

## U.S. Bicolor Postage Issues of 1869, 1873 & 1901: Synopsis

**Scope & Organization:** This *Traditional* five frame exhibit illustrates the difficulties encountered in the production of line-engraved bicolor postage issues of 1869, 1873 and 1901, using the *intaglio* multi-plate printing method. The exhibit is organized and presented chronologically, tracing the design, production and ultimate uses of the bicolor stamps and postal history memorabilia created during these periods.

**Importance and Significance:** This is the only philatelic exhibit devoted exclusively to the first three U.S. bicolor postage issues. The 1869 Pictorial Definitive issues were produced by the National Bank Note Company, and were both the first U.S. bicolor stamps and the first U.S. postage stamps to contain *inverted color errors*. The U.S. State Department Dollar-Value Officials, produced by the Continental Bank Note Company, were the second U.S. bicolor issues printed, and were created to be used for postage on official Consular mail, and to replace the *free franking privilege*, which was abolished by an Act of Congress in 1873. The Pan American Exposition Issues of 1901 were the first bicolor postage stamps printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, and the first six stamps produced in the twentieth century.

**Production:** The bicolor printing process necessitated that each color plate be applied to the printing base separately, and that each stamp sheet be passed through the press twice: once for the frame color and once for the vignette color. Printers not only had problems aligning the two color elements, but also, in the case of the *inverts*, with keeping the printed stamp sheets ‘top’ side up. Numerous examples of vignette and frame mis-registrations and printing varieties are shown, some on cover.

### Highlights include:

- Examples of all recorded *inverts*, either mint or used, produced during 1869, 1873 and 1901
- Used 1869 15c Type I, *PF Certified* EDU, March 31, 1869 cancellation (*unique*)
- Used 1869 15c Type II, vignette double-printed, one *inverted* (three known)
- Complete set (15c, 24c, 30c & 90c) of used 1875 Re-issue (of 1869) pairs (*unique*)
- Used 1869 - 90c Lincoln “on piece” (two recorded)
- Used *inverted* 1c Pan-American vertical pair (*unique*)
- Used *Inverted* 1c Pan-American “on piece” (3 known)
- Used *inverted* 2c Pan-American (seven recorded)
- 5c Pan-American ‘solo franking’ used on First Day Cover (two recorded)
- Die essay for State Department Dollar-Value Official Stamps (two known privately held)

**Limitation:** Although examples of most types of covers are included, they are not *per se* germane to the bicolor printing difficulties; thus no attempt has been made to include examples of all kinds of covers since this is not a postal history exhibit necessitating them.

**Awards:** This exhibit has been totally-reorganized and materially-changed in order to compete in FIP and International competitions. It achieved an Ouro Grande (Large Gold) & *Special Recognition* at Viana, Portugal, in 2008; and scores of 91 at the China World Stamp Exhibition, 2009; 93 at IBRA, in Essen, Germany, 2009; and 95 at Sofia, Bulgaria, 2009.

**Information Resources:** Brazer, Clarence W., “Varieties of U.S. Essays and Proofs”, *The Essay-Proof Journal*, Vol. 4, #2 (April, 1974), pp 149-154; Brookman, Lester, *The U.S. Postage Stamps of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (1966), Chapter XXIII; ); Meek, John, “The Pan-American Issues—Parts II and III”, *The U.S. Specialist*, Vol. 50, #s10, 11, 12 (Oct.– Dec. 1979); Rose, Jon, *U.S. Postage Stamps of 1869* (Amos Press, 1996); Trepel, Scott, *Chronicle of the U.S. Classic Postal Issues* (2003).

