

Mekeel's & Stamps Sampler:

Studying the Gordon Eubanks 1851-56 One Cent Blues

by John F. Dunn

On October 12-13 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries presented at auction a collection that Scott President Scott R. Trepel described as follows: "The 1851-1856 Imperforates in the Eubanks collection have everything a collector could desire. We regard it as the most outstanding collection of these issues ever formed, and do not make that judgment lightly. In our estimation, the material and overall quality of the Eubanks collection surpasses all other 1851-1856 collections."

We covered this auction in its entirety in *Mekeel's & Stamps*, One Cents through Twelve Cents. In this "Sampler," I present excerpts from the One Cents section, which was presented in Plate order, for two reasons, first, the Siegel Galleries provided extremely informative descriptions regarding the various Types; and second, to remind *USSN* readers that we also present U.S. material in *M&S*. Note that the descriptions are those of the auctioneers. If I do have any comments, they will be in brackets; and the prices quoted here do not include the 18% Buyer's Premium that is added on to these hammer prices.

The first lot that relates to the printing of the One Cent Blue stamps is this cover with the 1¢ Blue Types I-Ib-Ib (5-5A-5A), Positions 7-8-9R1E, horizontal strip of three, Type I at left and two Type Ib stamps at right,



large margins all around showing traces of surrounding positions at left and bottom, brilliant Plate 1 Early shade and finely detailed impression, complemented by clear strikes of vivid red grid cancels, equally sharp strike of matching "Richmond Va. Jul. 5" (1851) circular datestamp on blue folded letter, the fifth day of the issue. The strip includes the finest Scott 5. Stanley Ashbrook, the eminent philatelic scholar, hailed this as "Number One" of all rare United States covers.

The 1¢ 1851 Franklin, a workhorse postage stamp from 1851 through 1861, was printed from 200-subject steel plates numbered 1 through 12 (Plate 6 was never used, and Plate 1 exists in Early and Late states). Only Plates 1 through 4 were used to print stamps that were issued imperforate. The original 1¢ 1851 die design has an elaborate ornamental border on all four sides. Several factors affected the designs entered on the plates, which in turn produced variations in the printed stamps.

Stanley B. Ashbrook developed the system used to classify design types, based on the premise that Type I should be a printed version that comes closest to the original die design. The completeness of the ornamentation at top and bottom is a requirement for Type I. For imperforate stamps, Ashbrook found only one position among the 1,000 subjects that met this requirement—Position 7R1E—which is why Scott 5, a Type I imperforate stamp, is so rare. Type Ib, Scott 5A, has slightly less ornamentation and was also printed from Plate 1 Early (imperforate only).

Most of the approximately 100 known examples of Scott 5 do not have full margins, so parts of the ornamentation are cut off. The strip offered here has large margins, providing an unimpeded view of the Type I and Type Ib designs.

Estimate \$200,000-300,000, hammer price \$310,000.

Next, as background information for a cover, not shown here, we have this description: Three new stamps—1¢, 3¢ and 12¢ denominations—

were necessary after postage rates were revised by Congress during the Fillmore administration. Effective July 1, 1851, the basic rates became 1¢ for newspapers and circulars, 1¢ for drop letters and carrier fees, 3¢ for domestic letters sent up to 3,000 miles, and 6¢ for letters sent over 3,000 miles. Prepayment by stamps or stamped envelopes was not made compulsory until 1855, but for the first time there were higher rates for letters sent unpaid—5¢ instead of 3¢, and 10¢ instead of 6¢. The combination of convenience and the financial incentive to prepay postage led to a rapid increase in stamp use and popularity.

All three 1851 Issue stamps were supplied to certain post offices on or before July 1, 1851, the first day of the new rates. The census of 1851 First Day Covers published by Wilson Hulme in 2001 tallied 45 covers... Only two have 1¢ stamps... The other 43 have 3¢ stamps, and currently there are no 12¢ July 1 covers known. The cover in this lot, one of the two with 1¢ stamps, with an estimate of \$100,000-150,000, drew a top hammer price of \$125,000.

Among stamps off cover, we start with this Type Ib (5A), large margins including portion of Position 16 below, with "New-York Nov. 11" c.d.s., Position 6R1E, one of the two positions that furnished the best Type Ib examples, showing the complete design at top and nearly complete design at bottom. [Note that as explained further, the auctioneers are referring to how the plate was prepared, not that a portion was cut short by the user, something that is evidenced by the presence of the adjacent stamp at the bottom.]



Type Ib was produced only as an imperforate stamp from Plate 1 Early. Six positions on Plate 1E furnished stamps qualifying as Type Ib—Positions 3-6R and 8-9R—distinguished by the complete design at top and nearly complete design at bottom. When first entered on the plate, these six positions (as well as 7R1E) had the complete design at top and bottom. However, unlike 7R, small portions of the bottoms were ironed out when the entries were made below them. Positions 6R and 8R had less of the bottom erased than the other Type Ib positions, and for this reason they are more desirable examples of the type.

SCV \$11,000, hammer \$13,000.



To the left above is the 1¢ Blue Type II (7), Position 65R1E, the most prominent double transfer on Plate 1 Early, large to huge margins including portion of adjoining stamp at left, brilliant Plate 1E shade, cancelled by town datestamp, a superb example of 65R1E, this is the most pronounced of the eight double transfers on Plate 1 Early, the lines of Franklin's shoulder and the lower label are extensively doubled.

SCV \$500, hammer \$2,600.

To the right is a Type IIIa (8A) I selected for viewing so that you can see the difference between it and the double transfer example. From Position 51R1E, it shows a left interpane margin and centerline, has large margins all around, and a wide break in the top outer line. Plate 1 Early stamps showing the centerline are rare. Position 51RE is one of the best examples of Type IIIa on Plate One Early. Estimate \$1,500-2,000, hammer \$2,000.



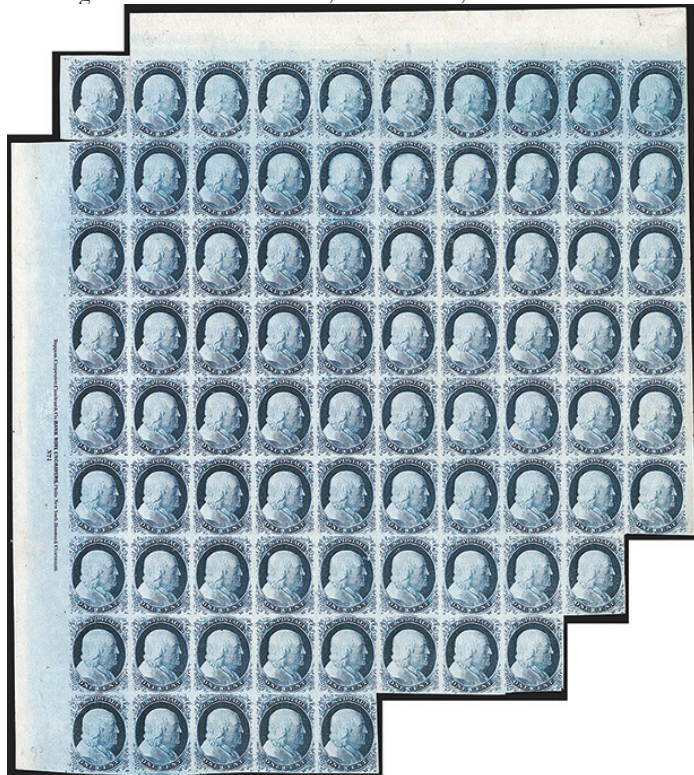
Another lesson from the auctioneers comes in the form of the lot description for this cover with Types II-IIIa-IIIa-II-IIIa-II (7-8A-8A-7-8A-7), Positions

31-36R1E horizontal strip of six, with left interpane margin and centerline, tied by neat strikes of "Sacramento City Cal. 1 Mar." (circa 1852) c.d.s. on buff cover to Bloomville Ill., the strip of six used to pay the 6-cent Transcontinental rate from California, on an early date.

The 6¢ transcontinental rate was effective from July 1, 1851, to March 31, 1855. This use of the 1¢ stamp from Plate 1 Early probably dates to 1852. The Neinken book notes "I have a very incomplete record of early uses of the one cent stamps in California, but I have observed very few uses in 1851. Supplies of the three cents were not received at the San Francisco Post Office until late in September of 1851, and it is doubtful if any one cents were sent out there so early. Covers from California to Eastern states showing the single 6¢ rate paid by a block of six, or a strip of six Plate IE stamps are scarce items."

Estimate \$7,500-10,000, hammer price \$10,000

Below we view the Type IV (9) in an unused, no gum, block of 82 from the left pane of Plate 1 Late, nearly full top and left sheet margins, single Position 1 at top left corner with huge margins has been reattached but appears to originate from the same sheet, showing complete left "Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. BANK NOTE ENGRAVERS. Phila. New York, Boston & Cincinnati" imprint and "No. 1" plate number, numerous double transfers and Positions 71 and 81 with triple transfer, one inverted, a few light creases between rows, Positions 10, 30 and 50 have creases



ending in tears, three stamps have trivial surface scuffs and there is a small margin thin affecting Position 81, the stamps in the plate block are sound.

This is the largest existing multiple for the left pane of Plate One Late. In its early state, before 199 of the 200 subjects were recut, there was no imprint on Plate 1. At the time of reworking the plate, the Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Co. imprint with the plate number ("No. 1") was added at the sides, which makes this the first plate number in United States stamp production. This largest recorded multiple from the left pane of Plate 1 Late contains probably the finest plate block of the issue as well. The only larger 1¢ 1851 multiple is the unique complete pane of 100 from the right pane of Plate 1 Late. The complete pane of 100 from Plate 2 (including the Position 99R2 Type III) was broken up after the 1980 Ishikawa sale.

Estimate \$30,000-40,000, hammer price \$42,500.



Next we view a Type IV (9) Positions 88-90L1L horizontal strip of three, left two stamps recut once at top and bottom, right stamp recut once at top and twice at bottom, extra large right straddle-pane margin with centerline, capturing an unusually large portion of stamp from right pane, left two stamps also showing double transfers. [Type IV comes recut at either top, bottom, top and bottom.]

Estimate \$750-1,000, hammer price \$1,500.

We conclude this section, which covers the One-Cent Blue Plate One, with a hand-drawn illustrated cover bearing the 1¢ Type II (7) and 3¢ Dull Red Type

II (11A), Washington driving a horse and wagon with Franklin on back thumbing his nose at a dog, the 1¢ being tied by a "West Cambridge Ms. Feb.



11" c.d.s. From the Pattee Correspondence, the auctioneers describe it as "one of the most famous and extraordinary of all American hand-drawn covers." Estimate \$20,000-30,000, hammer price \$70,000. [This lot was not relevant to the study of the Types, but I could not resist including it here.]

We continue our viewing of the October 12-13 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries presentation at auction of the Gordon Eubanks 1851-1856 Imperforates Collection. Having covered the One Cent Blue Plate 1 lots, we now turn to the other plates.

[The information provided here is from the exceptional lot descriptions of the auctioneers. My comments, if any, are in brackets; and the prices quoted here do not include the 18% Buyer's Premium that is added on to these hammer prices.]

The first Plate 2 lot selected for viewing in this study is seen on page 12. From the lot description, "Positions 81/91L2, vertical pair, original gum, small h.r., enormous margins all around including huge bottom left corner sheet margins...so wide they actually capture the outline of the edge of the printing plate, also with part of adjoining stamp at top..." [Positions are numbered from left to right, top row first, so Position 81 would be the leftmost position in the 9th row and Position 91 would be the leftmost position in the bottom row, which would end with Position 100 at the lower right.]

Completing the description, "There are several desirable positions of

this type. Among these are: the one position on Plate 1 Late which is not recut; the top row positions on Plate 4, which show the design complete at top; the plate crack positions from the top left of Plate 2; and any stamp from the short-lived Plate 3. We would add corner sheet-margin positions to this list. This pair was cut from a block of eleven after it appeared in our 1988 Rarities sale.”



To the left we have an appealing lot that includes an informative lot description. The lot is a Type II (7), Positions 40/50/60R2 [note that the R indicates right pane of 100 from the Plate of 200, while L indicates the left pane], vertical strip of three, including “er, Casbore & Co. BANK NOTE ENGRAVERS. Phila. New York, Boston & Cincinnati” imprint and “No. 2.” plate number, manuscript cancels and partly eradicated “Business Corner, Iowa” manuscript postmark in sheet margin.

With an estimate of \$2,000-3,000, the strip hammered for \$3,500.

Next we view the Type II, Plate 2 Crack (Sc. 7 variety), Positions 1-4/11-14/21-24L2, top left corner margin block of twelve.



It contains four of the Plate 2 crack positions (Pos. 2, 12, 13 and 23), a late state of the crack showing widening through Position 23... Unlike plate cracks resulting from stress fractures during the course of printing, the Plate 2 crack is believed to have been caused by an integral flaw in the steel plate. As Plate 2 was used, the crack widened and extended downward into the fourth row. Estimated at \$30,000-40,000, it hammered for \$32,500.

This next lot is for the specialists among us. It is a block of six that incorporates a Type III, Position 99R2 (Sc. 8) in the block that encompasses Positions 79-80/89-90/99-100R2, Position 99R2 bring at bottom left, other stamps Type II (Sc. 7).

Position 89R2 [second stamp down on the left] with pronounced double transfer,... the most important stamp (Position 99R2) is completely sound and superb.

Plate 2 was made in late 1855, and consists of 198 stamps that are Type II, one position that is Type III (99R2) and one that can be Type II or Type

IIIa (100R2) [lower right stamp]. To summarize the Ashbrook and Neinken books: Guide dots were used to correctly lay out the spacing for the plate. Positions 79 and 89 were transferred perfectly using their guide dots. However, the guide dot to the south-east of Position 88R2, which was used to align the single B Relief for Position 99R2, was placed far out of line. The misplaced dot was accidentally used and the bed of the press was moved too far, resulting in the bottom



part of the A Relief being transferred into the bottom part of Position 89 (and in the margin below this position) by mistake. The original entry of Position 99R was out of place and so it was erased or burnished out, but seemingly no attempt was made to erase the parts of the A Relief transferred into the bottom of Position 89R. When the fresh entry was made in Position 99R a full transfer of the design was not possible without running into the error in Position 89R. The position was therefore short transferred at top, and apparently also at bottom, creating the finest example of Type III found on any plate. Position 100R2 can be Type IIIa (from plate wear) but it is an early state Type II [Sc. 7] in the block offered here.

[Regarding the double transfer in Position 89R2, you can compare this stamp with the surrounding stamps to make out the doubled areas. As for the discussion of the effects of the placement of the dot outside of Position 89, compare how it touches the stamp above it, whereas the stamps to the right do show a gap. At the same time, notice how there is only a very slight horizontal space between any of the stamps, which explains why so many are found with incomplete designs at top or bottom.]

With an estimate of \$50,000-75,000, this block hammered for \$80,000.

Continuing to learn from the Siegel lot descriptions, here we view an example of Type IIIa, supported by the lot description: Type IIIa (8A), Position 100R2, **clear broken line at bottom** [emphasis added] full to large margins all around...this is the only position on Plate 2 that yields a Type IIIa stamp. In the early state of the plate the position was Type II but became Type IIIa as the plate wore through use...listed but unpriced in Scott [from Plate 2], Scott value as normal 8A from Plate 1E is \$750.

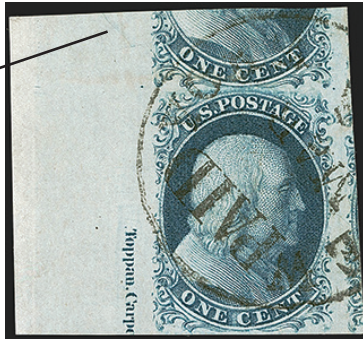


[Pulling together this description with the previous Plate 2 lots, Scott 7, Type II has complete oval frames, Scott 8, Type III has breaks in the ovals at top and bottom, while Scott IIIa, which developed from wear of Type II, has only one break, at either top or bottom, but not both top and bottom. When you incorporate the reasons for the various types, along with the number of plates used and the listed and unlisted varieties, you can understand how the One Cent Blue has fascinated so many great philatelists for more than a century.]

Back to this stamp, estimated at \$500-750, it hammered for \$2,300.

Moving on to Plate 3, we have this striking Type II, Plate 3 (Sc. 7) Position 31L3 with huge left sheet margin and “Toppan, Carpe(nte)r” portion of imprint. In addition, and more relevant to previous discussions,

it also shows surface cracks [diagonal, in the area of the pointer], cancelled by unusual "New York Paid" circular datestamp. This remarkable stamp is illustrated and described in the Neinken book (Fig. 14-D, pages 221-222). Ashbrook described Position 31L3 as "the finest example of these left edge cracks" (Vol. I, page 224).



Estimated at \$3,000-4,000, it hammered for \$4,250.

Here we have a rare "straddle pane" margin stamp that used to be described as "scarce," a Type II, Plate 3 (7) Position 81R3, huge right straddle-pane margin and centerline, clearly showing a portion of Position 90L3 from the adjacent pane. This has gone from scarce to rare "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 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, this example is particularly desirable from the elusive Plate 3" Estimated at \$750-1,000, it hammered for \$1,300.



More cracks: Type II, Plate 3 (7), Positions 97-99L3, strip of three with 14mm bottom sheet margin showing light surface cracks throughout the strip.



This is the famous "Warner Strip" called by Neinken, "A beautiful and extremely rare piece, perhaps the most valuable strip of surface cracks from this plate." [The cracks are most visible in the margins, though you might be able to spot a few using your pdf magnifier tool.]

Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, it soared to a hammer price of \$24,000.

From Plate 4 [keeping in mind, Plate 3 was not used], we start with this Type Ia (Sc. 6) Position 100R4, F Relief, huge margins to full, deep rich Plate 4 color and impression, Type Ia being one of the rarities from Plate 4.



Stamps printed from Plate 4 were issued in April, May and briefly in June 1857 before perforations were introduced. The relatively small number of imperforate Plate 4 stamps issued during this period explains the rarity and desirability of any of the imperforate stamp types produced from this plate (Ia, Ic, II, III and IIIa). The rare Type Ia, showing the full design at bottom, was furnished only by 18 of the 200 subjects on Plate 4 (the remaining two bottom-row positions were sub-type Ic).

[Type I shows the complete design, Type Ia is complete at the bottom but not at the top...notice, for example, the incomplete plumes at the top.]

With an SCV of \$9,500, this stamp hammered for \$9,000.

Here's another One Cent Blue lesson, next column: Type Ic (Sc. 6b) Position 91R4, F Relief and one of the most distinct positions of this scarce type on Plate 4, large margins to barely touching bottom left plume,



deep rich color.

Positions 91R [rightmost stamp in the right pane] and 96R [sixth stamp in from the right] on Plate 4 come from the bottom row and have the full plume at bottom left and partly complete plume at right (a sub-type of Type Ia, above, which has all bottom plumes complete). Neinken states that Position 91R4, offered here, yields the best example of the rare Type Ic.

With an SCV of \$9,000, it hammered for \$10,000.

Still comparing Types, we come back to a Type II: Plate 4 (Sc. 7), Position 10L4, unused (no gum), huge top right corner interpane margins with centerline, deep rich color, intense shade and impression.

The top row of Plate 4 produced Type II stamps with the complete design at top [but not at the bottom]. These distinctive positions are highly regarded by specialists and described as "rare" and "beautiful" in Neinken (pp. 269-270). Position 10L4 offered here has a very small break in the bottom outer [oval] line, between the "E" and "C" of "Cent". Some specialists argue that this qualifies it as a [much more valuable] Type IIIa. Scott value [Type II from Plate 4] as original gum is \$3,250.00. Estimated at \$2,000-3,000, it hammered for \$1,900.



With Wagshal in mind, here we have a lot with the Type II Chicago Perf 12-1/2 (7 var), Plate 2, with full perforations on all four sides, tied by "Chicago Ill. May 29, 1856" year-dated circular datestamp on folded printed Chicago Market Review and Weekly Prices Current to E. Armitage in Exeter Ill., the circular contains a report from R. K. Swift, promoter of the Chicago Perfs.



We complete these excerpts from our M&S coverage, with an Imperf T from Plate 2 on one of only five recorded covers bearing the One-Cent Chicago [private] Perforation, this is the only one with a date specified, making this the earliest documented usage, one of the great rarities of the One Cent 1851-57 issue.



The origin of the Chicago perforation was revealed in an article published by Jerome S. Wagshal in the Chronicle 130 (May 1986). To briefly summarize Mr. Wagshal's revelations, the inventor of the machine used to create the Chicago Perf stamps was Dr. Elijah W. Hadley, a Chicago dentist. He probably constructed the machine in 1854. Over a two-year period, beginning in November 1854, Dr. Hadley's device was offered for sale to the Post Office Department through R. K. Swift, a prominent Chicago banker and businessman. The distinctive 12-1/2-gauge Chicago Perf was applied to sheets of the 1¢ (Plates 1 Late and 2) and 3¢ 1851 Issue, the former being considerably rarer. Approximately 18 examples of the 1¢ Chicago Perf have been recorded, including five used on covers...only three in private hands. Estimated at \$15,000-20,000, it hammered for \$15,500.

