

The 3¢ Nashville Provisional

Real or Fake?



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Type X



Type Y (top), Type Z (bottom)



The Approach

- Trust no one
- Examine philatelic sources
- Examine non-philatelic sources



False Start



Confederate (fac simile)	5c.	3c.
“	10c.	3c
Memphis	3c.	
Nashvllle	3c.	
New Orleans	3c.	
M. C. Callaway	3c.	
Baton Rogue	3c.	

— 0 —

From S. Allan Taylor's price list in the *Stamp Collector's Record* 15 Feb 1864



First Mention

NASHVILLE, TENN.

1861.—Figure indicating value in oval within inscription, (W. D. McNish, P. M., Nashville, Tenn.) Col. imp. on blue paper, rect.

5 cent crimson, grey, black.

—Inscription, (W. D. McNish, P. M.,) at top, (Nashville,) at bottom, large figure denoting value in centre. Col. imp., large rect.

3 cents rose.

From A.C. Klein's 1865 *Stamp Collector's Manual*



Early Mentions/Listings (1)

- 1868
 - J. Chute article in *American Stamp Mercury*
- 1869
 - Listed in 5th edition of F. Trifet's *Descriptive Catalogue*
- 1870
 - March - Scott states he has one, but not genuine



April 1870



3c Nashville stamp illustrated in two English journals
Actual (left), *Philatelist* (center), *Stamp-Collector's Magazine* (right)



Early Mentions/Listings (2)

- 1870
 - July – Scott now says it is genuine, details to follow
 - August – Anonymous article in *American Journal of Philately* provides “evidence” it is genuine
 - November – 3c Nashville listed and illustrated in Scott’s 21st edition of *An Illustrated Descriptive List of Postage Stamps*



The Article (1)

- No author
- We [Scott & Company] wrote a well-known philatelist, a citizen of Nashville and asked his help to find McNish and get particulars on the 3c stamp.
- The correspondent found the former chief clerk, Fowler and asked him what he knew.
- Fowler stated he could not trust his memory but he was almost certain McNish issued the 3c stamp just after the state seceded.



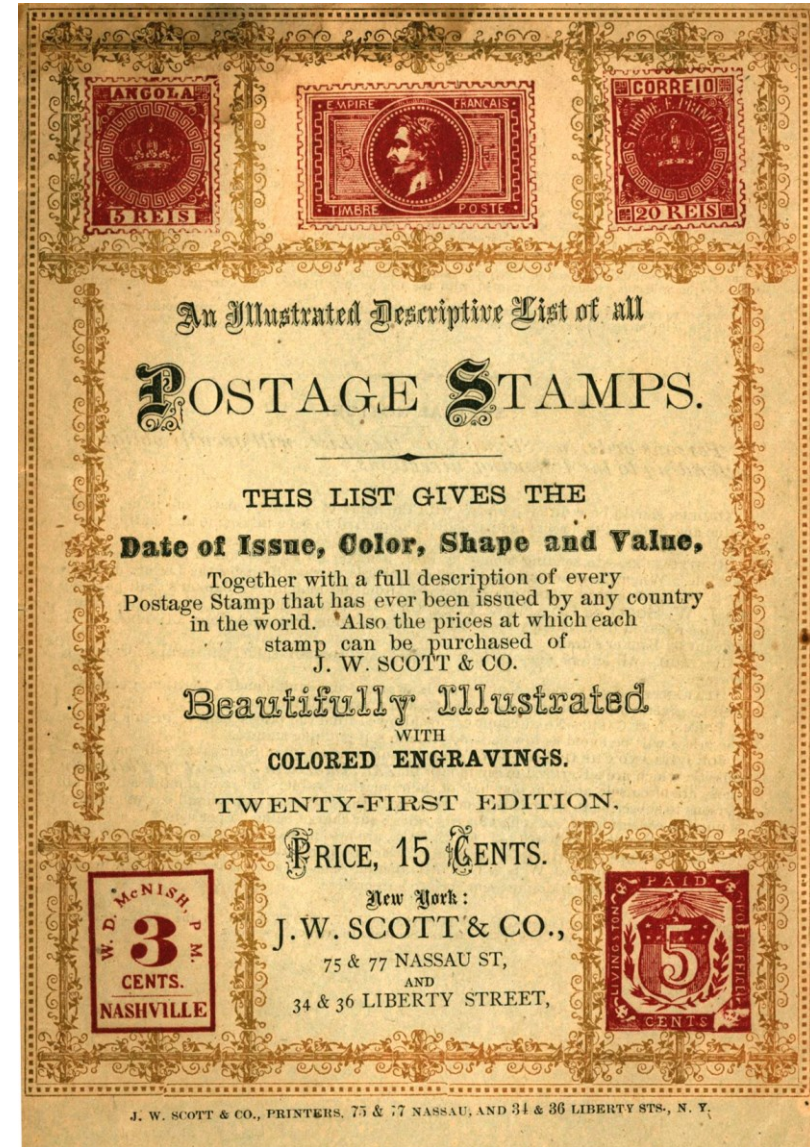
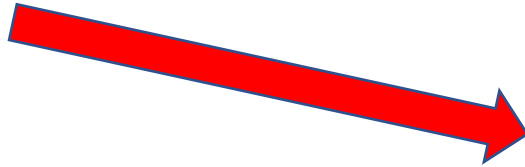
The Article (2)



- They were 3c in value because that is what was used in the United States for letters. Few were issued.
- Not being able to communicate with McNish the correspondent undertook a journey to his place of retirement.
- The stamp being shown to McNish, it was recognized and the same information given by Fowler was given by McNish.



Scott illustrates and includes the 3¢ stamp in his 21st edition (Nov 1870) of *An Illustrated Descriptive List of all Postage Stamps*.





The Article (3)

- **No author**
- We [Scott & Company] wrote a **well-known philatelist** a citizen of Nashville and asked his help to find McNish and get particulars on the 3c stamp.
- The correspondent found the **former chief clerk, Fowler** and asked him what he knew.
- Fowler stated **he could not trust his memory** but he was **almost certain McNish issued the 3c stamp just after the state seceded.**



The Article (4)

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The Clue

- Article in June 1871 *American Journal of Philately* by Scott.
- Mentioned post offices which in 1859 generated more than \$40 revenue.
- Obvious reference to the 1859 *Register of Officers and Agents*
 - Contains Fowler's name
- Led to researching the 1860 Nashville City Directory



McNish's Place of Retirement

McNish, W. D., principle clerk at post-office, residence Edgefield.
McNish, Thos. F., " " " " country.
McNish, J. J. salesman 29 Public-Square

From 1860 Nashville City Directory



1871-1899 (1)

- 1874
 - Pemberton lists five varieties in his *Stamp Collector's Handbook* (Type X, Y or Z)
- 1879
 - Scott's *Revised List of Postage Stamps* lists strips of five (Type Y or Z)



3c Pair Used on Cover



188x

Type Y pair tied by
fake postmark



Tapling Collection © British Library



Type Z Strip of Five

NASHVILLE. — 1861. — 3 cents, rouge, N° 2164



Type Z Strip of Five
From 1892 Moens Catalog



1871-1899 (2)

- 1899 – Collin and Calman's *Catalogue for Advanced Collectors* states solid border variety is a fake and one type of the strip of five is fake



George Toppan Strip



Type Y From George Toppan's 1906 *Notes Upon United States and Confederate States Stamps and their Varieties*



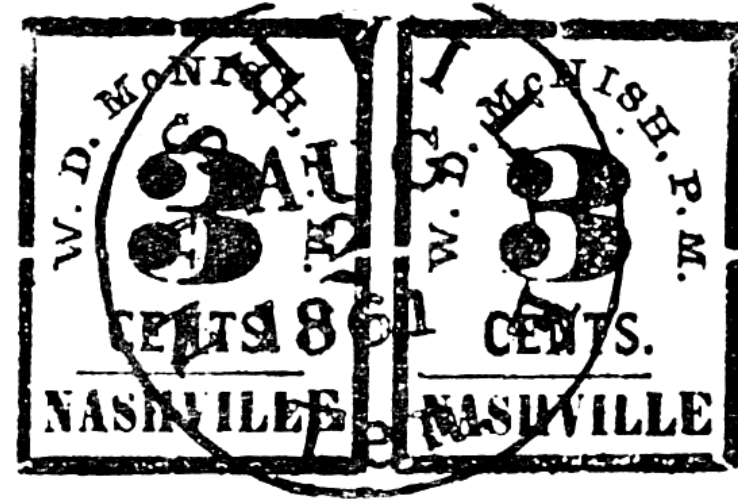
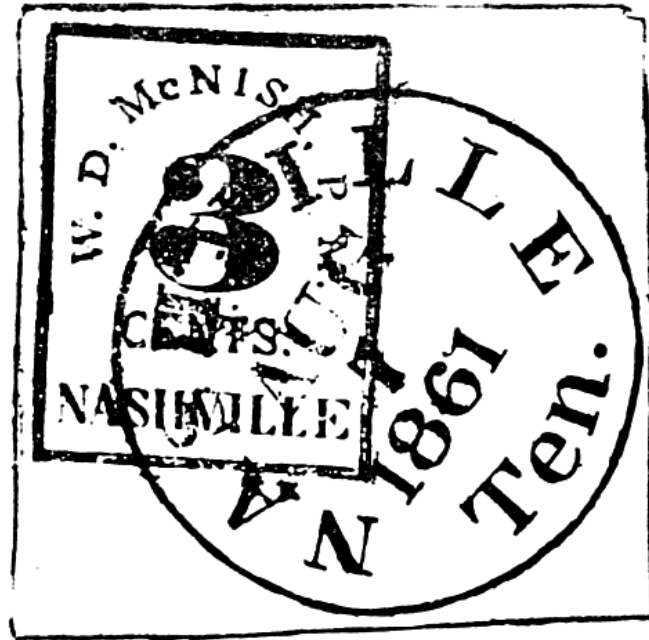
20th Century



- 1922 – Fake cancels on 3¢ Nashville's in Ferrary Collection (type unknown, probably Type Y)
- 1934 & 1935 – Dietz notes fake cancels on Types X and Y



Fake Cancels on 3c Nashville



Examples of Types X and Y with fake cancels

From *Stamp and Cover Collecting*, January 1935 (left) and May 1934 (right)



20th Century



- 1940s – Both Type Y and Z marketed as genuine
- 1980s – Both the PF and the Confederate Stamp Alliance Authentication Service consider both types genuine
- 1990s – Awareness of differences between Type Y and Z becomes more common. Shift toward Type Z being the genuine item.



21st Century



- 2002
 - In an article P. Powell concludes Type Z is the authentic 3c provisional.
 - Type X is not mentioned



Type Z



Justification for 3c Nashville



- 1870 article authenticated 3c Nashville, – never challenged – accepted as fact
- 1959 – Dietz believed they were possibly prepared anticipating a continued 3c rate, but not used
- 1960 – Thomas Ray believed they were prepared to meet a shortage of 3c stamps between 1 June to 1 July



Early Arguments Against (1)



- 1927
 - April - Letter from Norman Fitzhugh to Dietz
 - Asked why 3c Nashville was listed as Confederate provisional and not US provisional?
 - May - George Walcott responded, questioned whether the 3c Nashville was genuine.



Early Arguments Against (2)



- 1932 – Two letters in *Pat Paragraphs* about 3c Nashville. One from F. X. B.
 - Doubted a shortage of 3c stamps
 - Doubted McNish would prepare illegal stamps
 - Questioned whether McNish had anything to do with the stamps
- 1933 – George Sloane column
 - Copied letter that justified the 3c Nashville
 - Never mentioned letter from F. X. B.



Historical Events in 1861



- February
 - Tennessee elects delegates to Secession Convention
- March (23rd)
 - McNish appointed as Nashville postmaster
- April (12 th)
 - Fort Sumter fired on
- May (6th)
 - Tennessee Legislature passes ordinance of secession with referendum scheduled for 8 June



Early June in Nashville



- 5 June
 - McNish received letter from POD dated 1 June directing him not to forward mail to Confederate States
- 6 June
 - McNish informed of Memphis PO closure
 - McNish resigns as US postmaster, but keeps office open and mail moving
- 12 June
 - Nashville post office becomes a Confederate post office



Key Questions (1)



- Was there a need for a 3c stamp at Nashville?
- No record of a shortage of 3c stamps at Nashville prior to 12 June 1861.



Key Questions (2)



- Would McNish have prepared a 3c stamp?
- There was no motivation
- Any stamps prepared by a postmaster were invalid and against the law
- McNish has no reason to prepare the stamp



Key Questions (3)



- When would 3c Nashville have been prepared
- McNish appointed postmaster (23 Mar 1861)
- After firing on Fort Sumter (12 Apr 1861)
- Before passage of ordinance of secession (6 May 1861)
- McNish had no reason to prepare the 3c Nashville during this short period



Key Questions (4)



- What is the validity of the 1870 article
- Includes details unknown to the average reader of the day
- Details could be gleaned from the 1859 ROA and Nashville City Directory
- Detail from City Directory misinterpreted
- At best the article is highly suspicious. Like other articles of the day that attempted to prove authenticity of a stamp.



Conclusion



- Type X – Fantasy
- Type Y – Facsimile of Type X
- Type Z – Facsimile of Type X



What Came First X, Y or Z?



- X was first
 - First listed/reported
 - First illustrated
 - Single copies trademark of early fakers
- Y and Z
 - Difficult to say which was next
 - Five varieties noted 1874, strips 1879
 - Y - Example as early as 188x (Tapling example)
 - Z - Illustrated as early as 1893 (Moens catalog)



Questions