NOTES ON THE DESIGNS OF AMERICAN STAMPS
BY W.K. FREEMAN
(The American Journal of Philately, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1, 1868)

It is not my intention in penning these lines, to attempt a complete description of the Postage Stamps of this Continent, but merely to string together, as the title implies, a few notes in connection with the designs of our stamps.

Any one who has even casually glanced over a collection of Foreign Postage Stamps, must have noticed the variety of emblems employed by the governments of North and South America: but perhaps they never considered for a moment, that many of them convey a special adaptation of the countries they represent.

Thus, the last issue of Newfoundland, is a striking illustration of the subject of these remarks. The fishing business, (the general commerce of the Island,) is faithfully portrayed by the codfish on the two and the schooner on the thirteen cent stamps; while the seal, which abounds so plentifully, is found on the five cent specimens.

A greater portion of the British Colonies have adopted the profile of the Queen, and in some instances the beauty of the engraving is specially noticeable, such as Nova Scotia, St. Lucia, Canada, &c. The latter, however, has varied design by introducing the beaver on the three pence and five cent stamps, and the head of Cartier (the great explorer of this country), on the ten pence and seventeen cent specimens. New Brunswick has also a striking variation in connection with her postal labels. The one cent bears the likeness of a locomotive; the twelve and a half cent stamp, an ocean steamship in full motion and the effigy of the Prince of Wales is finely portrayed on the seventeen cent specimens. And here let us not fail to notice the remarkable five cent proof, (as some term it,) which contains the portrait of the ex-postmaster general, Mr. Connell.

The United States employ the heads of several of her Presidents and a variety of design, too well known to be spoken of, is depicted on both of the issues. We dwell in the hope of realizing, at a not far distant period, a magnificent emission for our own country.

The stamps of Central America have adopted, as a general theme, a view of the mountains which string in long chains all through most of these localities, Salvador and Nicaragua are fine specimens of this type. In addition to this landscape, a few, such as Costa Rica and Guatemala have added a sea view with ships plying here and there.

Most of the South American issues employ the arms of the country to which they belong; with a few exceptions this is the general rule: Chili (sic) makes use of the profile of Columbus, which we think is rather far fetched, probably they borrow the idea from the “mother country.” Peru, like Newfoundland, prefers to symbolize her commerce, and has therefore selected views in which the Llamas are the principal attraction.
The new issue for the Argentine Republic is undoubtedly the finest specimen set of any South American stamps. The portraits of Rivadavia, Belgrano and San Martino are the subject of the five, ten, and fifteen centavos specimens.

With these few notes I must close my remarks, but before so doing, I must state that most of the above mentioned stamps are the execution of the American Bank Note Company in this City. De La Rue & Co., and others, may excel in the selection of some of the most exquisite hues and colors, but none can imitate the principal features: - the engraving and designs of the above mentioned company. It stands champion in this branch of arts to the exclusion of all its competitors.