



Dummy News and Views

the Newsletter of the United States Stamp Society - Dummy Stamps Study Group

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Welcome to the Dummy Stamps Study Group's Twelfth Newsletter

This newsletter is produced quarterly by the United States Stamp Society's - Dummy Stamps Study Group for your information and pleasure. We hope that the information included in this newsletter will be informative, useful and encourage your enjoyment of collecting dummy/test stamps. Our goal is to keep you up-to-date with the latest information available to our group. Questions, comments and articles proposed for publication should be directed to Terry R. Scott, Chairman of the Dummy Stamps Study Group at trs@napanet.net

Bank Savings Stamps

by Jim Drummond

Many collectors of United States postage stamps are at least somewhat aware of the Scott-listed postal and war savings stamps, which have the prefix letters of PS, S, WS, and TS.

A two-and-a-half page listing of these stamps can be found in the Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers, and in most Scott National stamp albums, there are a few pages reserved for the placement of these issues. The majority of these stamps are readily available, having been used for a long period of time, and having been printed in large quantities.



Most collectors however may not be aware of the large number of non-government issued savings stamps that were issued well before the postal and war savings stamps. These interesting stamps were issued by banks and schools all across the United States, but they were used primarily in the Northeast.

The earliest stamps came out in the late 1880's, but the real heyday of savings stamps was from 1890 to the late 1920's. All banks completely abandoned the concept in the 1970's, when inflation and general attitudes toward saving money made the idea of taking, say, eight or twelve cents all the way to a bank to deposit into a savings account fairly impractical, if not outright unpopular.

The original intent of the savings stamps, as was documented by the writings of early moral reformers, was not necessarily to assist an individual with eventually becoming financially independent, but was to educate children in the habits of thrift, self-denial, delayed gratification, honesty, self-responsibility, and so on. For every nickel that was removed from a child's pocket and replaced with a colorful stamp, there was that much less chance of the child using the money for immoral behavior.

The procedure of using a saving stamp from a bank was easy enough. Small amounts of money were exchanged for stamps at the bank. These stamps were then placed into special folders, and once the folder was completed, it could be used as a deposit into a savings bank account. Later, the United States government took this simple idea and modified it so that the folders were instead exchanged for savings bonds.

please turn to page 2 ➤

In this issue:

Bank Savings Stamps	1
Recent Auctions of Interest	3
Recent Publication of Interest	7
Proposed Future DSSG Projects	7
Requests for Articles	7

The bonds themselves couldn't be redeemed until much later, in some cases as much as 20 years later.

Many schools also took part in this saving process. Some schools had regular periods of banking, where students exchanged their weekly allowance or other money for some stamps, and the stamps were then placed into each student's folder. The teacher took all the deposits to the principal, who in turn deposited the money at the sponsoring bank. The folder held the student's name on the cover, and it was impressed on them that should the folder become lost, whatever amount of money that was represented by the stamps was also lost.

Today, some of these stamps and folders can be found in back of the book stamp collections, and from time to time, in online auction sites such as eBay. Collections of savings stamps are very rarely offered, and frequently they sell for considerable amounts.

The author has identified about 175 different banks and schools that took part of a saving stamp system. Some of these banks were in existence for just a few years, and they only issued a single stamp value, in what appears to have been a very limited quantity.

Other banks issued stamps in numerous different denominations and colors, over a long period of time.



The earliest stamps were printed in sheet form, and were removed by tellers as they were purchased. As might be expected, some of these savings stamps are relatively common, having been used by a large number of individuals over many years, while others are rare, with there being perhaps only a copy or two of some stamps that are known today.

Some of the printers of these savings stamps were economical and they used the same die for several different banks, changing only the bank name and location and leaving everything else untouched, including the color of the ink.



These stamps are all listed and described in a forthcoming book from the author called "Bank and School Savings Stamps." It should be out before the end of 2008.

Probably the largest printer of the savings stamps during the later time period of their usage was the American Banking Machine Corporation. They developed a novel device which dispensed four different denominations of stamps. Depending on the amount of money that had been inserted into the front slot, a correspondingly denominated single stamp was pushed out. These Automatic Receiving Tellers could be found in drug stores, book stores, and department stores, in addition of course to being found inside of banks. They were usually mounted securely to a wall.

Decades after they were determined to be obsolete, partial rolls of mint A. R. T. stamps were found by some lucky people, still inside of the abandoned machines.



The majority of banks that took part of a stamp saving system (A. R. T. or otherwise) had their name included in the stamp design. Smaller banks though used a "generic" type of stamp, which only had text on it that more or less read, "bank or agency named on this folder." These generic stamps are known in a number of formats, there being at least half a dozen different A. R. T. types alone.



please turn to page 3 ➤

Another maker of “stamp system equipment” was the Forbes, Thomas and Company. As a purchaser of their equipment, one could use their generic stamps, or they could have the Forbes company imprint their firm name instead, such as with the example from Thayer’s Bank, shown below.



Inexplicably, these generic savings stamps are being sold today by some stamp dealers as a type of test or demonstration stamp. It is unclear to this author how this erroneous identification of these stamps came about, as there are **many** examples of folders with the generic stamps applied to them, as there are of course folders with bank-inscribed stamps in them. A typical example, with only three stamps in it, is shown to the right, greatly reduced in size.

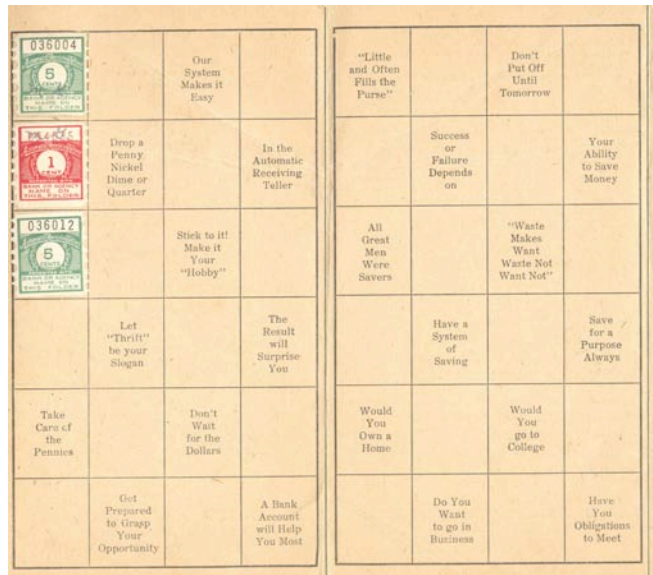
The purpose of this article is to provide a brief overview of the usage of bank savings stamps, and to hopefully halt the incorrect association of A. R. T.

I would like to thank Jim Drummond for this very informative article on Bank Savings Stamps. I, for one, was collecting some of the different styles with the misunderstanding that some of them were test or

stamps with “regular” test or dummy stamps.

None of these generic savings stamps were ever used to test or demonstrate *anything*. Simply put, they were sold and used by banks that were “thrifty,” or some might say, “cheap.”

For those that are interested, further information can be found in the author’s book. ☐



demonstration stamps. This is the reason I asked him to submit this article for the Dummy Stamps Study Group Newsletter. Thank you Jim! ☐

Recent Auctions of Interest to Dummy Stamp Collectors

by Terry R. Scott

On August 13, 2008 Downeast Stamps of Bangor, Maine held Public Auction No. 250 that contained the following test stamps. A 10% buyer’s premium is to be added to the prices realized.

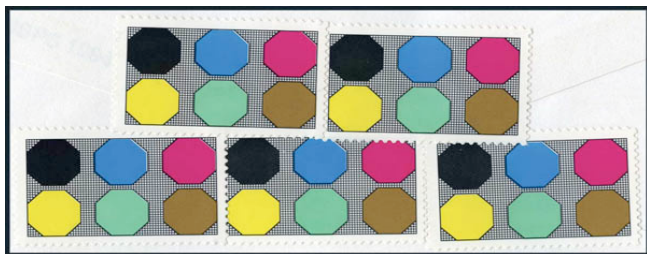


Lot 0591 ** TD38, Multipost strip of four, FVF NH Photo, Cat 100.00. Realized \$66.00

Lot 0592 ** TD38, as above, Multipost pair, FVF NH No Photo. Cat 50.00. Realized \$19.00

On June 26 through 29, 2008 Harmer-Schau Auction Galleries, Inc. of Petaluma, California held their 78th Public Auction at the ASDA Mega Event in Santa Clara, California. That auction contained the following test stamp lots. The lots in this auction were all items that had been previously reported in the November 2006 issue of *United States Specialist* describing test stamps that were produced for the USPS testing of various formats of paper, gum and printing on self-adhesive stamps, to try and mitigate recycling problems. A 15% buyer’s premium was to be added to the prices realized.

please turn to page 4 ➤



Lot 1204 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, 1998, 3 Issues on Covers From Albuquerque, NM, #TD130A-B, TDB89A. All on reverse of #U632, TDB89A (8), TD130A (8), TD130B (5), cancelled 7 or 8 Dec, very scarce matching city postmark set, Very Fine. See article in the Nov. 2006 issue of The U.S. Specialist for more details. Reduced photo of back of cover. Estimate \$500/600. Not Sold



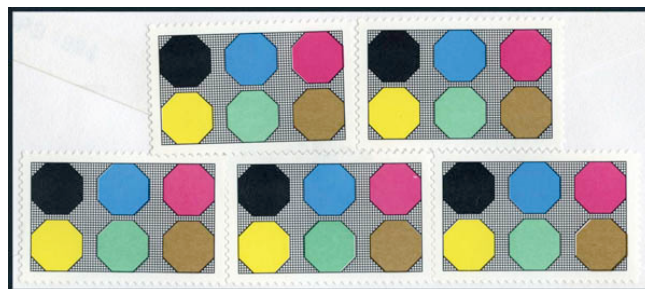
Lot 1205 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, 1998, 3 Issues on 3 Covers, #TD130A-B, TDB89A. All on reverse of #U632, TDB89A (8), cancelled on front 4 Dec 1998, Fayetteville, AR, TD130A (8), cancelled on front Philadelphia 7 Dec 1998, TD130B (5), cancelled South Suburban, IL, very unusual items, Very Fine. See article in the Nov. 2006 issue of The U.S. Specialist for more details. Reduced photo of back of one cover shown. Estimate \$500/600. Not Sold



Lot 1206 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, 1998, "Flag" Test Stamp on Cover, #TD130A. 8 singles on reverse of #U632, cancelled 7 Dec 1998 from Philadelphia, for testing purposes, unusual, Very Fine. Estimate \$300/400. Realized \$300



Lot 1207 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, 1998, "Flag", #TD130A. 8 singles on reverse of #U632, cancelled 7 Dec 1998 from Philadelphia, with "Space Discovery" cancel, for testing purposes, unusual, Very Fine. Reduced photo of back of cover. Estimate \$300/400. Not Sold



Lot 1208 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, 1998, "Octagon", #TD130B. 5 singles on reverse of #U632, cancelled Dec 9, 1998 from South Suburban, IL for testing purposes, unusual, Very Fine. Reduced photo of back of cover. Estimate \$300/400. Not Sold



Lot 1209 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, Booklets; 1998, "George Clinton", #TDB89A. 8 singles on reverse of #U632, cancelled Dec 4, 1998 from Fayetteville, AR, with "Space Discovery" slogan cancel, for testing purposes, unusual, Very Fine. Reduced photo of back of cover. Estimate \$300/400. Realized \$200

please turn to page 5 ➤



Lot 1210 U.S.; Test Stamp Covers, Booklets; 1998, "George Clinton", #TDB89A. 8 singles on reverse of #U632, cancelled Dec 4, 1998 from Fayetteville, AR, for testing purposes, top left copy with surface scrape, unusual, otherwise Very Fine. Reduced photo of back of cover. Estimate \$200/300. Realized \$150



Lot 1835 U.S.; Test Stamp; 1998, Stamps and Booklet Pane Issues, #TD130A-B, TDB89A. 3 unused singles, all soaked off the test envelopes, great modern items, very fine, see article in the Nov. 2006 issue of The United States Specialist for more details. Estimate \$200/300. Not Sold

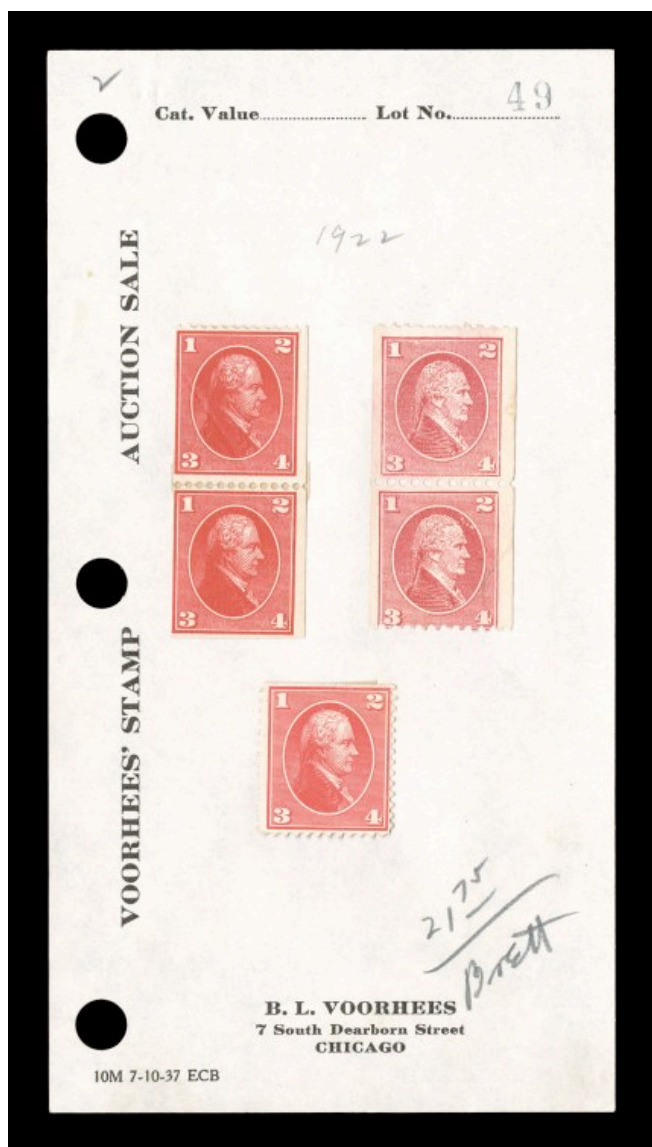
Some fantastic test stamp items appeared in the September 2008 Collector's Series Sale held on September 11, 2008 by the auction firm Spink Shreves. The test stamps shown in lot 1730 and lot 1731 of this sale are gems to say the least. A 20% buyer's premium was to be added to the prices realized.

Somewhere out there in test stamp collecting land, there is one or more very happy and extremely lucky collectors who won these lots. It is rare to see items like this come up for auction and this may be the first of many items from the collection of George W. Brett that we see that are unique and worth mentioning. While it is not clear if the first two lots are from the George W. Brett collection, they certainly may be.



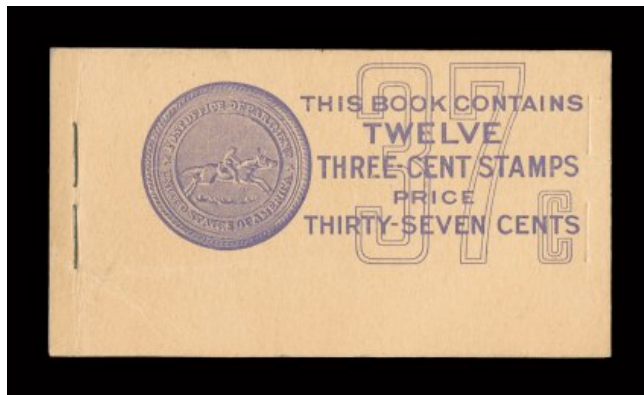
please turn to page 6 ➤

1730 ★ □ #TD19, Red testing stamp imperforate, left sheet-margin block of eighteen (2x9), with a portion of the adjoining stamps at top, bright color, with ms. note in margin dated June 2, 1917 "First impression taken from Rotary Press Intaglio of experimental Plates for Printing Postage Stamps Bureau of Engraving & Printing Washington DC J E Ralph Director" some creasing, very fine appearance; an essential item for the testing coil specialist. (Image) Est. \$2,200.00+ R \$3,250.00



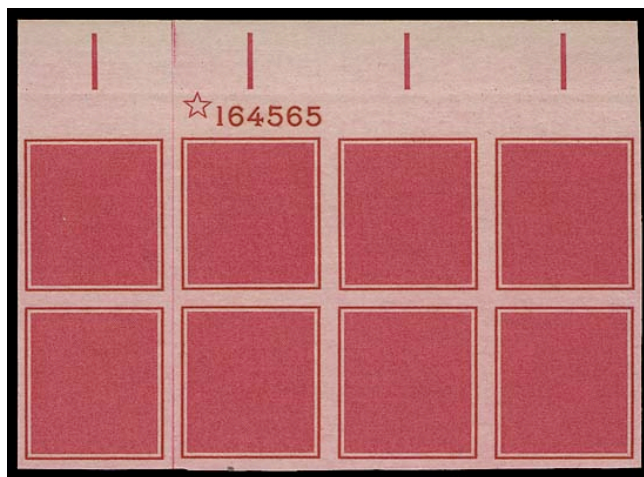
Lot 1731 ★ #TD21, TD22, Deep red testing stamp, perf. 12 and perf. 12 horizontally, the coil is in a vertical pair (rejoined perfs., s.e. at bottom) with a diagonal crease, #TD22 is a single without gum (s.e. at top), these are still hinged to the original Voorhees'

Stamp Auction lot card where George Brett purchased them in 1938! (a #TD23 pair is also present, stuck down to lot card), fine appearance; extremely rare testing stamps, #TD21 catalogs \$3,100.00 each while #TD22 is unpriced. (Image) Est. \$1,000-1,500 R \$1,600.00



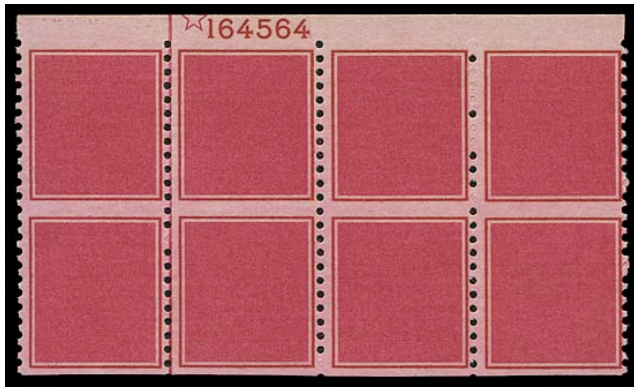
Lot 1732 BK #TB3, 37¢ booklet of two panes of the purple test stamp, fresh, light cover crease, fine; a seldom seen test stamp booklet. (Image) \$600.00 R \$350.00

On August 15 through 17, 2008 Regency-Superior of Saint Louis, Missouri and Beverly Hills, California held their Public Auction #68 that contained the following test stamps. Neither of the two lots sold in this auction.



Lot 2040 ** (TD97a) 1954 TEST STAMP, FRAMED RECTANGLE, RED VIOLET, IMPERF PLATE BLOCK Incredible top plate block of 8, plate #164565 with star. Has to rank with rarest of 20th century plate blocks. MINT never hinged, very fine. Estimate: \$5000 Not Sold

please turn to page 7 ➤



Lot 2041 ** (TD97b) 1954 TEST STAMP, FRAMED RECTANGLE, RED VIOLET, PART PERF PLATE BLOCK Fantastic top plate block of 8, plate #164564 with star, of imperf horizontally variety. Has to rank with rarest of 20th century plate blocks. MINT never hinged, very fine Estimate: \$5000 Not Sold

Recent Publication of Interest

2008 Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog

According to an article in the June 2008 issue of *The United States Specialist*, The United States Stamp Society recently released the new *2008 Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog* at the Society's Annual Meeting at NOJEX '08, May 23, 2008.

The *2008 Durland* edition is the eighth produced by the USSS and its publication celebrates the 58th anniversary of the introduction of the *Standard Plate Number Catalog*.

The new *2008 Durland* has been reformatted and digitized by Len Piskiewicz and is edited by Wallace Cleland.

The new *2008 Durland* is an all-color presentation and is in a three-column 8-1/2" x 11" format. It is

available in two formats, a perfect-bound and spiral-bound.

The new greatly expanded edition contains listings for numerous back-of-the-book sections of the *Scott Catalogue*, including test stamps.

The *2008 Durland* is available for \$25 perfect-bound and \$27 spiral-bound. USSS members will receive discount pricing of \$20 perfect-bound and \$22 spiral-bound. All prices include postage. Orders may be sent to USSS Executive Secretary, P. O. Box 6634, Katy, TX 77491-6634. They can also be ordered online at the USSS website, www.usstamps.org. Online orders are only available for purchase with PayPal. □

Proposed Future DSSG Projects

Updating Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets

Work is progressing, albeit at a snail's pace, on updating Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets. The last update by Earl McAfee, Dummy Booklets Study Group Chairman, was in 1998. Since then there have been many new discoveries. Many of them have been written up in articles in *The United States Specialist*. Now the time has come to document and illustrate them in a new updated version of Research Paper Number 3. I am in charge of this update project and knowing that it will take quite a bit of time

to complete, have no estimated completion date in mind. I will be asking all of you to join me in this project as I am not able to do it all, nor would you want me to do it all. It is a DSSG project and all members should have a chance to provide their input. Several illustrations are needed and a listing of these will be sent to you when I compile it. Scans at 300 dpi are necessary for clarity. It is anticipated that this publication will be in color. It has not yet been determined if it will be available on CD. □

Requests for Articles for *The United States Specialist*

by Terry R. Scott

Leonard Piskiewicz, Editor of *The United States Specialist*, is always looking for articles of interest for inclusion in our society's monthly publication. The type of articles Len needs most are the shorter ones, one or two-page articles. If you are considering writing an article for *The United States Specialist*, please contact him for instructions. If the article is regarding dummy stamps, I would appreciate knowing about it also. Many members of the DSSG have

written articles on dummy stamps and other stamps for this publication. It is rewarding and other USSS members benefit greatly from the information that is published in *The United States Specialist*.

Leonard can be reached by e-mail at: lenp@pacbell.net or his mailing address is: Leonard Piskiewicz, Editor, 951 Rose Court, Santa Clara, CA 95051, phone (408) 241-4626. □