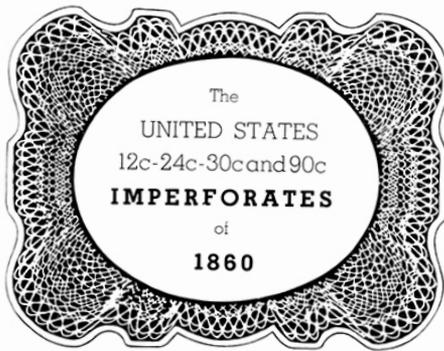


From the Stamp Specialist:

Per the introduction below, which would have been written by Harry L. Lindquist, the publisher of the Stamp Specialists, as well as STAMPS Magazine, this is an excellent article. It is packed with information on the subject of the 1860 Imperfs; perhaps more important—certainly extremely interesting—is the ‘behind the scenes’ view of how the Scott Catalogue editors not only approach a listing, but also reverse it when that is found to be necessary.

The author, Stanley Ashbrook, may be the leading expert of his era; equally important, he was able to put his expertise to paper in an understandable way.

As I am presenting the text as a copy from the Stamp Specialist Book 3, published in May 1940, where additional information or images are useful, I footnoted them in the appropriate places and added them on at the end of the article. JFD.



by Stanley B. Ashbrook, F.R.P.S.L.

This article should interest every collector who owns a Scott's Specialized U. S. Catalogue, whether he collects 19th or 20 Century stamps. It raises a most important question as to what the catalog should contain and what it should not contain, which applies to every stamp that is listed. It is interestingly written and contains information that every collector should have, in a non-technical language. We have no hesitancy in saying that this is unquestionably the best philatelic article that has appeared in the philatelic press in many moons.

As each year rolls by, there are undoubtedly quite a number of new collectors who become greatly interested in the classic issues of Nineteenth Century U. S., but probably only a small percent of these have access to the files of philatelic publications of past years, hence reliable information on many subjects, which are quite well known to the older class of specialists, are entirely unknown to those who have joined our ranks in recent years.

Recognition of this fact, furnishes the sole excuse for these notes on the above subject.

The true story of the *trial printings* of the 24c, 30c and 90c, as listed above in the catalog is quite interesting, and while the notes and comments to follow

contain little information which is actually new on the subject, still I believe there are quite a number of new collectors who will be much interested in having an old tale retold.

In attempting to carefully analyze the catalog listings of numbers 37, 38, and 39, may I state in the beginning that in my opinion, I do not believe that these so-called "Imperforates of 1860" are entitled to be classed as a part or parcel of the 1851 issue of imperforate stamps, and further that they are not "regularly issued" U. S. postage stamps. So far as I am aware, there does not exist one particle of competent evidence which even indicates that the U. S. Post Office Department issued to the general public, any values of postage stamps in imperforate condition in the years 1860 and 1861.

In the **Scott United States Catalogue**, 1940 Edition, the following are listed, as imperforate stamps:

1860		(unused)	(used)
¢37	— A17 — 24c Lilac	300.00	_____
	Pair	3,500.00	_____
¢38	— A18 — 30c Orange	500.00	_____
	Pair	5,000.00	_____
¢39	— A19 — 90c Blue	1,000.00	_____
	Pair	8,000.00	_____

The notation below the above listing reads,

"From investigations by careful students, it seems probable that Nos. 37, 38 and 39 were not regularly issued, but came from trial printings. There is also a possibility that a trial printing in black of the 30 cent stamp was sold and used for postage."

1

These three values are not postage stamps, but are in fact nothing more or less than *trial printings* which were submitted to the U. S. Post Office Department, by the bank note engraving firm of Toppan Carpenter & Company, the Government stamp contractors, merely as samples or trial color printings in the summer of 1860 and prior to the time of the actual issuance of the regularly prepared and perforated stamps of the three values of 24c, 30c and 90c. In other words, they are *proofs on regular postage stamp paper*, and I defy anyone to prove the above facts are incorrect in any particular.

The notation in the Scott catalog, following the listing, contains a warning that these three items may not have been "regularly issued," but the notation is not positive, because it gives the impression there may be some doubt of this fact, because it states, "it seems *probable* that Nos. 37, 38 and 39 were not regularly issued etc." ²

Perhaps some of my readers will inquire, "If what you state is actually true, that these three items are not U. S. postage stamps, are the facts in the case unknown to Hugh Clark, the Editor of the Scott U. S. catalog? And further if the facts are known to Mr. Clark, then why are these three proofs listed side by side with our regular stamps and why are spaces provided for the three proofs in the Scott albums, such spaces being a part and parcel of the regular issue of the 1851 imperforates?"

In justice to my good friend Hugh Clark, permit me to explain that he had nothing to do with the original listing of these three items. They were in the Scott catalogs and Scott albums when he joined the Scott organization many years ago, in fact they had been in these publications for many years prior to that time.

In addition, as the authority for the listing, the Scott Co. had Mr. Luff's statement in his published book, on United States postage stamps, that he believed the three items were actually issued in imperforate condition. I might add that the Luff book was published by the Scott Company in 1902.

While the catalog contains a warning in the notation, attention is called to the fact there is no warning in the Scott albums. There we find spaces for *regularly issued* 24c, 30c and 90c imperforate stamps of 1860, and such spaces are no different from the legitimate values of 1c, 3c, 5c, 10c and 12c.

I wish it distinctly understood that I am not criticising the editors of the Scott catalogs or albums, nor attempting in any way to suggest to them what should or should not be included in their publications. I wish merely to set forth all the facts, opinions, etc. at my disposal for the benefit of the collecting public, so that they, and they alone, can judge whether or not discredited items should still be listed in catalogs and printed albums, as "regularly issued postage stamps."

Some dealers, with whom I have discussed this subject, expressed the opinion that inasmuch as these three "proofs" were recognized for so many years as legitimate Government issues, that it would be unwise to discontinue them from their present position in the catalog. This opinion recalls to my mind that the Scott U. S. catalog some years ago included the following notation below the listing of Nos. 37, 38 and 39:

"From investigations by careful students it seems probable that Nos. 37, 38, and 39 were not regularly issued but came from trial printings. But, because there is *no positive proof* of this and because these imperforate varieties have long been accepted by collectors, we retain them in the catalogue."

In short the above notation stated, "It seems probable they were not regularly issued, but because there is no positive proof to this effect, we retain them in the catalog."

In all fairness, may I inquire, that if we have no proof whatsoever that these trial printings were actually issued, or regularly issued, in imperforate condition, then how can "careful students" produce *positive proof* to the contrary? I believe that all the careful students can do is to attempt to show the fallacy of the "proof" that was originally produced, and which was the basis of the misplaced legitimacy accorded these three trial printings. Careful students such as Dr. Carroll Chase and Elliott Perry expressed their unstinted condemnation of these "so-called imperforates" many years ago, and as I recall, I published an article on the subject in the *American Philatelist* back in 1921 (December Issue).

Regarding the change made in the wording in the catalog of the notation following the listings of #37—#38 and #39. Attention is called to this change merely as a matter of this record, and not with any desire to criticise it one way or the other.

Suppose for example, we had a listing in the catalog of the 10c 1847 "Perforated," and the "evidence" of such a mythical listing was the endorsement given such a variety by Mr. Blank, who published as a fact he had heard on good authority that in 1848, Messrs. Rawdon Wright Hatch & Edson sent over to London, twenty-five sheets of the 10c 1847 for the purpose of having Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Co., perforate these sheets as an experiment. When the sheets

were returned they were placed in the regular stock and in the course of time were issued to various postmasters throughout the country and sold by them over the counter to the public.

Mr. Blank stated that an old friend of his, told him positively that his uncle, long since dead, often recalled the fact that he had purchased several of the perforated 10c 1847 stamps at the Fall River Post Office. But the convincing proof that perforated 10c 1847 stamps were actually issued was a cover in the collection of Mr. "X" which was purchased in the fall of 1934 from the well known firm of J. Zareski & Co. of Paris, Ky. This cover had a perforated copy of the 10c 1847 neatly tied to cover by a Fall River, Mass. Postmark. Mr. Blank stated, "This cover establishes, beyond doubt, the use of the 10c stamp in perforated condition."

I will admit the above is all rather silly, but we must not forget the fact that we are dealing with quite an absurd situation, i.e., proofs listed as regular postage stamps.

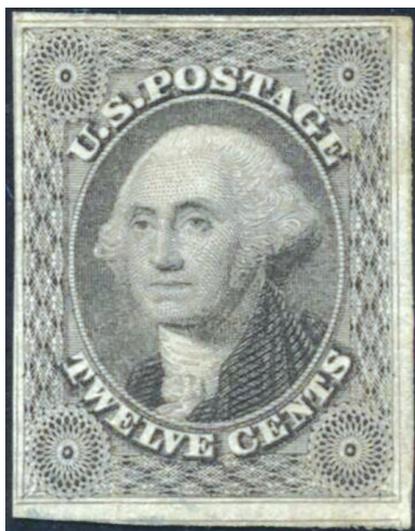


Figure No. 1—The 12c 1851, from Plate No. 1

Where may I inquire could careful students obtain positive proof that no 1847 perforated stamps were issued to the public, and likewise where may I inquire can we find positive proof that a thing that never did happen, actually did not happen, such as the issuance in the year 1860 of three high value U. S. stamps in imperforate condition?

I call attention to the heading of these notes; "The U. S. 12c, 24c, 30c and 90c Imperforates of 1860," and the reader will perhaps wonder why I included the 12c value, and the answer is, that there was a "12c imperforate trial printing of 1860" which is in absolutely the same class as the other three values. If there exists any reason on earth why the 24c, 30c and 90c should be listed in the catalog then I think that in all fairness, the fourth member of this group should be given recognition.

These 12c imperforate trial printings of 1860 came from the 12c Plate #3, and we know positively that this plate was not made until the spring of 1860. I have little doubt that copies of these Plate #3 imperforate proofs *on regular postage paper* are equally as rare as copies of the other three values of 24c, 30c and 90c. ³

If we consider the high prices which have ruled for many years for numbers 37, 38 and 39, it does seem highly probable that someone or some group probably profited by the listing of these trial printings. Evidently it was not possible to exploit the 12c Plate 3 trial printing, because there was no novelty about a 12c imperforate stamp, regardless of the fact whether it came from Plate One or Plate Three. But inasmuch as none of the three high values issued in 1860 were known otherwise than perforated, then it appears that someone really had something when "unused imperforate copies" of these stamps showed up and were given catalog recognition.

I think very few collectors have ever given much thought to this point, that is, instead of "three 1860 imperforate trial printings," there were actually four.

Figure No. 1 illustrates a 12c 1851, the regularly issued stamp. The 12c value was first issued in 1851 and there was only one plate used from 1851 until the second plate was made in the spring of 1860. This second 12c plate was given the number "3" instead of "2" for some unknown reason.

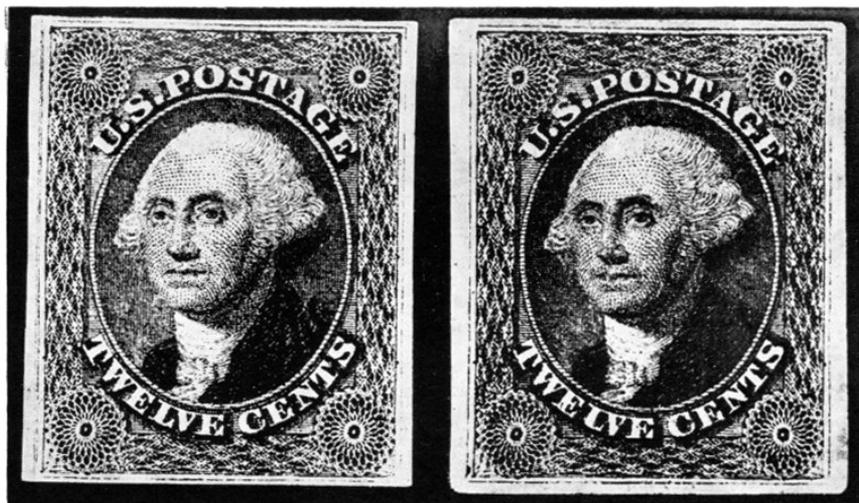


Figure No. 2—Two copies of the 12c imperforate trial printings from Plate 3.

Figure No. 2 illustrates two copies of the 12c imperforate *trial printings* from Plate 3.

It is not at all hard to distinguish 12c Plate 3 copies from 12c stamps from Plate 1. In the latter the frame lines are sharp and clear, whereas in the former the side lines are not sharp but fuzzy and broken, and the average impressions are far inferior to those from Plate 1.

The Plate 3 "imperforates" or trial printings are quite rare, but the Plate 3 regularly issued perforated stamps are rather common. No imperforates from Plate 3 were issued through post offices.

Inasmuch as no claim was made by Mr. Luff in his book on U. S. postage stamps that any 12c "imperforates" were issued in 1860, the above trial printing could hardly be classed as a #36, because all 12c 1851 imperforates are recognized as originating only from Plate 1. While #51, the 12c 1857, mentions that these stamps were printed from Plates 1 and 3, no listing is made of a variety "imperforate," or rather an error of perforation.

There is no listing under "Proofs and Essays" of this 12c 1860 trial printing of 1860 from Plate 3, hence here is an item equally as legitimate as numbers 37, 38 and 39 which is not given any recognition whatsoever in the catalog. Its rightful place is in the Proof Section.

An unused copy of the regular 12c 1851 lists at \$85 yet this 12c Plate 3 trial printing of 1860 is many times more rare. An unused pair of the 12c 1851 lists at \$275, but I dare say very few pairs of the 12c Plate 3 trial printing of 1860 exist.

In the Chase sale (Kelleher—May 22, 23, 1925) Lot #1035 described as follows, sold at \$29.00:

"Superb unused *imperf.* copy from Plate #3. Large margins on *regular* stamp paper. Double frame line at left."

In the recent sale of the Brown collection, under the heading, "1851-56, 12c Black, Scott #36," Lot 589, was described as follows: "12c black, a beautiful unused copy from Plate 3 (Stamps from this plate were issued without gum) rare." The sale price was \$15.

The fact is that no imperforate stamps from Plate 3 were issued to the public, hence it is not surprising that they are *without gum*.

As quoted in the forepart of these notes, the catalog states, "There is also a possibility that a trial printing in *black* of the 30 cent stamp was sold and used for postage."

It is an established fact that a trial printing of the 30c value was made in *black* on regular postage paper, but we have no authentic proof that any 30c 1860 *blacks* were issued in 1860 or 1861, either in imperforate or perforated condition. If by any possible chance, a 30c *black* stamp was issued, it is only natural to assume they were issued like the other values, that is, perforated. Therefore I see no logic in anyone attempting to give any legitimacy to the 30c black trial printings on regular postage paper.

The following is the description of Lot 1135 in the Chase sale. (1925).

"The *imperf* 30c in *black* on regular stamp paper. These come in the class of stamps 'prepared for use but not issued.' The contractor printed many thousand before it was decided to use orange instead of black. There is a possibility that some of these may have been used for postage. This copy is 31R1 and shows a shift of the top left arrow. Very fine and rare." The sale price was \$43.00.

It is of interest to compare auction prices of the two 30c *trial color proofs*. At the Crocker sale in London (November 1938) a 30c orange #38, brought ninety-two pounds, ten shillings, or close to \$450, whereas a 30c black brought only eleven pounds. I have no idea as to the comparative scarcity of these two 30c proofs, but I do believe the great difference in price between them is due solely to the fact that for over half a century collectors have been led to believe the 30c orange was really a *very rare U. S. postage stamp*, whereas the 30c black was merely a trial color printing.

It is quite true that in listing 37, 38 and 39, the catalog states that it seems probable these were not regularly issued. The mere fact that the catalog gives these trial printings recognition as major listings among regularly issued stamps provides, in my opinion, an excuse for some dealers and some auction houses to describe these three items in the same manner as they describe regularly issued U. S. stamps.⁴

As an example of this practice, I quote from the Harmer Rooke & Co. catalog of the sale of the Crocker collection. (The italic face type are mine). (Lot) #62—30c Orange, variety *imperf.*, Scott 38, a magnificent *unused* copy, one of the finest known copies of *this rare stamp* in the typically brownish-

grange shade with four margins, a very choice and rare piece (see photo, Plate II)."

Is it right to call this 30c trial printing a *postage stamp*? If so, then what is the difference between a postage stamp and a proof?

In the same sale of the Crocker collection—Lot #63 was described as follows:

"#63—30c the *rare* imperf. in *black*, prepared for use but not issued, a rare and well known item, very fine (See photo, Plate II)."

The above is a correct description and not in the least misleading. Lot #62 was referred to as a *rare stamp*, yet there is no difference between the two items except the color, as both were not postage stamps but trial printings which were not issued, and were never intended to leave the files of the United States Post Office Department. 5

In the Ward sale of the collection of Mr. X, Lot #74 was described as follows.

#74—30c Orange. Large margins three sides, little close at left, unusually fine for this *stamp*, of which few exist. *Issued without gum*. The sale price was \$230.00.

Several things are worthy of note. The Government stamp contractors, Toppan Carpenter & Co., commenced to perforate the stamps they furnished the U. S. Post Office Department in 1857. Thereafter all stamps were supplied in perforated sheets. In 1860, three new high values were added to the series, a 24c, a 30c and a 90c stamp. Why should any of these new high values have been issued in imperforate condition, when all the other values, the 1c, 3c, 5c, 10c and 12c were being issued only in perforated condition? And further, why issue to the public these high value imperforates without any gum?

It will be noted that the catalog does not list any copies of 37, 38 or 39 in used condition, for the very simple reason that no used copies are known. 6

In the catalog of the Mr. "X" sale, Mr. Ward included the following remarks regarding #37, #38 and #39:

"The 24c—30c and 90c appeared in 1860. Of these three values, few copies now exist, all in unused condition."

Mr. Ward very wisely substituted the word "appeared" for "issued."

The following record is from the catalog of the sale of the Arthur Hind Collection, November 21st, 1933:

	"1860, Imperf.	(Estimated value)
(Lot)		
147—24c Lilac, <i>NO GUM</i> , part imprint on left, trifle short at top, but design intact, large margin		\$ 250.
	Sale Price \$165.00	
148—24c Lilac, <i>NO GUM</i> , Short on top, three other margins		250.
	Sale Price \$175.00	
149—24c Lilac, <i>NO GUM</i> , horizontal pair, left stamp slightly cut into at top, otherwise good. Margins all around. <i>Only three or four other pairs known.</i>		3500.
	Sale Price \$2100.00	
150—30c Black, <i>NO GUM</i> , good margins, many good authorities consider this was used for a very short period.		75.
	Sale Price \$75.00	
151—30c Brownish Orange, horizontal pair, trifle short at top, <i>NO GUM</i> , very fine		5000.
	Sale Price \$2200.00	
152—30c Brownish Orange, horizontal pair, <i>gum</i> , trifle short at bottom, superb. Only two other pairs known in addition to these two		5000.
	Sale Price \$2000.00	

153—30c Bright Orange, large margins. Some good authorities consider this the correct stamp, the paper and color does not agree with the above authentic pairs and we offer this "as is" with no recourse. 100.
 Sale Price \$160.00

154—90c Blue, superb horizontal pair, large margins all round. *The only known pair.* 8000.
 Sale Price \$3700.00

In the recent sale of the Stephen D. Brown collection, only two of the three values were included, as follows:

Scott #37—(Lot) 625—24c *Lilac*, imperf., a copy with huge margins (Ex-Hind collection) Cat. \$300.
 Sale Price \$270.00

Scott #38—(Lot) 626—30c *Orange*, imperf., a beautiful bright fresh copy with large margins, Cat. \$500.
 Sale Price \$410.00

In the year 1887, John K. Tiffany published his book, *The History of the Postage Stamps of the United States*. I believe Mr. Tiffany was recognized at that time, as the leading authority on the postal issues of the United States. No mention is made in his book of a "30c and 90c imperforate of 1860," but on page 96, he describes an imperforate "24c Lilac" with the statement, "Although made and approved, this stamp is said to have been withheld from issue in this imperforate condition. They were finished and gummed, and some of them seem to have gotten into circulation, as occasional specimens are to be found in collections, and one entire sheet, at least, is known to have existed." And again on page 108 he stated,

"*Unperforated twenty-four cents*," "The rarity of specimens has prevented further examination. The color of the specimens, is *Lilac, with the reddish cast*."

I do not know when the 24c, 30c and 90c *trial printings* were first inserted in the Scott catalog, but I note they were listed in the 1891-1892 edition.

The compilers at that time, were well aware of the fact that perforation was adopted in 1857, so they made no claim that these items were "imperforate errors" of 1860, but listed them as regular imperforates issued in 1856. At least they slipped the date of issue a year back of the perforated issue.

The following listing is found in the 52nd edition of the Scott catalog (1891-1892):

"Head in Oval
Unperforated

#21	—	1851	—	1c Blue (Franklin)	.50	.15
21A	—	1851	—	1c Blue variety		.30
22	—	1851	—	3c Red (Washington)	.25	.02
23	—	1851	—	5c Brown (Jefferson)	10.00	5.00
24	—	1851	—	10c Green (Washington)	1.50	.50
25	—	1851	—	12c Black (Washington)	2.00	1.00
26	—	1856	—	24c Lilac (Washington)		
27	—	1856	—	30c Orange (Franklin)		
				Head in Square		
28	—	1856	—	90c Blue (Washington)		
				Same, Perforated		
29	—	1857	—	1c Blue		
30	—	1857	—	1c Blue variety		
31	—	1856	—	3c Red		
32	—	1857	—	3c Red (with outer line)		
33	—	1856	—	5c Brown		
34	—	1857	—	5c Red Brown		
35	—	1857	—	5c Brown, ornaments at top & bottom cut off.		
36	—	1855	—	10c Green		
37	—	1857	—	12c Black		
38	—	1860	—	24c Lilac		
39	—	1860	—	30c Orange		
40	—	1860	—	90c Blue		

In glancing through the above perforated listing, it is interesting to note that our 3c Type I is listed as "1857," so evidently our 3c Type II is the one listed as 1856, and further, 1856 is listed as the date of issue of the perforated 5c Brown, and 1855 as the date of issue of the perforated 10c green.

In the late Eighteen Nineties, John N. Luff of New York succeeded Mr. Tiffany as the recognized authority on U. S. postal issues. In 1902 Mr. Luff's monumental book entitled *The Postage Stamps of the United States* was published by the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. We will now refer to this authoritative work and note what Mr. Luff's opinion of these trial color proofs was at that time, some thirty-seven years ago. On page 71 we note the following: (the italic type being mine and are not thus in the original text)

"The design for a stamp of the value of twenty-four cents was approved on April 24th, 1856. Following this approval the plate was made and the stamps printed and gummed. We can, however, find no record that they *were issued until June 1860, when they appeared perforated*. But imperforate specimens in pairs and blocks are well known and the existence of *nearly an entire sheet* in this condition is reported on excellent authority. *I have seen two imperforate copies used on the original envelopes*. The imperforate thirty and ninety cent stamps of this series have been much discussed. One thing, at least, cannot be denied, that is, that they exist genuinely imperforate, not trimmed, since they are in *pairs and strips*. They are *on the same paper* as the perforated copies and have *the same gum*. A well known philatelist makes this statement: "I myself, bought a thirty cent orange, imperforate, at the New York Post Office in 1860, and I distinctly remember having used one on a letter containing some photographs. The most important evidence in favor of this stamp is furnished by a copy which was purchased by Messrs. Morgenthau & Co, in the summer of 1899. This copy is on a letter sent from New York to Lyons, France. The cancellation covers a large portion of the stamp and is dated October 2nd, 1860. The stamp has fine margins on *three sides* and shows a *portion of the adjoining stamp at the left*. It is printed in the *peculiar brown-orange shade* in which the imperforate copies are *always found*. It establishes *beyond doubt*, the use of the thirty cent stamp in imperforate condition. There was a cancelled copy of the imperforate ninety cents in the Hunter collection. Beyond question or contradiction, these three values, twenty four, thirty and ninety cents, exist imperforate. *It is, however, my opinion, that they do not constitute a part of the 1851-55 series but are varieties of the 1857-60 series which have escaped perforating*. I shall place them under that heading." (End of the Luff quotation).

On page 78 of the Luff book, Mr. Luff listed these trial color proofs as follows:

"24 cents Gray-Lilac—Imperforate
30 cents Brown-Orange—Imperforate
90 cents Indigo—Imperforate"

It is only natural to assume that Mr. Luff intended to infer these were "Regularly issued postage stamps," or else he would not have listed them in his book, which was a book devoted to U. S. postage stamps, and not to Essays, Proofs, or Trial Printings.

Mr. Luff stated on page 78 of his well known book:

"I am not certain that the twenty-four cents in dull reddish-lilac was ever issued as a stamp. I have seen copies, *both imperforate and perforated*, in old collections of proofs and essays and I am inclined to think it belongs to that category rather than among stamps. I have, however, no positive evidence to confirm this belief. In addition to the above stamps and *varieties the thirty cents is known printed in black*. *It is imperforate and on the regular paper*. This has usually been regarded as a proof. But Mr. Francis C. Foster states that at the time he obtained his copy, he was told that it was a stamp and had been in use, and that shortly afterwards he made inquiry at the Washington Post Office and was informed that it was actually on sale at that office for a few days but, because the cancellation did not show up well, the color was changed. *However it must be remembered that the twenty four cents also exists in black, identical with this thirty cents in shade and paper*. *And copies of the five, twenty four and ninety cents are known in various colors imperforate and printed on the regular paper*. *It has never been claimed that these latter varieties are anything but proofs in trial colors*."

It is perhaps rather difficult to explain why Mr. Luff considered the "24c Gray-Lilac Imperforate," the "30c Brown-Orange Imperforate" and the "90c Indigo Imperforate" were all *regular* stamps, yet he regarded printings of these three values in other colors, nothing more than what they actually were, that is, *proofs in trial colors*.

Mr. Luff condemned the *30c black* but he listed the *30c orange* as a regular stamp. He stated that the former had "usually been regarded as a proof," and he apparently accepted the statement of the well known philatelist, who depending on his memory, recalled that he had bought a *30c orange imperforate* at the New York Post Office way back in 1860, some forty-two years prior to the publication of the Luff book. But evidently he placed little credit in Mr. Foster's statement that he had purchased a *30c black* at the Washington Post Office, because he stated in his book that, "It has never been claimed that these latter varieties are anything but proofs in trial colors."

So far as I am aware, the only evidence which exists, that attempts to prove that these trial color proofs are regular postage stamps is in the account in Mr. Luff's book. I believe I do not make a mis-statement when I venture the opinion that the continued listing of these three proofs in catalogs and albums is due solely to the indorsement of these items by Mr. Luff.

To demonstrate that even the highest of authorities can be honestly mistaken at times, I am illustrating herewith the "30c imperforate cover" mentioned by Mr. Luff in his book. (See page 12)

See Figures No. 3 and No. 4, the latter is the back of this cover. Regarding this cover, Mr. Luff stated in his book, "It establishes beyond doubt the use of the thirty-cent stamp in imperforate condition."

Figure No. 5, is an enlarged photograph of this so-called "imperforate stamp." It will be noted it is one of "those things" so familiar to all dealers, a center line copy with trimmed perforations. (See page 13)

The 1851-1857-1860 issues of stamps manufactured by Toppan Carpenter & Co. were all printed from plates of 200 subjects, with two panes of 100 subjects to a pane. In the case of the 30c plate, a "center line" separated the right pane from the left pane and vertical perforations were not placed between the two printed panes, the sheets being separated by a cutting machine. Quite frequently the separation was not exactly on the center line, hence it is quite a simple matter to make an "imperforate stamp" or a "part perforated stamp" out of a single perforated copy. It is quite possible the perforations were trimmed off this stamp before it was placed on the cover, but more than likely the cover originally contained a perforated stamp, a center line copy with straight edge at left, and the stamp was removed from the cover, perforations on three sides cut off and the copy replaced on the cover.

So far as I am aware, this is the first time this cover has ever been illustrated in the philatelic press. This particular cover was offered at auction in the sale of the George H. Worthington collection held by J. C. Morgenthau & Co., in New York in August 1917. It was lot #119 and was described as follows:

"30c Orange (38), on cover from New York to Lyon, France; the stamp fine margins at sides and bottom. Lightly cancelled in red and part of the New York cancellation likewise in red falls on the stamp. As far as we know this cover is unique and of the greatest rarity as it proves the use of this stamp."

Mr. Luff stated that the stamp on the above cover was "in the peculiar *Brown-Orange shade in which the imperforate copies are always found.*"

Mr. Luff was misinformed on this particular point as the stamp is in the Orange shade and not the Brown-Orange.

Mr. Morgenthau described it in the above quoted Worthington sale simply as *30c Orange.*"

Elliott Perry had a few comments on this particular cover in the issue of *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* under date of September 6, 1919, as follows:

"Unfortunately this cover does not establish anything except that someone trimmed the perforations from a perforated 30c and used it as an 'imperf,' or else that the stamp was never used on that, or any other cover, at all. True, \$1000 was bid for this cover at the Worthington sale, but investigation threw such doubts upon its genuineness that its sale was not consummated. Another cover in the Worthington collection bore a *perforated* 30c in the *same shade* as the alleged imperforate. The reader should always bear in mind that the 30c and 90c sheets were normally imperforate along the pane line between the 10th and 11th vertical rows so that right side edge of the stamp in the 10th row of the left pane and the left side edge of the stamps in the 1st row of the right pane are normally imperforate."

Mr. Perry mentioned there was another cover in the Worthington collection with a *perforated 30c in the same shade* as the alleged imperforate. But Mr. Perry failed to mention two very important features of this second cover. The fact is the second cover was from the same correspondence and was also mailed from New York *on the same date, namely, Oct. 2, 1860*. The writer had the opportunity of examining these two covers side by side some years ago and there is no question but what *both are in the same shade*, in fact the shades are so identical that it is entirely possible that both stamps came from the same original sheet of perforated stamps.

Figure No. 6 is an illustration of the face of this second cover and Figure No. 7, an illustration of its reverse side. (See pages 13 & 14.)

It will be noted *both covers are from the same firm in New York* and both are addressed to the same firm in Paris, France. One is a double rate to France, the other a triple rate, and both were mailed from New York *on the same date, Oct. 2, 1860*. Both were routed by the "Steamship Europa" and both have the same "French receiving handstamp" of "*Oct. 15, 1860.*"

Regarding perforated stamps which had been trimmed to make them appear as part-perforated, or imperforate copies, Mr. Luff had the following on page 78 of his book:

"It may be well to say here that no imperforate or part-perforate varieties of stamps which are normally perforate, will be listed in this work, except such as are known in pairs or blocks. Owing to defects in manufacture, stamps are frequently found which have *such widely spaced perforations as to allow trimming* by those who enjoy producing such fraudulent novelties. For this reason it seems best to refuse recognition to all varieties except such as are entirely beyond suspicion."

Yet Mr. Luff in referring to the trimmed perforated stamp on the cover illustrated by Figure No. 3, stated:

"It establishes, beyond doubt, the use of the thirty cent stamp in imperforate condition."

Now I must admit that there may be a double meaning to Mr. Luff's statement. Suppose for example, this stamp had the perforations trimmed before it was placed on the cover. If so, no doubt Mr. Luff had a very good alibi in stating that the cover establishes the use of the 30c stamp in imperforate condition. It could be claimed that he did not mean that this cover proved beyond doubt that imperforate 30c stamps were issued at the New York Post Office in September or October of 1860. However, in reading Mr. Luff's comments on the "30c imperforate" I always understood him to mean that this cover, (which he undoubtedly considered genuine at the time he wrote his book) proved beyond doubt that the 30c value was regularly issued imperforate.



Figure No. 3—The famous “30c 1860 Imperforate” cover described in the Luff book on United States Postage Stamps.

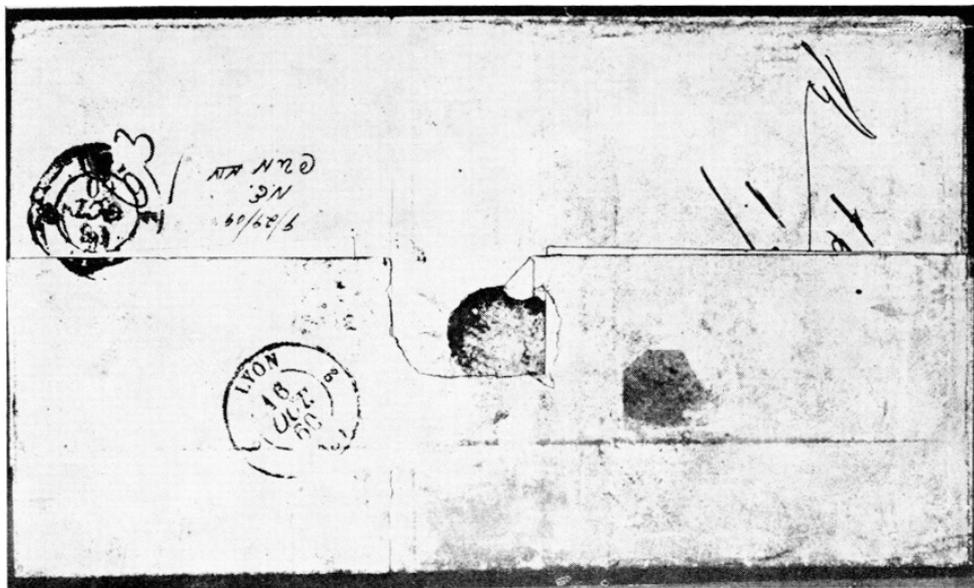


Figure No. 4—The reverse side of the “30c 1860 Imperforate” cover.

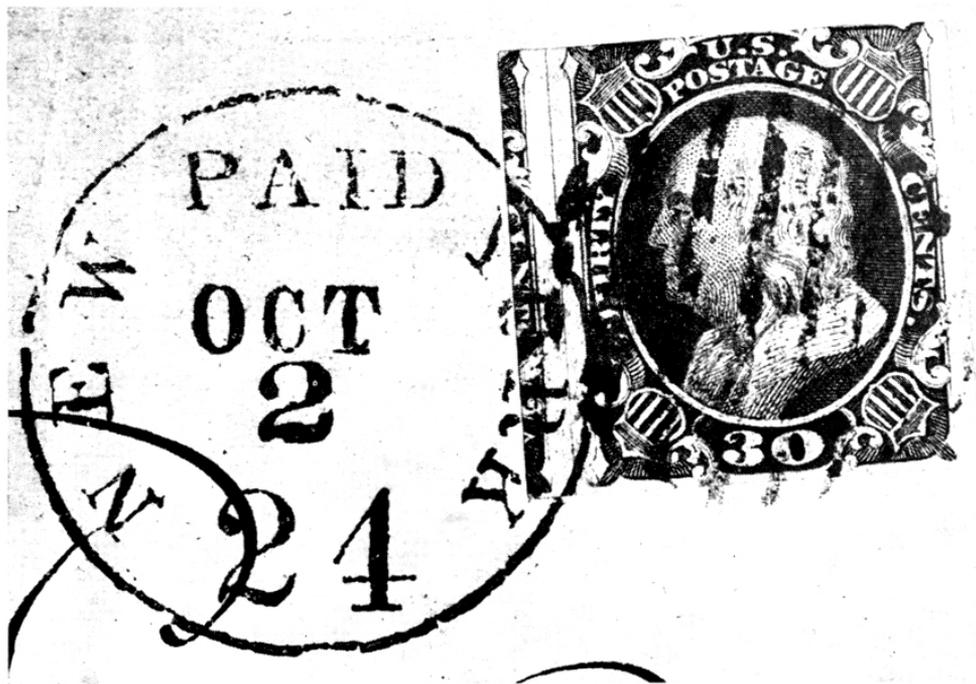


Figure No. 5—An enlargement of the “30c Imperforate of 1860.”

I made the photograph of this *30c Imperforate cover* over sixteen years ago, and I quote in part from the letter which accompanied it:

“I have your letter of December 26th and herewith send for your inspection, the much talked of 30c cover. I regret however that I can not supply you with Mr. Luff’s guarantee as this is now in the possession of Mr. ——. The substance of it however, was to the effect that the stamp was an imperforate of the 1860 issue, used on cover. So far as I can learn the history of the cover is as follows:

E. B. Power, of New York, while on a trip to Paris many years ago went into the office of Mr. Berinchon, who offered Mr. Power a large assortment of covers from the Payen correspondence including about 30 or 40 covers bearing 30c stamps. The cover enclosed is one of the lot and is exactly as Mr. Power purchased it. E. B. Power sold the cover to someone whose name I cannot remember off hand and then it went to Mr. Worthington and it was sold in the Worthington auction sale to Mr. ——.”

It is indeed strange that Mr. Luff in 1902 stated that the 30c stamp on this cover (Figure No. 3) was “printed in the peculiar *brown-orange* shade in which the imperforate copies are always found.” There can be no doubt the cover illustrated by Figure No. 3, is the one he so minutely described in his book. The perforated stamp on the companion cover, Figure No. 6, and used the same day, is positively no *brown-orange* similar to the regular 30 imperforate trial color proofs. This particular cover is now the property of a prominent Eastern collector and as I pen these lines, I have it before me. Because of the prominence given to the 30c “imperforate” cover by Mr. Luff in his book, this item will no doubt be famous as long as the Luff book exists. And likewise the companion cover, mailed the same day, will in all probability command special at-

tention because of its close association. In my humble opinion both 30c stamps, one with the perforations trimmed, the other in superb condition, on these two covers in all probability came from the same original sheet of stamps. While the 30c trimmed copy on cover was no doubt unknown when the "1860 Imperforates" were first mistakenly listed in the Scott catalog, there is no denying the fact that this cover, with the strong endorsement given it by Mr. Luff in his book, did lend some weight to the questionable listings. Perhaps the present day reader of Mr. Luff's book will inquire, "Is this 30c Imperforate cover the only evidence that exists today that these three trial printings were ever regularly issued to the public? And in reply I can state the following: If any other evidence exists, I am not aware of same, and if any other collector or student of our postal history has any evidence, I have never heard of same.

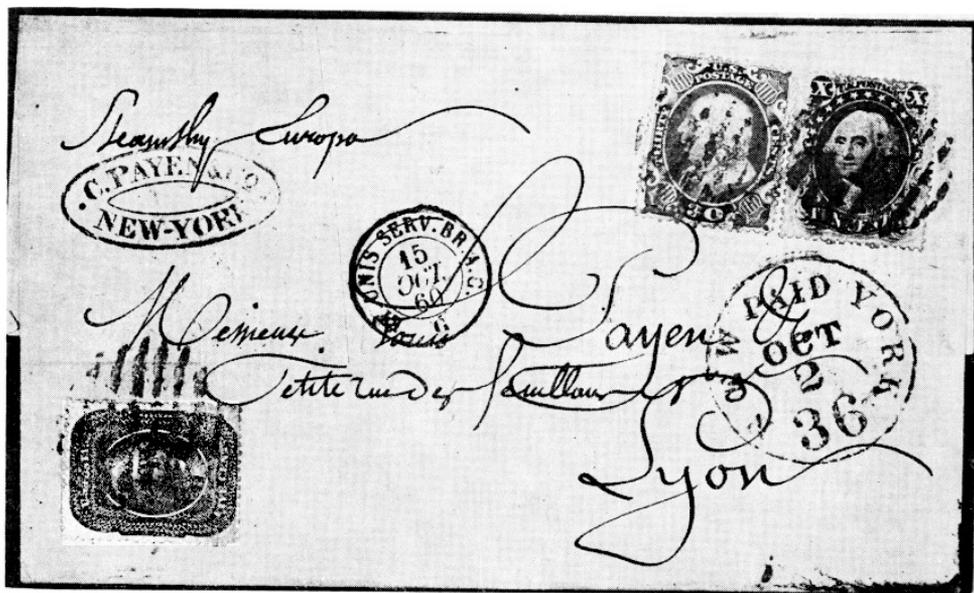


Figure No. 6—Triple rate to France with 30c 1860. Same correspondence as the "30 Imperforate" cover, both mailed on Oct. 2, 1860.

On many occasions in past years, when studying carefully the contents of Mr. Luff's marvelous book, I have pondered for long over certain of his statements which raised questions in my mind. I have often wondered if he was similar in some respects to others, who like myself, have made a special study of certain phases of our early stamps and postal history. I often wondered if he ever changed his opinion about the 1860 "Imperforates," and the 30c cover in particular, concerning which he made the very positive statement many years ago, "It establishes beyond doubt the use of the thirty cent stamp in imperforate condition." Surely no human is infallible and many times have I had occasion to revise opinions expressed in the past. Only in recent months did I obtain further facts about the now famous 30c 1860 cover. Through the kindness of Hugh Clark, I am now able to make this additional information public. Under date of January 17th, 1940, Mr. Clark wrote to me in part as follows:

"This particular Payen cover was offered in the Worthington sale. One of our customers, a Mr. —, wanted us to bid on the cover, (together with many other items) for him. Mr. Luff examined all of the items desired by Mr. — before the auction. When the sale took place, we bought this cover for Mr. —. I do not remember the price (but I think it was \$1050.00) and charging a small commission for executing the bid. Shortly after the sale, Mr. — heard comments affecting the standing of the cover and talked with me about it. Mr. Luff then seemed perfectly certain that the cover was genuine and at my request wrote me a seven page letter under date of August 29th, 1917, which I am enclosing herewith. This has been in the Reference Collection and I will ask you to return it to me at your convenience. This letter satisfied Mr. — thoroughly and the cover remained in his collection for some time. I cannot say just how long without going into our books. I believe, however, that it was about two years later that Mr. Luff talked to me concerning this cover and said he would like to see it again, whereupon I wrote Mr. — who sent the cover in. Mr. Luff spent some time checking and examining it and finally came to me to tell me regretfully that he was convinced that he had been mistaken in his previous opinion of the cover and had come to the conclusion that the stamp was a trimmed copy. He

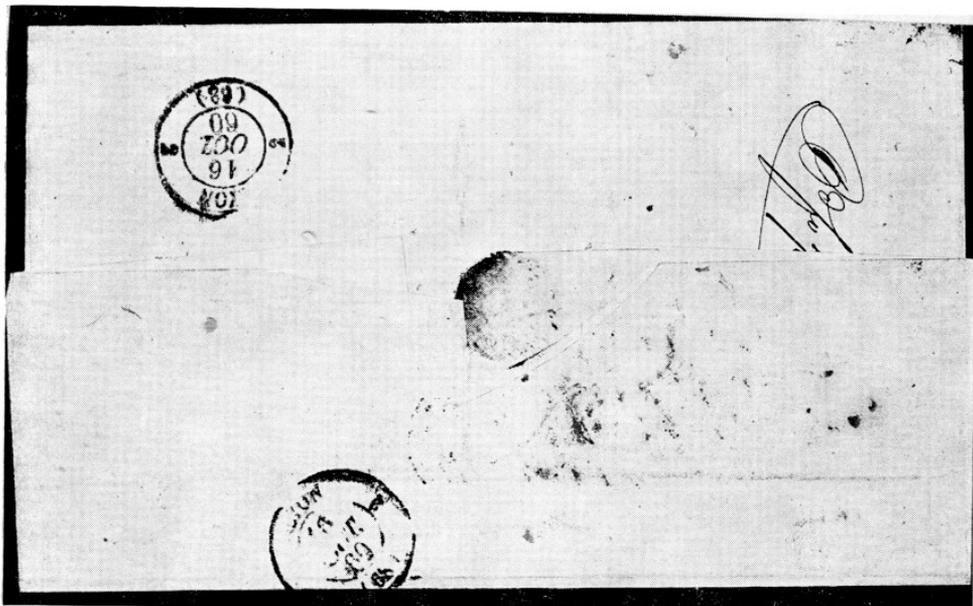


Figure No. 7—The reverse side of the cover shown in Figure No. 6.

could not explain in any way, even to myself, how, when, where, or by whom the trimming could have been done. On receiving Mr. Luff's verbal statement, I immediately issued our check to Mr. — for the full amount of the purchase price plus the commission and sent it to him together with a full statement of facts as to Mr. Luff having changed his opinion. The cover thus became the property of the Scott Co., and has been in the Reference Collection ever since. I did not feel at liberty even to mention Mr. Luff's changed opinion to Morgenthau, feeling we had no possible grounds on which to return it to Morgenthau or ask for a refund. Mr. Luff had guaranteed it and I felt this held Mr. Morgenthau blameless and harmless from claims. Now there is the full story of the incident referred to. Apparently Mr. Luff had no reason then to doubt or question the issuance of a 30c stamp but only the genuineness of this particular copy." (End of quotation from Mr. Clark's letter)

The following is a copy of Mr. Luff's letter of Aug. 29th, 1917, referred to by Mr. Clark in his above letter:

“Scott Stamp & Coin Co.,
207 Broadway,
(Branch of 127 Madison Ave.)

New York, August 29, 1917.

Mr. H. M. Clark,
127 Madison Ave.,
New York City.

My dear Mr. Clark:

I return herewith the U. S. 1851-57 30c imperforate, on cover, purchased by you at the Worthington auction.

I have discussed this stamp with a number of collectors and dealers. Mr. Krassa, Mr. Morgenthau and Mr. Power are of the opinion that it is genuinely imperforate.

I also brought it before the A. P. S. Expert Committee. My fellow members Mr. J. A. Kleeman and Mr. J. M. Bartels hold the opinion that it was once a perforated stamp from which the perforations have been cut off. For my own part I consider the weight of evidence is in favor of the stamp. On looking at it carefully in a good light I must admit that the color tends a little more toward the orange shades of the 1857 perforated 30c stamps than toward the mustard shade that we accept as being the color of the imperforate 30c. Even so I do not see any reason that the stamp might not exist in more shades than one imperforate. I cannot see any traces of perforations on the margins of the stamp. The margins are of satisfactory width on all sides but one. The red bar cancellation was very common on our early postal issues and the circular red cancellation is very like if not identical with one I have on a cover which came from family correspondence.

The history of this cover is well known. About 1898 or 1899 Mons. Jules Berinchon of Paris obtained a quantity of covers addressed by a New York firm to Messrs. Paven & Cie. Lyon, France. Covers from this correspondence are well known as a large number of them came on the market about the date mentioned. The Berinchon lot bore mostly U. S. stamps of 1857. A lot purchased by the Scott Stamp & Coin Co. had more of the 1861 issue than any other.

The Berinchon lot was sold to Messrs. Stanley Gibbons, London. In the summer of 1899 Mr. E. B. Power—at that time in business with Mr. J. C. Morgenthau—was in London. He bought this cover and brought it to New York. It was described in various stamp journals including the American Journal of Philately. Subsequently the cover passed to Mr. A. E. Tuttle, Mr. J. W. Paul, the New England Stamp Co. and Mr. G. H. Worthington. As it is claimed this is a stamp with perforations trimmed we are entitled to consider by whom the trimming might have been done before the stamp was shown imperforate in the summer of 1899.

It does not seem probable that a large business house of 1860 would trouble to trim its stamps. I cannot conceive any reason why they should do so, either by accident or intent. But they might have bought an imperforate 30c stamp at the post office. Let me refer you to the statement of an old time philatelist quoted in my book on U. S. stamps (page 71). ‘I, myself, bought a thirty cent orange, imperforate at the New York Post Office in 1860.’ The other people through whose hands the cover passed, Messrs. Berinchon, Stanley Gibbons, Power and Morgenthau, have reputations which should place them above any suspicion of trimming stamps.

As I said before, it appears to me that the weight of evidence is in favor of the stamp being genuinely imperforate and I am still of that opinion.

Very truly yours,
(signed) John N. Luff.

P. S. Permit me to call attention to the fact that the statement about the purchase of an imperforate 30c stamp at the New York Post Office in 1860 was first published in the A. J. P. for November 1897 (page 487) and the cover we are considering was described in the same journal for August 1899 (page 349). Therefore, the statement about a purchase in 1860 antedated by 21 months the discovery of a copy cancelled in that year and there can be no claim that the discovery influenced the statement.”

Notation at the head of this letter:

“Received from Mr. Clark on Aug. 30—Mr. Luff was there—he said he was sorry he could not budge K. & B.” (end of Luff Quotation)

The writer is indeed pleased to include in these notes the actual facts regarding the 30c cover, because they are most enlightening to all who have a copy of Mr. Luff’s book, and they demonstrate the fact that when the time came that Mr. Luff was convinced of his error, he did not hesitate for a moment to correct same.

Again referring to the color of the 30c trimmed stamp. Mr. Clark in the above quoted letter, commented as follows:

“* * * *” quotes Mr. Luff as saying that the cover in question was the peculiar *brown-orange shade*. I refer you to his letter of August 29, 1917, enclosed, and can further state that from a check today on the color of the stamp it is not brown-orange.”

In Mr. Luff's letter, as given above, mention is made to the “A.J.P.” for November 1897, (page 487) and the same Journal for August 1899, (page 349).

In *The American Journal of Philately*, published by The Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., of New York, for November 1897, page 487, Mr. Luff made the following statements:

“The imperforate thirty and ninety cent stamps of this series have been much discussed. One thing, at least cannot be denied, that is, that they exist genuinely imperforate, not trimmed, since they are in pairs and strips. They are on the same paper as the perforated copies and have the same gum. A well known philatelist makes this statement: ‘I, myself, bought a thirty cent orange, imperforate, at the New York office in 1860. And I distinctly remember having used one on a letter containing some photographs.’

Beyond question or contradiction these three values, twenty-four, thirty and ninety cents, exist imperforate; *but whether the stamps were issued in this condition by intent, accident or favor, is yet to be determined.*”

In the same Journal for August 1899, page 349, appeared the following under the general heading of “Notes” with no author given:

“Messrs. J. C. Morgenthau & Co. have shown us a beautiful specimen with fine margins on three sides, of the 30c of 1857, *imperforate*. The stamp was used on a letter sent October 2nd, 1860, from New York to Lyon, France, and the cancellation covers a good portion of the margins. This specimen *absolutely establishes* the existence of the 30c stamp in imperforate condition, *notwithstanding the doubts which have been thrown upon it for a number of years*. The date of the letter referred to would also tend to confirm *the theory that we have held for some time that the 30c and 90c imperforate of the 1857 issue form part of a sheet which escaped perforation, and hence should be considered as a variety of the perforated issue.*” (End of quotation.)

Along about 1900, there appeared “A Catalog For Advanced Collectors” edited by Henry Collin and Henry L. Calman. In this work the 24c—30c and 90c “imperforates” are listed as “varieties” of the “1857-1860” issue. In the 52nd edition of *Scott's Standard Catalogue* (1891-92) the three “imperforates” are listed as part and parcel of the 1851 issue, with dates of issue given as “1856.” The only change that has been made since that time, (so far as I am aware) is to change the “1856” to “1860.” They are today listed as part and parcel of the 1851-1856-1860 issues of imperforates. One cannot help but wonder why the Scott catalog failed to follow Mr. Luff's suggestion that the three items be listed as “varieties” of the 1857-1860 issues of perforated stamps, especially in view of the fact that the Collin-Calman “Advanced Catalogue” placed them under that head.

Mr. Luff stated in the above quotation that the date of the trimmed perforated 30c stamp on cover “would also tend to confirm *the theory* that we have held for some time etc.,” proving conclusively (in my opinion) that there was no proof whatsoever to justify the original listings of these “trial printings” in the Scott catalog, and that their continued inclusion was only on a *theory* held by Mr. Luff. I seriously doubt if Mr. Luff actually believed that the three values were ever *regularly issued in imperforate sheets*, except accidentally, i.e., as “sheets which escaped perforation,” but for fifty years the Scott catalog and albums, to all intents and purposes, have given the impression that these three high values were actually postage stamps which were issued imperforate. The only warning has been the notation that some doubt exists.



Now Sc. 37P5, proof on stamp paper, 2023 SCV \$1,500; formerly Sc. 37b imperf stamp



Now Sc. 38P5, proof on stamp paper, 2023 SCV \$1,500; formerly Sc. 38a imperf stamp



Now Sc. 39P5, proof on stamp paper, 2023 SCV \$4,500; formerly Sc. 39a imperf stamp

- 2 Today, below the Postage Stamp Listings, Scott notes, “See Die and Plate Proofs for imperfs, on stamp paper.
- 3 12¢ Plate 1 produced the 1851 Imperf issue, Sc. 12 and the 1857-61 Perf 15-1/2, Sc. 36, outer frame lines recut on the plate.
12¢ Plate 3 produced the 1860 12¢ Perf 15-1/2, Sc. 36B, with outer frame lines not recut.
12¢ Plate 3 also produced the 1860 Imperf, now classified as Sc 35BP5 proof on stamp paper.
- 4 Even today dealers and auction houses use the outmoded Postage Stamp catalog #, rather than the current Proof listing identification, although the accurate catalog value is given.
- 5 I boxed this to emphasize it as a telling point: even though neither the 30¢ nor the 30¢ black imperf are unissued, but found on stamp paper, because the black does not have a comparable issued stamp, there is no way for collectors and dealers to try to treat the 30¢ black as a Postage Stamp.
- 6 Keep in mind that at the time this article was written, Scott listed the imperfs as Postage Stamps #37, 38 and 39—so here Ashbrook is referring to the still-listed Imperfs. In the 1942 catalog, there are no listings for #s37-39, and the perf 15-1/2 are numbered 52-54. At some later date the numbering was changed to what it is today, the perf 15-1/2 being #s 37-39.
- 7 Hugh Clark took over as Scott Catalog Editor in 1935. The changes in the treatment of these Imperforates are among the changes made shortly after he took over. Like these changes, some were based on research by Stanley Ashbrook.