

1898
THE OMAHA, or
TRANS-MISSISSIPPI ISSUE
Bicolor Large Die Essay



Issued in conjunction with the Trans-Mississippi Exposition held in Omaha, Nebraska, June-October, 1898, the stamps were originally announced as bicolors with colored frames and black vignettes.

With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in April, 1898, the U.S. government developed an insatiable appetite for revenue stamps which overwhelmed the resources of the Bureau of Engraving & Printing. As a result, the Trans-Mississippi bicolors became single colors, more's the pity.

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The vignette designs of the 2-cent and 2-dollar values were transposed in the official issue.

Official records indicate that no bicolor essays were issued until July-August, 1899, long after printing of the commemorative issue had ceased. Bartels believed as many as 216 sets of bicolor essays were made in 1899; and prior to that only 77 sets of single color die proofs were issued in toto. The ratio (about three-to-one) of surviving sets of each version lends his theory some credence.

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