



The SHIFT HUNTERS

AN ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS OF PLATE RESEARCH PROBLEMS

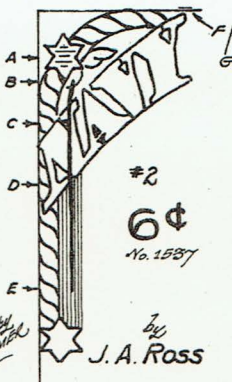
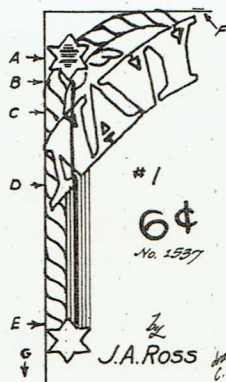


Subscriptions to Shift Hunter Letters \$2 per year, starting with January

BEDFORD ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Accompanied by a reprint of the P.V. Committee Report in BUREAU SPECIALIST of June 1933

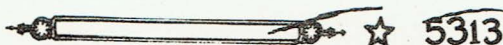
The plate variety in the 6¢ Navy Department (No. 1537) with the line through "N" of "Navy" has long been known and listed in the Specialized U.S. Catalogue. Two copies of this variety were recently found by J. A. ROSS which, upon comparison, were discovered to be different... the difference being so slight that we wondered if it had been previously known. A study of the two varieties was made by CHARLIE PALMER, and we show in the center of this report, his drawings and analysis of the differences. Any information concerning the nature and cause, position and previous knowledge of the variety will be appreciated.



(LINE THROUGH "N" OF "NAVY")

A number of Shift Hunters have been on the mailing list and contributing to the financial support of our work for a number of years without having sent in any varieties for report. Naturally, both are necessary for the success of the group and we are always particularly pleased when one of the seldom-heard-from members sends something for report. One of these is GERALD H. BURGESS who has just submitted some mighty nice items. His Crack showing in the imprint and number of a lower pane of plate 5313 (from which pane?) is shown below:

No. 331. PLATE CRACKS by GERALD H. BURGESS



- #1-A Horizontal Lines of UL star doubled.
B Scratch or crack begins almost at bottom point of star.
C Crosses upper serif of "N".
D Crosses lower serif of "N".
E Continues down third white vertical line of background, ending at star.
F Tiny line above outer frame over "Y".
G Two spots of color outside left frame.
- #2-A No doubling in UL star.
B Begins to right of bottom point of star.
C Crosses serif and right vertical stem of "N".
D Barely touches lower serif of "N".
E Continues down fourth white vertical line of background, ending above star.
F Tiny line above outer frame over "Y".
G Stamp above shows signs of possible variety. No spots outside left frame.

In the upper right corner of this report is a small broken relief in the 50¢ 1922, #570, discovered by DICK KINDIG who has been studying a number of different relief breaks in common issues, and in addition is particularly interested in the offset issues of 1918, which offer a fertile and profitable field of research.

On this second anniversary of the death of the originator of these SHIFT HUNTER LETTERS and "daddy of plate research", the late Clayton W. Bedford, we give you a promised dividend in the form of the two reports necessary to complete his last year. These reports are made from "masters" made by Mr. Bedford before his death, and sent to us with other supplies of the Shift Hunters.

While these two reports, numbered 64 and 65 are "extra" to the newer subscribers, they contain considerable information of interest and are quite necessary to maintain the unbroken series of SHL numbers.

On SHL 64 there are two references to Revenue Stamps... a subject which we have neglected during the past years! reports only because of shortage of material. We know that it is a subject of interest to a large number of our members and hope that during the next few months we may receive some good revenue varieties that we can illustrate and report. We have asked for such data prior to this time but the response has been practically nil. Now we call the matter to your attention again in the hope that new discoveries and further research may be available. How about it?

Many of our problems may be solved only through the co-operation of the plate number collectors but for some reason or other we have not been able to secure any of the data that has been requested. We suppose it is because they are busy on their own problems, but we are willing to make it worth the while of anyone having a fairly complete plate number collection if they will promise cooperation. WE WILL GIVE A PERPETUALLY FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO THESE REPORTS to the one who will agree to furnish or secure information requested of them. Any takers?

Cordially,
Lee M. Ryer

As Confucius said nearly 2500 years ago: "One picture is worth ten thousand words!" Use MATS for mounting and illustrating plate varieties. Prices from \$1.25 to \$1.75 per 100 postpaid - less than 2¢ each!



Plate Varieties Committee

L. M. RYER

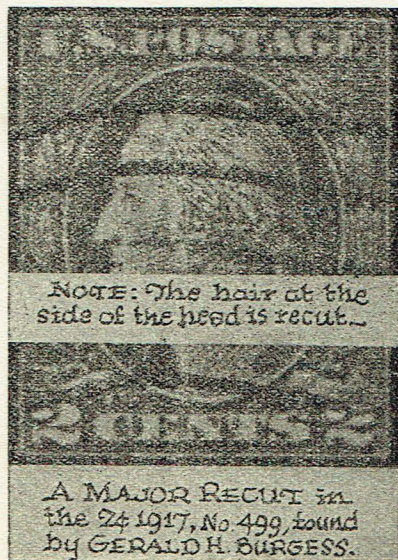
92 E. Lynn St., No. 101, Seattle, Wash.

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



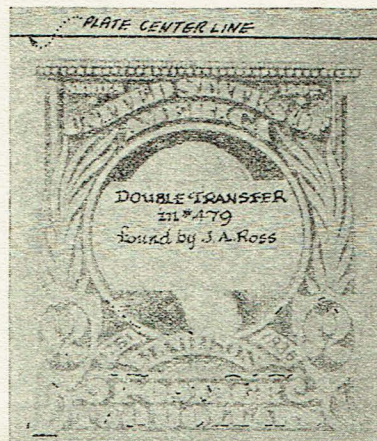
whom it was shown, noticed the difference immediately.

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*.