



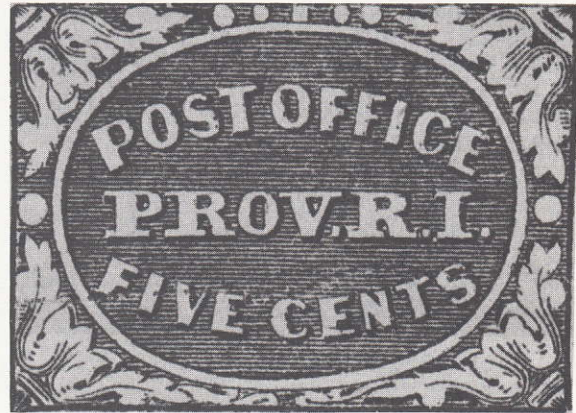
Philatelic Foundation Analysis Leaflet

The Philatelic Foundation, 270 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

The Providence, Rhode Island, Provisionals of 1846



Genuine



Sperati Fake

NOTICE POST OFFICE STAMPS

"The postmaster has issued postage stamps of the denominations of five and ten cents for the payment of postage in advance. They are very convenient and will save the trouble of making change at the Post Office, and will enable people to send prepaid letters at hours when the Office is closed. To cover the expense of engraving and printing, these stamps are sold at five per cent advance upon the regular rates of postage.

"They are for sale at the Post Office."

W. B. Sayles, P.M.
Providence, R.I., August 24, 1846

Welcome B. Sayles had been appointed Postmaster of Providence, Rhode Island, by President James K. Polk in 1844. He was reappointed by President Franklin Pierce and served in this post about twelve years. During his tenure, he became impressed with the English use of postage stamps. Since the use of a postage stamp was convenient and time-conserving, he came up with an idea for stamps to be used in Providence. He ordered a copper plate for the printing of stamps from a prominent local engraver, George W. Babcock. Babcock produced a finished plate which contained 11 five-cent and 1 ten-cent stamps.

Sayles had Henry A. Hidden & Co. print the stamps from Babcock's plate. This firm did a lot of printing for banks in the area, a fact that can be noted from the type and quality of paper used for these stamps. On Friday, August 21, 1846, the stamps and plate were delivered to the post office. The stamps were not gummed by the printer. This task was given to Assistant Postmaster Robert Barton, who spent a Sunday spreading glue on the stamps from two bundles, making them ready for the August 24 first day of issue.

This issue has long been of interest to philatelists. When the stamps became of some value, there were numerous counterfeits manufactured. The original plate eventually was purchased from Postmaster Sayles' son. Many reprints were made as well as die proofs in colors. After years of making reprints, the plate was sold to Slater in 1917, who presented the plate to the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1930.

There are many interesting stories surrounding this issue, the reprints and the counterfeits, but it is not within the scope of our analysis to try to present them all. A short bibliography follows this analysis.

We can touch briefly on the Sperati fake of the five-cent Providence Provisional. Sperati made fakes of position 12, the last position on the sheet. These exist as die proofs and as used and unused stamps. The distinguishing characteristic is the printing process. The fakes were printed lithographed, while the genuine examples are engraved. Running a finger across the face of the stamp will reveal the raised printed surfaces on the genuine or the relatively smooth surfaces on the fakes.

**Analysis of the Providence Rhode Island Provisionals of 1846
Submitted to The Philatelic Foundation from 1945 to December, 1985**

Scott Number:	<u>10X1</u>	<u>10X1,2</u>	<u>10X2</u>	<u>10X2a</u>	<u>10X2R</u>
Quantity of Stamps Submitted	177	40	94	50	4
Quantity found:					
Genuine	142	33	45	38	4
Not Genuine	14	1	49	0	0
Reprints	21	6	0	12	0
Quantity of Covers Submitted	35	0	2	0	0
Quantity found:					
Genuine stamp & cover	21	0	2	0	0
" " did not originate	11	0	0	0	0
Fake stamp " " "	2	0	0	0	0
Decline Opinion	1	0	0	0	0

Bibliography:

- "The Postage Stamps of the United States" by John N. Luff
- "The Stamps of the Providence Rhode Island Postmaster 1846-1847" by A.B. Slater.