

## The United States Bicolored Postage Issues of 1869, Focusing on the 24-cent Stamp Depicting John Trumbull's painting *Declaration of Independence*

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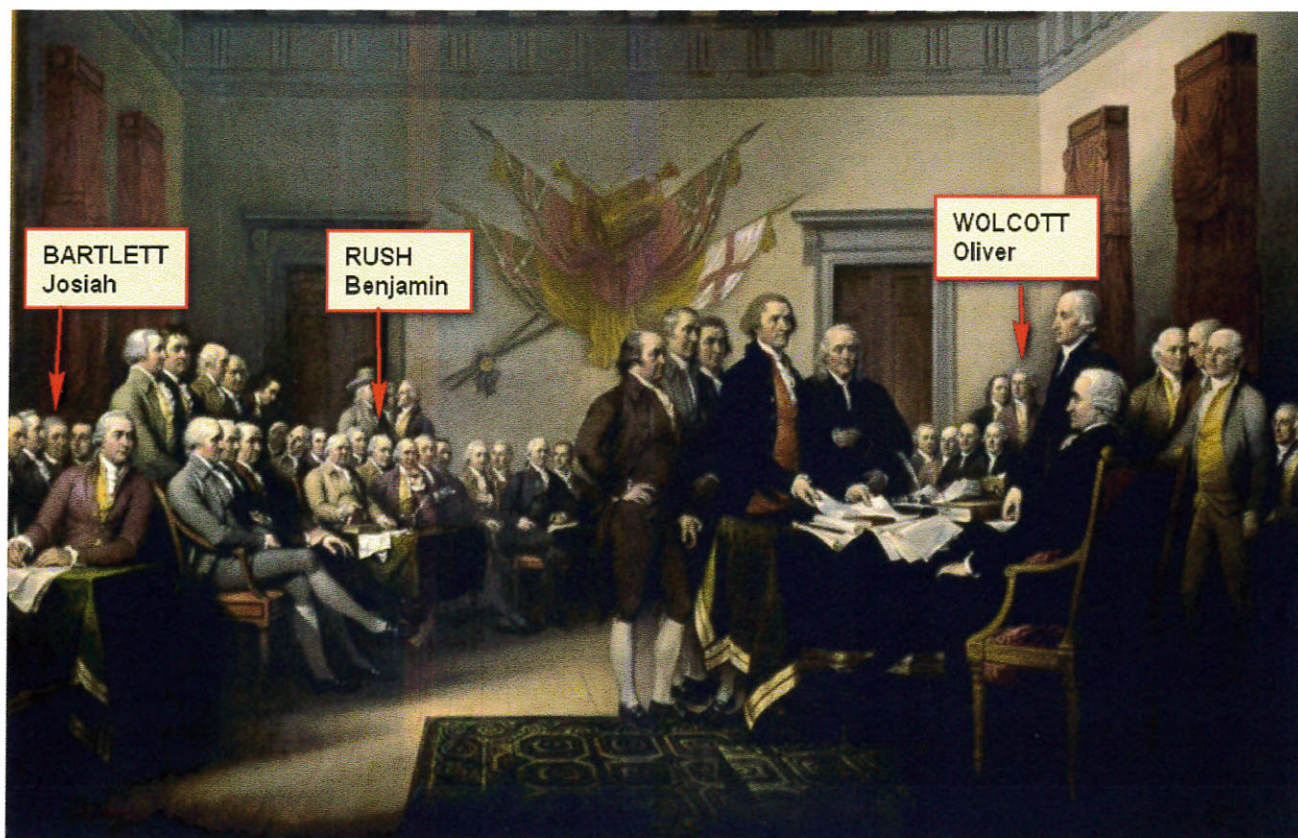


Fig. 1

We all collect for different reasons. Physician portraits on stamps fascinate me. This hobby affords me to learn about history in general and specifically the history of medicine, the technical process by which stamps are made, and to experience the inherent beauty of the stamps, especially the freaks, errors, and inverts. This essay concentrates on the historically important 1869 series, the first bicolor-ever production of a United States stamp. It features John Trumbull's oil painting, which contrary to the popular belief that it depicts the signing ceremony of the Declaration of Independence, is actually a romanticized imaginary image of the five-man committee presenting their draft of the Declaration to the Continental Congress (1) an event that took place on June 28, 1776. The Declaration had 56 signatories (2) The painting portrays 47 of them, all of whom the tiny engraving captured (Fig 1). The signatories included five physicians, three of whom appear in the stamp (Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire, Benjamin Rush

of Pennsylvania, and Oliver Wolcott of Connecticut) and two who were not (Matthew Thornton of New Hampshire and Lyman Hall of Georgia).

Most of the illustrations shown are from past auctions conducted at the Siegel Galleries in New York City during the past half century (and reprinted with their permission) or in my personal collection. Much of the narrative comes directly from the Siegel catalogue prepared for the March 15, 2016 sale of the *Don David Price collection of United States Bicolored Postage Issues of 1869, 1873 and 1901*.(3)

The 1869 pictorial issue was a transformative set of stamps created during a period of historic transition. The Civil War had ended four years earlier. President Johnson's postmaster general, Alexander Randall, began the process to design the 1869 Pictorial stamps with their novel shapes and imagery, and John A. J. Creswell, Ulysses S Grant's new postmaster general, completed them. Surprisingly, the public spurned the 1869's, which the 1870 Issue, bearing the traditional portraits of statesmen, war heroes and Founding Fathers, quickly replaced.



## 1.0 Medicine

### 1.1 Medical doctors

#### 1.1.4 Zoologists

1. Bloch, Marcus Eliezer
2. Boddaert, Pieter
3. Bois-Duval, Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Dechauffour
4. Cuvier, Baron George L.C.F.D.
5. De Zayas Muñoz, Fernando
6. Gmelin, Johann Friedrich
7. Gray, J. E.
8. Herrick-Schaeffer, Gottlieb August
9. Lamarck, Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet
10. Lesson, René Primevere
11. Linnaeus, Karl von
12. M'Dougall, Patrick
13. Olivier, Guillaume Antoine
14. Pallas, Peter Simon
15. Peters, Wilhelm Karl Hartwig
16. Torre y de la Huerta, Carlos de la



## 1.0 Medicine

### 1.2 Dentistry

#### Dentists

1. Aguilar Rodríguez, Florestán
2. Martos Valhonrat, Joaquín A. Marcos de la Caridad
3. Núñez Rodríguez, Emilio
4. Oti, Enrique
5. Silva-Xavier "Tiradentes", Joaquín José da
6. Third National Dental Congress



## 1.0 Medicine

### 1.3 Veterinary Medicine

1. Carbó Serviá, Juan Pedro
2. Voisin, André
3. Animal health – Ichthyology
4. Animal protection – Humane Society
5. Evolution of animals



## 1.0 Medicine

### 1.4 Medical Students

1. Álvarez de la Campa, Alonso
2. Bermúdez, Anacleto
3. Del Castillo Sánchez, Adolfo
4. González Toledo, Eladio
5. Marcos y Medina, José de
6. Reynoso Valdés, Álvaro
7. Rodríguez, Pascual
8. Spotorno Yurubi, Juan Bautista
9. Torre Madrigal, Carlos Augusto de la
10. Verdugo, Carlos

#### Defenders

1. Capdevila Miñano, Federico
2. Estévez Murphy, Nicolás



## 1.0 Medicine

### 1.5 Equipment, Instruments and Miscellany

#### Microscopes

- Compound microscopes
- Simple microscopes
- Binocular microscopes

#### Test tube

#### Stethoscope

#### Syringe & scissors

#### Dissection table

#### Dissection knife

#### Mortar and pestle

#### Circular external bone fixator

#### Veloergometer

#### Gravimeter

#### Sphygmomanometer

#### Electrocardiograph

#### Nuclear power plant

#### Cobalt bomb

#### Chess game "a medical doctor"

#### Medical doctor in celebration of workers day (Labor Day)

#### "Surgeon" fish

#### Postcard 'Medical doctor's day'

#### Postcard "Medical doctor auscultating a child"

#### INFOMED (Cuban health web)

*Outline to be continued  
in the October/December 2016 issue*





Controversy also mired the four-year 1868 printing contract. Four security printers had submitted bids: the American Bank Note Company (prior to consolidation), Butler & Carpenter (the successor firm to Toppan, Carpenter & Co. and printers of revenue stamps since 1862), George T. Jones, and the National Bank Note Company (the contract printers since 1861). In July 1868 the Post Office Department awarded the contract to National, despite Butler & Carpenter's lower bid.

During the bidding process, National argued they should win the contract based on their ability to grill stamps, using Charles F. Steel's patented grilling machine, and since Butler & Carpenter lacked fireproof production and storage facilities. In fact, just four years later, Butler's Philadelphia plant—the Dr. D. Jayne & Son building, named for the patent medicine manufacturer—burned to the ground.

Butler & Carpenter vigorously protested the Post Office Department's decision for months. It is also possible that the Butler firm was behind a public smear campaign to discredit the stamps. Contemporary articles criticized the 1869's shapes, designs and especially the adhesive gum's unreliability.

By September 1869 the decision had been made to replace the 1869 Pictorial stamps with a new, more conventional issue. The postmaster general's report (November 15, 1870) explains that the 1869's failed to give satisfaction to the public, on account of their small size, their unshapely form, the "inappropriate designs, the difficulty of cancelling the stamps efficiently, and the inferior gum quality used in the manufacturing process." Considering the exalted position the 1869 Pictorial Issue has occupied in philately for nearly 150 years, it is remarkable that these stamps elicited such negative comments from officials and the public.

### **The 1869 Pictorial Designs**

The Postal Reform movement of the 1840's and 50's and Reconstruction intended to help the war-torn nation heal; images of America's past and symbols of forward-looking communication played parts in the symbolic imagery chosen for the 1869 designs.

Unlike their predecessors, the ten 1869 stamps were designed in an almost square format. The final 1¢ through 12¢ values were printed in sheets of 300—two panes of 150—instead of the regular 200-stamp sheet format. The final 15¢, 24¢, 30¢ and 90¢ values were printed in sheets of 100 in two colors, requiring separate plates and printing for the frame and vignette colors. All of the stamps were to be grilled.

Three of the ten final 1869 stamps had traditional portraits: the 1¢ Franklin, 6¢ Washington and 90¢ Lincoln, the highest denomination and one of the four bicolored stamps. The other values represented a radical departure from the portraiture of all previous issues. The theme of improved postal communication was chosen for three values: the 2¢ postal carrier on horseback; the 3¢ locomotive train, possibly to celebrate the imminent completion of the transcontinental railroad; and the 12¢ S.S. *Adriatic*, the Collins line transatlantic steamer, which was used to carry mail to and from England. The vignettes on the 15¢, 24¢ and original 30¢ Burgoyne essay are intricately engraved depictions of historical events.

### **The 24 cent Bicolored 1869 Pictorial Design and Engravers**

The vignette of the 24 cent stamp was initially adopted for the 10c.

The overall design is attributed to an "E. Pitcher," who speculatively was the daughter of a family known to the engraver, and whom she assisted in the 1869 issue's early design phase.

The Scottish-born James Smillie (1807-1885), one of National's most talented engravers, made the vignette. Previously a partner with Rawdon, Wright and Hatch, Smillie joined National in 1861, and shortly after engraving the 1869's he moved to the American Bank Note Company.

Douglas S. Ronaldson (1825-1902) designed and engraved the frames. He had moved from England to Philadelphia in 1840 and was working as an engraver in 1858. National employed him as early as July 1868 and he continued with the American Bank Note Company until 1897, after which he worked for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing until his death in 1902.

J. C. Kenworthy engraved the lettering. He worked for the National as early as 1859 and perhaps as late as 1875.

### **The stamp itself.**

Originally, the 'Declaration' was to appear on the 10c, but was moved later to the definitive 24¢.

The initial essays (Scott 116-E2a) were produced as dies on India, sunk on card in the test colors black, carmine, dim rose, dull scarlet, red orange, orange yellow (**Fig 2a**), red brown (**Fig 2b**), orange brown, green, blue and gray.

The next essays (Scott 116-E2b) were dies on India, cut to stamp size in black (**Fig 3a**), and in the test colors red orange, blue green, dim rose, brown, buff, dull scarlet and possibly others.





Fig. 2a (Scott 116-E2a)



Fig. 2b (Scott 116-E2a)



Fig. 3a (Scott 116-E2b)



Fig. 4 (Scott 120-E1)



Fig. 5a (Scott 120-E2a)



Fig. 5b (Scott 120-E2a)



Fig. 6a (Blue) (Scott 120-E2b)



Fig. 6b (Brown) (Scott 120-E2b)



Fig. 7 (dull yellowish) (Scott 120-E2e)

Later, the vignette was changed to that used for the 24 cent stamp (Scott 120). The design is nearly as issued, but shading under leaves at top of frame and ribbon over "TWENTY" is unfinished. The value numerals are small and the stamp at this time is a single color (Scott 120-E1) (Fig 4).

Scott 120-E2 24 cent has a small numeral design in a single color. The stamps in the E2a grouping have an 8 mm-high band of colored lines 31mm long overprinted

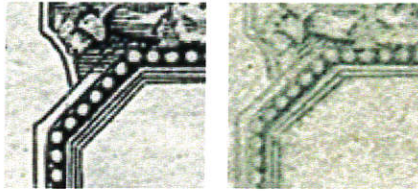
above and below the vignette (Scott 120-E2a). Examples are shown with brown orange bands (Fig 5a) and green bands (Fig 5b). Brown orange bands and violet brown bands are also known.

Some specimens were used to test different colors (Scott 120-E2b) (Figs. 6a,b) or tinted papers (Scott 120-E2c-g), e.g., dull yellowish tinted paper (Fig. 7) and salmon-red tinted paper.





Fig. 8 (Scott 120-E3a)



Figs. 9a&b (Scott 120-E3b&c)

Scott 120-E3a was printed with a bicolor design largely with black and green, but also with combinations of a red, violet or green vignette and green, rose, or violet frames (Fig 8). The vignette was printed separately and mounted in place.

Scott 120-E3b shows the frame only with 3 border lines around the vignette space (Fig 9a). Scott 120-E3c frame has only two border lines around the vignette space as issued (Fig 9b). Scott 120-E3b and E3c were

frame dies on cards or sunk on India, respectively. The frame in E3b was in black, light green or dark green.

Scott 120-TC1 illustrated was pulled in one impression from a single die incorporating both the frame and vignette (Fig 10). A similar unified die was created to make Small Numeral essays. This proof with the large numerals is exceedingly rare. The Scott Catalogue also list an "e" type in black.

Scott 120-TC3 is in green & reddish lilac, trial color plate proof on India. The block illustrated shows the plate # 24 and a bottom right corner imprint (Fig 11).

One sheet of Scott 100 (120-P4a) was printed with an inverted center (Fig 12).

Most of the 1869 24 cent stamps (Fig 13) contained a single grill (Fig 14).

Rare specimens had double grills and occasionally even no grill (Scott 120a).



Fig. 10 (Scott 120-TC1)



Fig. 11 (Scott 120-TC3)



Fig. 12 (Scott 120-P4a)



Fig. 13 (Scott 120)



Fig. 14 (Scott 120) with G grill on backside (courtesy Wikipedia)



### 1869 Bicolored Stamp Production:

Sheets of each 1869 bicolored stamp were printed from two separate frame and vignette plates. The first printing in March 1869 had a frame plate in green and numbered 20 and a vignette plate numbered 20 and in violet. The second printing, two months later used the same frame plate and number, but a new vignette plate numbered 24 and also in violet.

The 1869 Pictorial stamps were first placed on sale at the New York post office on March 23. Stamps from the second 1869 printing were in circulation by May 1869. Based on Post Office Department records, the quantities available of the 24c were 235,250.

On September 6, 1869, the New York Tribune and New York Herald reported for the first time that the 1869 Pictorial Issue was to be replaced. By March-April 1870, only one year after the 1869's made their appearance, the new 1870 Portrait series was issued.

In 1875 the U.S. Post Office Department ordered a new printing for the Re-Issue and Special Printing program. The printers had the original frame die on hand and used it to create a new frame plate. Again, the frames had no ornament or shading lines. This time, however, the printers did not bother to add them to each position.

The color is more pronounced in Scott 130 and the stamp lacks the grill (Fig 15), but otherwise is virtually identical to Scott 120, other than for lower market value, which may explain unhappily why several stamps I purchased years ago as Scott 120s became Scott 130 when expertized.

Several stamps from the 1869 series had unusual dispositions. Scott 120S-A is hand-stamped and shows a slightly doubled overprint from a bounced impression (Fig 16).

In the late 1870's and early 1880's the Post Office Department responded to requests for samples by sending out some of the available card proofs. In four recorded



Fig. 16 (Scott 120S-A)

instances the receiving country applied the "Specimen" handstamp. One is a Plett Type 3, Inverted "Specimen" Chessylite Blue Handstamped (Fig 17a). The second, a 21.5mm tall black hand-stamped overprint, is from the British Post Office Archive (Fig 17b).

The first published report of any 1869 invert error appeared in the December 20, 1870, issue of J. Walter Scott's *American Journal of Philately*. Based on then applicable mail rates, most of the used 24 cent inverts were probably found on covers in England and France. Siegel records document that currently there are known four unused, 83 used singles, one used pair, one on cover and the unique block of four, for a total of 94 copies of the perforated 24 cent invert. There are only 100 known inverts from the single sheet discovered of the P4 proof state (Fig 12).

### Bibliography

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2. *Signing of the United States Declaration of Independence*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signing\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Declaration\\_of\\_Independence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signing_of_the_United_States_Declaration_of_Independence)
3. *The Don David Price Iconic Collection of U.S. Bicolored Issues, Sale # 1118* • Tuesday, March 15, 2016, <http://siegelauctions.com/2016/1118/1118.pdf>



Fig. 15 (Scott 130)



Fig. 17a (Scott 120 P4-S)



Fig. 17b (Scott 120) P4-S

