

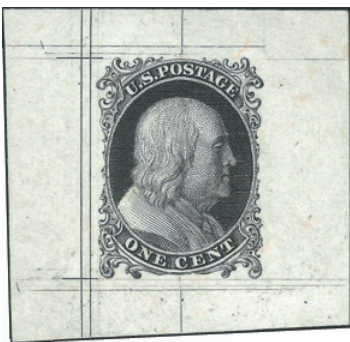
Viewing the Wagshal One-Cent Blues

by John F. Dunn

On September 30 and October 1 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries presented at auction the Jerome Wagshal Collection of the Imperforate One-Cent Blues of 1851-56. This is part of a series of sales of the Wagshal Collection. While at the Philatelic Foundation I had the pleasure of editing a study of the One-Cent Blues that Wagshal did for the PF and can attest to the fact that he was recognized as the leading scholar of his time in this area.

In this viewing, I will try to focus on some of the specialized pieces from the Wagshal Collection. All prices quoted here do not include the 15% Buyers' Premiums that are added on to these hammer prices.

Let's start off with this 1¢ Large Die Trial Color Proof on Card in black (Sc.TC1). It is one of three reported proof impressions from the 1851 issue, one of which is in blue and is described as having been "probably executed during the production phase of the 1875 Reprint...". This opinion was expressed by Mortimer Neinken based on markings that are found on the 1875 Reprint plate.



Estimated at \$4,000-5,000, it sold for \$3,750.

Next we view the 1¢ Blue, Type Ib (Sc. 5A), position 4R1E, from Plate 1 Early, producing a sharp impression.

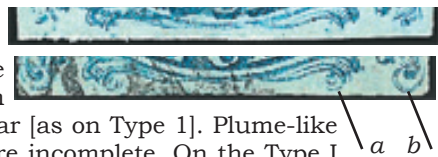


As explained in the lot description, "Type Ib was produced only as an imperforate stamp from Plate 1 Early. Six positions on Plate 1E furnished stamps qualifying as Type Ib—Positions 3-6R and 8-9R—distinguished by the complete design at top and nearly complete design at bottom. When first entered on 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. With an SCV of \$10,000, this stamp fetched \$5,250.

Next we see an example of Position 7R1E, the 1¢ Blue Type I (Sc. 5), showing the complete design at top and bottom, rare in sound condition. As described, "Position 7R1E is the only one among the 1,000 subjects on the plates that produced imperforate one-cent stamps to show the full design.... the 1¢ 1851 Type I is the rarest of all United States stamps issued regularly prior to the 1868 Grills.... The example offered here should be considered desirable because it is sound and also because it shows the complete outer part of the design at top and bottom, the essential elements of Type I.



We show here a magnified view of the previous two stamps. As explained in the Scott Specialized, the "balls below bottom label are not so clear [as on Type 1]. Plume-like scrolls at bottom are incomplete. On the Type I magnification we show arrows to one of the balls (arrow a) and one of the plumes (arrow b).



With an SCV of \$85,000, the Type I, Sc. 5, realized \$52,500.

Next we see Position 17R1E, Ty. IIIa (Sc. 8A). A distinguishing characteristic of Type IIIa is a wide break in the top or rarely the bottom outer line—but not both. This stamp shows a wide break in the top outer line (arrow). As explained in the lot description, "the reason that 7R1E retained its Type I elements at the bottom is because 17R1E was short transferred at the top, thus reducing the 'ironing out' effect on 7R1E".



This particular stamp actually shows parts of the plumes and balls of Position 7R1E above it. With an SCV of \$1,200, it sold for \$550.

(For those who are not familiar with Positions, if you start with the upper left stamp on a pane, that is Position 1; on a 10 x 10 plate of 100, the upper right would be Position 10; next row left to right are Positions 11-19, and so on to the lower right stamp, which is Position 100; thus, Position 17 would be just below Position 7.)

A few lots later we find another example of Sc. 8A, but this one shows the break in the bottom outer line instead of the top. This is Position 100R1E, one of only two on Plate 1 Early with a break in the bottom outer line (arrow), those two positions being 81L and 100R. Estimated at \$1,000-1,500, it fetched \$1,500.



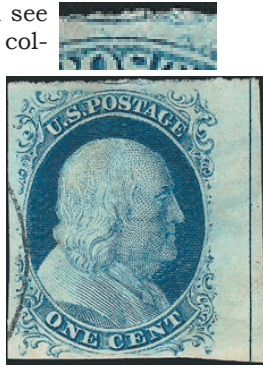
Again, to explain, the One-Cent Blues were printed from plates of 200, the full sheets of 200 then being cut into Left (L) and Right (R) panes of 100.

Next up for viewing is the most common Imperforate 1¢ Blue, Type IV (Sc. 9) with imprint and plate "No. 1" sheet margin at left. This, the "First" Plate Number block, was estimated at \$10,000-15,000 and sold for \$12,000.



Sticking with Scott 9, we can see a number of variations that make collecting the 1¢ Blues so fascinating.

First is a straddle-pane margin with the centerline at right that would have run vertically between the left and right panes in the full sheet of 200. This particular stamp is recut once at the top, recognized in part by the relatively heavy outer frame line. With an SCV of \$135 with no premium for the straddle margin and line, it sold for \$375.



This next stamp looks to be a common Scott 9 on the face, but it is extremely rare. In fact is unique—the only 1¢ 1851 issue with the design printed on both sides.



On the actual stamp, the design on the reverse is inverted relative to the front, but I flipped it here to show in the lettering that it is not an offset from another stamp, but an actual printed stamp. We computer enhanced the top label in order to bring out the “U” at left and “GE” at right in “Postage” to demonstrate that point.



As explained in the lot description, “It has been theorized that, for the printed-on-both-sides varieties, the back was printed first. The impressions for other stamps are normally either faint or off-register, and so the paper was probably reused to obtain the better printing found on the front. A similar explanation has been given for double impressions.”

Listed but unpriced in Scott, offered for the first time in decades, and estimated at \$20,000-30,000, it realized 42,500.

Coming back to recuts, here’s an example of Scott 9 recut twice at the bottom, which should be visible just below the “C” without the need for magnification. With an SCV of \$875, this example went for \$300.



Still another collectable variety are plate cracks. In this case it is a block of the Type II, Scott 7, Positions 1-2 and 11-12L2, with a huge corner sheet margin and a plate crack from the top of the sheet margin through Position 2L and into 12L below.

Estimated at \$1,500-

2,000, it sold for \$3,250.

Next we come to another rarity, and an amplification on the ways in which the breaks on Type III (Sc. 8) came about. This is Position 99R2—one of only two sound, original gum examples of this stamp.



Position 99R2 is described as “the best example of the Type III, with the widest breaks at top and bottom.” As explained further, “Type III is defined by breaks in the outer lines at both top and bottom. Many Type III stamps have breaks that were created or enlarged by plate wear. Since the wear occurred over a period of time, a majority of stamps of this type (both unused and used) have small breaks in at least one line. The most notable exception is Position 99R2. According to the Neinken book, ‘The 99R2 stamp is a fresh entry, that was short transferred both at top and bottom, over an original entry that had been erased...The reason that 99R2 is the finest example of Type III is because of its very short transfer at top and at bottom, giving us the wide breaks in these lines.’”

With an SCV of \$35,000, this example went for \$42,500.

We viewed earlier a right straddle margin and line single from a left pane; now we see a pair from a right pane, Type II, Sc. 7, Positions 31-32R3, showing a left straddle-pane margin and centerline. With an SCV of \$1,500, this pair with a thin fetched \$425.



For the 1¢ Blue, Type Ia (Sc. 6), we show this Position 99R4 with huge margins and a proof-like impression, barely cancelled by a very light strike of a circular datestamp. As described, “Stamps printed from Plate 4 were issued in April, May and briefly in June 1857 before perforations were introduced...The extremely rare Type Ia, showing the full design at bottom, was furnished only by 18 of the 200 subjects on Plate 4.



With an SCV of \$13,000, it sold for \$35,000.

Finally, we view a ‘perforated imperf’. It is the Imperforate Type II, Sc. 7, with a privately produced experimental, perf 12-1/2, Chicago Perforation—one of only 19 One Cents stamps with this perforation, one of just two recorded unused examples of the 1¢ with Chicago Perforation—and the only one with original gum. As noted in the lot description, the origin of the Chicago perforation was revealed in an article by Wagshal. With an SCV of \$22,500, this great rarity realized \$17,500.

