

# Stupid eBay

A Continuing Series, The Editor

Picture is worth a thousand words? In these five cases words escape me while out right chuckles happen with great abandon. The wild and wooly world of eBay can be a great resource and a horrid betrayal to the philatelic community. Do I exaggerate? You be the judge.



The first one up is the Edison issue (#655). Described by the new seller as a block of 8. I call it a block of six with two added. The image shows a little better than average centering with some evident staining. Price \$18.85. On a good day it is worth maybe 50 cents – and that is a stretch.

The 17 cent Wilson is a laugh. The shrunk stamp has been chemically altered to act on the fibers of the stamp, thus reducing its size by nearly one half. Apparently, the long-time eBay seller does not know about that fakery. The item has been listed at least three times that I have seen. Sale price \$20.



The third entry is the block of six of the 13 cent Freedom Hall/Flag issue. This can be

found readily in discount postage lots for much less than face. Keep that in mind as you buy it for \$4.50 from a long-time eBay seller – who should know better.



Now for the first bizarre listing – the \$2 non-inverted Jenny. This gem is being offered by a long-time eBay seller for roughly six times the Scott's price for a single. The price is \$522,000 – with free shipping. It comes with a cert for the sheet of six and is graded 90. This seller appeared in the first article of this series with some other wild Jenny offerings.



The last bizarre listing is in my mind the most problematic. The new eBay seller is offering the unidentified 1 cent green Franklin for \$10,000. The description of “very rare stamp” is all that appears in the non-helpful information field. Rare apparently is defined as having a printing total of 1 billion (or more!).



These are only some of the ones that I have noted in my almost daily eBay exploring. Some make me chuckle, others raise the hairs on the back of neck for the outright flim-flam nature of the sellers attempt to swindle. Such is the world of eBay.

**Taken from HERST'S OUTBURSTS, Vol XXVII-No. 3,  
Whole No. 117, dated Autumn 1967, Page 14  
Trial Colors**

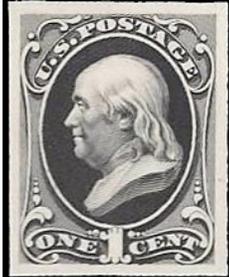
Every once in a while, a collector excitedly turns up a stamp, even one of our own country, in a color other than the one in which it was supposed to be printed, and he feels that he has a rarity. Sometimes it is what is called a changeling, the different color having been obtained through the applications of a chemical, or even fumes. (Album pages, the paper of which contained an overabundance of sulphite will turn an orange stamp black in a surprisingly short time, as an example.)



Sometimes the odd color was intentionally done. In the period before the final color is assigned, the projected stamp is printed in any number of colors. They are studied, and the final color is chosen. Some designs appear more attractive in one color than they do in another. And often these trial colors “get out,” as the saying goes, even in the case of our own stamps. When we recall that our postage stamps were privately produced until 1894, and that there was little control over the distribution of proofs, essays and trial colors in philately's early days, we can easily see how these got into circulation.



Back in the 1870s, in one decade, the contract was given to three different firms. Undoubtedly politics dictated the choice to some extent; one company which lost the contract less than two years after it had been awarded took recourse to the courts to get it back... unsuccessfully. The stamps referred to are popularly called the Bank Note issue, a term which confuses many collectors who do not realize that the name comes from the fact that the contract went from the National Bank Note Co. to the Continental Bank Note Co., and then to the American Bank Note Co., which was an amalgamation of the former.



Some of these trial color proofs will dress up any collection, especially when mounted on the same page with stamps in the proper colors. When the trial color is a jet black, it makes a startlingly interesting exhibit. Scott #156, #157 and #158 ultimately appeared in blue, brown and green. The trial color proofs which we are leading up to, all in jet black, catalog at only \$5 each, the surprisingly low price due not to their plentifulness [sic], for they are not plentiful, but the fact that few collectors know of their existence, and hence do not seek them.

We can offer the set of three black trial color proofs, catalog \$15, for only \$5 per set. These are considerably scarcer in blocks, and Scott rightly puts a premium on these...\$25 each. We can offer the set of three blocks, also in black, for \$20, which is of course, the proportionate price of singles, even though they list at \$75. (We refer to the catalog of last year; the new one had not yet appeared as this goes to press.)

When this country joined the Universal Postal Union, and adopted the uniform price of five cents for a letter to any place in the world (instead of the old complicated rates, which varied from country to country), a new stamp was issued, picturing Zachary Taylor. It has always been a very popular stamp since there are only two varieties of it. For an additional \$2.50 to the \$5 mentioned above, we will include a trial color proof in black of this stamp. If a block is desired, add \$10 to the \$20 for the blocks of the other three denominations.

**[Editor's note: This article from the ever-readable Pat Hearst – penned a little over 50 years ago, has been provided for our reading pleasure by Team Dowrick. The trial proofs are a specialty collecting area that can be very challenging. Frankly I agree with Herst – the trial proofs in jet-black are stunning.]**