

24¢ Justice Short Transfer

Alan C. Campbell

In Figure 1, we illustrate the discovery copy of the 24¢ Justice with short transfer at the lower left. This stamp is now in the collection of Mr. Theodore Lockyear, and was displayed for the first time at Indypex in September, 1996. Les Lanphear, from his photographs of the Earl of Crawford proof sheets, was able to confirm that this variety comes from position 98. I am chastened to admit that the confirming copy of this variety, the lower right stamp of a plate proof block on India paper, comes from my own collection, where it has languished undetected for years. See Figure 2. As T. S. Eliot memorably wrote in the poem "Little Gidding":

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Because only 6,400 copies of the 24¢ Justice stamp were issued, and only 150 copies of the special printing were sold, this constantly recurring variety should prove to be quite elusive. It is not surprising that it has gone undetected for so long. This short transfer differs from all others previously recorded on official stamps - 10¢ State, 30¢ Treasury, 90¢ Navy - by occurring not at the top, but at the bottom of the stamp. In my article on the 90¢ Navy short transfer, I followed Al Staubus in citing Ernest A. Kehr's explanation that such varieties were caused by a siderographer's overzealous burnishing out of excess metal ridges forced up along the forward edge as it rocked onto the plate.¹ Since entering a relief requires rocking the transfer roll back and forth, presumably the ridges could be forced up either at the top or bottom of the design.

Mr. Lockyear, a lawyer in Evansville, Indiana, has been quietly collecting the stamps of the Department of Justice for over twenty-five years. I had heard tantalizing rumors that such a collector existed, but was not able to make contact until last year, when he wrote to me about an article I had written earlier for this section, "Cancellations on United States Official Stamps, 1873-1884."² After seeing photocopies of his material, I urged him to exhibit, since no one has previously attempted a display of this notoriously difficult department, which issued fewer stamps than any other, except for the Executive office itself. The result, a four frame exhibit of 48 over-sized pages, is virtually complete, and has been shown so far exclusively in the mid-West, winning the reserve grand award at Chicagopex in the fall of 1996. Highlights include the only recorded blocks of the 15¢ and 30¢ values, the only recorded pair of the 90¢, a complete sheet of the 1¢ special printing on

¹ *Chronicle*, August, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 3, p. 186. In this article, I overlooked the fact that Rollin C. Huggins had described and illustrated this variety in the September, 1988 issue of "Official Chatter."

² *Chronicle*, November, 1992, Vol. 44, No. 4, Whole No. 156.

ribbed paper with two small dotted “i” varieties, six different “SEPCIMEN” errors, and the largest holding of Justice covers ever assembled, including two 12¢ covers, two 15¢ covers, and one of two recorded 24¢ covers.

To demonstrate the design evolution of these stamps, Mr. Lockyear begins his exhibit with examples of the scarce 1¢, 2¢, 3¢, 12¢, and 30¢ regressive die essays, in which the frame portions were cut off transfer reliefs taken from the original National dies for the regular issues. The most notable of these is of course the 12¢ value, where the lobes of the numeral “2” contain the secret marks added when Continental took over the dies from National, illustrated in Figure 3. As I mentioned in a previous article, it was John Donnes, a specialist in the 12¢ large Bank Note stamp, who first noticed this evidence that these partial die essays were pulled, not as the original dies were being worked up by National, but as they were being modified by Continental to produce the official stamps.³

Figure Captions - 24¢ Justice Short Transfer

1. 24¢ Justice short transfer, courtesy Theodore Lockyear.
2. 24¢ Justice plate proof block on India paper, showing short transfer.
3. 12¢ Bank Note regressive die essay (Scott #151-E10), courtesy Theodore Lockyear.

Alan C. Campbell, “The Design Evolution of the United States Official Stamps,” *Chronicle*, February, 1996, Vol. 48, No. 1, Whole No. 169, pp. 50-51.