

# **“OPERATION: MANIPULATION”**

## ***THE U.S. TEN CENT STAMP OF 1855 - 1859***

**By Mortimer L. Neinken**



The earliest known use of this stamp imperforate is May 12, 1855. One plate was made with imprints both on the right and left sides and, under the imprint, the number 1. This was a 200 subject plate, divided by a center line into panes of 100 (10 x 10).

There were four different types in the plate. All the designs in the bottom row were Type I (Figure 1). Most designs from the top row and from the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th rows were Type II (Figure 2). Type III (Figure 3) was represented by two designs in the top row, and all designs from the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th rows. Type IV (Figure 4) are those on which the outer curved frame line was recut. Four designs were recut at top, three recut at bottom, and one recut at top and bottom. One Type IV

design is found in the right pane (3R1) and seven are grouped in the lower portion of the left pane.

The 1984 Scott Specialized Catalogue prices these stamps used imperforate as follows: Type I, \$650.000; Type II, \$275.00; Type III, \$285.00; Type IV, \$1350.00.

Perforated stamps from this plate were issued in late 1857. The earliest known use perforated is July 27, 1857. A new plate was made later. The earliest known use is May 9, 1859. The plate layout was the same as the first plate, with similar imprints and a plate number 2. All of these stamps were Type V (Figure 5). They differ from the stamps on the first plate mainly by having no pearls, or by missing pearls, to the right and left of the bottom shells and by having the side ornaments somewhat cut away. All of the stamps from this plate were perforated.

The 1984 Scott Specialized Catalogue prices the Type I imperforate (Scott #13) at \$7000.00 unused. It prices the Type V at \$175.00 unused. So, it is very tempting for the faker to trim off the perforations on wide margin copies of the Type V stamp and sell them as Type I imperforates. There are numerous such fakes, mostly unused. Some years ago many such fakes appeared throughout Europe.

Figure 6 shows a manipulated Type V stamp with perforations trimmed all around. Note that the bottom shells are complete. Referring to Figure 1, it is to be noted that on the Type I designs, the right shell is complete, while the left shell is slightly incomplete. Also note the incomplete and missing pearls on the Type V designs.

As stated previously, all Type I stamps are from the bottom row of Plate 1. All of the designs have guide dots just below and to the left of the left shell. Some thirty years ago, George Sloan, who for so many years wrote Sloan's Column for Stamps magazine, said to the writer "Don't buy a Type I 10c stamp unless the guide dot shows". This advice should still be followed. (See Figure 1 for the guide dot.)

The other manipulation, which is not seen very often, is the inking-in of fake recuts on Type II and Type III stamps so that they can be offered as Type IV. These fakes can be detected by comparing the shape of the recut with the recut on a stamp which is known to be genuine. If there are doubts, the stamp should be examined under an ultraviolet light to see if the color of the ink of the recut matches the color of the stamp.

Another check is the location of the guide dot on positions 54L, 55L, 74L and 76L. This dot is located to the left of the left "X" (Figure 2). Most of the fake recuts are on position 64L, which is recut both top and bottom. These imitation recuts have been marketed both used and unused and are not easy to detect.

**Inasmuch as the prices at which the Type I and Type IV stamps are offered or sold in auctions are so high, they should be submitted to the Philatelic Foundation for expert opinion.**

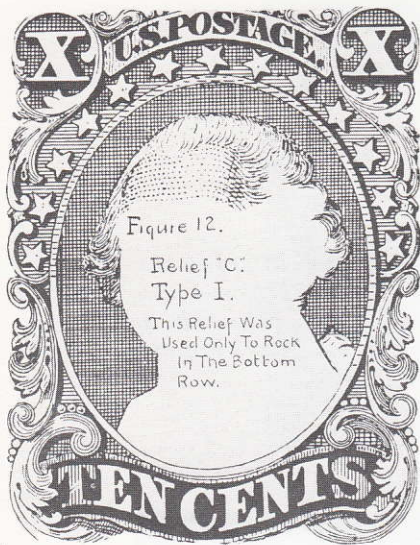


Figure 1

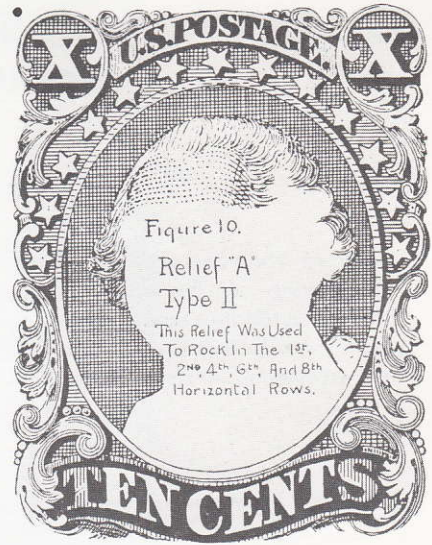


Figure 2

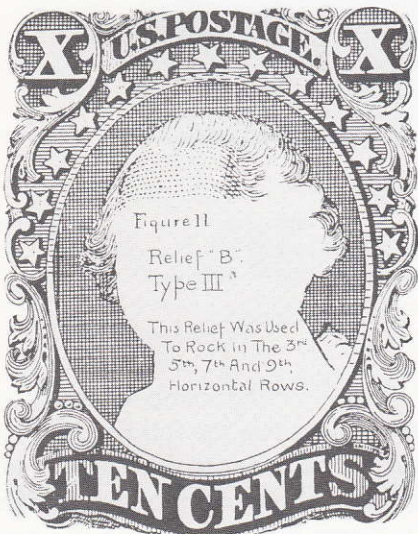


Figure 3

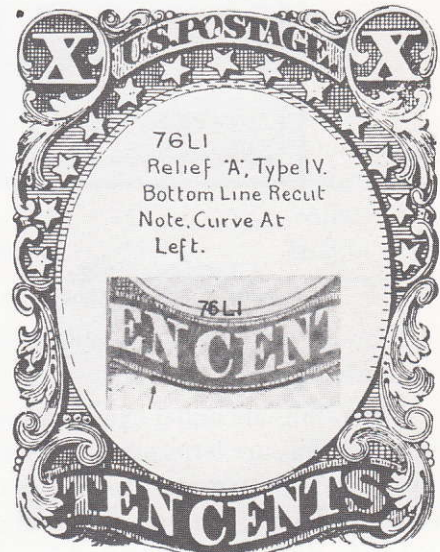


Figure 4

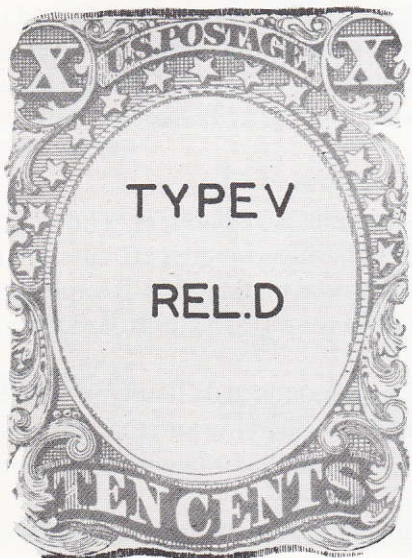


Figure 5

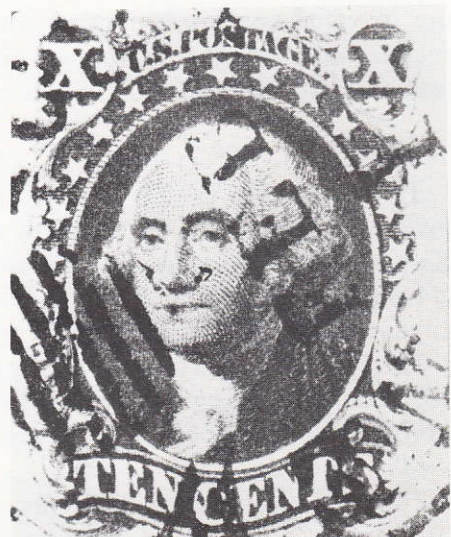


Figure 6