

Multiple Types for the Large Narcotic Strip Stamps

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Design type differences have been noted on the large U.S. Narcotic strip stamps (*Scott* type NT4). This article will highlight the differences that have been observed.

First, a bit of background is in order. In 1997, the unwatermarked varieties of the Narcotic strip stamps received new catalog numbers in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers*, becoming *Scott* RJA75 to RJA104. After making the purchase of some of the unwatermarked varieties, I observed that the colors were deeper and the lines of the designs were clean, “crisp” and well-defined while many of the watermarked stamps in my collection exhibited “fuzzy” designs. Later, I also noticed that some of the stamps on watermarked paper also exhibited the same characteristics as those printed on unwatermarked paper. However, I could not explain why there was such a visual difference.

In May of 2018, I sought the help of Wayne Youngblood to help explain what I had observed in my study of the large Narcotic strip stamps. After a short period, he came to the conclusion that the differences that I had seen were likely due to different *plates* (or, perhaps, redrawn/refurbished plates) being used. More importantly, he was able to identify subtle design differences primarily in the scrollwork around the denominations. With this new information, I was able to take a closer look at the stamps to discover where the plates differed.

General Observations:

- 1) Design differences are consistent for both imperforate and rouletted examples.
- 2) While the “fuzzy” versus “crisp” line differences exist for all of the Narcotic strip stamps, design differences have not been identified for the three smallest designs (*Scott* design types NT1, NT2 and NT3) that could not be attributed to plate wear.
- 3) All observed copies of the design type NT4 3¢, 9¢, 18¢, 19¢ and 20¢ exhibit “crisp” line characteristics. Thus, no design differences have been observed for these denominations.
- 4) There is not a common difference between the types. Each denomination is essentially different, although some common characteristics were observed between denominations.
- 5) Colors can provide a hint as to the type of stamp. However, it is not always conclusive, especially of those printed in the mid-to-late 1940’s. Environmental effects on the paper may also play a role in the perceived color.
- 6) Other very minor differences likely exist between the types than those identified below. Nonetheless, the differences noted below should be enough to make a proper identification.
- 7) Additional sub-varieties exist in the upper-left scrollwork next to the left numeral on some of the designs. These sub-varieties are also outlined below.

The Types



RJA59 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1” has two types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, two full dashed lines extending from line. Found on rouletted 7 stamps.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line. Found on rouletted 7 and 3½ stamps.
Note: The two subtypes have been observed alternating between stamps within the pane.
- Outline of left “1” without a distinctive line at top-left side of numeral.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “1” has one distinct short line extending upward with a large break between scroll lines.
- Outline of right “1” without a distinctive line at left side of numeral.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1” has three dashed lines extending from line.
- Outline of left “1” with a distinctive line at top-left side of numeral.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “1” has two distinct short lines extending upward with a small break between scroll lines.
- Outline of right “1” with a distinctive line at left side of numeral.



RJA60 *Type I*

- Scrollwork at upper-left of right ‘2’ contains two dashed lines.
- Scrollwork at right of left “2” has a continuous line below large scroll.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “2” has one short line and one long line extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “2” is short.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “2” contains three distinct lines.
- Scrollwork to left of right “2” has a break.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of right “2” has two distinct lines extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing right “2” is short.

Type II

- Scrollwork at upper-left of right ‘2’ contains five dashed lines.
- Scrollwork at right of left “2” has a broken line below large scroll.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “2” has one short line and two long lines extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “2” is long.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “2” contains four distinct lines.
- Scrollwork to left of right “2” is continuous.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of right “2” has three distinct lines extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing right “2” is long.

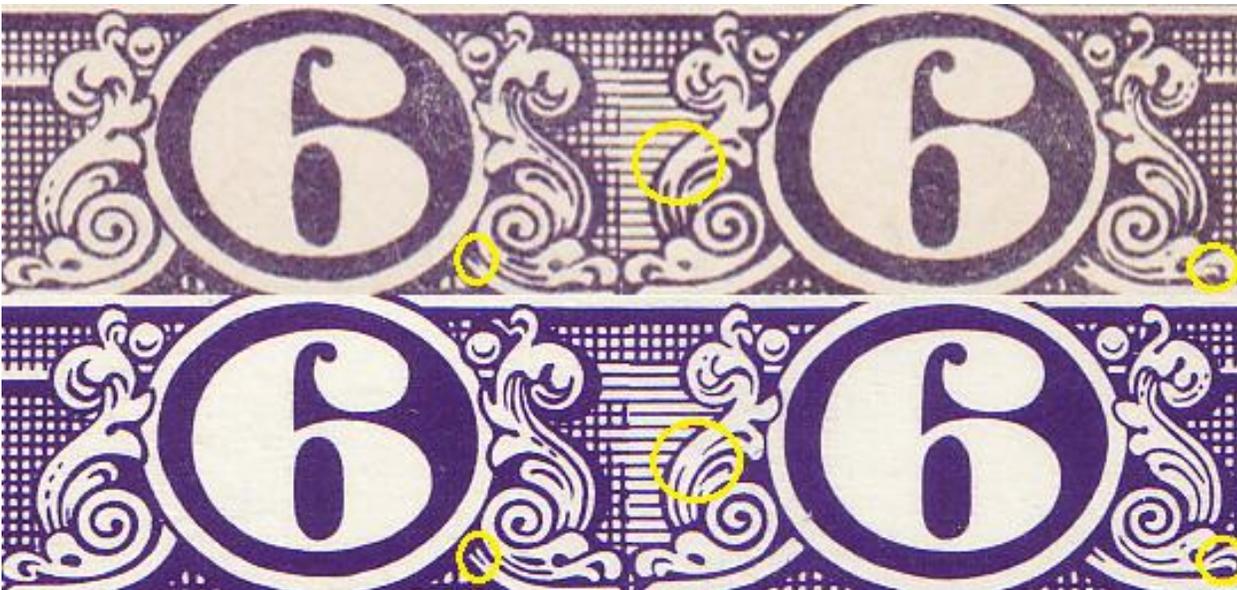


RJA62 Type I

- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing left "5" is short.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right "5" contains three distinct lines.
- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing right "5" is short.

Type II

- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing left "5" is long.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right "5" contains four distinct lines.
- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing right "5" is long.



RJA63 Type I

- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing left "6" is short.
- Scrollwork at left of right "6" has a large gap between the lines.
- Scrollwork at far right of right "6" does not extend at left to below the ball above it.

Type II

- Spike at 4 o'clock of circle enclosing left "6" is long.
- Scrollwork at left of right "6" has a narrow gap between the lines.
- Scrollwork at far right of right "6" extends at left to below the ball above it.



RJA64 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “8” has two types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, two full dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines and a barely visible small dot extending from line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “8” has one short line and one long line extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “8” is short.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “8” contains three distinct lines.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing right “8” is short.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “8” does not extend at left to below the ball above it.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “8” has three dashed lines extending from line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “8” has three distinct lines extending upward.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “8” is long.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “8” contains four distinct lines.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing right “8” is long.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “8” extends at left to below the ball above it.

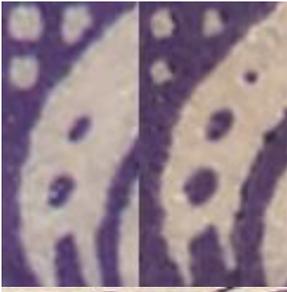


RJA66 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “10” has two types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, two full dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “10” does not extend at left to below the ball above it.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “10” has two dashed lines and a small dot extending from line.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “10” extends at left to below the ball above it.



RJA67 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “16” has two dashed lines and a small dot extending from line.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “16” is short.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “16” contains three distinct lines.
- Scrollwork at right of right “16” has a break.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “16” has two types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, two full dashed lines extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted stamps.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted stamps.
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “16” is short.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “16” contains three distinct lines.
- Scrollwork at right of right “16” is continuous.

Type III

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “16” has two dashed lines and a small dot extending from line
- Spike at 4 o’clock of circle enclosing left “16” is long.
- Scrollwork at upper-left of right “16” contains four distinct lines.
- Scrollwork at right of right “16” is continuous.



RJA71 Type I

- Scrollwork at right of right “25” has a break.

Type II

- Scrollwork at right of right “25” is continuous.



RJA72 Type I

- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “40” has a large break with an additional line.
- Scrollwork at right of right “40” has a break.

Type II

- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “40” has a small break without an additional line.
- Scrollwork at right of right “40” is continuous.

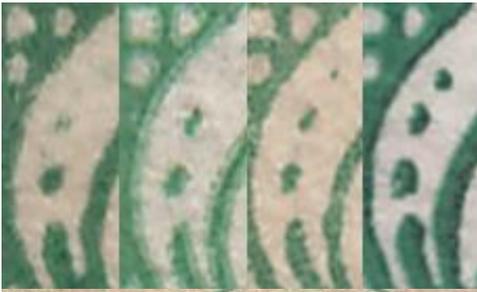


RJA73 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1” has two types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, two full dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines and a barely visible small dot extending from line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “1” has one short line and one long line extending upward.
- Scrollwork to left of right “1” has a break.
- Curled scrollwork to left and right of right “1” has thin green line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of right “1” has two distinct lines extending upward.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “1” does not extend at left to below the ball above it.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1” has three dashed lines extending from line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of left “1” has two short lines and one long line extending upward.
- Scrollwork to left of right “1” is continuous.
- Curled scrollwork to left and right of right “1” has thick green line.
- Scrollwork at lower-right of right “1” has one distinct line extending upward.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “1” extends at left to below the ball above it.



RJA74 Type I

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1.28” has three types of dashed lines extending from line
 - *Subtype a*, one full dashed line and a small dot extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted 7 stamps.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted 7 stamps.
 - *Subtype c*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line. Found on rouletted 7 stamps.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “1.28” does not extend at left to below the ball above it.

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1.28” has three types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted 7 stamps.
 - *Subtype c*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line. Found on imperforate stamps.
 - *Subtype d*, three full dashed lines extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted 7 stamps.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “1.28” extends at left to below the ball above it.

RJA74, 8 inches long with wide side margins

Type II

- Scrollwork at far-left of left “1.28” has three types of dashed lines extending from line.
 - *Subtype a*, one full dashed line and a small dot extending from line. Found on imperforate stamps.
 - *Subtype b*, two full dashed lines extending from line. Found on rouletted 7 stamps.
 - *Subtype c*, two full dashed lines and a small dot extending from line. Found on imperforate stamps.
 - *Subtype d*, three full dashed lines extending from line. Found on imperforate and rouletted 7 stamps.
- Scrollwork at far right of right “1.28” extends at left to below the ball above it.

My sincere thanks to Wayne Youngblood for his help in recognizing the type differences present for this issue of stamps.