

Yesterday in USSN: Who's He? Conclusion

by William H. Waggoner

(From U.S. Stamp News, September-October 1999)

Lest readers get the idea from earlier parts of this study that only cabinet officers got their portraits on revenue stamps, this final installment will consider a miscellany of other individuals who have appeared there. If one remembers that we are dealing here with federally-issued stamps, it should come as no surprise to learn that even those in this miscellaneous group had government connections of one sort or another.

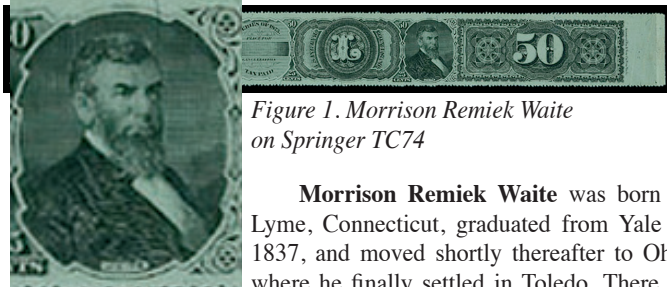


Figure 1. Morrison Remiek Waite on Springer TC74

Morrison Remiek Waite was born in Lyme, Connecticut, graduated from Yale in 1837, and moved shortly thereafter to Ohio where he finally settled in Toledo. There he practiced corporate and railroad law, and served on the Ohio Supreme Court from 1863 to 1871. When Chief Justice Chase died in office in 1873 in Washington, it became the president's duty to replace him. Waite eventually became that replacement, although he was President Grant's third choice for the position; Congress refused to confirm the two prior nominees. Waite served on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1874 to 1888 and died in office. His portrait appeared on the 50 unit Cigars stamp, Series of 1875 (Springer TC74, TC92C and D; Figure 1).

Thomas Hart Benton was born in North Carolina, grew up near Franklin, Tennessee, where at various times he worked as a school teacher, farmer, lawyer, and politician. In 1809, he served a term as a State Senator. He saw action in the War of 1812 during which he brawled with Andrew Jackson, but after the election of 1824, Benton became a Jacksonian Democrat and Jackson's close friend. In 1815, he moved to St. Louis; five years later he was elected



Figure 2. Thomas Hart Benton on 1878, 25¢ black, 1/4 barrel vignette die essay on India (Sc. REA39-E, Turner B-39)

U.S. Senator from Missouri. Repeatedly reelected, he served continuously in the U.S. Senate until 1851. Defeated in the senatorial election of 1850, Benton later won election to the U.S. House where he served a single term, 1853-55. His opposition to slavery cost him reelection to that body. Always a staunch supporter of the Democratic party, he refused to vote for his own son-in-law, John C. Fremont, when Fremont was the Republican presidential candidate in 1856. Benton's portrait appeared on the 8 oz. Tobacco Strip stamp, Series of 1872 (Springer TG48A, B) and on the 1/4 barrel Beer stamp, Series of 1878 (Scott REA39, Figure 2).

Henry Laurens Dawes was born in Massachusetts. He graduated from Yale in 1839, taught school for a short time, edited a newspaper, and became a lawyer in 1842 practicing in North Adams. Following ser-

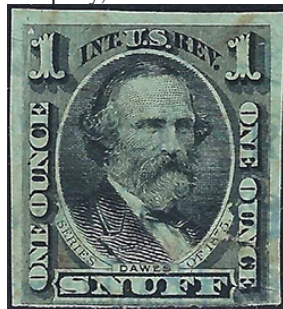


Figure 3. Henry Laurens Dawes on Springer TE49

vice in both the State House (1848-49, 1852) and State Senate (1850), he won election to the U.S. House in 1857 where he remained until 1875 when he was elected to the U.S. Senate. He served there until 1893 and then declined to be a candidate for reelection. He died in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1903. He is credited with founding the system of daily weather reports, and with establishing reservation schools for the Indians. Dawes is pictured on the 1 oz. Snuff/stamp, Series of 1875 (Springer TE49, Fig. 3)

David Kellogg Cartter was born and educated in New York. After studying law in Rochester, he was admitted to the bar in 1832 and commenced practice there. Four years later, he moved to Ohio and settled in Massillon. From 1849 until 1853, he served as a Democratic Representative in the U.S. House. In 1856, Cartter moved his law practice to Cleveland. Sometime thereafter, he switched to the Republican Party and became a delegate to that party's 1860 National Convention. President Lincoln appointed him U.S. Minister to Bolivia and he served in that post in 1861-62. The following year, he was appointed Chief Justice of

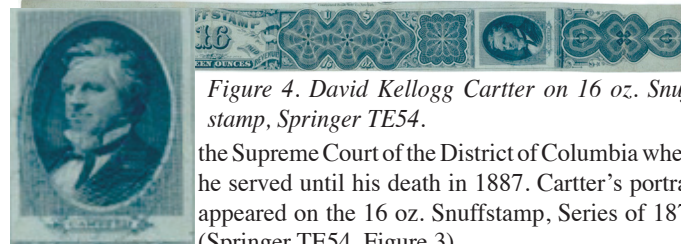


Figure 4. David Kellogg Cartter on 16 oz. Snuff stamp, Springer TE54.

the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia where he served until his death in 1887. Cartter's portrait appeared on the 16 oz. Snuffstamp, Series of 1875 (Springer TE54, Figure 3).

Thaddeus Stevens was born in Vermont and received his early education there before entering Dartmouth, from which college he graduated in 1815. Soon employed as a teacher in York, Pennsylvania, he began the study of law but was refused permission to sit for the Pennsylvania bar examination because he had not devoted all his time preparing to become a lawyer. Young Stevens accordingly moved to Maryland, took and passed the law examination there, before opening his law office in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. In 1833-41, he served in the Pennsylvania House. Elected as a Whig candidate to the U.S. House in 1849, he left in 1853 after quarreling with his party's stand on slavery. As a Republican, he was reelected to the U.S. House where he served from 1859 to 1868, becoming Chairman of the Ways & Means Committee. Stevens favored a harsh reconstruction policy and led the move to impeach President Johnson. He died in Washington soon after the president's acquittal. He was pictured on the 6 oz. Snuff stamp, Series of 1875 (Springer TE65).

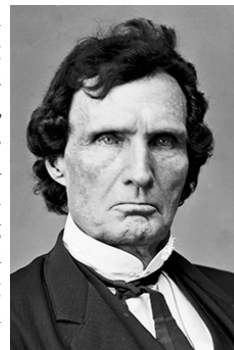


Figure 5. Matthew Brady portrait of Stevens

Many of this country's early political leaders established their reputations through military service during the American Revolution. Several generations later, distinguished service during the Civil War also often led to careers devoted to public service and election, and/or appointment, to a variety of political offices. As might be expected, however, some individuals chose to build on their wartime experiences and remained in federal military service. We'll consider several of these veterans first.

Winfield Scott was born in Virginia only four years after the British surrender at Yorktown ended the American Revolution. He briefly attended the College of William & Mary and began the private study of law before enlisting (1807) in a local cavalry troop. Subsequently, Scott saw action

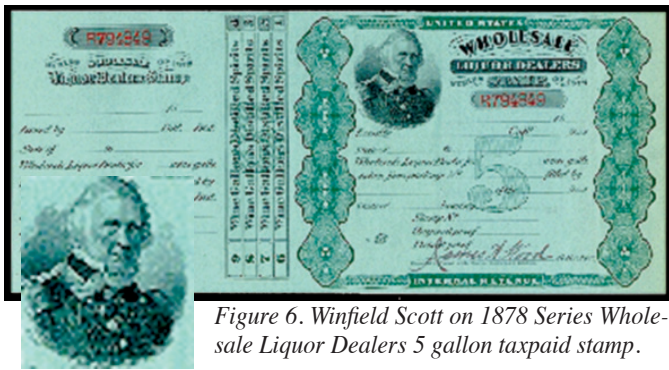


Figure 6. Winfield Scott on 1878 Series Wholesale Liquor Dealers 5 gallon taxpaid stamp.

Thomas who also rendered gallant service during the Civil War.

George Henry Thomas was born in Virginia, educated in local schools, and had begun legal studies before entering West Point from which academy he graduated in 1840, commissioned in the artillery. Sent to Florida, he took part in the Second Seminole War prior to being transferred to Texas where he won promotion to 1st Lieutenant of artillery under Zachary Taylor (1845). Thomas fought in the Mexican War (1846-48), was twice promoted, and returned to duty in Florida (1849-51) before he was reassigned to West Point as an artillery and cavalry instructor.



Figure 8. 1878, 33-1/3¢ violet on green, 1/3bbl., Beer (REA40), and a portrait of George Henry Thomas

in the War of 1812 during which he was thrice wounded, captured and exchanged, and emerged as a brevet major general. As a career Army officer, he later fought in several Indian Wars (Black Hawk, 1832, Seminole, 1835-41) and supervised the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from Georgia along the “Trail of Tears” to western Indian Territories (1838). In 1841, Scott was appointed General in Chief of the Army, was in command during the Mexican War (1846-48), and personally led U.S. troops in the capture of Veracruz and the occupation of Mexico City. His widespread popularity made him the Whig candidate for the presidency in the 1852 election won by Franklin Pierce. Nicknamed “Old Fuss and Feathers,” he remained in the Army where, for a brief period preceding his retirement, he commanded all Union forces in the Civil War, although many believed he was too old and too conservative. He died at West Point, N.Y., in 1866. Scott’s portrait appeared on the Wholesale Liquor Dealers stamps, Series of 1878. Figure 6 shows the 5 gallons value of this series.

Philip Henry Sheridan was born to Irish immigrant parents in Albany, N.Y., but reared in Perry County, Ohio, where he worked as a store clerk before obtaining an appointment to West Point. An indifferent and fractious student, Cadet Sheridan accumulated so many demerits that he did not graduate until 1853, a year behind his class. He took his commission in the infantry, served capably in that Army branch in Texas and in Oregon fighting Indians, and was an obscure infantry lieutenant at the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1862, Sheridan found his true calling, however, when he was given a cavalry regiment. He rose rapidly to command a division and distinguished himself in subsequent engagements in Mississippi and at Chattanooga. In 1864 Grant put him in charge of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac, the role in which he never lost a battle while proving to be the most able cavalry leader the Union had. Later, as commander of the Army of the Shenandoah, he laid waste to the countryside, and took part in the final battles leading to Appomattox, and Lee’s surrender in 1865. Sheridan remained in the peacetime Army, served as commander of several military districts in the west, and directed the campaign against the Plains Indians. In 1883, “Little Phil” (he was short and stout in stature) succeeded Sherman as General-in-Chief of the U.S. Army, the position he held until his death in 1888. Sheridan’s portrait appeared on the 6 ounce Snuff stamp, Series of 1875 (Springer TE52).



Figure 7. I could not find an image of the Snuff stamp, but here Sheridan is on the 3¢ Army stamp, Sc. 787.

I invite readers’ help in confirming the identity of this last of the Army personages cited here. The problem arises from the practice by early portrait engravers of identifying their subjects by surname only. Cataloguers subsequently repeated only the abbreviated identification. Thus the Scott 1999 Specialized Catalogue identifies the one-third barrel (33-1/3 cent) 1878 Beer stamp (REA40, Figure 8) and its successor equivalents (REA47, 54, 61, 68, 73, and 78) as picturing “Thomas” in their common design which features the bust portrait of a bearded man in military uniform. But which Thomas? My own choice is the General Thomas discussed below, but there were two other general officers named

From 1855 to 1860, he again served in Texas with the 2nd Cavalry, a celebrated regiment which later supplied 12 generals to the Confederacy and five to the Union. When war broke out, Thomas chose to remain in the Federal Army where he distinguished himself as a brilliant and popular officer. As commander of the 1st Division, Army of the Ohio, he won the first major Union victory in the west at Mill Springs, Ky., and fought at Shiloh, Corinth, Perryville, and in the Tullahoma campaign. For his decisive rear guard action there, Thomas won for himself the nickname, “Rock of Chickamauga,” promotion to brigadier general, and command of the Army of the Cumberland. As Sherman’s second-in command, he participated in the Atlanta campaign and later at Nashville where he crushed Hood’s army. He remained in the Regular Army after the war, and commanded several military districts in the west. Thomas died in San Francisco, March 1870. An equestrian statue of him was unveiled in Washington in 1879. His appearance on beer stamps was noted above.

It is my impression—completely unscientific and lacking a census—that more Army than Navy officers have been pictured on revenue stamps. If true, it perhaps is due to the fact that because armies have always utilized more men than navies, the pool of Army veterans from which the honorees were selected is larger. Or perhaps it was more political and related to the fact that a greater number of presidents had obtained their military experience in the Army and thus had more friends in that branch. In any case, several distinguished U.S. Naval officers have been portrayed, including the following.

William Bainbridge was born in New Jersey, the son of a man who remained a British Loyalist during the American Revolution. Young William went to sea on a merchant ship when he was 15, and captained his own vessel within five years. First commissioned into the U.S. Navy in 1798, he participated actively in all important naval actions for the next twenty years. During the Quasi War with France (1798-1800), he commanded the U.S.S. *Retaliation*, was captured and briefly held prisoner, and was promoted upon his release to command of the frigate U.S.S. *George Washington*. During the Tripolitan War (1801-05), his ship, the U.S.S. *Philadelphia*, ran aground off Tripoli, he was again captured, and spent 20 months in prison there. In and out of active duty thereafter, Bainbridge was twice recalled by the Navy, first to command the U.S.S. *President* (1808-10) and then, during the War of 1812, the U.S.S. *Constitution* (“Old Ironsides”) with which vessel he won a notable victory over H.M.S. *Java* (1812) but suffered “severe wounds”. Following the end of hostilities, he was assigned to various shore posts (1815-20), set up the first school to train U.S. Naval officers (1817, at Charleston), and commanded the U.S.S. *Columbus* on its Mediterranean tour (1820-21) before returning to extended shore duty (1821-33) that included serving as president of the Board of Naval Commis-

sioners. He died in Philadelphia in 1833. William Bainbridge was pictured on Snuff/stamps, 1/2 to 5 pounds values, Series of 1878 and later (Springer TE77-81, Figure 9.



Figure 9. William Bainbridge on 1 pound Snuff stamp, Springer TE168

David

Glasgow Farragut was born in Tennessee, the second son of a naval officer, and named “James” by his parents. In 1810, he was adopted by Commander David Porter when his mother died. At age nine, and now called “David,” young Farragut was appointed a midshipman in the U.S. Navy. During the War of 1812, he served aboard the *U.S.S. Essex* commanded by his foster father. Thereafter, until the outbreak of the Civil War, Farragut’s service as a peacetime career naval officer was varied but unspectacular with assignments in the West Indies and the Mediterranean, during which he learned Arabic, French and Italian. Promoted to commander in 1841, he was given his first command the following year, and served in California (1854-58) where he established the Mare Island Navy Yard. In January 1862, Farragut was put in command of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron with orders to seize New Orleans and open the lower Mississippi River. In the months following, he defeated a Confederate river flotilla, took New Orleans without bloodshed, and steamed upriver past Vicksburg before withdrawing south to the safety of the Gulf of Mexico. He is better remembered, however, for telling his flag captain during the 1864 battle of Mobile Bay: “Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead, Drayton.” His last three promotions—to rear admiral (1862), to vice admiral (1864), and to admiral (1866)—were U.S. Navy firsts. He died at Portsmouth, N.H., in August 1870. David Farragut was pictured on



the 8 ounce 1870 and 2 ounce 1872 Tobacco Strip stamps (Springer TG24A, B; TG46A, B) and the rare 1/3 barrel Beer stamp of 1871 (Scott REA23, 24). Figure 10 shows one of the 2 ounce stamps.



Figure 10. David Glasgow Farragut on 1872 Issue 2 oz. Tobacco Strip stamp, Springer TE46

For some men, the New York State governorship has been the stepping stone to the presidency (e.g., Franklin D. Roosevelt) while for others (e.g., Thomas E. Dewey) the step up proved to be too great. In yet other instances, some former governors of the Empire State are better remembered for other offices they held. Such is the case with at least one of the men we will now consider.

De Witt Clinton was the consummate New Yorker, born into a politically-prominent family six years before the American Revolution. After graduating from Columbia, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and commenced practice (1790) in New York City. Service (1790-95) as the private secretary to his uncle, Governor George Clinton, led to his repeated election to the state Assembly (Representative, 1797-98; Senator, 1798-1802) and then to the U.S. Senate (1802-03) from which he resigned to begin his lengthy service as Mayor of New York City (1803-07, 1808-09, 1811-15). While mayor, he organized the city’s first public school, the Historical Society of New York and the Academy of Fine Arts, and helped found City Hospital. In 1812, Clinton was the unsuccessful candidate of the Peace Party for U.S. President, losing that election to incumbent President Madison. More successful in gubernatorial races, Clinton served as Governor of New York for nearly a decade (1817-23, 1825-28). History books have long emphasized his affiliation with the Erie Canal, a connection which began with his appointment in 1809 to

the commission that explored the route for a canal between Lake Erie and the Hudson River. Later, as the ranking canal commissioner (1810-24), he took the lead in promoting its construction, and presided at the dedication when the Erie Canal was completed in 1825. He died in Albany in 1828. De Witt Clinton’s portrait appeared on all Cigarette stamp issues, beginning with the Series of 1878 (Springer TA8). It has been noted that more than half-a-trillion of these stamps were used before they were discontinued in 1959. Figure 11 shows one of these stamps (Springer C205), once so familiar to smokers.

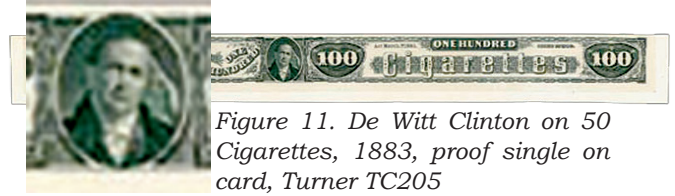


Figure 11. De Witt Clinton on 50 Cigarettes, 1883, proof single on card, Turner TC205

Silas Wright was born in Massachusetts, raised on a Vermont farm, studied law after graduating from Middlebury College (1815), was admitted to the bar and began practice in Canton, NY. He entered the political arena when he accepted appointment (1820) as county surrogate. This led to his election as senator in the state Assembly where he served two terms (1823-27), followed by one term in the U.S. House of Representatives (1827-29). Appointed State Comptroller in 1829, he remained in that position until 1833 when he returned to Congress, this time in the Senate where he served until 1844 before resigning to run for Governor of New York. Running as a Democrat (Wright was always a staunch party man) he defeated the Whig candidate, Millard Fillmore, but lost his bid for reelection in 1846 and retired to his farm where he died in 1847. Better known for his negative actions while he lived—he refused appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court and declined to be Secretary of the Treasury, and was nominated to be James Polk’s vice-presidential running mate but refused to run—Wright was posthumously remembered in a poem by Whittier and an historical novel by Bacheller. His portrait appeared on the 1 hogshead Beer stamps of 1878 (Scott REA43), 1898 (Scott REA64), 1901 (Scott REA71), and 1902 (Scott REA74, 81), and on all of the Customs Fee stamps, Series of 1887 (Scott RL1-8). Figure 12 shows the 90 cents stamp from that series.

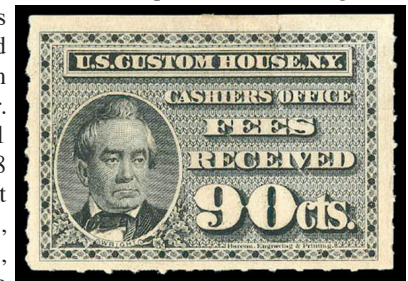


Figure 12. Silas Wright on the 90¢ Customs Fee stamp (Sc. RL8).

The selection of individuals to be memorialized by having their portraits appear on revenue stamps should have been a thoughtful process. And yet when we review the results (remembering that the decisions were made in image-conscious Washington) we are not surprised to find many examples of political patronage. Regardless, we still might hope to see, for instance, stamps bearing the likeness of persons chosen to represent the office charged with keeping track of those stamps. Happily that can happen, although to a lesser extent than might be hoped.

An office of Commissioner of Internal Revenue within the Treasury Department was created by the same Civil War-time act that levied so many stamp duties and authorized production of the First Revenue Issue. In charge of that office was a commissioner to be appointed by the president with the consent of the Senate. That office still exists as the “Internal Revenue Service,” now a bureau of the Treasury Department. Today, few of us know the name of the director of the IRS, nor can we look to find his portrait on a stamp. But there was a time when we could, although the appearance may have been based upon other public service.

From 1862 when the office was created, until the end of the 19th century, 17 different men served as Commissioner. Three held “Acting Commissioner” appointments, and two of them served twice. Two of the Commissioners were considered earlier in this series in connection

with their service in cabinet posts: George S. Boutwell (Treasury) and Columbus Delano (Interior). Except for the men whose careers we will review here, I know of no other IRS commissioner who was ever pictured on any revenue stamp.

William Orton, third Commissioner, served July 1, 1865, to October 31, 1865. Born and schooled in rural western New York, he later attended the Normal School in Albany to complete his education. He graduated with honors, taught school in Geneva, N.Y., clerked in a book store there, and became a partner in the business which later was liquidated (1851) when it was moved to New York City. Orton secured a job with a publishing company, became active in Republican politics, and was elected to the City Council. In 1862, he was appointed a Collector of Internal Revenue for the city, a position in which he showed such great executive ability that he was made Commissioner of Internal Revenue in Washington, but ill-health prompted his resignation after brief service. He soon became president of the United States Telegraph Company, then moved (1866) to the vice-presidency and presidency of the Western Union Telegraph Company where he introduced the money order system, lowered night rates, and established the *Journal of Telegraphy*. At the time of his death in 1878 in New York City, he also was president of several other telegraph companies. William Orton's signature is found on the 1871-78 telegraph frank stamps of Western Union (Scott 16T1-8); his portrait is on the 2 ounce Tobacco Strip stamps, Series of 1875 (Springer TG51 and following). Figure 13 shows Orton's signature on a Telegraph stamp.



Figure 13. 1871 Telegraph stamp, Sc. 16T1

John Watkinson Douglass was Acting Commissioner, November 1, 1870, to January 2, 1871 and Commissioner, August 9, 1871, to May 14, 1875. Born in Philadelphia, he grew up in Erie, Pa. He attended public schools there, studied law as an apprentice to an Erie lawyer, and was admitted to the bar in 1850. He served as Collector of Internal Revenue for the 19th Pennsylvania District, 1862-69, was promoted to 1st Deputy Commissioner, Washington, in 1869, prior to becoming Acting Commissioner in Commissioner Delano's absence. When Delano was replaced by Alfred Pleasonton in January, 1871, Douglass reverted to the 1st Deputy position where he remained until he replaced Commissioner Pleasonton in August, 1871. Following his government service, Douglass practiced law in Washington, and became a member and president of the Board of Commissioners in that city. He died there in 1909. Douglass is pictured on the 4 ounce Tobacco Strip stamps, Series of 1875 (Springer TG52 and following).

It is a safe bet that I have omitted someone from this series. I can, in fact, add at least one deserving person, and readers will no doubt think of others. My late addition would be Benjamin Franklin for his appearance on the types D, E, F, and U Revenue Stamped Paper issues of 1862-82 (Scott RN, Figure 14). His omission was intentional, however, because I felt that he was too familiar a figure to need a discussion of his life. The same could not be said of some we considered who labored in relative obscurity and deserve recognition.



Figure 14. Benjamin Franklin design from Revenue Stamped Paper, Sc. RN-D1

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