



Lot 44



Detail

LOT 44°

The only recorded example of the 1851 Franklin Carrier General Issue stamp on cover that shows the plate crack—only two other plate crack stamps are in private hands, both off cover and with much less conspicuous cracks

ESTIMATE \$40,000-50,000

DESCRIPTION

(1¢) Dull Blue, Franklin Carrier, Cracked Plate (LO1 variety), Position 19L, deep and well-inked plate crack across entire stamp, large margins except touched at bottom left corner, intense shade and impression, cancelled by Philadelphia red star cancel, one point impressed strongly enough to tie stamp through paper, used on cover addressed to “Mr. Benjamin B. Myrick, Corner of Christian and Church Streets, Philadelphia”, red wax seal and “Recd. Mar. 18, 1852 B.B. Myrick” receipt docketing on back

PROVENANCE

Alfred F. Lichtenstein, Eugene N. Costales sale, 4/26-27/1950, lot 767, to Elliott Perry on behalf of Gibson

Henry C. Gibson, Sr. (sold privately)

Siegel Auction Galleries, 4/27/1990, Sale 723, lot 355, to Golden

David Golden, Siegel Auction Galleries, 11/15-17/1999, Sale 817, lot 15, to William H. Gross

CENSUS, LITERATURE AND EXHIBITION REFERENCES

National Philatelic Museum, 1956, Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 482

Scott R. Trepel, “Carrier Stamps During The 1851 Issue Period,” *The 1851 Issue of United States Stamps: A Sesquicentennial Retrospective*, p. 198

CERTIFICATION

The Philatelic Foundation (1999)

CONDITION NOTES

Extremely Fine stamp and cover

Henry C. Gibson owner’s backstamp with note “Perry 1950”



Large plate crack in Positions 18-20L

HISTORY AND COMMENTARY

The Other 1851 Issue Franklin Stamp

When the 1851 stamps were issued in three denominations—1¢, 3¢ and 12¢—the Post Office also created a special “Carrier Stamp” with Franklin’s profile facing left, in contrast with the regular 1¢ stamp with the profile facing right. The absence of a denomination was evidently intended to accommodate the 1¢ or 2¢ carrier fees permitted by law. The similarity between the Franklin Carrier and its regular-postage counterpart raised concerns that the two would be confused. Official correspondence provides contemporary documentation of the problem and solution. On October 10, 1851, a replacement for the Franklin Carrier stamp—the distinctive Eagle Carrier—was approved by the postmaster general.

The Franklin Carrier stamps were printed by Toppan, Carpenter, Casilear & Company, the same printer that made the regular postage stamps from 1851 through 1860. The stamps were printed from a plate of 200 that was marred by a large, nearly horizontal crack across six positions in the second row from the top (18-20L and 11-13R). As the plate wore, the crack extended further into the two adjoining positions at left and right (17L and 14R). The plate crack is found on original proofs, issued stamps and reprint proofs. The reprint proofs show the crack in its later, more extended state.

There are four recorded Franklin Carrier stamps with the plate crack:

- 1 Position 19L, **the only recorded cover**, Philadelphia red star cancel, to B. B. Myrick, ex Lichtenstein, Gibson and Golden, **offered in this sale**
- 2 Position 19L, off cover, **unavailable to collectors**, ex Ferrary, Chase, Miller, now in The New York Public Library collection (at the National Postal Museum)
- 3 Position 13R, off cover, ex Golden (Sale 817, lot 14)
- 4 Position 14R, off cover, Siegel Auction Galleries, 2001 Rarities of the World sale, 5/19/2001, Sale 837, lot 392

Franklin Carrier stamps were shipped to three cities: New York (250,000), Philadelphia (10,000) and New Orleans (50,000). Although New York received the most stamps, it did not put them on sale until mid-1852, and covers with the Franklin Carrier originating in New York are very rare. Conversely, Philadelphia, which received the smallest number of stamps, is the origin for most of the known covers.

Only this cover, among the 17 recorded in the census by Dr. Vernon R. Morris, Jr., has a stamp from one of the cracked plate positions. Only two off-cover stamps are in private hands, but they come from positions that show a much smaller part of the crack. From several perspectives, this is one of the most outstanding 1851 Issue covers extant. ■