ROBERT HOPKINS SPECIALIZED COLLECTION OF CHINESE POSTAGE AND REVENUE DIE PROOFS AND ESSAYS

FINDING GUIDE

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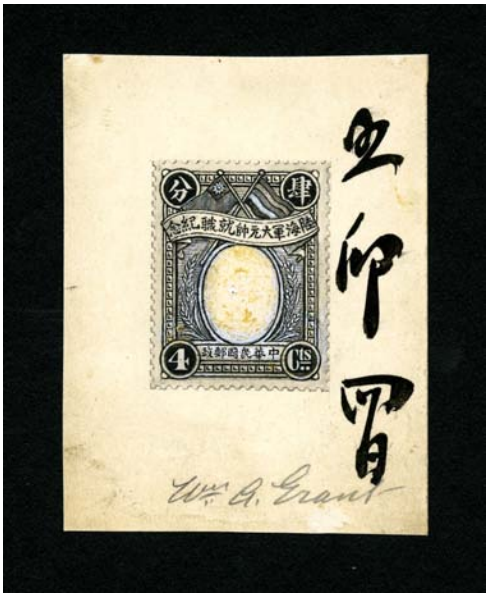

Folder 18 – Pen and Ink Essay

Smithsonian
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COLLECTION SCOPE & CONTENT

This specialized collection contains 34 individual folders of Chinese Postage Stamps and Revenue Die Proofs and Essays from 1912 to 1928.

PROVENANCE

Mr. & Mrs. Robert O. D. Hopkins donated this specialized collection on November 7, 1963 (Accession Number 251474), December 3, 1964 (Accession Number 259606) and September 27, 1965 (Accession Number 250711).

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

This collection of early Chinese die proofs, engraver's models, ink drawings and essays from 1912 to 1928, was donated between 1963 and 1965 by Robert Hopkins. Hopkins was the son in-law of William A. Grant, one of two Americans responsible for establishing the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

In 1908, the Imperial Chinese government sent a representative, Chen Chin Tao, to the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany to investigate stamp production styles and determine which method was least susceptible to counterfeiting. The Chinese government decided that United States' manufacturing technique was most suitable for its purposes. The Imperial government asked two Americans, Lorenzo J. Hatch and William A. Grant, to establish a Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Hatch was a renowned artist and engraver whose experience included more than 15 years at the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Hatch had also spent a number of years working at both the Western Banknote Company of Chicago and the International Bank Note Company. After overcoming some initial reluctance, Lorenzo Hatch signed a six-year contract with the Chinese government.

William A. Grant, an engraver and designer, was an expert in creating the lettering, script, vignettes, geometrical lathe work, scrolls and cycloid twirls that filled bank note and stamp backgrounds. Grant specialized in detail engraving, which helped make bank notes and stamps difficult to counterfeit. Grant was in charge of the engraving room at the American Bank Note Company when he agreed to accompany Hatch to China.

Hatch and Grant established the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing in 1909. They were responsible for the design and production of all the early Chinese Republic issues. Lorenzo Hatch was primarily responsible for the design of the stamp and prepared most of the vignettes. William Grant applied his special skills to reducing the frame and scrollwork, as well as doing the lettering and much of the actual engraving.

Lorenzo Hatch also designed most of China's paper money from 1908 to his death in 1914. Grant served as the technical advisor to the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing until his retirement in 1928. During this time, Grant had as many as 300 trainees working under him at one time, all learning the art of steel engraving and printing. Grant also worked as a stamp authenticator while serving as a consultant to the Chinese Postal Service.

The first issues of the new Chinese Republic ran into a few problems. The original design for the first commemorative issue of 1912 displayed a map of China bearing the inscription, "The Republic of China" in English and Chinese. After the design had been approved, the set of eleven stamps were printed and made ready for distribution, President Yuan Shih-kai ordered the stamps burned, however some survived the fire. Three partially burned stamps of the original map issue are in this collection.

In their place, President Yuan Shih-kai demanded the creation of a commemorative design bearing his portrait and the legend, "Founding of the Republic." The president also requested a second stamp design. That issue featured a portrait of Dr. Sun Yat-sen with the inscription, "National Revolution." Dr. Sun Yat-sen, considered the leader of the first Chinese Revolution and the provisional President of China, had voluntarily yielded the office to Yuan Shih-kai.

The issuing of the first definitive stamps of the Republic had their own problems. Three designs were approved for the Republic's first definitive stamp issues. This series of three stamps embodied the hopes of the budding Republic for progress, prosperity, and advances in education. Each stamp design used traditional Chinese motifs. The central designs depict a three-masted Chinese Junk (the Junk Issue), a Chinese farmer harvesting a field in front of the Temple of Heaven (the Reaper Issue), and the Hall of Classics in Peking.

On the Junk Issue, a train is shown crossing a bridge to represent progress in transportation and communication. Stalks of rice forming part of the columns that flank the farmer symbolize agricultural richness in the Reaper Issue. The Hall of Classics Dollar Issue exemplifies the rich heritage of Chinese education and literature.

Hatch and Grant created the stamp designs and produced the printing plates. However, the printing was not done in China. According to Robert Hopkins, political troubles in China led post office officials to award the printing order to Waterlow and Sons, Ltd., a London company. In London, the stamps from the prints taken from Grant's dies were re-engraved for the first printing. The issues were reprinted in Peking in 1915 and 1923. Grant made new, re-cut dies that were used in the 1915 printing. In 1919, the post office decided to use Grant's original designs and dies.

Of all his works on stamps, Grant was especially proud of his designs for, and engravings of, the Chinese airmail stamps. The stamp design shows a Curtiss "Jenny" airplane flying over the Great Wall of China. The Bars of the Republic flag can be seen on its tail. The essay samples in the collection show that the original design depicted a smaller plane from a different angle, head-on. Also in Grant's collection are five airmail stamps, ranging in denomination from 15¢ to 90¢. They are proof impressions of the special cachet used at Peking on July 1, 1921 to cancel mail matter on the first airmail flight between Peking, Tsinan and Shanghai. (Kundu, 1998)

Also included in these accessions are William A. Grant's engraving tools and devices.

CONTAINER INVENTORY

Folder 1: 1915 Junk Issue (First Peking Printing) - Nine small die proofs, colors as issued (½¢ brown, 1¢ ochre, 3¢ blue green, 4¢ scarlet, 5¢ lilac, 6¢ gray, 7¢ violet, 8¢ brown orange, and 10¢ deep blue)

Folder 2: 1923 Junk Issue - Four large die proofs – Signed (initialed) by D.M. in green crayon and dated (½¢ black brown, 1¢ orange, 1½¢ purple, and 1½¢ purple - the 1 ½¢ die proofs have different dates and different die numbers.)

Folder 3: 1923 Junk Issue – Five large die proofs – Signed die proofs (initialed) by D.M. in green crayon and dated (5¢ rose mauve, 6¢ gray, 7¢ violet, 8¢ orange, and 10¢ blue)

Folder 4: 1923 Reaper Issue**-** Five die proofs, colors as issued (13¢ brown, 15¢ deep blue, 16¢ olive green, 30¢ deep purple, and 50¢ green) signed (initialed) by D.M. in green crayon and dated

Folder 5: 1915 Hall of Classics Dollar Issue (First Peking Printing) - Nine small die proofs, colors as issued ($1 ochre brown, $1 ochre brown, $2 blue, $5 scarlet, $5 scarlet, $10 green, $1 ochre brown frame, and two different color (purple and slate) vignettes)

Folder 6: 1915 Reaper Issue (First Peking Printing) - Five small die proofs - trial color (15¢ olive green, 15¢ brown, 20¢ brown lake, 50¢ purple, and 50¢ dark green) and horizontal composite pair die proof of the 1923 Reaping Issue (30¢ and 50¢ green) on one piece

Folder 7: 1915 Junk Issue (First Peking Printing) – Vertical composite pair die proof of the 1915 Junk Issue (2¢ and 4¢ yellow green) on one piece. Three small die proofs of the 1923 Junk issue (2¢ yellow green, 4¢ scarlet, and 4¢ dark gray green)

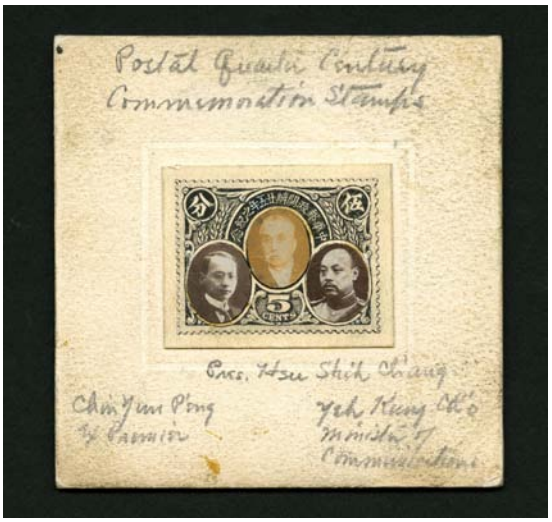
Folder 8: Six small die proofs (1¢ orange, 3¢ blue green 3¢ orange (no sky behind the Temple), 3¢ yellow green, 4¢ scarlet, and 10¢ deep blue) of the 1923 Constitution Commemorative Issue depicting the Temple of Heaven in colors as issued and a 10¢ rejected essay showing an airplane in flight over the Temple of Heaven

Folder 8 – Rejected essay

Folder 9: 1915 Postage Due Stamps – small blue die proofs (½¢, 1¢, 2¢, 4¢, 5¢, 10¢, 20¢, and 30¢)

Folder 10: Two complete sets of 12 soft, thin paper cut-down die proofs in issued colors of the 1912 Sun Yat-sen stamps (National Revolution Commemorative Issue) on the right and Yuan Shih-kai stamps (Founding of the Republic Commemorative Issue) on the left

Folder 11: 1912 Yuan Shih-kai (National Revolution Commemorative Issue) – 1¢ blue and 5¢ blue trial color on card

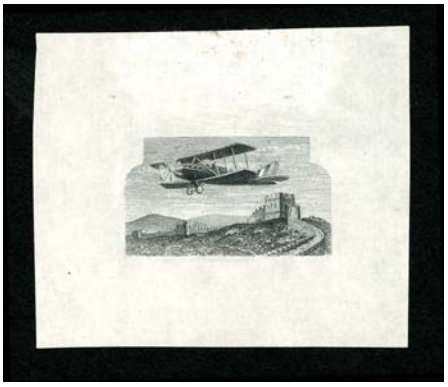


Folder 12 - Essay

Folder 12: 1921 – 25th Anniversary of the Postal Service Commemorative Issue - 5¢ hand painted essay with photos, three values in a windowed card (1¢ orange, 8¢ blue green, 10¢ deep blue), and three small windowed cards with 3¢, 3¢, 10¢ - one 3¢ and the 10¢ have hand drawn pencil perforations

Folder 13: 1921 Peking Printing of the Airmail Issue – Five small die proofs, collors as issued (15¢ blue green and black, 30¢ scarlet and black, 45¢ violet and black, 60¢ blue and black and 90¢ olive green and black) and three small trial color proofs of 15¢ (scarlet and black, orange and black, dark blue and black)

Folder 14: 1921 Peking Printing of the Airmail Issue – Two hand drawn essays of 15¢, one is an engraver's model of a rejected design showing a head-on view of the biplane and signed Wm. A. Grant and the other is a pen and ink drawing of the engraver's model for the accepted design, one proof of vignette in black


Folder 14 – Vignette

Folder 15: 1924 Revenues – Twelve revenues in small die proofs initialed and dated in pencil and ink. Six in single color (1¢ green, 2¢ orange, 5¢ lake, 10¢ blue, 20¢ lake and 50¢ green) and six in bicolor ($1 light brown & dark brown, $2 blue & lake, $5 scarlet & black, $10 light green & lake, $20 purple & black and $50 black & lake)

Folder 16: 1924 Revenues – Hand painted essays of the 2¢ blue & white (this is the engraver's model with values expressed in Chinese and English and initialed W.A.G) and $5 red & white (engraver's model for approved design and initialed W.A.G but not issued)

Folder 17: 1928 General Chang Tso-lin (Commander-in-Chief Assumption Office Commemorative) – Ten small trial color proofs - four in issued colors (1¢ orange, 4¢ olive green, 10¢ dark blue, and $1 scarlet) and six of the 4¢ in trial colors (orange, green, brown orange, dark blue, scarlet, and lake)

Folder 18: 1928 General Chang Tso-lin (Commander-in-Chief Assumption Office Commemorative) – Engraver's model of the frame and inscription for the 4¢ stamp - a pen and ink drawing signed, Wm. A. Grant and also bears the signature of Chang Tso-lin in Chinese characters. There is also a small photograph from which the vignette portrait was engraved.

Folder 19: 1912 General Internal Revenue stamps – Three large size die proofs (50¢ brown, $1 green, and $5 red)

Folder 20: 1912 General Internal Revenue stamps – Three large size die proofs ($10 purple, $50 blue, and $100 yellow brown)

Folder 21: 1915 General Internal Revenue stamps – Three smaller die proofs on card (1/10¢ olive green signed and dated , ½¢ scarlet, ½¢ blue) and five larger die proofs (1¢ blue green, 2¢ purple, 10¢ scarlet, 50¢ blue green, and $1 blue)

Folder 22: 1912 General Internal Revenue stamps – First Design of the 2¢ green essay showing the Temple of Heaven instead of the Watch Tower, 10¢ signed Wm. A. Grant and dated, and the approved design showing the Watch Tower and the Great Wall of China in blue green trial color

Folder 23: Photo of Temple of Heaven on card

Folder 24: 1915 Three different Gate of Heaven essays with drawn-in perforations. They were approved by Yuan Shih-kai but never placed in service because the new Empire collapsed before they could be issued (5¢ scarlet and 5¢ blue shows the Cheng Yang Gate, 10¢ shows the Tien An Men Gate, and 50¢ green and 50¢ blue shows the Tai Ho Palace)

Folder 25: 1921 - 25th Anniversary of the Postal Service Commemorative Issue – Engraver's model labeled "1st Model for 1921 Issue", hand drawn essay of [President Hsu Shih Chang] in bluish green ink of the 3¢, and engraver's model labeled "2nd Model for 1921 Issue", hand drawn essay of [President Hsu Shih-chang] in bluish green ink of the 3¢, and one hand drawn frame

Folder 26: Design of the proposed commemorative issue of 1912 includes a set of thirteen Map of China essays on card with superimposed inscription in Chinese and English "The Republic of China." Small die proofs, imperforate and not issued (1¢ orange, 2¢ yellow green, 3¢ blue green, 5¢ lilac, 8¢ brown, 10¢ blue, 16¢ gray, 20¢ lake, 50¢ green, $1 scarlet, $2 light brown, $5 gray, and $10 purple)

Folder 27 - Essay

Folder 27: In December 1915, President Yuan Shih-kai tried to overthrow the Republic and planned to establish himself as Emperor. He ordered the Chinese Bureau of Engraving and Printing to prepare stamps with the inscription "Commemorating the Establishment of the Chinese Empire." There is an engraver's model – a portrait of Yuan Shih-kai and a pagoda, 3¢ black inscribed "In Commemoration of the Chinese Constitutional Monarchy." Two small die proofs with a new portrait of Yuan Shih-kai replacing the ones on the Revolution and Republic Commemoratives, 3¢ blue (Founding of the Republic) and 5¢ blue (National Revolution), small die proof of vignette in blue

Folder 28: Photo of Yuan Shi-kai – source photo

Folder 29: Three burnt examples of the plate impression of the proposed Map of China stamp recovered from the fire (3¢ blue green perforated, 3¢ blue green from an imperforate sheet, and 20¢ lake perforated), an engraver's model for a 4¢ Junk stamp in red with the vignette of the junk in a circular frame with the inscription "The Republic of China", and proof in green of Sun Yat Sen – could be for stamp or money

Folder 30: 1912 Board of Law Fee Stamps – Eight small die proofs of the mythological animal part unicorn and part bear (1¢ aqua, 5¢ green, 10¢ purple, 20¢ brown, 50¢ orange brown, $1 light blue, $5 orange, and $10 scarlet)

Folder 31: On one large card with seven types of Folder 30 Board of Law Fee Stamp essays, five types of Folder 21 General Internal Revenue Stamp essays and four types of Folder 19 & 20 Revenue Stamp essays

Folder 32: Proof impressions of the special wooden chop used at Peking on July 1, 1921 to cancel mail on the first Peking – Tsinan – Shanghai flight (applied on the 15¢ blue green and black, 30¢ scarlet & black, 45¢ violet & black, 60¢ blue & black and 90¢ olive green & black (Scott C1 – C5))

Folder 33: Fifteen essays titled "Ordinary Stamps Not Issued" of stamp designs used for stamps issued in 1920, including five "Dove in Flight" stamps, two "Carp" stamps, two "Flying Goose" stamps, two Postage Due stamps, two Junk stamps, and two Reaper stamps

Folder 34: 1¢ ochre "Angel Wings" essay for the First Issue of the Republic

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CREDITS & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Images are from the Mr. & Mrs. Robert O. D. Hopkins Specialized Collection of Chinese Postage and Revenue Die Proofs at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.