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## A FEW NOTES ON REVENUES OF THE UNITED STATES.

The imperforate and part perforate condition of the first issue U. S. Revenues may be accounted for by the hurry with which they were prepared. Congress had passed a war measure levying a stamp tax upon legal instruments and other documents and there was little time before the law went into effect for the preparation of the large variety of stamps required. It was creditable to the contractors that no serious errors were made. Later, the demand was so great that they could not afford to reject sheets of stamps because they had been run through the perforating machine too many times and were double perforated. These double perforated stamps are not very uncommon and are generally found in the case of the most plentiful varieties, these having been produced in the greatest numbers and consequently with the greatest haste and the least care. I think that three or four times the price of the ordinary stamp is enough to pay for these oddities.

Requisitions for stamps came in from all parts of the loyal States, and supplies were sent, some of which included nearly the whole issue of a single variety. Instead of dividing up a batch of stamps among the different sections of the country and sub-stations from which stamps were distributed, the bulk of it would be sent to one place and if no more of that kind were issued, the use of that particular stamp would be confined to the one locality. Thus, almost all the 50c P. of W. imperforate now in collections originally came from California. More specimens have been found on the Pacific coast in recent years, it is said, than in all the East. This probably indicates that many of the rarest revenues are to be sought, each in a particular vicinity of its own. But knowledge of this, if anyone has it, must be a trade secret.

The genuineness of imperforate revenues may be determined to some extent by the date which was usually written or stamped upon them. In 1862, no stamps were perforated and most stamps used in 1863 were imperforate,

but stamps of later date need not necessarily be pronounced clipped on this account. I have seen a pair of imperforate 50c P. of W. dated 1863. These probably were remainders which had been kept for two or three years before being used. Width of margin is deceptive, for the stamps were often irregularly perforated, sometimes so as to show portions of adjoining stamps both above and below.

After a year or two, it was found to be both inexpedient and unnecessary to require that the stamps should bear inscriptions corresponding with the names of the documents to which they were attached, and thereafter they were used indiscriminately. The engravers, since it was no longer necessary to provide every variety of stamp, retired some plates and dies and printed no more stamps from them; this restricted their issue and made them rarer than the others. The playing card and proprietary stamps were always required to be used for those purposes only, however, and this is the reason for their general scarcity. I am not aware whether the 6 cent proprietary is rare because there was little use for that value, or because it was early retired. Perhaps both reasons operate.

During the early '70's, a number of revenues were issued on a very thick paper. In fact, there are two thicknesses of thick paper. They are easily distinguished from the ordinary papers, but may be tested in this way: double the paper between the thumb and finger; if it will crease easily, it is the thin paper, but if there seems to be considerable resistance, it is the thick, hard variety. Lists have been attempted of the varieties printed on this paper, but new discoveries are continually being made.

It is said that revenues are soon to be catalogued both unused and used. Heretofore, unused specimens have been obtainable for a mere fraction of the face value on account of the fact that the government does not redeem them, but there is such a limited source of supply that they are bound to be high priced. A distinction must be made between uncanceled and unused revenues. Although the users of the

stamps were at first very careful to cancel them well, later on they became less so, and many stamps are to be found on the original documents bearing no cancellation whatever. This is particularly true of the lower denominations.

It is said of the 6 cent Proprietary that it was used almost solely upon two or three medicines, and that there are Commercial travelers who know these medicines. In the course of their tours they visit old-established drug-stores and inquire for them, and thus, without exciting too much suspicion on the part of the druggists, sometimes secure the *rara avis*, the gem of the first water, the 6 cent proprietary.

The stamps printed upon blanks for taxable documents, are destined soon to obtain recognition. By far the commonest are two or three varieties imprinted on bank checks, but the same kind of impression has been found on blanks for receipts and other documents. These stamps bear the same relation to adhesive revenue stamps that stamped envelopes bear to adhesive postage stamps, and are fully as collectable; they should be collected entire, also. Some firm obtained the right from the government to print this stamped paper: Large sheets of bank check paper were imprinted at regular intervals with some such design as a large diamond with head of Liberty and the words, "U. S. Inter. Revenue, 2 cents." The banks then purchased this paper and it was cut up into slips of the regular bank check size, each bearing one impression of the stamp. These were printed with the formula for a blank bank check. After the revenue stamp tax went out of effect, banks had their stock of checks redeemed, and they were rubber stamped to that effect, and then used in the course of business. Thus, the stamped checks are to be found surcharged "Redeemed," "Cancelled," etc. Perhaps another generation of philatelists will even collect these.

The Pennsylvania Philatelist.

## HALIFAX NOTES.

The N.S. remainders is the one topic of conversation here, and collectors almost unanimously unite in condemning