



1875 CONTINENTAL SPECIAL PRINTING

IN 1875 A SPECIAL PRINTING PROGRAM was established by the postal administration under President Grant and was continued until the Arthur administration in 1884. This program created the 1847 Reproductions, 1857-60 Reprints, 1861-66 and 1869 Re-issues, and the Bank Note Special Printings of 1875 and 1880-83.

The Third Asst. Postmaster General's office was authorized to sell old stamp issues. Reproductions of the 1847 Issue were made at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The 1857-60 Issue was reprinted by Continental Bank Note Co. The 1861-66 Issue and 1869 Pictorials were reprinted by National Bank Note Co. (and were valid for postage). At the same time, a small quantity of the Continental Bank Note Co. issues were prepared as a Special Printing in 1875. They were printed on hard white wove paper and were issued without gum. Most of the 1875 Continental Special Printing stamps were separated by scissors, and examples showing perforations all around are very rare.

While the earlier issues were no longer in routine circulation, the Bank Note Special Printings were on sale at the same time as the regularly-issued stamps, but only through the Third Asst. PMG's office.

The postal records of Special Printing sales grouped together the Continental and American Bank Note Special Printings. There is also reason to believe that some regular issues might have been used to fill orders. Therefore, census figures become the most accurate way of judging the relative rarity of the Special Printings.

The table below lists each 1875 Continental and corresponding 1880 American Bank Note Co. Special Printing with the total number sold for

both printings, the estimated number of extant copies, and percentage statistics for each value. We have not listed Scott 205C, 211B or 211D in this table, because they do not exist as 1875 Continental Special Printings.

The Scott Catalogue states that the 1880 American is "much the rarer" between the two Special Printings. Statistically, this statement is true for only seven of the thirteen different values. The opposite is true for the 7c, 12c and 5c values, which are rarer as hard-paper Continental Special Printings. The 2c (180/203), 30c (176/201) and 90c (177/202) are about evenly divided between Continental and American printings. Only in a few cases are known copies heavily weighted to the American printing.

The 2c Vermilion and 5c Blue Special Printings present enigmatic survival rates. The postal records show that 917 2c Vermilion Special Printing stamps were sold, yet this stamp has the lowest survival rate, at only 4.69% for both printings (43 stamps). In relative terms, 21.68% of all Special Printings sold were 2c Vermilions, but only 3.75% of all surviving Special Printings are 2c Vermilions (both printings). The survival rate for 5c Special Printings is just 8.83% of the total sold. These rates compare with percentages ranging from 18.04% to 57.69% for the other 1c-90c Special Printings. Identification of Scott 180-181 and 203-204 has always been difficult, and it is possible that the census, which is based only on recognized examples, skews the numbers. It is also possible that orders for the 2c Vermilion and 5c Blue were filled with ordinary stamps or another unrecognized variation of a special printing. Further research to determine why the 2c and 5c are so rare is warranted.

SPECIAL PRINTING	NUMBER SOLD		1875 CONTINENTAL S.P.			1880 AMERICAN S.P.			BOTH
<i>Denomination & Color (Scott No. for 1875 and 1880 Printings)</i>	<i># Sold 1875/80 Printings</i>	<i>% of Total # (4229)</i>	<i># of Stamps Extant</i>	<i>As % of Continental Extant</i>	<i>As % of # Sold (Column 1)</i>	<i># of Stamps Extant</i>	<i>As % of American Extant</i>	<i>As % of # Sold (Column 1)</i>	<i>Survival Rate of # Sold</i>
1c Ultramarine (167/192)	388	9.17	40	6.86	10.31	30	5.33	7.73	18.04
2c Dark Brown (168/193)	416	9.83	75	12.86	18.03	55	9.77	13.22	31.25
3c Blue Green (169/194)	267	6.31	40	6.86	14.98	20	3.55	7.50	22.48
6c Dull Rose (170/195)	185	4.37	35	6.00	18.92	30	5.33	16.22	35.14
7c Reddish Vermilion (171/196)	473	11.18	50	8.58	10.57	100	17.76	21.14	31.71
10c Pale Brown (172/197)	180	4.25	40	6.86	22.22	30	5.33	16.67	38.89
12c Dark Violet (173/198)	282	6.66	60	10.29	21.28	75	13.32	26.60	47.88
15c Bright Orange (174/199)	169	3.99	40	6.86	23.67	30	5.33	17.75	41.42
24c Dull Purple (175/200)	286	6.76	90	15.44	31.47	75	13.32	26.22	57.69
30c Greenish Black (176/201)	179	4.23	40	6.86	22.35	40	7.10	22.35	44.70
90c Violet Carmine (177/202)	170	4.01	40	6.86	23.53	40	7.10	23.53	47.06
2c Carmine Vermilion (180/203)	917	21.68	23*	3.94	2.51	20*	3.55	2.18	4.69
5c Bright Blue (181/204)	317	7.49	10*	1.71	3.15	18*	3.20	5.68	8.83
Totals	4229		583		13.78	563		13.31	