

Since the topic for this month's program is "Beautiful Stamps" it is only appropriate that we mention a series not noted for images of "dead white men" as found on most United States 19th Century Stamps (true the first were of Franklin, Washington and Lincoln) but after that they branched out into goddesses, allegorical figures and even an Indian maiden.

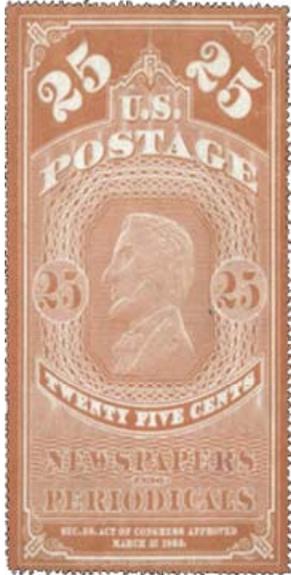
Though not the first (Austria - 1851), the US began issuing "Newspaper" stamps in 1865 for bulk parcels of periodicals rather than for individual newspapers (we use Postal Stationery Wrappers for this). As a follow on to Congress passing a law in 1863 that allowed postal employees who worked on trains or vessels (route agents) to accept newspaper parcels at the train or vessel and turn them over for delivery from the train or vessel without having them pass through a post office. Postage fees were paid in cash upon presentation of the parcels to the route agent. In 1865, the Post Office Department introduced **Newspaper and Periodical stamps** as an accounting tool to slow postal agents from 'pocketing' the fees.

The first issue were BIG - 2 x 3¼ inches, typographed/embossed on thin, hard paper and without gum. The style was copied from the private express company labels in that they could be easily seen when they were glued to large bundles of newspapers. This first series continued until 1869, (with the inauguration of President Grant and on behalf of his cronies - the old system of paying postage in cash was resumed).

Congress again authorized the use of **Newspaper and Periodical stamps** in 1874, after a recommendation from the Postmaster General estimated that as much as two-thirds of the postage collected for newspapers and periodicals was never turned in. This led to a new series of stamps printed by the Continental Bank Note Company (CBNC). The set comprising twenty-four stamps, were issued in values ranging from 2¢ to \$60 (Scott PR9-32).

Though not as large as the first issue, these stamps were still big (1 x 1½ inches) and considered elaborate and Victorianly attractive. They feature female allegorical figures ("Freedom," "Justice," "Victory," "Peace" and "Commerce") and goddesses from Greek mythology (Ceres, Clio, Minerva, Vesta, and Hebe). The high-value stamp (\$60.00) stamp portrays an Indian maiden.

In 1875, the Post Office Department produced a special printing of all stamps issued up to that time in conjunction with the Centennial Exposition to be held in Philadelphia, PA in 1876. This printing was un gummed and was contracted to the Continental Bank Note Company. The newspaper special printings were not 'hot' sellers because of their high face value and therefore very rare in the higher denominations (Scott PR33-56). The earlier 5¢, 10¢ and 25¢ newspaper stamps were also reprinted in 1875, by the National Bank Note Company (PR5-7).



Scott PR3



Scott PR15
Freedom



Scott PR17
Justice

Scott PR24
Ceres

Scott PR25
Victory

Scott PR26
Clio

Scott PR74
Minerva

Scott PR75
Vesta

Scott PR76
Peace

Scott PR77
Commerce

Scott PR78
Hebe

The American Bank Note Company (ABN) issued newspaper stamps using the same plates that had been used by CBNC, but were printed on soft, porous paper and in slightly different colors (Scott PR57-79) with a special printing of the 2¢ stamp (PR80) in 1883.

On July 1, 1885, the rate was reduced, to 1¢ per pound for any bulk mailing. This required the introduction of a new 1¢ stamp. The ABN produced the new stamp using the same Statue of Freedom design as the earlier low-denomination newspaper stamps. Along with the new 1¢ issue, a new 12¢, 24¢, 36¢, 48¢, 60¢, 72¢, 84¢ and 96¢ stamps were issued at this time, again in slightly different colors (Scott PR81-9).

In 1894, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) low-balled the contract to produce all United States stamps. The BEP, using the plates from the previous printers, produced 12 newspaper stamps in face values from 1¢ to \$6 (Scott 90-101).

During this transitional period the BEP was printing these stamps from old plates, its designers and engravers were working on producing new stamps from new designs (Scott as PR102-13).

With the exception of the 1¢ through the 10¢, the central vignettes from some of the earlier stamps were re-used, but with new framing designs and devices. The low-denomination stamps still showed the Statue of Freedom, but from a frontal rather than a profile view as on the earlier stamps. These new stamps issued in 1895-97 on double-line "USPS" watermarked paper. These stamps are listed by Scott as PR114-25. In 1898, the series was discontinued and demonetized.

As nice as these stamps are, the collecting is not easy an task given the rarity of most of the higher denominations. The stamps are cataloged from a price from \$8.00 - \$250K+. This cost factor has greatly increased the chance of finding a forgery in this issue. With this in mind, you would not want to build your collection from eBay items.



Scott PR79
Indian Maiden