



1856 FIVE-CENT JEFFERSON

THE 5-CENT STAMP IN THE 1851-56 imperforate series was issued early in 1856, under the authority of James Campbell, Postmaster General during the Franklin Pierce administration. There is no conclusive evidence proving why a 5c denomination was issued, but the stamp did serve a useful purpose by prepaying the 5c inland rate (or shore-to-ship postage) on outbound transatlantic mail. After negotiation of the U.S.-French postal treaty, a 5c strip of three or a single in combination with a 10c stamp also conveniently paid the 15c rate. The 5c registry fee that became effective in July 1855 was intended to be paid in cash, and it seems unlikely that the stamp was issued for this purpose, as only two covers showing such usage are known.

The 5c stamp features a portrait of Thomas Jefferson, based on the painting by Gilbert Stuart. This stamp was the first to portray someone other than Franklin or Washington, leading to speculation that this founder of the Democratic Party was a favored choice of the Democratic Pierce administration. The imperforate stamp was printed by Toppman, Carpenter & Co. in a deep reddish brown from a single engraved plate of 200 subjects, each of which shows projections at the top and bottom, the characteristics that define Type I. This plate was used exclusively through the end of 1859, spanning the introduction of perforations—the

earliest known use of a 5c perforated stamp is August 23, 1857. The brief period during which the 5c was issued imperforate is the reason for its scarcity. Curiously, although Casilear had retired from the firm in October 1854, his name was still included in the plate imprints through 1857.

The Type I perforated stamps were issued in different shades, listed here in chronological order: Red Brown (Scott 28, eku 8/23/57), Bright Red Brown (Scott 28b, eku unknown), Indian Red (Scott 28A, eku 3/31/58), Brick Red (Scott 27, eku 10/6/58) and Brown (Scott 29, eku 4/4/59).

In 1860 Toppman, Carpenter & Co. created a second 5c plate, on which each subject had all or most of the top and bottom projections removed to widen the horizontal space between rows for perforations. These stamps from Plate 2 are classified as Type II designs and were issued only with perforations. There are two Type II shades: Brown (Scott 30A, eku 5/14/60) and Orange Brown (Scott 30, eku 5/8/61). The Brown was valid for postage for 18 months, but the Orange Brown, which was released in late April or early May 1861, was used for only a short time before the Federal demonetization order took effect. Consequently, the Brown is much scarcer unused than used, and the Orange Brown is quite rare used and not particularly scarce unused, owing to remainders discovered in the South.



The earliest recorded transatlantic use of the 5c 1856 Issue