 stamps were not printed from steel plates, as had generally been considered up to the time of that article, but on the contrary were printed from plates made of copper.

To many philatelists, the question as to whether the 1847 plates were made of copper or steel may seem a very trivial matter, but my discovery was to me quite an important factor, because it explained fully many points which had sorely puzzled me in the past twenty years.

Without question, I had accepted the statements made by authorities of former years that the stamps were printed from steel plates, and then late in 1935, Edward S. Knapp showed me a copy of the 10c 1847 which contained a double transfer which neither of us had ever seen before. I made a careful study of this stamp extending over a number of weeks, and I am quite frank to admit that certain fea-

As I am reproducing Specialist page pdfs to present the text of this article—to reprocess everything would take many more hours than it is worth doing, as the text scan is legible—I will try to intersperse images ahead of the text to which they apply, along with notes as necessary.

In this instance, starting on this page and carrying over to page 2, Ashbrook discusses the Knapp 10c Double Transfer; however since then, that stamp has been determined to be a fake. Reproduced here is the image and the lot description from the 2020 Siegel Galleries auction of the William Gross 1847 Collection.

For this and other images, where necessary, please use your pdf magnifier for a closer look at the images. JFD.

The famous "Knapp Shift" forgery. 10c Black (2), Position 23L, striking and enigmatic doubling of design at top and in parts of bottom, accomplished by expertly painting in the double transfer, red grid cancel, small thin spot, the famous (or infamous) "Knapp Shift", which roiled experts for decades before being definitively determined a fake, numerous Chronicle articles have been written on this over the years and we will not attempt to recreate all the arguments here, the most recent and best are Wade E. Saadi's and Philip Wall's articles in Chronicle No. 176, ex Saadi, 1996 P.F. certificate no longer accompanies.



For comparison, a Scott 2 without any faked top or bottom "double transfers"

tures of it puzzled me to a very great extent. I was convinced the stamp was a genuine plate variety, not any sort of a slip printing, kiss, or error that could fall in any such a class. In spite of the fact I considered the stamp was a genuine plate variety I could not explain to my entire satisfaction how such a double transfer could possibly originate from a plate made of steel. Therein lay the solution, because while such a double transfer could not by the wildest imagination originate from a steel plate, such a variety could most assuredly originate from a plate made of copper. And thus, the Knapp 10c 1847 stamp with the unique double transfer was the direct solution of various problems which had puzzled me for years, principal among which was the question, what was the real reason why it was impossible to make any progress whatsoever in reconstructing the 5c 1847 plates? Why had so careful a student as Dr. Carroll Chase made such an attempt and failed? If the 5c plates were made of steel then surely someone would have been able to make some progress years ago.

Chase was familiar with the two well known double transfers of the 5c 1847, which he called "A" and "B", and which are listed by these same letters in the Scott Catalogue, yet at the time he published his exhaustive article on the 1847 issue in 1916 he had not even been able to locate the positions of these two major varieties. He stated one was a #80, but he was unable to give the pane. Mention is merely made of these points to demonstrate that although Chase surely possessed much 5c 1847 material, and no doubt had access to additional material in large eastern collections, he made practically no progress, because he was only able to state that one of the double transfers was a No. 80.

It was possible for Elliott Perry to reconstruct the 10c 1847 plate principally because after the plate was transferred, the four frame lines were recut on each of the 200 positions. Inasmuch as no recutting was done on the two 5c plates, this impor-

tant help to plate reconstruction did not exist. Plating marks, such as recutting, faint guide lines, double transfers, burrs, scratches, cracks, dashes, curls, etc., etc., are indispensable guides to plate reconstruction. The more that exist, the more simple is the solution, and vice versa the less we have the more difficult the solution.

Plating marks occurring on the U. S. 1851-1857 plates, such as faint guide lines, scratches, curls, dots, dashes, etc., generally originated when a plate was transferred. These plates being of *steel*, such valuable guides to plating were very slow in disappearing from the plates. For example, I cite the 1c 1857, Type V plates. Here we have no recutting, only a very few double transfers, few cracks, but plenty of other plating marks which did not disappear from the hard surface of the steel plates, and thus we are able to reconstruct these plates. With the 5c 1847 plates it is an entirely different proposition. An examination of original plate proofs discloses an ample supply of plating marks, but the plates being of copper, these plating marks soon disappeared and left us stamps without guides for plate reconstruction. Therefore the principal reason why it is impossible to reconstruct the 5c 1847 plates is because they were made of copper.

The Double Transfers of the 5c 1847

The Scott United States Catalogue, issue of 1939, lists four double transfers and designates them as, "A"—"B"—"C"—and "D". Illustrations are given of these four stamps and I believe they are quite correct as they are from my pen.

Heading the listing is the notation—"Engraved—Plates of 200 subjects in two panes of 100 each."

This should have stated there were two plates of 200 subjects each, consisting of two panes to a plate with 100 subjects, arranged 10 x 10.

These two plates were made of copper, were not numbered and had no imprints of any description. Students refer to the plate which was in use in 1847—1849 and 1850, as the "First Plate" and to the plate made in 1850 as the "Second Plate."

[Note: Ashbrook subsequently came to the opinion that only one plate was used to print the 5c 1847s. JFD.]

Text continued on p. 6



A

For comparison purposes, from the Wm. Gross Collection, a Scott #1 without any Transfers

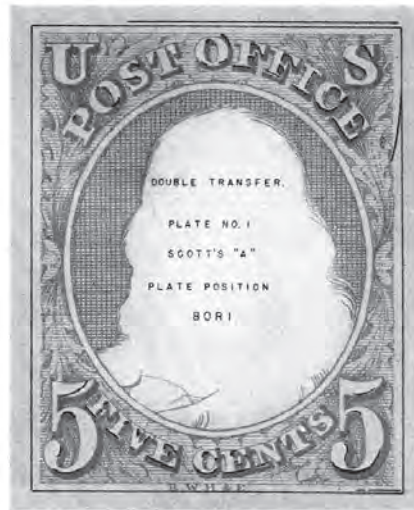


Figure 22—Double Transfer, 80R1

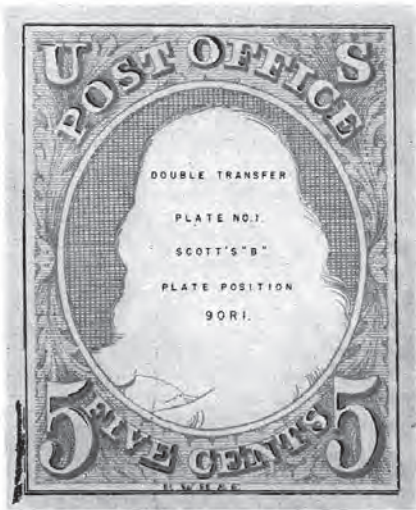


Figure 23—Double Transfer, 90R1

B

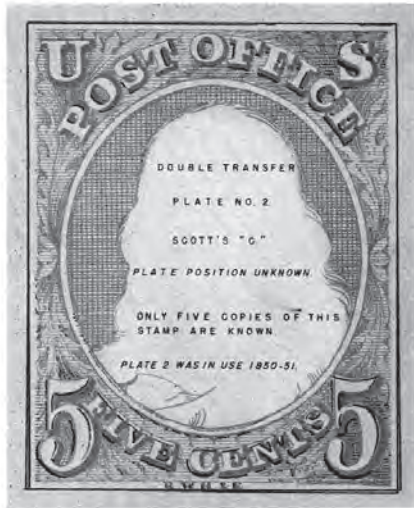


Figure 24—Double Transfer "C"

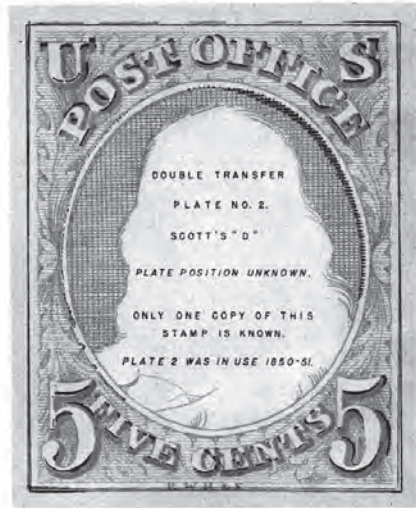


Figure 25—Double Transfer "D"

D

In the Double Transfer types diagrams to the right, the double transfer areas were darkened by Ashbrook.

C



From a 2010 Siegel auction of the Myerson Collection:

5¢ Red Brown (1). Reconstructed block of six from vertical strips of Positions 79/89/99R1 [left column] and [right column] 80/90/100R1, containing Double Transfer Types A (Position 80) [top right stamp] and B (Position 90) [middle right stamp], the unique "Ashbrook Reconstruction", a block of six in which two verticle strips of three were rejoined.

The left strip was owned by Stanley B. Ashbrook. In 1918, while viewing the Judge Robert S. Emerson collection, he realized that a similar strip owned by the judge had once adjoined his own.

It is reported that only one other 5c multiple exists with both double transfers—a pair from Positions 80 and 90R—but the pair is cut into at bottom and right.

Ex Emerson, Ashbrook, Newbury, Dr. Morris, Mirsky and Middendorf. With 1980 Freidl and 1983 P.F. certificates. 1996 Calvet M. Hahn analysis accompanies.

Estimated at \$20,000-\$30,000 it drew a top hammer price of \$40,000.

A Study in Plating

This lot, from the Siegel Auction of the Wm. Gross 1847 Collection, provides a lesson in plating stamps.



5¢ Brown Orange, Double Transfer Type C, Positions 83-84L, horizontal pair, the right stamp showing the prominent Type C double transfer, evident in the framelines at bottom and lower left, and in the right frameline at top and “5” and “Five Cents”

In Jerome S. Wagshal’s August 1995 Chronicle article, he summarized previous articles on the rare Type C double transfer. It was first discovered by Dan Hammatt around 1920. Mr. Wagshal recorded a total of 13 copies plus a half-stamp in the left sheet-margin strip from the Newbury collection; two of the double transfer stamps are contained in pairs. He also echoed Ashbrook’s theory that the Type C and D double transfers were created when the plate was reworked in late 1850 and were only part of the 5th Delivery from RWH&E in December 1850. This would account for their greater scarcity compared to the Type A and B double transfers, and it seems to be confirmed by the two examples known on cover, which were described by Ashbrook as 1851 uses. The distinctive shades also point to the 5th Delivery.

The parts of framelines of adjoining stamps in this pair are instrumental in identifying the Type C double transfer’s plate position. Specialists have known for some time that it must come from the fourth column, based on the Newbury strip. As this pair reveals, it cannot be a top or bottom row position, since there are framelines of adjoining stamps in this pair’s top and bottom margins. We successfully ruled out the right pane through a Photoshop overlay using the complete pane of plate proofs with “Specimen” overprint (Siegel Sale 1047, lot 103). We also ruled out Positions 14L, 24L and 34L in the left pane by overlaying the pair on the plate proof block offered in this sale as

lot 29. Therefore, we narrowed the possibilities down to Positions 44L, 54L, 64L, 74L or 84L.

The final piece of evidence establishing the Type C double transfer’s position is the stamp on the cover offered in this sale as lot 490. Its top margin shows the bottom frameline of the Type C double transfer [arrow, see also the lower right “5” in the Figure 4 diagram on page 3], and the bottom margin, although cut at an angle, is too wide at the left to be anything other than a bottom sheet margin. Therefore, the stamp on the cover in lot 490 is Position 94 Left and the Type C double transfer [just above it] is Position 84 Left.



Lot 490 from the Siegel Wm. Gross 1847 Collection Auction

From the Gross 1847 Collection, 5¢ Red Brown, Double Transfer Type D, block of four, top left stamp the double transfer, late impression from the cleaned plate, the original color was probably closer to Orange Brown but has since changed to a Red Brown—in an article in [this 1939] Stamp Specialist, Stanley B. Ashbrook describes the four double transfers that were known at the time; the Type D was discovered by Ashbrook in 1921 in the collection of noted philatelist Judge Robert S. Emerson; after publishing his discovery, serious philatelists of the day looked for confirming copies but were unable to find any; finally, more than 20 years later, Lambert Gerber found one—the top left stamp in this block of four—it is believed that this and the Type C double transfer were created when the plate was reworked in December 1850 and were only part of the 5th Delivery from RWH&E in January 1851; this would account for their greater scarcity compared to the Type A and B double transfers—today perhaps a half-dozen are known. [See also the highlighted Figure 5 on page 3.]



Post-Ashbrook Article Double & Triple Transfer Discoveries

While Ashbrook was aware of some of what appears on this page, he did not treat them as transfers in this article.



**Double Transfer E
"The Mower Shift"**

From a 2019 Siegel Auction;

5¢ Brown Double Transfer Type E, tied by "Boston Jul. ?" (1848) circular datestamp on part printed folded letter from Massachusetts Bank to Bath Me.

The so-called "Mower Shift" is named after its discoverer, the San Francisco dealer R. H. Mower. In an article discussing this rare position in the November 1976 Chronicle, Duane Garrett quotes a letter from Stanley B. Ashbrook, which states "this 'E' variety is quite scarce, much more than either the 'A' or 'B', probably due to the fact that the extra lines were not cut very deep on the plate and soon wore away. I believe that we can only find the 'E' among the very earliest prints from the plate."

In the Garrett article, these characteristics are given:

Illustration 1 shows a significant, consistent plate variety of the 5¢ 1847 issue known as the "Mower Shift" or "E" double transfer as it was called by the late Stanley Ashbrook. The chief characteristics of this variety are double horizontal lines at the top of the "T" of "POST" and in the right arm of the "U" of "S" and a single line in the "S" of "POST." These markings are clearly shown in the plating diagram in the late Lester Brookman's *The United States Postage Stamps of the 19th Century* (1966) at page 38 of Volume I.

Here's that Brookman Vol. 1 illustration by Ashbrook and the caption

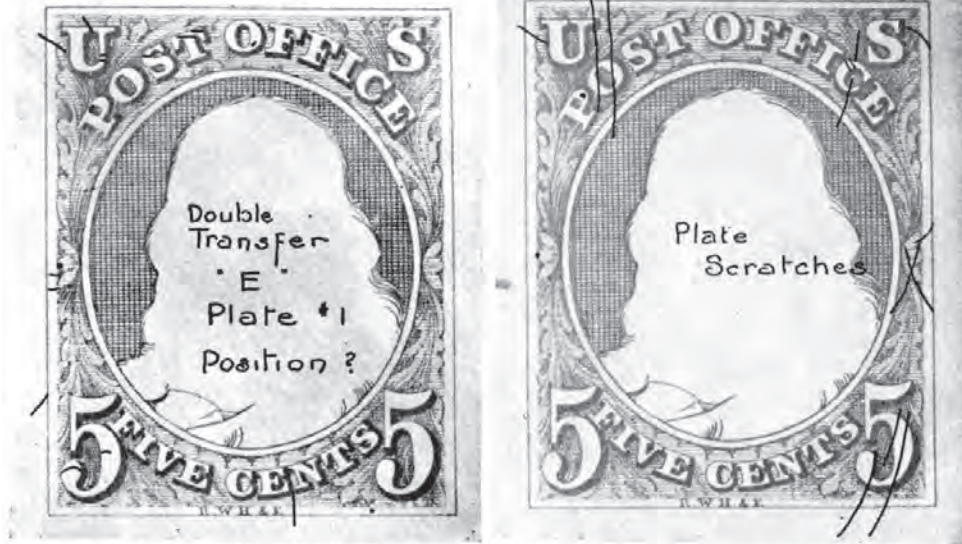


Figure 37 (Left). This drawing shows the marks found on a consistent plate variety called by its discoverer, Stanley Ashbrook, "Double Transfer E." His description is as follows: "I have located five different copies of this position, proving the variety is consistent and an actual plate variety. Further, I located a copy on a cover used in 1848, proving that it comes from plate 1. Some of the lines may be scratches but the principal ones are evidently traces of a former entry. Note the curve in the left '5.' (Note that Ashbrook had not as yet, as he did eventually, realized there was but one plate of the 5¢ 1847, L.G.B.) (Drawing by Ashbrook).

Figure 38 (Right). (Drawing by Ashbrook).



5¢ Brown, Triple Transfer Type F, clear secondary transfer of top frameline, upper part of side frameline, "U" and "Post Office", the so-called "Wagshal Shift", which is stated to be a triple transfer; only a half-dozen copies are known—discovery of the "Wagshal Shift" was first published in *The Philatelic Foundation's Opinions V* book in 1988; the sole discovery copy (offered in our Sale 993, lot 134) was confirmed by a photograph of one in a pair in the P.F.'s records and another in a pair in Ashbrook's notes; the stamp offered here was discovered by Mr. Wagshal in the "Elite" sale in 1989, and gave confirmation that this is indeed a triple transfer and not just a double transfer; Mr. Wagshal also confirmed that the stamp offered here was originally part of the pair in Ashbrook's notes—ex Garrett ("Elite"), Wagshal and Saadi, with 2010 P.F. certificate specifically stating it is the "Wagshal Shift".

Inasmuch as this is rather awkward, I suggest that we designate the two plates as "No. 1" and "No. 2". It will be noted that the catalog does not give any plate positions of the double transfers, or of the other two plate varieties, namely, the "Dot in S" and the "Dot in U." The reason for this is that, the exact plate positions have never heretofore been discovered, that is, so far as I am aware. I think I have definitely established the fact that Plate One produced two double transfers, the Scott "A" and "B" and that the other two double transfers, "C" and "D" which are indeed quite rare, came from Plate 2. (1850-1851).

Dr. Carroll Chase was the first philatelist to make a serious study of the 1847 stamps, and his fine article describing the Issue, published in 1916 in the old "*Philatelic Gazette*" still remains to this day the finest study on the 1847 Issue which has ever been published. This is in no way a reflection on the outstanding articles on the plating of the 10c value by Elliott Perry, which were published in the "*Collectors' Club Philatelist*" during 1925 and 1926. Chase produced a study of the Issue, including practically all features, whereas the Perry article related strictly to the reconstruction of the 10c plate.

Chase made a serious attempt to plate both the 5c and 10c values and would probably have made greater progress on the 10c if he had not joined the French Army early in the World War.

Returning to this country in the Spring of 1919 he disposed of his entire collection of the 1847 issue, and his philatelic work from that time forward was devoted principally to the 3c 1851-1857.

It is quite interesting to refer to the Chase article of 1916, and in it we find that Chase listed and illustrated only two 5c 1847 double transfers. These he called "A" and "B" and I used the same designations in furnishing suggestions for the catalog listings.

I do not recall when the "C" and "D" double transfers were first discovered, but my earliest record of them dates back to 1920. Since that time I have attempted

to keep a record of all known copies. There exists little doubt that both came from Plate 2, yet strange to state, I have never been able to locate but one copy of the "D", whereas I have seen five different copies of the "C".

It must be remembered that Plate Two was not made until very late in 1849 or early in 1850 and inasmuch as the stamps were obsolete after June 30th, 1851, Plate Two stamps were not in use for any extended period. Thus we have the explanation of the range in price quotations in the catalog, as follows:

"A"—\$35.	"C"—\$250.
"B"— 35.	"D"— 500.

Since the early 1920's we have known positively that "A" and "B" were from Plate No. 1, and came from positions 80 and 90 in one of the panes. What we have never known was whether they came from the *left pane* or the *right pane*, and for a number of years I have been trying to solve this problem. Chase was probably the first one to discover the fact that both "A" and "B" came from a tenth vertical row but he did not know they were from adjoining vertical positions when he wrote his article, in fact he stated, "*Shifted Transfers*—On the 5 cent value *two* may be found, both from the extreme right vertical row. Shift 'A' is probably either number 40, 50, 60 or 70 on the plate, while the other called shift 'B' is number 90 on the plate." Chase also established the fact that the stamps with the "Dot in the S" came from a ninth vertical row on a plate. He evidently had, or had seen, horizontal pairs containing either the "A" or "B" double transfers, with the stamp to left in such a pair or pairs without the "Dot in S." Therefore he was quite sure the two double transfers "A" and "B" came from a different plate (or pane) than the plate or pane which consisted of all stamps in the 9th vertical row, showing the "Dot in S" variety.

Mr. Luff in his book on United States stamps published an affidavit, (page 63) which was for many years considered by philatelists as a true statement of the facts. The following is from Luff's book:

"The report of the Postmaster General, dated November 15th, 1851, (for the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1851), says: "Directions for the destruction of the dies and plates employed in the manufacture of the postage stamps formerly used, have been given, and for counting and burning such of the stamps as have not been issued to postmasters or have been returned." It has been said that the first contract for the manufacture of stamps did not provide, as was done in all subsequent contracts, that the dies and plates should be the property of the Government. Consequently they were claimed by the contractors. This may explain the anxiety of the Post Office Department to secure the return and destruction of the remainders of the 1847 issue and the forbidding of their future use. That this anxiety was groundless is proved by the following affidavit:

New York, Dec. 12, 1851.

Have this day destroyed dies of 5 and 10 cent stamps, also the plates of same.

1—5c stamp plate, 100 on, 1847 Issue

1—10c stamp plate, 100 on, 1847 Issue

Rawdon Wright Hatch & Edson

Witness

Wm. Brady, P.M.N.Y.

John Moor

G. W. Johnson

It will be noted that the Postmaster General in his annual report stated that directions had been given for the destruction of the "dies and plates," yet it is quite evident that this was not done in spite of the above affidavit. Any engraving firm having a die and a transfer roll (taken up from the die), can destroy the die, but with the transfer roll undestroyed, a new die can easily be made which is practically the same as the original. We know positively that a 5c 1847 die was in existence as late as the middle nineties, because die proofs of the 5c 1847 are in existence which were not printed until a certain period in the nineties. We are indebted to Clarence W. Brazer for the discovery of indisputable facts regarding these modern "original" die proofs.

It is therefore possible the original die may have been destroyed as the affidavit states but a transfer roll was most certainly preserved and in all probability is still in existence. It is to be regretted that the Post Office officials were not aware of this fact, so that it would have been unnecessary to engrave the counterfeits, which are erroneously referred to as the "Reprints of 1875." Reprints of what, may I inquire?

Early students were misled by the above quoted affidavit and naturally assumed the plates of the 5c and 10c stamps consisted of only 100 subjects each.

Elliott Perry, by his reconstruction of the 10c plate proved that this plate consisted of two panes of 100 subjects to a pane. And further, I think it is practically an established fact that all known copies of the 10c stamps come from the one plate, even including the famous "Knapp Double Transfer" of which only one copy is known.

If by any chance there was a plate of 100 subjects, as stated in the affidavit, and such a plate was actually destroyed in December of 1851, it might have been one-half of the original 10c copper plate, or one pane. If such a theory be true, it would be interesting to know what became of the other pane.

We have no proof whatsoever that any other 10c plate was transferred other than the plate which we call "No. 1" and which unquestionably contained 200 subjects. However it is barely possible that a plate of 100 subjects was made, from which no stamps were ever issued to the public, and that this phantom plate was the one mentioned in the affidavit as being destroyed in December of 1851. If there were badly worn plate copies of the 10c in existence, we might have an excuse for supposing a second plate was laid down prior to the expiration of the Rawdon contract on June 30th, 1851, however, copies of the 10c do not exist which show any appreciable plate wear.

We know that the Post Office Department ordered a total of 1,050,000 of the 10c stamp, of which amount 863,800 were sold by Post Offices throughout the country. Thus 5,250 sheets of stamps were printed from Plate One, and from these 5,250 impression, we do not have any 10c stamps which show any signs of a deterioration of the copper plate.

Plate Positions

"A" and "B" Double Transfers

In the collection of the late Judge Emerson was a most unusual copy of the



Figure 1, discussed on page 9



Left, Figure 2, from the Stamp Specialist article and discussed on page 9.
Right, the same stamp from a Siegel auction.

In Siegel's 2021 Gordon Eubanks Collection auction in a lot description for an 1851 1¢ Blue Type II (Sc. 7), the auctioneers clarified the definition of a Straddle Pane stamp, as follows: "Position 81R3, huge right straddle-pane margin and center-line, clearly showing a portion of Position 90L3 from the adjacent pane [arrow], other margins large to barely touched...since the definition



of straddle-pane has been updated and refreshed—a portion of the adjoining pane's stamp must be present or it is an "interpane" margin—the vast majority of 1¢ 1851 stamps [and 1847 5¢ stamps] in Power Search described as straddle-pane no longer qualify for that term, very few examples have a large enough margin on the proper side of the stamp to actually show part of the stamp in the adjoining pane."

The 1847 5¢ in Figure 2 qualifies by the current definition of a Straddle pane example.



The block of 30 discussed on page 10, with a magnified view of a pair from this pane, showing the dot in the left ornament in each stamp and the dotted line showing the horizontal line of dots in each left ornament, as described by Ashbrook



Dot in "S" variety, discussed on page 11

5c 1847 which I feel reasonably sure came from Plate One. If my deduction is correct this copy proves conclusively that Plate One consisted of two panes of 100 stamps to a pane. The Emerson copy is from the 10th vertical row of the left pane, and it shows a wide sheet margin measuring 7 MM, and part of a stamp in the first vertical row of the right pane of the plate.

Recently I discovered a copy of the "B" double transfer, #90, in the collection of the late Stephen D. Brown. This copy shows a sheet margin to right of a full $7\frac{3}{4}$ mm, but no trace of any stamp to right, hence, while the proof is not conclusive, I think there is little question of a doubt that double transfer "A" is actually 80 R 1 and double transfer "B" is 90 R 1. Thus the right pane of Plate One is identified, and proves that the left pane of Plate One consisted of ten examples of the "Dot in S" variety occurring in the ninth vertical row of this pane.

Figure #1 is an illustration of the Emerson "straddle pane" copy, the plate position of which is unknown to me, though I recall that Stephen Brown wrote me several years ago that he had located its position. My record shows there is another "straddle pane" 5c 1847 stamp in a famous eastern collection. Both of these stamps were evidently unknown to Chase when he was working on the 1847's, as he no doubt supposed that the affidavit quoted by Luff was correct and that the 5c and 10c plates consisted of but 100 subjects, surmising that there were three, 100 subject 5c plates, and two 100 subject 10c plates.

It has been stated on numerous occasions that the late Stephen Brown was attempting to reconstruct the two 5c plates. I did some work on the 5c plates in conjunction with Mr. Brown, but it was my belief at the time that he did not believe he could make very much plating progress on either of the plates, but was merely attempting to identify the positions of the double transfers "A" and "B", certain minor varieties, and key positions, such as the eight corner positions of each plate. Anyone with a knowledge

of plate reconstruction would realize that if the 16 corner positions of the four panes of the 5c plates could be identified it would indeed be quite an accomplishment.

I therefore feel reasonably certain that Mr. Brown, before his death, had located the positions of the "A" and "B" double transfers, but if so he never advised me of such a discovery.

Mr. Brown had a short article in *STAMPS*, issue of April 3, 1937, from which I quote the following:

"I believe the 5c 1847 can be solved at least to the extent that some of the constant plate varieties can be accurately located. Only four of the eight corner positions of Plate One are easily identified as single stamps, and not all of these four have been plated. And until certain key positions have been definitely established, the "Dot in S" row, and the corners, especially,—nothing much can be done."

At the time the above was published it does appear that Mr. Brown had not discovered the pane of Plate One which contained the "Dot in S" variety, hence he evidently was not certain regarding the pane of the "A" and "B" double transfers.

Illustrations herewith of the four double transfers are as follows: *[See illustrations, page 3]*

Figure #2. Double transfer "A"—plate position 80 R. 1. Scott describes this "Double transfer of top line." In this drawing I have drawn the four frame lines in black so that the double lines may be easily distinguished. This stamp is very easy to identify as it contains a heavy scratch to the right of "E" of "Postoffice." This "scratch" is shown on my cut "A" in the Scott Catalogue.

The guide dot in the middle left trifoliate is also drawn in black. Early impressions show the line in the top of the left "5" very distinctly.

Figure #3. Double transfer "B"—Plate position 90 R 1. Scott describes this as "Double Transfer of top and bottom lines." This position can easily be identified by the large "burr" to the left of the lower left corner of the stamp.

Figure #4. Double Transfer "C". From Plate Two. Position unknown. Scott describes this as "Double transfer of bottom frame line and lower part of left frame

line." Frame lines are drawn in black so as to emphasize the doubled lines. As only five copies of this rare variety are known at this writing, I would greatly appreciate advice of any copies unknown to me.

Figure #5. Double transfer "D". From Plate Two. Position unknown. Scott describes this as, "Double transfer of top, bottom, and left frame lines, also numerals." In the illustration, the frame lines are drawn in black and the extent of the double transfer is slightly exaggerated in order to show the direction of the "shift." Only one copy of this stamp has been reported, but surely there must be additional specimens in collections. Advice of others will be greatly appreciated.

Original 5¢ 1847 Plate Proofs

[See illustrations, page 8]

In the Emerson collection there was quite a unique block of 30 of the 5¢ 1847, (six horizontal x five vertical), an original plate proof on India paper printed in black, with each stamp overprinted in red with the word "Specimen." Judge Emerson loaned this item to me several years ago and I made a very careful study of it and also made a number of enlarged photographs. This proof was in all probability struck from the left pane before any of the issued stamps were printed. It shows that in the original lay-out of the copper plate that horizontal lines were ruled across the pane, and on these lines were placed the guide dots which were used to guide the entry of the single relief of the transfer roll. These guide dots are found at the middle left side of the stamps in the small trifoliate ornament, hence the horizontal lines extend across the stamps at a point between the tip of Franklin's nose and his upper lip. Fortunately this plate proof is from the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th vertical rows of the left pane and it shows five of the ten "Dot in S" stamps. In addition there is a vertical guide line which runs from top to bottom, on, or near the *right* frame lines of the five stamps in the 10th vertical row. There is a partial sheet margin at right and in this margin are guide dots to the

right of the middle of each stamp. Various positions in this large block show plate scratches and distinct plating marks. If it was possible to reconstruct even the left pane of Plate One this large block of 30 would be of immense assistance, but it is quite evident that the horizontal and vertical guide lines, plus the plate scratches, plus the plating marks, quickly wore away soon after the first impressions were taken from the plate and these valuable plating guides, so necessary in plate reconstruction were lost to us, so far as the stamps themselves are concerned. I am positive that if this plate had been of steel that all of these valuable plating marks would not have disappeared until after many thousands of impressions had been printed.

It has been suggested just for the sake of argument that possibly the 1847 plates were of steel, but were not case hardened, but there is no logic in this theory because if such had been the case the plate marks mentioned above would not have disappeared so early in the life of the plate. I have never been able to find, even among the earliest used copies of the 5¢ stamp, any specimens showing all of the plate markings as mentioned above on the block of plate proofs. Up to this writing I have not been able to identify the exact positions of this large plate proof block but with the assistance of the five "Dot in S" stamps in this block I believe the plating will be discovered in the near future. Attempting to locate the position of this block as a whole is quite a different task than in attempting to identify all the positions in this block among existing used specimens.

With such a fine plating piece as a guide it does seem that it would be possible to reconstruct the 30 positions in this block, from used singles and pairs, but I really doubt if it can be done, and if I am correct, what chance exists to reconstruct the 200 positions of Plate One, much less the Plate Two, stamps from which are much more scarce than those from Plate One.

Chase in his 1916 study made frequent

mention of the unsatisfactory 5c 1847 impressions, and attributed this to plate wear. He never had any apparent trouble in plating 3c 1851 copies regardless of plate wear and I am quite sure I have never had any trouble in plating One Cent 1851 copies from Plate One Late, in spite of the fact this steel plate was in constant use for some five or six years. The following is from the Chase Article, page 201:

"I made a serious attempt to plate the 5c 1847, but only a little progress was, or *can be made*." (Note by S.B.A.—Chase did not know he was working on copper plate printed stamps and attributed his inability to make progress to the scarcity of plating marks and "fine impressions in pairs and strips").

"The reason is as follows. For plating to be possible at least a fair number of the stamps on the plate must show varieties marked enough to allow of their constant recognition. A summing up of these varieties on the 5c is about as follows. Two Shifts, ten stamps with 'dot in S', four with a horizontal dash inside the right frame line, two with dots just outside the frame lines, a few with multiple guide dots, identical or mostly identical with the stamps showing 'dot in S', a few with *broken frame line at left*, and a very few with attempted repair of the broken frame line. Further than this the only plating guides are slight variations in the location of the guide dots, the differences of spacing and alignment, and copies showing *corner*, or other sheet margins. Pairs are comparatively common but strips and blocks are scarce, and further the *impressions are often far from clear, due to wear of the plate* or careless printing. When it is remembered that three plates of 100 exist, (note by S.B.A.—Chase thought there were three plates of 100 each, calling the 'Dot in S' pane, Plate No. 1, the 'A and B' double transfer pane, Plate No. 2, and the stamps from Plate 2 which made their appearance in 1850 as Plate No. 3. He did not suspect 400 different 5c 1847, but only 300.) the absolute hopefulness of plating the 5c 1847, without a goodly number of large blocks, is quite apparent."

Chase surmised that two plates were made and used from 1847 until 1850. Regarding two large blocks of Plate Proofs he made the following statement which is quite interesting. (page 171)

"The proof that two plates were used concurrently from 1847 to 1850 is as follows: Two large blocks of *plate proofs* have been seen, (these have since been cut up into smaller blocks) which overlapped to some extent. By this is meant that the blocks were large enough so that certain parts of the sheet of 100 appeared on both blocks. The spacing alignment, etc., of these stamps from duplicate plate positions was entirely different."

The following is Chase's description of the make up of the plates:

"Neither a plate number nor any imprint, (other than the tiny 'R.W.H. & E.' at the bottom of each stamp) is found on any of the 1847 plates. The plates, all of steel, consisted of ten rows of ten positions each. From the fact that the alignment is never perfectly regular either horizontally or vertically, it is evident that the impressions were rocked on the plate from the transfer roll one by one, and never in groups of two or more as was customary with most later issues. It seems fair to assume that a transfer roll having but one relief upon it was used, because had it been a multiple relief roller more than one impression would probably have been rocked at a time, and a certain regularity of alignment would have resulted.

The 5 cents plates were seemingly laid out in the following manner before the impressions were rocked on them by the transfer roll. Ten very faint horizontal guide lines were drawn on the plate to assist in placing the guide dots. These dots were placed ten to a line about 10mm. apart. In addition at least one plate showed a very faint vertical guide line even with the right edge of the right vertical row of stamps. With the exception of traces of this vertical guide line, none of these lines can be seen on the issued stamps although the original plate proofs often show them more or less clearly. The hundred impressions were then rocked on the plate with the aid of the guide dots so that ninety stamps (all but the extreme left vertical row) show one of these dots in the small tri-foliate ornament at the left of the medalion. The extreme right vertical row of stamps usually shows a dot in the corresponding position in the right sheet margin, that is, about 2mm. to the right of the right frame line. It should be noted that occasionally a stamp has two, or even three guide dots in the right sheet margin. The second marginal guide dot may be only about 1mm. from the stamp, in lines, horizontally with the other dot or maybe just above it. The third marginal dot found on at least one stamp—No. 80 in Plate No. 1, is just above the dot which is 2mm. away from the stamp. (Note by S.B.A.—Chase here refers to the 'Dot in S' pane, the left pane of Plate No. 1, and his No. 80 is therefore 80 L 1). On some of the stamps in the ninth vertical row of Plate No. 1, (note by S.B.A.—here Chase refers to the 'Dot in S' vertical row) two, and in one instance, No. 89 on the plate, (referring to 89 L 1) three, guide dots are found in the tri-foliate ornament at the left of the stamp. This vertical row is made up of the stamps with the variety 'Dot in S' of 'U. S.'. These multiple guide dots on the stamps also occur in a very few stamps not in this row." (Note by S. B. A.—Chase was mistaken as 89L1 does not show three guide dots)

The Dot in "S" Stamps

[See illustration, page 8]

Regarding this well known variety, Chase stated, (page 200)

"*Plate varieties other than shifts.* The most prominent of these is the variety 'Dot in S' of 'U. S.'. This, at its best, is a strong round dot of color at the upper left of the white part of the design of the letter 'S'. It exists in the *entire ninth vertical row of stamps* of the plate called

No. 1. The nearer the bottom of the plate the stronger the dot, and also, the earlier the impression the stronger the dot. Consequently late impressions of the upper stamps of the row may not show the dot at all. Most of the stamps in this row can be plated by the varying number and location of the guide dots in the tri-lobate ornament at the left of each design. This variety was probably caused by a small piece of metal adhering to the transfer roll and gradually wearing off as the plate maker neared the top of the plate."

Chase evidently obtained the above information from the large plate proof block which he stated was later cut up in smaller pieces. I have little doubt the Emerson block of 30 came from the one Chase referred to. Evidently Chase made an error in his notes as the Emerson block shows that the dots are stronger toward the top of the block rather than as Chase stated toward the bottom. These "Dot in S" stamps come from positions 9 L 1—19 L 1—29 L 1—39 L 1—49 L 1—59 L 1—69 L 1—79 L 1—89 L 1 and 99 L 1. It is probable that the positions were entered from top to bottom rather than from bottom to top, and that after the entry of 100 L 1, then 9 L 1, the top position in the 9th vertical row was entered. Inasmuch as 100 L 1 shows no dot in the S, some foreign substance probably became attached to the transfer roll relief after the entry of 100 L 1 and before the entry of 9 L 1. The Emerson block shows that the dot is much stronger in the upper positions of the vertical row, rather than in those in the lower part of the vertical row.

Describing other plate varieties Chase continued,

"The next most prominent variety is that with broken frame line at the left, the break-in marked examples—extending from opposite the bottom of 'P' of 'Post' to opposite Franklin's eyes. A very few stamps have been seen which show evidence of an attempt at repair of the broken line on the plate. This break is not due to wear as it may be found on early impressions. It is probably due to faulty transfer, as a careful examination of the die proofs shows this portion of the left frame line to have been weak. This line on the transfer roll being already weak in relief may also have become damaged.

"Other plate varieties include horizontal dashes just within the right frame line. These occur in at least four locations—one to a stamp. One has been seen opposite 'S' of 'U. S.', and three in varying locations near the center of the stamp. One stamp exists with a distinct dot just below the bottom frame line under the 'E' of the imprint.

Another shows a very plain dot near the top of the left half of the 'U' of 'U. S.' (This is the variety usually referred to as with 'dot in U'). Another stamp, probably No. 10 in Plate 1, shows three dots just outside of the design at the upper right corner."

Chase mentioned above a stamp which was probably a "#10 in Plate 1," and he was quite correct because I have a record of a horizontal pair from the top row, the left hand stamp being 9 L 1, a "dot in S" stamp, and the right stamp, 10 L 1. *Figure #6* illustrates a single from 10 L 1, showing the three dots at top right of the design, two very close to the corner, the third, quite heavy, in the margin, directly above the "S". Very early impressions of 10 L 1 show a "blur dot" in the left side of the "U" of "U. S." This marking does not show in the stamp illustrated by *Figure #6* which is a later printing.

Regarding margins, Chase expressed the opinion that the sheets of paper on which the stamps were printed were seemingly but little larger than the plates, and that the widest top sheet margin he had seen measured $9\frac{1}{2}$ mm, the widest bottom was 16mm, and the widest side margin was 9mm. He did not state whether this was a stamp from the 1st or 10th vertical rows of a plate.

Regarding the alignment he stated, page 197,

"On the 5 cent plates the horizontal alignment is sufficiently irregular, so that, in extreme cases a stamp may be found a half mm. higher than the adjoining one; while the vertical alignment sometimes shows almost a half mm. variation. The horizontal spacing varies from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 2mm. the average being a trifle over $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm.; while the vertical spacing varies from $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ mm., the average being a bit less than $1\frac{1}{4}$ mm."

Earliest Known Dates of Use

The Scott Catalog gives the date of issue of the 5c 1847, as *July 1, 1847*, but I have never seen a cover showing so early a use. Mr. Luff stated in his book, page 63, that on June 3, 1847, the Government ordered 600,000, Five Cent stamps, (or 3,000 sheets) and 200,000, Ten Cent stamps (or 1,000 sheets). This first order was completed and ready by June 26, 1847, as shown by the following letter, the original

An 1847 5¢ red brown (Scott 1), used to England, tied by New York red square grid cancel to folded lettersheet with invoice datelined 7th of July 1847, addressed to Messrs. T.W. Mackford & Co., Liverpool, England, 1/- due handstamp marking, manuscript Caledonia and back-stamped Liverpool July 28, 1847 upon arrival, also evidence of a reversed impression of red backstamp that appears to resemble a "7" quite possibly from an underlying datestamp of a postmark...Likely the earliest 5¢ 1847 use and the earliest possible recorded date to a foreign destination, one of two recorded covers used from New York on July 7, 1847: one domestic use to Poultney Vt. [I was unable to find a photo of this cover] and this datelined only cover to England which sailed on the Cunard Liner on its 2nd voyage of July 1847 aboard the "Caledonia", which departed from Boston on July 16th and arrived July 28th in Liverpool England.



From a November 1982 *Classics Chronicle* article, "The Earliest Known 1847 Covers": "The 5¢ cover without a postmark is a folded letter datelined New York July 7, 1847. This fine cover was recently sold by the Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries [1989 Rarities Sale] as part of the specialized transatlantic collection of Walter Hubbard. It was described as 'Earliest use of the 1847 issue to Europe.' A better description would have been 'One of three '47 covers to Europe via the first transatlantic crossing by a Cunarder after the stamps were issued and the one with the earliest dateline, July 7.' "It was, of course, written on July 7 but when was it stamped and mailed? No one knows but we know it reached Boston in time for the Cunard sailing on July 16. "Recently this cover without a postmark has been offered as the 'Earliest use of the 1847 Five Cent Stamp', which is not correct. Some time a U.S. #1 cover may be found confirming an earlier use than July 7 but it must be postmarked earlier, not just datelined.



The earliest documented usage of a U.S. 1847 issue, the 10¢ issue, Sc. 2, used July 2, 1847 on a legal size envelope addressed to the Marion County, Indiana, Circuit Court—discovered in 1972 by a tax consultant between the pages of a copy of "Annotated Indiana Statutes" from his library.

of which was exhibited at the Tipex in 1936 by The American Bank Note Co.,

New York, June 26th, 1847

Hon. Cave Johnson,
P. M. General,
Washington.

Sir:

We leave to inform you that the stamps ordered per your letter of the 1st inst. are ready for delivery, and we hold them subject to your further instructions.

Twenty thousand dollars in 10ct stamps, and thirty thousand dollars in 5ct. stamps, or 200,000 stamps of 10 cts. and 600,000 stamps of 5cts.

Very respectfully

Your obed. Servants,
Rawdon, Wright, Hatch & Edson.

From the above it would appear the stamps may have been placed on sale on July 1st, 1847 or very soon thereafter. Covers showing uses in July 1847 are extremely scarce.

Chase mentioned several possible early uses and I quote from his article, merely giving this information for what it is worth.

July 7, 1847

"A cover, shown to me by Dr. William Evans, addressed to Philadelphia, Pa. It bears a 5c 1847, *typical first printing* but there is absolutely no postmark of any kind on the cover. The letter is dated New York, July 7, 1847, and is endorsed by the receiver 'July 7-8-1847'—the '8' evidently being the date of receipt. The absence of postmarks makes one wonder if the letter might not have been carried by hand instead of being posted. But the history of the cover which came from the well known 'Whelen' correspondence of St. Louis Postmaster Provisionals fame, leads to the impression that the stamp had at least been purchased in the New York City Post Office not later than July 7, 1847."

July 9, 1847

"A cover, shown to me by Mr. J. J. Cone, Jr., addressed to Middletown, Conn. It bears the circular red postmark reading 'New York—9 Jul—5cts' in the upper right corner. In the lower left corner is an *uncanceled 5c 1847*. The *color* and *impression* indicate the first printing. The date of the letter and the receiver's endorsement both read 'July 9, 1847'. This cover, although it looks authentic in every way to me (It is not extremely unusual to find an 1847 stamp, that was not canceled on the original cover) is not absolutely conclusive".

Chase had no record of any other early uses between the above dates and the end of July 1847.

My record shows the following:

July 10, 1847, from New York.

A cover in the Waterhouse sale (1924)

July 14, 1847, Reported by Clarence W. Brazer.

July 15, 1847, Emerson Collection.

July 15, 1847, A cover to Ireland.
Reported by Iver Johnson.

July 30, 1847, Reported by Iver Johnson.

July 31, 1847, Reported by Iver Johnson.

Colors of the 5c 1847

Chase made an extensive study of the colors of the 5c 1847 and made careful comparisons of the various colors with the color charts in the Ridgway book. No finer or more accurate list has ever been published on this subject and for the benefit of present day collectors I am reproducing this section of his article in its entirety.

"First some considerations of the colors of the 5 cents stamps. The official description says 'light brown', and the other a brilliant orange brown. month to month varied greatly. By the examination of a large number of dated covers it has been possible to determine with considerable accuracy the sequence in which these various tints and shades appeared. Thus by noting the color, together with the impression (as indicating the amount of wear on the plate) it becomes possible to assign any given copy—not too badly discolored or 'oxidized'—whether on or off cover, to the approximate time of its issue.

Very briefly this sequence was about as follows: Two distinct colors were included in the stamps sent out in the first consignments. One is a clear rather dark brown (perhaps the official 'light brown'), and the other a brilliant orange brown. Later in the year—within six months of the date of issue—a rare color, indicating a small printing appeared which might be called black brown. This is the deepest shade in which the stamp is found.

During 1848 the color did not vary greatly, commonly being practically identical with the 1847 shade referred to as dark brown. One other color was used this year, not very different from the one just mentioned, but having a more reddish tone. This might be called dark reddish brown.

By 1849 the color ordinarily was considerably lighter, perhaps best described as reddish brown, another rare color, often referred to as the 're-print shade', was used this year. It is a lighter and brighter color, and may be called bright reddish brown. It does somewhat resemble one of the unusual government counterfeit colors. Possibly the ink mixer in 1875 was given, by chance, one of these rare shades as a sample of the color to be copied.

In 1850 the usual colors are grayish brown and dark grayish brown. A rarer shade is the dark olive brown, found only from worn plates as are

the two previously mentioned. During the latter part of this year a decided change was made in the ink, and the orange and colors more or less closely related to it appeared. These are described as orange and brownish orange.

The typical 1851 shade is also brownish orange, but the shade is darker than the 1850 brownish orange. These, to some extent, resemble the orange brown 1847 shade but the two can be differentiated after a little practice, although both are 'early' impressions.

A list of all the colors sufficiently distinct to allow of listing is given forthwith. Ridgway's 'Color Nomenclature' being the authority for the names in parenthesis.

1847

Orange brown (Auburn—11 m)
Bright orange brown (light auburn—11 1)
Dark brown (chestnut brown—11' m)
Black brown (dark Van Dyke brown—11'' o)

1848

Dark brown (chestnut brown—11' m)
Dark reddish brown (deep Rood's brown—11'' 1)

1849

Reddish brown (dark russet—13' 1)
Bright reddish brown (dark pecan brown—11'' 1)

1850

Grayish brown (light Mars brown—13' 1)
Dark grayish brown (Mars brown—13' m)
Dark olive brown (Prout's brown—15' m)
Orange (cinnamon-rufous—11' 1)
Brownish orange (dark cinnamon-rufous—11' 1)

1851

Deep browish orange (hazel—11' k)
Dark brownish orange (dark hazel—11' 1)

It should be understood that there are more slight shades and tints than are here given, as the colors often grade gradually from one to another. This list attempts to give only those prominent enough to deserve a separate name.

The rarest colors are the true orange and the black-brown, while the bright orange brown, the bright reddish brown, the brownish orange and the dark olive brown are not much commoner.

What are commonly called 'oxidized' copies—in reality they are the opposite being 'reduced'—may be found in varying shades up to a pretty fair black. Peroxide of hydrogen carefully applied will return them to their normal color. Stamps showing false colors and various degrees of fading also exist. These usually have been caused by prolonged exposure to sunlight, or by chemicals used in an attempt to remove a cancellation.

Thanks again to Mr. Berolzheimer it has been determined that the ink used was surely made from one or more of the iron containing brown pigments—sienna, ochre and umber; and that it is highly probable sienna was the principal pigment used. Comparing the stamps with the samples known to have been printed with these pigments, the 1847 colors (except the orange tints) are not

yellow enough for ochre, nor dark enough for umber. The ink used for the orange tints may have had some ochre with the sienna."

The 5c 1847 Orange

Scott's U. S. lists as 28 C an Orange shade. The real 5c 1847 Orange is a very much scarcer stamp than the catalog price indicates. There are orange brown copies and brown orange copies which are frequently sold with the assurance they are the real orange listed in the catalog. As will be noted by the Chase list of colors, the real orange is listed as a color which did not make its appearance until 1850. We have orange browns and bright orange browns, used on cover in 1847, but these colors are not in the same class with the 1850 orange, no more than a 3c rose of 1861 can be compared to a real 3c 1861 "Pigeon Blood Pink."

Plate No. 2

It has generally been supposed that Plate #2 was not made until the latter part of 1850 but I believe it was made either late in 1849 or early in 1850. I have seen several covers showing uses in April and May of 1850 which unquestionably bore stamps from Plate 2.

Regarding this point Chase stated:

" xxxxxx copies seen on covers dated during the first six months of 1851—(the last six months of the use of the issue), almost invariably show either *very worn impressions*, (note by S.B.A. Stamps from Plate No. 1) or else *clear, "early" impressions* in the *typical 1851 shade*, (note by S.B.A.—Stamps from Plate No. 2) and the clear impressions are far commoner. The very few exceptions noted are undoubtedly copies held over, by individuals or small post offices, from previous printings and used at this time."

Chase referred to the "*typical 1851 shade*" and this he called "Deep Brownish Orange" and "Dark Brownish Orange." I seriously doubt if many covers exist which show uses in 1850 of *fine early impressions from Plate One*. Therefore I think it is rather safe to assume that fine, clear, sharp impressions on covers with dates in 1850 are stamps from the less common Plate #2. I am constantly searching for such items and will appreciate the loan of any such covers showing uses in the first six

months of 1850. This is about the only way that Plate Two stamps can be distinguished from those from Plate One. We know that all covers showing uses in 1847—1848 and 1849 contain stamps only from Plate One. Further, the great majority of covers of the period, late 1849 or early 1850, show stamps with “worn plate impressions.”

When we locate a cover with a use for example, in late 1850 or early 1851, and the stamp is a fine early impression in the typical 1851 shade, we can be reasonably sure such a stamp comes from Plate 2. If such a stamp happens to be a corner margin copy, we know we have one of the pane key positions of Plate 2, and in this way we can eventually perhaps identify certain key positions of the two plates.

In Conclusion

With special permission from Dr. Chase

I have quoted freely from his original article because I believe that present day collectors are interested in the studies of twenty-five years back. I regret that each and every collector who is interested in the 1847 Issue does not possess the two outstanding studies of these stamps, viz.—The Chase study and the Perry study illustrating the plating of the 10c stamp.

Fine articles, such as the Chase and Perry studies, which are published serially in philatelic magazines eventually become buried and entirely forgotten, whereas had they been published in hand book form they would be available today for many collectors who would like to study their stamps in a serious manner.

I think United States collectors of the classic issues of the Nineteenth Century would gladly welcome a fine up-to-date hand book on the 1847 Issues. I, for one, would like to have such a work in my library.