

Stamp Specialist:

The 6-Cent Lincoln Bank Note Issues, Pt. 5

By George C. Hahn (*From the Stamp Specialist Volume 11, The Gray Book*)

*Note: See pages 6-8 for additional images and
page 9 for the 1875 Special Printing text and image.*

THE 1879 ISSUE

The Continental Bank Note Company was absorbed by the American Bank Note Company, according to John N. Luff, on February 4, 1879, and ceased to exist under its own name after that date. Clarence W. Brazer, however, states that the actual date of consolidation of the Continental Bank Note Company with the American Bank Note Company took place on December 31, 1878, although the physical closing of the Continental Bank Note Company plant may have been on February 4, 1879.

The American Bank Note Company assumed all outstanding contracts of the Continental Bank Note Company, among them the contract for supplying the Post Office Department with its required stamps.

At the time the American Bank Note Company absorbed the Continental Bank Note Company, the contract originally entered into by the Post Office Department with the Continental Bank Note Company, still had two more years to run. The American Bank Note Company took over the printing of the contract but used Continental Bank Note Company's plates 304 and/or 305. It consequently will be readily understood why many of the American Bank Note Company printings carry the imprint of the Continental Bank Note Company.

The only way the stamps printed by the American Bank Note Company can be differentiated from the printing of the Continental Bank Note Company is by means of the paper. The Continental Bank Note Company, it will be recalled, used a hard, white paper whereas the paper used by the American Bank Note Company, with one or two rare exceptions, was a soft, porous paper. However, it is said that the Continental Bank Note Company began using a soft paper just prior to its consolidation with the American Bank Note Company but such soft paper is not known to have been used in the printing of any of the 6-cents values by the Continental Bank Note Company. Therefore, the only way in which the stamps of these two printings can be distinguished is by means of the texture of the paper.

The gum used by the American Bank Note Company was generally yellowish in appearance but occasionally it had quite a brownish hue. The stamps, like all others of the 6-cents Lincoln Bank Note issues, were perforated 12.

The "United States Stamp Catalogue" of Scott Publications, Inc., lists the color of this stamp as pink but several shade varieties have been noted such as pale dull-rose, brown rose and a dullish pink color.

Cancellations on this stamp generally seem to be rather heavy, due to the soft paper easily absorbing the cancelling-ink. According to Scott's "United States Stamp Catalogue" cancellations were applied in black, blue, purple, magenta and red and among some of the rarer cancellations are found "Railroad", "China", "Numeral", and Supplementary Mail cancellations.

John N. Luff, in reporting the quantities issued, calls attention to the fact that official government statistics only take notice of the denominations. Therefore, it is impossible to decide how many stamps of each of the printings were issued. Luff lists a total of 48,401,550 stamps as having been issued of the 6-cents value during the period of 1873 to 1879.

While new plates were manufactured by the American Bank Note Company, as the old original plates of the Continental Bank Note Company began to wear out, no such new plates were made for the 6-cents value.

THE 1880 SPECIAL PRINTING

No one seems to know why these special printings, produced by the American Bank Note Company, were made. They were printed from the original Continental Bank Note Company plates on the soft, porous paper which was in use by the American Bank Note Company. The stamps were perforated 12, the same as the regular printing, but issued without gum, the same as the Special Printing of 1875. The perforations were rather rough and ragged.

Five hundred complete sets of the entire issue are said to have been furnished to the Post Office Department.

The Post Office Department did not keep separate records, differentiating between the Special Printings of the 1875 and 1880 issues. The total quantity of the 6-cents value of both of these Special Printings sold, according to Scott's "United States Stamp Catalogue," was 185 copies only. Of these the 1880 Special Printings, however, are the rarest and but a few copies are known to exist.

THE 1881-1882 ISSUE

The contract for the printing and supplying of the government's requirements of stamps, originally entered into with the Continental Bank Note Company and taken over by the American Bank Note Company, expired in 1881. At the expiration of this contract, the American Bank Note Company once more was awarded the contract for another period of four years on a bid of 9.19 cents per thousand. A new essay was submitted, which followed quite closely the previous design of the 6-cents denomination. This essay, according to Clarence W. Brazier, was an incomplete engraving of the adopted design. The shading on the label at the top and in the ribbons below was incomplete. There are found four lines between the frame sinkage at right and left edges. There is also a horizontal line to be found at the bottom.

The stamp of the 1881-1882 issue is known as the re-engraved stamp. It differs from the preceding issue in that there are three vertical lines located from the edge of the panel to the outside of the stamp at the right and left side, whereas there are four such lines located in the same place on the previous issue.

The inside curls of the ribbon, containing the denomination inscription, appear to be as solid color due to the strengthening of at least ten of the shading lines. The horizontal lines of the panel and the vertical lines of the background also have been re-engraved. This makes for a uniformly solid appearance of the shading of the edges and the oval.

The reason for the re-engraving of this and the other values of this issue was said to have been due to a decision by the American Bank Note Company to deepen the background of the various stamps, presumably to improve the appearance of the same. It also was expected that the wiping of the plates would be made easier and heavier impressions produced by the deepening of certain of the lines of the design. However, it did not seem to have this effect as the re-engraving of the original die did not seem to improve the appearance of the stamp as the clearness apparently was destroyed. As a matter of fact the impressions from the altered design are heavy, blurred and uneven.

L. G. Brookman, in commenting on the procedure used to re-engrave the original dies, is of the opinion that the plates for this re-engraved stamp were made in the following manner: A secondary die was laid down by the use of an old transfer roll, and the design surrounding the portrait was then erased from this secondary die. Then one of two procedures was followed; either a new



Left, the 1870-71 Issue, Scott 148, four vertical lines in frame just outside the medallion; right, the 1881-82 Issue, Scott 208, three vertical lines.

frame was engraved directly on this secondary die from which the original frame had been erased, or a transfer roll bearing only the portrait was made from this erased die. In this event the new frame was engraved on a new die and the transfer roll bearing the portrait was used to enter the portrait on the new die. From this new and complete die a new transfer roll was produced and used to lay down the two American plates, Nos. 426 and 427, which were used to produce this stamp.

While some of the re-engraved stamps of this issue were first delivered to Postmasters in 1881, the 6-cents value, according to John N. Luff, was not issued to the public until June 1882.

The plates of the American Bank Note Company of this issue bore the imprint "AMERICAN BANK NOTE COMPANY," in heavy faced, shaded capitals without frame or other surroundings. The imprints and plate numbers occupied the same position as on the plates of the previous contractors. The plate numbers themselves were all in small italic numerals.

The plates again consisted of 200 subjects, divided into post office panes of 100 each. The issue was perforated the same as the preceding ones with a twelve perforation.

The paper used for this issue was the same as the paper for the previous American Bank Note Company printings, namely a soft, porous paper, showing heavy meshes in the texture and varying from a thick white paper to a thin and somewhat transparent soft toned paper.

The stamps were gummed with a light, thin gum of light yellowish to white in color.

Scott's "United States Stamp Catalogue" lists the color of the stamp as rose and dull rose and a brown red. This latter color is quite rare and demands a considerable premium.

The only variety reported on this issue is the Stitch Watermark, which has been located on a few of the stamps. This Stitch Watermark has been described previously. Scott also list a double transfer, however, I have not located the same in my reference collection and therefore am unable to offer further details on this particular variety.

Cancellations on this stamp again are heavy and blurred due to the porousness of the paper and have been applied in black, magenta, red, purple and blue. The usual cancellations of the Bank Note period have been applied on the stamps and the only special cancellation, demanding a premium as listed in the "United States Stamp Catalogue," is the Type "F" Supplementary Mail Cancellation.

According to John N. Luff, 10,610,800 stamps of the 6-cents denomination were delivered to postmasters between July 1, 1882 and December 31, 1889. It again is difficult from these figures to decide how many of these stamps were those of the 1881-1882 issue of the American Bank Note Company. The 6-cents stamps of the next issue (1890-1893) were not placed on sale until February 22, 1890.

Images start on page 6

P R O O F S

The following list of various proofs known to exist was compiled by Mr. Clarence W. Brazer, the foremost student and specialist of proofs and essays. The list also was published in "THE BANK NOTE ISSUES OF UNITED STATES STAMPS," 1870-1893, by Lester G. Brookman and published by the American Philatelic Society.

NORMAL COLOR PROOFS

NATIONAL BANK NOTE COMPANY ISSUE OF 1870	Large Die Proof India Plate Proof
CONTINENTAL BANK NOTE COMPANY ISSUE OF 1873	Large Die Proof, Small Die Proof Plate Proof on India and on card

AMERICAN BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1882

Large Die Proof, Small Die
Proof
Plate Proof on India and on
card

TRIAL COLOR PROOFS

NATIONAL BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1870

Large Die Proof on India in
Brown-red and Dark Blue.

CONTINENTAL BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1873

Plate Proofs on stamp paper,
perforated and gummed:
Ultramarine, Dull Blue, Orange,
Blue, Yellow-Green, Warm
Sepia, Dark Ultramarine.

Large Die Proof on India in
Black

Plate Proof on India in Black

AMERICAN BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1882

Large Die Proof on India in
Deep Carmine, Red-Brown,
Orange-Red, Deep Scarlet,
Black-Blue.

Large Die Proof on Card in Vio-
let, Orange-Red, and Orange-
Brown

THE "ATLANTA" TRIAL COLOR PLATE PROOFS

CONTINENTAL BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1873

Plate Proofs on light card:
Black, Scarlet, Brown, Green,
and Blue

THE "GOODALL" TRIAL COLOR PROOFS

CONTINENTAL BANK NOTE COMPANY
ISSUE OF 1873

Med. size Die Proofs on India:
Dull Black, Dull Scarlet, Dull
Brown, Dull Green, Dull Blue

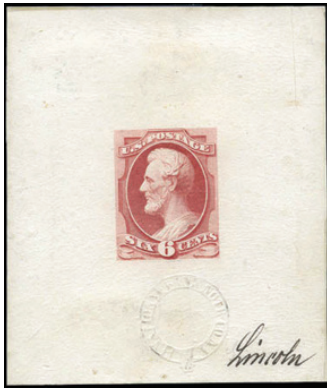
SPECIMEN STAMPS

(As listed in Scott's "UNITED STATES STAMP CATALOGUE")

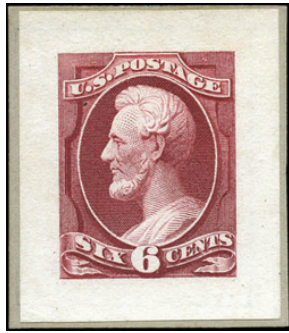
ISSUE OF 1870	Type "A"	Black Overprint
ISSUE OF 1873	Type "B"	Black Overprint
ISSUE OF 1881-1882	Type "D"	Red Overprint

SAMPLE STAMPS

ISSUE OF 1881-1882	Type "K"	Blue Overprint
	Type "L"	Blue Overprint



148P1 variety, 1870 6¢ carmine large die proof with embossed "National Bank Note Co NY" seal and manuscript "Lincoln", the only recorded example.



1873, 6¢ pink, small die proof (159P2), on gray card



1882, 6¢ rose, re-engraved, small die proof (208P2), on original gray card



1882 6¢ black re-engraved, trial color large die proof on India (208TC1), die sunk on 78x89mm card, with "National Bank Note Co." imprint at bottom, pencil "2" and "140", black is unlisted by Scott. (Printed by American Bank Note.)



1873 6¢ black, trial color plate proof on India (159TC3), top plate number "18" block of 12 with Continental imprint, on card with large margins



1873, 6¢ "Goodall" trial color small die proofs on India (159TC2), dull red and deep green,



1873, 6¢ "Atlanta" trial color plate proofs on card (159TC), complete set of five colors in black, scarlet, brown, green and blue,



1882, 6¢ rose, re-engraved, plate proof on card, "Specimen" Type D handstamp (208P4 var.), the only recorded example of this Specimen handstamp.



1881-82, Type L overprint, 208SL