

Viewing Collections:

Viewing the Kotanchik Newspaper & Periodicals Collection

by John F. Dunn

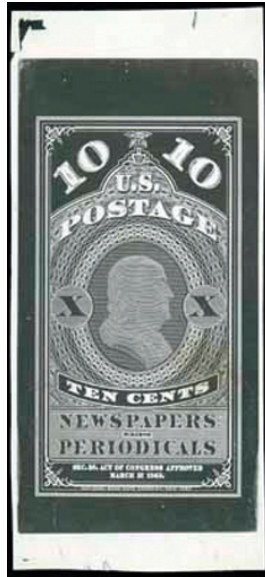
In February 2004 Bennett Auctions offered the Jim Kotanchik Collection of Newspapers & Periodical stamps.

The auction opened with this 1865 Newspaper 5¢ large die essay in blue on wove paper (Sc. PR1E), without “National Bank Note Company, New York” imprint at the bottom, and with bold impressions of the two screws that held the die to the press bed. Unlisted in Brazer or Scott, this unique essay was described as “a most important item in the development of the 1865 Newspaper issue.... ...This essay additionally displays the correct color of the stamp, making it a direct forerunner of the issued stamp. Consequently, we believe that the proper Scott number for this item should be PR1-E1.” Estimated at \$4,000-5,000 it realized \$3,250. (All prices quoted here do not include the Buyers’ Premiums that are added on to these hammer prices.)



Next we view the 1865 Newspaper 5¢ red trial color large die proof on wove paper (Sc. PR1TCP1) with a clear impression, and which clearly shows the damage to the working die at the top. Estimated at \$1,500-2,000, it sold for \$1,800.





Next up is an 1865 Newspaper 10¢ trial color large die proof on wove (Sc. PR2TCP1) showing a full impression of the die, but with distinct unfinished corners. Unlisted in Scott, this unique proof was estimated at \$1,000-1,500 and was hammered down for \$800.

Shown next is an 1865 Newspaper 5¢ lake trial color proof on cream wove paper (Sc. PR4TC3) in a complete pane of ten with imprint and plate number at the top, mounted on its original exhibition sheet. With small selvage faults “typical of the poor quality of paper used by the printer,” the pane fetched \$675 against a \$420 2004 SCV.



From a lot of 1865 5¢-25¢ Newspaper “make-up” plate proofs on wove (Sc. PR2P3-PR4P3 variety) bottom imprint and plate number strips of three, we see the 25¢ value (Sc. PR4P3 var.). Each stamp has circled areas in pencil to indicate to the printer those areas which needed to be “made-up”, i.e. reworking the printing technique to improve each plate’s impression; each



shows on the reverse the impression of the pencil in the color of the stamp indicating that these pencil strokes were made while the proof sheets were still on the press. Despite a few minor faults and described as “considering the rarity of these items still Very Fine,” the lot was estimated at \$750-1,000 and went for \$1,400.

Selected next for viewing is the high value from a set of 1865 Newspaper 5¢-25¢ plate proofs on card (Sc. PR2P4-PR4P4) in complete uncut sheets of 20 with various cutting lines.

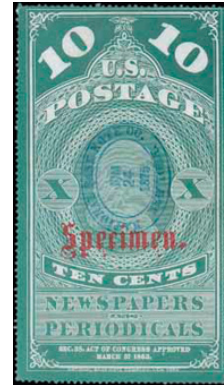
The 25¢ sheet shows the horizontal cutting line to separate each sheet into two panes of ten. With a total Scott value for the lot of \$3,960, it realized \$5,500.

Below we see the final designs in a set of 1865 5¢-25¢ Newspapers with manuscript “adopted” overprints (Sc. PR1-PR3 var.). The 5¢ and 10¢ have minor faults. This is the only recorded set with this manuscript overprint. A previous owner, specialist J. Frank Braceland claimed that these stamps were the first printed examples of the 1865 issue, and



the writing was that of the Postmaster General or the engraver, indicating the acceptance of these stamps by the Post Office Department. The lot went for the high end of its \$1,000-1,500 estimate range.

Next we see another step in the process leading up to issuing these first Newspaper stamps, the 1865 10¢ blue green overprinted “Specimen” type C (Sc. PR2SC), also with a blue 29 x 23mm double oval “NATIONAL BANK NOTE CO. NEW YORK JUN 24 1865” handstamp (sideways in the center oval), described as “most probably a presentation single. Without gum as issued.” With a \$400+ SCV, it sold for \$725.



And now for the finished product, in the form of the only recorded complete pane of 10 the 1865 Newspaper 5¢ dark blue (Sc. PR1). Without gum as issued, the SCV was \$6,050 as blocks & singles, and the realization was \$7,000.

Taking the process one step further, on page 5 we show a the 1865 Newspaper 5¢ dark blue (Sc. PR1), used, still attached to a piece of newspaper. As explained in the lot description, “When a publisher did not use a wrapper, he affixed the stamp to the outermost newspaper itself.

This used 5¢ 1865 single is truly an unrecognized rarity of United States philately.” With a modest estimate of \$400-500, it was hammered down for \$950.

Moving on, we come to the 1875 Reprint of the 25¢ dark carmine 1865 issue



(Sc. PR7) in a complete pane of ten, without gum as issued. From the upper half of a sheet of 20, with imprint and plate no. 40 at top, full selvage, a natural straightedge at bottom where the sheet was

cut in half, and without gum as issued. The pane went for \$4,250 against an SCV of \$2,070.

This next lot is the only complete pane of 10 of the 1880 Reprint of the 1865 Newspaper 5¢ dark blue (Sc. PR8), on soft porous paper, without gum as issued, With an SCV of \$4,800, it fetched \$6,250.





And coming back to the 1875 Continental Bank Note Special Printings imperforate (Sc. PR5-PR7 var.), we view the unique set of full sheets of 10, printed by Continental on new plates prepared around 1876, on hard white paper, without the embossing present on stamps printed from

the 1865 plates. As explained in the lot description, “The 10¢ and the 25¢ values have white margins all around the design, unlike those stamps printed by National Bank Note Co. in 1865, which indicates that new plates were used. Unlisted but footnoted in Scott and written about by Luff and Braceland. Braceland suggests that the Continental Bank Note Co., due to the popularity of the 1875 reprints, which had been made from the original National Bank Note Co. plates, made new plates in anticipation of retaining its government printing contract.”

Estimated at \$30,000-40,000, the set of full sheets drew a top bid of \$17,000.

The next lot selected for viewing is this 1875 25¢ Continental essay in dark green on India (Sc. PR9-E2a), the complete engraving of an unadopted design. Unlisted in Scott in this color, but with an SCV of \$1,250 for other colors, it sold for \$850.

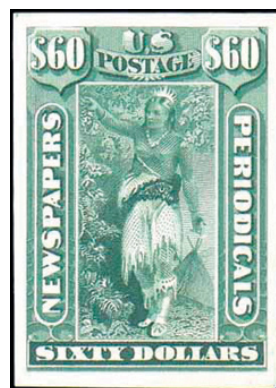


Another unlisted variety is shown here—an 1875 \$3 Newspaper \$3 light ultramarine trial color plate proof on India paper (Sc. PR25TC3) in a top imprint block of eight mounted on card, the variety consisting of the misregistration of reliefs between the first block of four and the second, the right block being slightly lower than the left block. Very Fine. An unusual and interesting multiple. The lot realized its \$280 SCV as singles.



An example of the 1875 “Atlanta” Newspaper trial color plate proofs on card (Sc. PR9TC-PR32TC) is shown next. These trial colors were printed for the 1881 International Cotton Exhibition in Atlanta, Georgia. The auction lot, consisting of the complete set of “Atlantas”, with an SCV of \$888, realized \$1,210.

Another complete proof set—this one the 1875 Newspaper 2¢-\$60 small die



proofs (Sc. PR9P2-PR32P2), mounted on three original gray cards (one shown) from a “Roosevelt” presentation album—comes next in our viewing. The set exceeded its SCV of \$960, selling for \$1,050.

Next we view the 1875 24¢ rose (Sc. PR17 var.), printed on paper with silk fibers. The regular postage issues printed by the Continental Bank Note Co. between 1873 and 1875 were partially printed on paper with silk fibers. This led to the belief that some of the 1875 Newspaper stamps also were printed by Continental, but no other copies came to light since the discovery in 1986 of this unique discovery copy. With an estimate of \$1,000-1,500, it was hammered down for \$1,600.



Among Newspaper stamps printed for use, we see the 1875 \$60 violet (Sc. PR32), the high value in this set. With wide margins, but regummed, this \$5,250 SCV stamp sold for \$1,600.



And back to Special Printings, we see the 1875 96¢ pale rose (Sc. PR47), without gum as issued—one of only 141 sold. With an SCV of \$6,250, it realized \$1,800.



And for variety, we show the 1879 60¢ red Newspaper, with a doubled Type D “Specimen” overprint (Sc. PR67SD variety). The doubling is very closely registered, but still visible using your pdf magnifier tool. This is the unique discovery copy. It was discovered by the auctioneers as they were lotting the auction. Estimated at \$500-750, it went for \$500.



Shown above is another extraordinary lot, the 1879

2¢ black (Sc. PR57) in a complete pane of 50, the upper half of the full sheet, with split arrows at the bottom left and right. With original gum, all but three stamps never hinged and only a few minor selvage faults, the sheet had an SCV of \$1,850 and a hammer price of \$1,150.

A similar lot (not shown), a bottom pane of 50 of the 1879 3¢ (Sc. PR58), but with tropicalized wax paper gum and light toning spots affecting ten stamps including the imprint block, could realize no better than \$500 against its \$2,250 SCV.

And now for an 1894 “Colman” Special Printing. As explained by the auctioneers, this printing was ordered from the American Bank Note Company in March of 1894 to serve as samples for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, which had been awarded the four-year contract to print postage stamps. These Newspaper stamps were printed from the original plates prepared by the Continental Bank Note Co. in 1875 and were in the possession of the American Bank Note Co. Washington stamp dealer Henry F. Colman obtained a set of imperforate panes of 50 of the sample stamps. Keeping five sets in imperforate condition, he perforated the other forty-five sets. He was indicted by the government for illegal possession of these stamps, but was acquitted.



The auction lot consisted of the 1¢-\$60, privately perforated and gummed (Sc. PR57-PR79, PR81 var., shown PR81 var.), the complete set of all values including the unissued 9¢, with lightly hinged original gum. Estimated at \$5,000-7,500, and one of only 45 such sets produced, it sold for \$6,250.

And to the right we see an 1885 1¢ black Newspaper (Sc. PR81 var.) pair with plate scratches (not listed in Scott) in positions 40 and 50, extend-



ing from the lower right corner of the top stamp to the upper right corner of the bottom stamp (arrow). The never hinged pair (bottom stamp with a tiny thin) had an SCV of \$90 hinged and fetched a lofty \$350.

Next we view an 1885 72¢ carmine Newspaper issue (Sc. PR87), it a top margin imprint block of 12. As described, there are no numbers on these plates, so this would be the equivalent of a plate block.



Despite this, with a Scott value given as “\$4,500 ++,” it only sold for \$750.



I selected this next lot, the 1894 4¢ intense black (Sc. PR92), to demonstrate the poor perforating that was typical of the First Bureau issues, including the Newspaper stamps. As described, “the earliest 1894 first Bureau low value Newspaper stamps have the same perforation structure of the previous American Bank Note Co. issue, but they are distinguished by

their color, paper and blotchy gum...and typical partially unpunched perforations.” With an SCV of \$350, this stamp realized \$180.

An atypical example is this 1894 12¢ pink stamp (Sc. PR95), without the usual paper creases, gum and perf problems, had a 2004 SCV of \$2,000...but could still do no better than \$1,150.



And now for one of the great Newspaper rarities, the 1894 \$3 scarlet (Sc. PR100) in the distinctive shade with First Bureau gum, perforations and an unusually clean impres-

sion. Fewer than ten singles were certified by the Philatelic Foundation. The issue had a 2004 SCV of \$60,000, and despite a small thin spot it fetched \$47,500.

Next we see an approved large die proof for the 1895 \$2 scarlet Newspaper issue. Barely perceptible at the bottom is the approval signature of the engraver, Lyman T. Ellis. Estimated at \$300-400, it sold for \$200.

Below we view the 1895 5¢ black Newspaper issue (Sc. PR104) in a top arrow imprint and plate no.



93 strip of three. The strip has a few selvaige faults and the red ink "N.W." initials, but with an SCV as singles of \$1,000 as singles it realized \$1,600.

Another appealing lot is this 1895 \$100 purple (Sc. PR113) with large margins and bright color. With a hinge remnant, a light natural paper wrinkle and a \$3,000 SCV, it sold for \$2,000.



Next we view the 1895-97 \$100 issue overprinted "Universal Postal Congress", part of a lot with the complete set, (Sc. PR114SO-PR125SO). All stamps have "CSY" handstamps and the \$100 has a tiny thin spot. Despite that, the set was described as "the finest recorded set," with the further explanation, "The majority of these Universal Postal Congress specimens

exist with no gum or disturbed gum from having been pasted into the specimen albums of the member U.P.U. countries....” With an SCV of \$1,500, it sold for \$1,700.

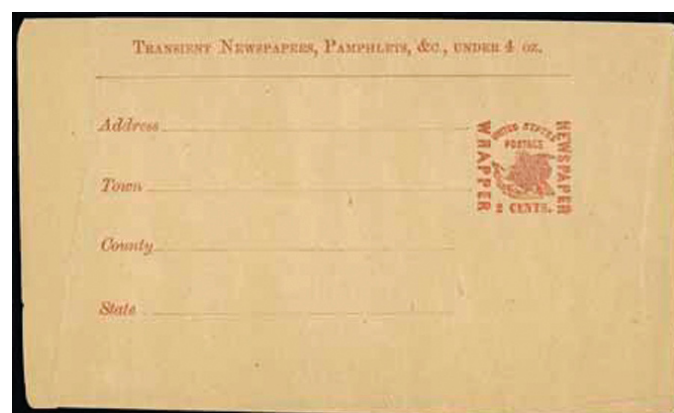
Next we see the same high value as issued and used, which itself is relatively hard to find. It was part of a complete set (Sc. PR114-PR125) with an SCV of \$378, it realized \$475.



This next lot illustrates how the small Newspaper stamps were used.

It is one of two pages from an 1898 Griffin, Georgia Post Office Newspaper and Periodical account book with 1896 1¢ and 5¢ black stamps (Sc. PR114, PR116) affixed, but not cancelled, to pay for the mailing costs of newspapers. With an estimate of \$300-400, it was hammered down for \$625.

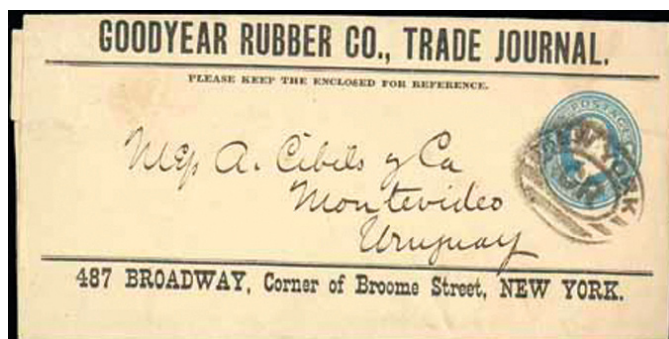
I selected this next lot primarily to bring attention to the beauty of these Newspaper stamps, with their various symbolic figures and attractive colors. In this case we see "Commerce" on an 1897 \$50 dull rose (Sc. PR124) with the added appeal of a margin imprint and plate no. 135 block of six. The block is NH and there is some separation in the selvage. The lot sold for its SCV of \$600 as singles.



to a Newspaper wrapper. It's a circa 1875 2¢ Eagle essay (Undersander catalog #E751a). This also happens to be the example used for the catalogue

illustration. With minor wrinkles at the ends, this rare piece was estimated at \$500-750 and went for \$575.

Also in the wrappers section, we find an 1874 Newspaper complete wrapper 1¢ light blue on manila, die 2 (Sc. W120), with a printed



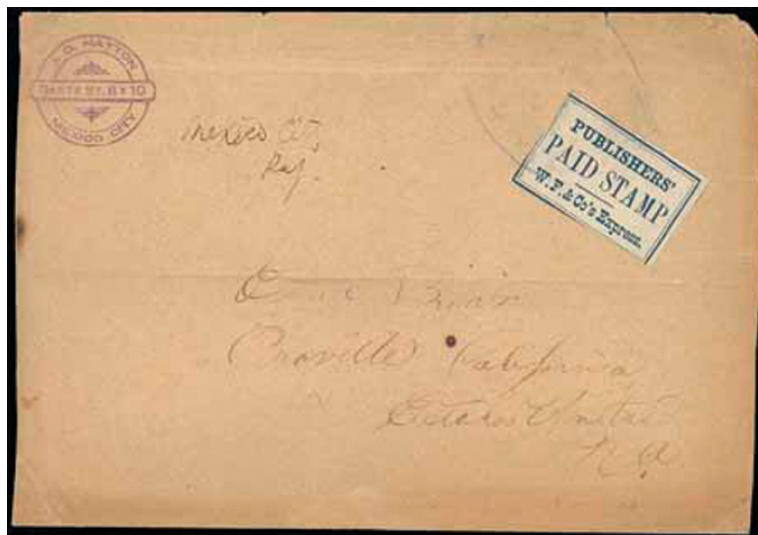
Goodyear Rubber Co. ad, cancelled by a New York oval

cancel. Mailed to Montevideo, Uruguay, this unusual foreign destination usage realized \$160 against a \$200-300 pre-sale estimate.

Completing our viewing with a few ancillary lots, we come to a large Newspaper advertising cover with an



1852 3¢ dull red (Sc. 11) bottom margin single tied by a Philadelphia datestamp, with the cover featuring a cameo of the Pennsylvania coat of arms, a printing press, the American eagle, and a sailing ship. Estimated at \$200-300, it sold for \$350.

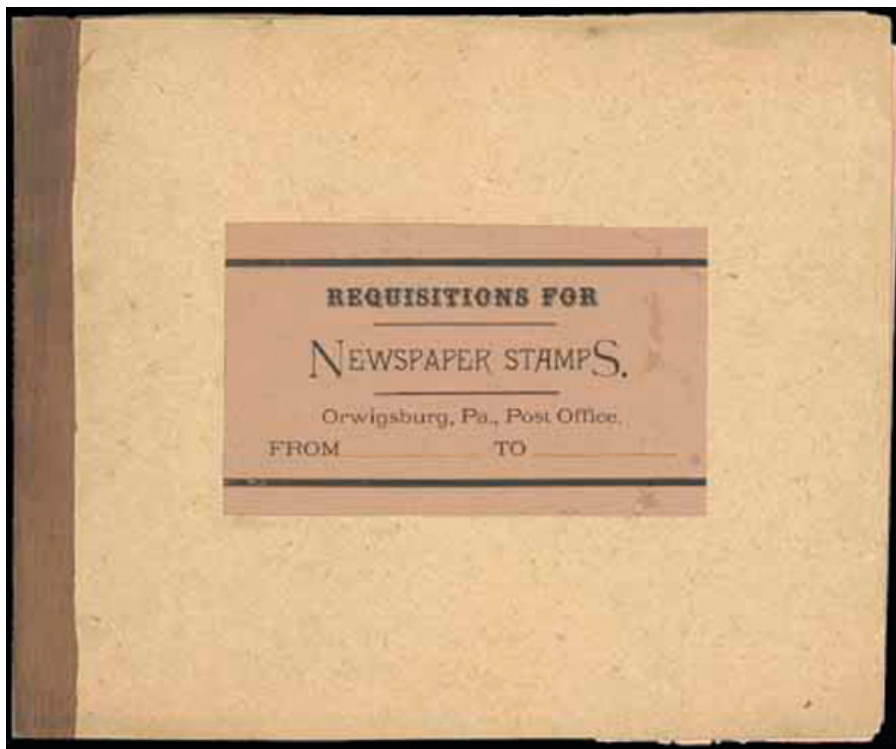


This next lot displays the Wells Fargo & Co. 1876 Publishers' Stamp (Sc. 143LP10) tied by a blue Wells, Fargo & Company

cancel. For added appeal, it is a Mexico City envelope that was sent to Oroville, California, with a manuscript "Mexico City" docketing to the right of the corner card. Despite faults, on the strength of its rare cross-border usage, it realized almost its full \$1,750 SCV, selling for \$1,700.



Next we see a block of ten of the Wells, Fargo & Co. 1883 issue (Sc. 143LP9), part of a lot of Wells, Fargo Newspaper stamps. In mixed condition, with an estimated value of \$200-300, the lot fetched \$240.



Finally, we complete this viewing with the cover of an 1883 Requisition Book for Newspaper Stamps, a clean softbound form book from Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania containing six Post Office Department Form 3203 “Requisition for Newspaper and Periodical Postage Stamps”, filled out and signed by postmaster George A. Rehr between 1893 and 1897. Appropriately described as “a wonderful exhibit item,” it was estimated at \$200-300 and realized \$190.