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Article: A major discovery: An Archer & Daly Final State Imprint on an early Keatinge & Ball Printing

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Discoveries



A major discovery: An Archer & Daly Final State Imprint on an early Keatinge & Ball Printing

By Col. Randy L. Neil & Gen. Patricia A. Kaufmann



The entire Sixth State of the Archer & Daly imprint remains on this block of ten of Type I of the 10-cent steel plate stamp—printed in the late summer of 1864 in the Keatinge & Ball dark blue shade on rough uneven paper showing imperfect impressions of many of the stamps—and notably, the messy, poor quality of gum seeping through to the front.

Keatinge & Ball, engravers and printers of Columbia, South Carolina, began printing at least one of the two types of the 10-cent steel plate issues (Scott CSA Nos. 11 and 12) in late summer 1864 before completely removing the sixth and final state of the previous printer's imprint.

The proof of this previously-unknown fact is a recently discovered bottom imprint block of ten from plate number four of the type II stamp. Prior to this discovery, it was believed that original engravers and printers Archer & Daly of Richmond, Virginia had completely removed their firm's imprint (with the exception of the plate numbers) from the two positions on the bottom of each of four different plates before transferring the plates to Keatinge & Ball. There was an imprint for each of the two panes on each plate. In addition, it was thought that all printings of both types I and II by Keatinge & Ball contained that firm's newly-engraved imprint at the bottom of all panes, beginning in late summer 1864.

Considering that this is a major discovery that changes the prior record on these issues, some historical context is necessary.



One of the key indicators of a Keatinge & Ball printing of the 10-cent steel plate stamps was the especially poor quality of the paper and gum utilized by the Columbia, S.C., printing. The paper has a brown cast and is porous and rough. The gum also has a brown cast and was, as can be plainly seen on the reverse of this discovery block, unevenly applied. Such paper and gum was never employed by the Archer & Daly printing firm in Richmond, Va., the previous printer of the 10-cent steel plate issues.

In his monumental 1929 work, *The Postal Service of the Confederate States of America*, August Dietz refers to the movement of stamp printing operations from Richmond, Virginia, to Columbia, South Carolina, and states on page 269 that, "...Archer & Daly were underbid by Keatinge & Ball competition in 1864."

Dietz further recounts a statement made in 1867 by H. St. George Offutt, Chief of the CSA Contract Bureau, (page 268): "*The engravers, Messrs. Archer & Daly, failed to comply with the terms of their contract, and a new one was entered into with Messrs. Keatinge & Ball, of Columbia, S.C., and the plates were delivered to them in 1864.*"

We quote the above remarks in noting that, contrary to popular belief over the years, the printing of Confederate stamps was removed to Columbia, not because Richmond was then being threatened by Union incursions, but because the Archer & Daly firm was failing to satisfy the needs of the Post Office Department. This removal of the plates to Columbia may have happened so fast that the plates for the stamps continued to carry the last state of the Archer & Daly imprint (see illustration of the A&D imprint states)—which eventually were to be removed by Keatinge & Ball so that the latter's imprint could be installed.

The earliest known use on cover of any Keatinge & Ball (K&B) printing of the 10-cent steel plate stamps is September 3, 1864. We might then confidently assume that printing of these stamps by K&B began in late August. It might also be speculated that, because of the time it took to transfer all plates and printing presses to Columbia, there was a rather immediate need for new 10-cent stamps from the very moment the plates and presses arrived. It is no stretch to believe that K&B immediately printed some stamps with at least one of the plates before burnishing out "Richmond, Va." and installing their own imprint, if only to test the newly-installed presses.

THE ARCHER & DALY IMPRINTS

No. 1 No. 2 No. 3 No. 4

*Archer & Daly, Bank Note Engravers, Richmond, Va.**Archer & Daly, Bank Note Engravers, Richmond, Va.**Archer Bank Note Engravers, Richmond, Va.**Archer Bank Note Engravers,**Bank Note Engravers, Richmond, Va.*

At left: August Dietz's illustrations of the six states of the plate imprints on plates by Archer & Daly, Richmond, Va. The sixth and last state appears on the block discussed in this article.

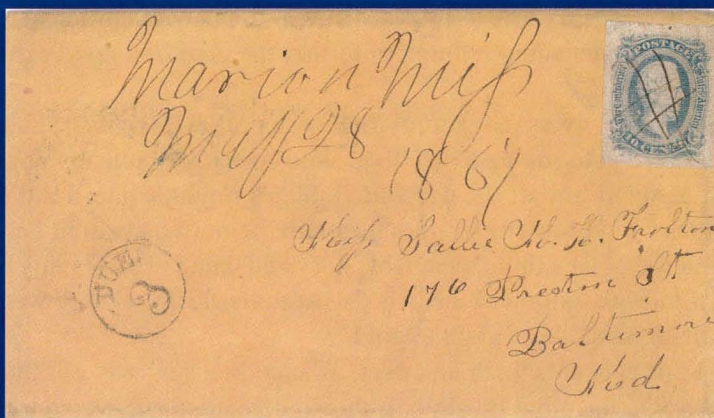
Dietz further states (page 271), "When the four plates of the 10-cent were delivered to Keatinge & Ball they still bore their plate numbers and the words, "Bank Note Engravers," though partially obliterated. The new firm name was engraved in alignment, but in *Italic capitals and small capitals*—the erased "rs" of "Engravers" re-established—and "Columbia, S.C." inserted in the space of the former "Richmond, Va.," in the same style lettering of the firm name."

No mention is made by Dietz that the sixth and final state of the Archer & Daly imprint, which retained the "Richmond, Va." wording, was never allowed by Keatinge & Ball to remain on any of the plates as they were first being printed by the latter firm. But that is certainly the case with this K&B-printed imprint block from plate No. 4.

Why this block is a Keatinge & Ball printing:

- 1) The distinctive deep blue color of the ink, which was a mainstay of all K&B printings of both types of the 10-cent steel plate stamps—a color rarely, if ever, used by A&D.
- 2) The blotchy and irregular filling of the engraved lines of the printing. (Note the inking failure in the upper right of the lower middle stamp.)
- 3) The poor, rough quality of the brown-cast paper, a kind of paper never used by Archer & Daly, but consistently used by Keatinge & Ball from start to finish.
- 4) The messy, uneven dark gum that frequently shows cracking.
- 5) The filling in of the cross-hatched lines behind the bust of Jefferson Davis.

What's this?



Perhaps another discovery? In the next issue of the CP, we'll discuss this newly-found cover that comes with a rather solid pedigree.