

US REVENUE STAMPS – FIRST ISSUE
“USING THE DOCUMENTS OF COMMERCE TO FUND THE
CIVIL WAR”
1862 - 1871

Synopsis

Overview:

This Revenue Fiscal History exhibit is focused on the First Issue revenue stamps and the documents taxable under Schedule A of the Tax Act of 1862 and its subsequent amendments. Proprietary articles subject to taxes specified on Schedule B are excluded from this exhibit.

Treatment:

The scope of this exhibit focuses on the U.S. First Issue revenue stamps and the documents meant to generate revenue to fund and pay for the Civil War. Included are rates over time, a brief description, printing information and analysis and as many relevant documents as possible. There may be duplicates such as deeds but the documents are different in almost every respect. For instance, there are several different types of deeds, displayed under Conveyance, which should be understood as part of this study. Deeds can be common or rare based on the type, the property deeded or extent of the deed such as value. This exhibit attempts to cover many types of deeds to show this extent. There are few usages that exhibit this variety. The key limitation is a few specific document types or usages such as Passage Ticket, Warehouse Receipt, Charter Party and Manifest. These are exceedingly rare in the marketplace and will be included as they become available.

Philatelic Importance:

Like old covers of historical importance, revenue stamps on documents depict an event in history, whether it is for the purchase of a keg of nails, developing land that ultimately became a famous landmark or executed a U.S. president's will. Each is unique, even if the stamp is quite common for the transaction deals with real events and real people. The true importance is how much money was collected to fund the war effort. This exhibit has a tally at the end to see how much was raised for the Civil War and what it could have bought at that time to aid the war effort.

Philatelic and general knowledge, personal study and research:

The research required for this exhibit included the following books or internet sites. Details for denominations, rates, usage and printing information are interspersed throughout the exhibit. Each document had to be researched for historical or philatelic importance, rates and usage. The references below were used for research to ensure the accuracy of this exhibit.

- 1) <http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war-1862.htm>
- 2) <http://www.robinsonlibrary.com/social/publicfinance/revenue/incometax/1862.htm>
- 3) "The Boston Revenue Book", c: 1899 by the Boston Philatelic Society. Quaterman Publications Inc.
- 4) "An Introduction to Revenue Stamps", c: 1994 by Castenholz and sons, Castenholz and Sons Publishers
- 5) "United States Civil War Revenue Stamp Taxes", c: 1988 by Michael Mahler
- 6) "A Catalog of United States Revenue-Stamped Documents of the Civil War Era by Type and Tax Rate", c: 1999 by Michael Mahler

In addition, each document was read thoroughly to divine the actual use, which is sometimes misleading when first examining a document. Some are simple checks while others are very extensive legal documents which sometimes led to general research concerning the town or people. Correctly using rates was a key part of the law and modifications to those rates occurred over time, necessitating vigilance in paying the prevailing rate.

Rarity:

The stamps on display that are not tied to a document have increasing rarity as portrayed on the printing information used throughout the exhibit. It varies by what the Bureau of Internal Revenue believed they could collect based on the commerce in place during the Civil War and what portion of the Civil War this effort would need to pay for. There were other means to collect revenue outside of revenue stamps such as income tax. Yes – this is the forefather of the I.R.S. In the final analysis, each document is unique even though the stamp and usage may be common in some cases. Some documents have multiple high values tied to the document in combinations that would be quite uncommon. The stamps that are included are all used with the vast majority being the more common full perforated variety vs. the partial and imperforate varieties which were simply not supposed to be released until fully perforated. The government pushed these into circulation to expedite the taxing. An item that is not normally seen or available is bounded by a double border or has text that is bounded by a double border. So many of these period documents have been discarded over the years as the legal requirements to keep them have been eliminated.

Condition:

For documents that have survived almost 150 years in most cases, they are in remarkably good shape. In some instances, the creases where the document was folded have begun to split however it does not take away from the attractiveness of the documents and stamps.

General Layout and attractiveness:

It begins with an overview of why these stamps came into being along with the printer and how they were intended to be used and how they ultimately were used, setting the stage for more generic second and third issues. It is organized by usage along with detailed information as to what are the intended usages for that denomination, the dates first put into circulation and how the stamps were to be used based on the transaction amount. This exhibit also captures the rate

changes following rate amendments. The stamps are included to show the vast variety of stamps available. It is impossible to show all denominations and usages solely on documents, thus the need to include the stamps. Every attempt was made to reduce the pages with only stamps on them. However, they are key to the exhibit and depict a variety that is impossible to capture with documents alone. They each were responsible in supplying the much needed revenue, thus the inclusion in this exhibit. All are used and were at one time affixed to a document.

The documents are also organized by usage, grouped with the stamps noted above with as much of the document viewable as possible. If a document has more than one stamp, the highest denomination is shown. Each document has a brief explanation of the transaction along with printing information and usage requirements and any penalties for incorrect or non-usage. Rates are noted throughout because they changed over time with the amendments so each item has been noted as to the correct usage rate for that period. If the rate paid is incorrect, it is noted. Again, every attempt was made to ensure a document was present on as many pages as possible.