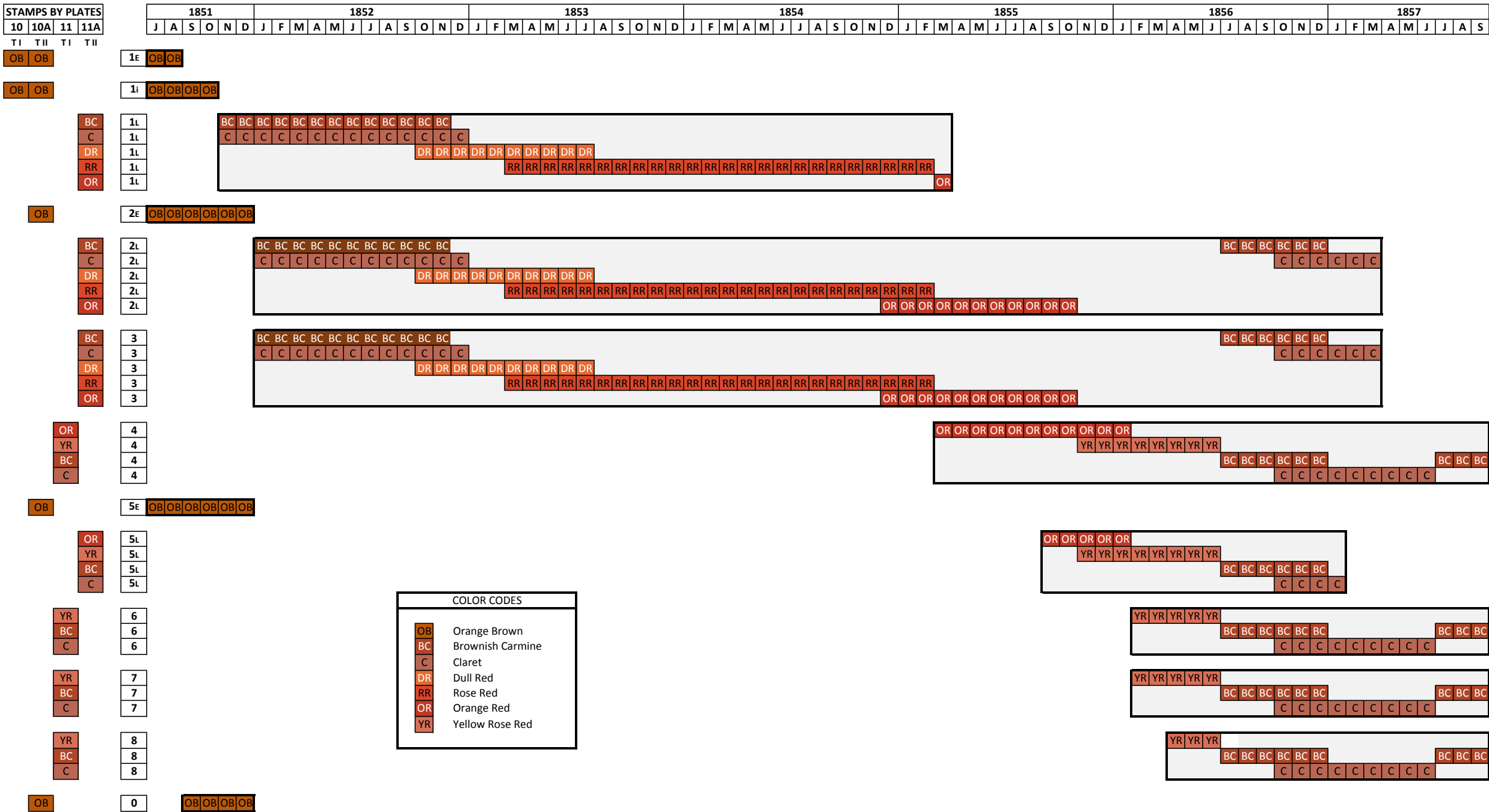


The 1851-1857 Imperforate Three Cent Washington History of Plates and Colors



COLOR CODES	
OB	Orange Brown
BC	Brownish Carmine
C	Claret
DR	Dull Red
RR	Rose Red
OR	Orange Red
YR	Yellow Rose Red

Some notable observations from the above chart are as follows:

The earliest known use of the 1851 orange brown was July 1st. The last 1851 orange browns were distributed to post offices in December 1851. In the mid-1850s it was highly unusual for a stamp distributed to the public to be used more than a few months after distribution. Therefore, imperforate 3-cent stamps bearing April, May, or June postmarks advertised as orange browns should be eyed with suspicion, although scarce usages of 1851 orange browns in the second half of 1852 are known.

Dating the the brownish carmine and claret shades to one of their two distribution periods is a difficult matter since plates 2L and 3 were in use during both periods. Identifying the stamp as a plate 1L impression is a sure way to eliminate the 1856 classification. Likewise, brownish carmine and claret stamps printed from plates 4, 5L, 6, 7, and 8 can only be 1856-57 impressions. Also, the Philadelphia CDS was used only with blue ink until January 1854 when black ink began to be used exclusively. So a stamp printed in the brownish carmine or claret shade with a black Philadelphia CDS surely is an 1856-57 printing. Stamps printed from plate 2L or 3 in the brownish carmine or claret shade may be distinguished from their quality of impression, as these plates became worn by 1855.

The appearance of the yellowish rose red shade coincides almost directly with the temporary removal of plates 2L and 3 from service in late 1855. This fact aids considerably in separating yellowish rose red printings from the sometimes nearly identical dull reds. However, some plate 2L/3 printings are known in the yellowish rose red shade.