



The SHIFT HUNTERS

AN ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS OF PLATE RESEARCH PROBLEMS—
Acting as the PLATE VARIETIES COMMITTEE of the BUREAU ISSUES ASSOCIATION



Subscriptions to Shift Hunter Letters \$2 per year, starting with January



CURRENT REPORTS OF INTEREST TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

When we ask for information concerning some variety previously reported or illustrated, we like to have the response immediate, positive and as complete as possible. In SHL #68 (March 1934) we illustrated the extensive marginal cracks found on a pair of 1¢ 1910 by C. S. Ernst and asked for any information available as to plate and position. Immediately we heard from E. R. UNTHANK to the effect that the pair came from just above the plate number 5493, and we later received from him an imprint strip for verification and record. The two pieces matched exactly, and we show the completed strip along the right side of this report. It is obvious that the cracks continue upward and downward from this strip, and we would like to see positions 1, 61, 71, 81 and 91, as well as to know whether this is the upper or lower pane.

The new "Gripper-slot" crack illustrated at left center is another of the contributions of JOHN COULTHARD. As is usual for such varieties, it comes from a plate-edge position. There is a remnant of plate number above the stamp at the right of the joint line. Please check this at once!

A new "Gripper-slot" Crack found by JOHN COULTHARD—

No. 599



2¢ Horiz. Coil

JOINT LINE

IN MEMORIAM

BEVERLY S. KING

1876-1935

Not only *The Shift Hunters* and the 20th-century U.S. Specialists, but the hobby as a whole, has lost one of the finest gentlemen and most serious of students ever to embrace Stamp Collecting in the tragic death of Beverly S. King, struck down by a speeding automobile in front of the Chastleton Hotel in Washington, D.C., March 4, 1935.

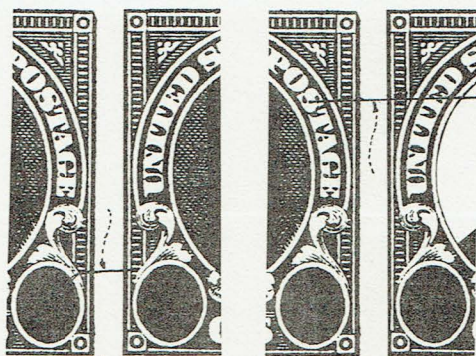
"Bev" is no more, but his memory will be perpetuated by his many invaluable contributions to the knowledge and pleasure of our hobby. May nothing be "off-center" to him in his final rest.

Ends

Altho scratches are usually considered to be quite minor varieties, those in #639 submitted by W. R. HART and illustrated at the left are easily noticeable without the aid of a glass and may, therefore, be of interest to many of you. They are from positions 11-12 and 17-18, UL 19236, as noted.

Our February report, giving new data on 1¢ 1902 plate 3365, has brought considerable response, most of which questions our contention that the "one-dot" relief break occurred only where indicated in the chart. Specimens showing guideline at the right were submitted as evidence, but we believe these to be printing varieties. We are awaiting further study by the members... and ask that you send in any and all information that you may have as soon as possible. We are now catching up on the huge pile of delinquent correspondence accumulated during the past months of enforced neglect of stamp activities, and we sincerely hope that we will be in a position soon to give you the kind of service that we WANT to give.

Cordially
Lee M. Ryer



Some rather prominent scratches from plate 19236 UL. submitted by W. R. Hart—
No. 639—74 per. 11 x 10 1/2



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Plate Varieties Committee

L. M. RYER

BS 6/34

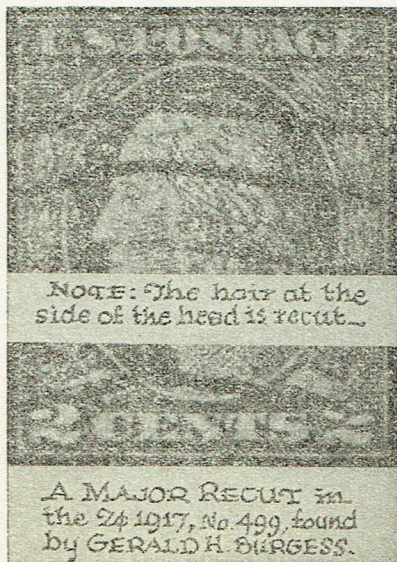
92 E. Lynn St., No. 101, Seattle, Wash.

While a myriad of smaller items await description and report, we will hold them for the slacker summer months to devote this report to a plate variety of the first water just submitted by our fellow member Gerald H. Burgess, of Minneapolis, Minn.

A number of the more modern issues of United States Stamps have produced varieties that, in the opinion of the Bureau workmen, needed correction. Since most of these have been on rotary press plates, the only method of correction, after the plate has been curved, was to **recut** the design by hand after the defects or flaws had been burnished out. In late years, smaller and smaller defects have been so treated, thus doubling the number of actual varieties, for each position could be found in two states: before and after the recutting.

Prior to the advent of the rotary press, even major defects, unless specifically called to the attention of the department, were allowed to remain once the plate had been hardened and certified for use, and recuts were an extreme rarity. Most defects were apparently discovered prior to hardening, resulting in either erasure and fresh entry or reentry without erasure; such varieties as were not discovered until after hardening, or occurred after hardening, being allowed to remain without alteration.

So it is that a major recut on the flat plate 2¢ stamp of the 1917 series (#499), hitherto unreported, is not only an apparent rarity, but distinctly unique in our experience with such issues. The accompanying illustration is an absolutely unretouched photograph of the stamp, just as it was found in used condition. From the appearance of the side of the head, it is probable that some extensive damage occurred on the side of the head; and due to its subsequent treatment, the plate damage probably happened after the plate had been hardened - - perhaps even after it had been in use for some time. At any rate the damage was extensive enough to attract the attention of the employees concerned, and the plate was withdrawn and corrected; probably by "tapping up" the design, burnishing, and then recutting the lines of the hair by hand. The recutting is so obvious that no glass is needed in looking for the variety; it stands out so vividly that even the veriest tyros to



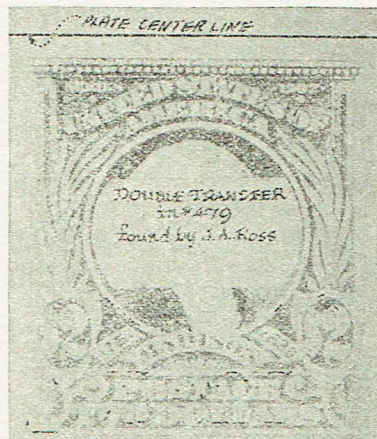
whom it was shown, noticed the difference immediately.

Such an outstanding variety should stimulate a search for a duplicate, and with millions (perhaps billions) of these stamps available for examination, another copy should not be too hard to find. However, a second single copy would not add materially to our story; what we need is to find the variety in a large enough piece to identify its plate and position - - then to determine whether it appeared in any previous states, such as "damaged, before recutting" or "normal, before being damaged". To this end, we ask our dealer-members to check ALL panes or large plate pieces in their possession, and our collectors to check every item available to them, whether in their collections, in dealer's stocks or in other collections. Perhaps the records of the Bureau may give some clue if any of our people can gain access to them.

We congratulate Mr. Burgess for having found and recognized such an outstanding variety, and thank him for his cooperation in sending it in for chronicle.

* * * * *

In the *Specialist* for January, 1934, we illustrated three varieties found in the \$2 stamp #479; the 1902 design reissued in 1916. These were found by C. L. Palmer of Fresno, Calif., and in an attempt to secure position data we asked for an immediate check of all large plate pieces available for study. Since only one plate, No. 8015, was used for these stamps, it was thought that position identification would be forthcoming. However, in the year or more that has passed since publication of that report, we have received no further information, and we again appeal to our members for any data that they may be able to secure and furnish. To further stimulate the search, we illustrate herewith a new Double Transfer in this stamp, just recently found and sub-



mitted by J. A. Ross, now of Fresno, Calif., showing displacement to the northwest in a position just below the horizontal plate center line. Someone among our membership of collectors and dealers surely has a large piece or complete sheet of this stamp available for check, and we will greatly appreciate your cooperation.

During the months of our enforced inactivity on this committee, many varieties were reported and illustrated in the Shift Hunter Letters, and to any of our members not receiving that service and who would like copies of those reports, we will gladly send copies of the letters carrying varieties which have not been reported in these committee reports. Just send a stamped, addressed return envelope and the Shift Hunter Letters are yours for the period we missed reporting in the *Specialist*.