

Chapter 11

Plate Numbers of the Parcel Post Stamps

In late 1912 and early 1913, the Post Office Department released a set of twelve stamps intended for use on fourth class items weighing more than four ounces. After January 1, 1913, only these stamps could be used on parcels. There were immediate problems with this system. The same color on all denominations caused confusion such that the remaining printing plates had the denomination in large block letters printed in the margins of the sheets. On July 1, 1913, both ordinary and parcel post stamps could be used on any type of mail. No more printings of the stamps were made after this time. The parcel post stamps and the 5 parcel postage due stamps were printed from 180 subject flat plates (series 1912), which were then cut into panes of 45 stamps. 194 plates were assigned to the stamps in this series and 142 went to press. All are reported and assembly of a complete set is a tough but not impossible task. It is interesting to note that 20 plates were assigned to 1c, 2c, and 5c parcel post stamps with the series date as 1913. These were 400 subject plates with the stamps the same size as the regular issue stamps. The horizontal design consists of large numerals indicating the denomination inside an oval.

25 plates were used to print the 1c stamp depicting a post office clerk. The last five plates are ranked as scarce by the Durland catalog. All of these had at least 9 reports in the plate number survey. It will take some searching but in my experience these plates were not too tough.

The 2c parcel post stamp pictured a city carrier. The 2c ranked second to the 1c in terms of plates used with 24. These plates are probably easier to locate than the 1c plates. The Durland catalog flags only 2 as scarce and the scarcest had 9 reports in the survey.

A railway postal clerk is pictured on the 3c stamp. Four plates were used and all are easy.

The 4c stamp depicted a rural carrier and 13 plates were used for this denomination. The last five plates seem to be the scarcest but all five had at least 9 reports in the BIA survey.

A dramatic vignette of a speeding mail train is the subject of the 5c stamp. 20 plates printed this stamp and the last set of four plates are the scarcest with 11,675 impressions printed from each plate. The scarcest of these (plate 6417) had 7 reports.

The 10c stamp shows a steamship and a mail tender. 8 plates went to press and none is difficult.

Mail automobile service is pictured on the 15c stamp. Four plates were used and all are equally available.

The 20c stamp is well known as the first postage stamp anywhere to depict an airplane. Four plates also printed this stamp and none is difficult to find.

A manufacturing plant is the subject of the 25c stamp. 6 plates were used and over 27,000 impressions were printed from the first four. The last two (6186 and 6189) had only 2,250 impressions and are much more difficult to find.

The first design of the 50c stamp shows a dairying scene with two prominent silos. Four plates were assigned to this design and one went to press. This design was deemed to be unacceptable and the printed impressions were destroyed. The second design of the 50c stamp shows a dairying scene with the silos removed and four plates were used. The plates are not rare but the stamp is expensive and plates are not seen too often.

Harvesting is the scene on the 75c stamp. The four plates used are not too difficult.

The \$1 stamp depicts fruit growing and four plates were used. Initially only one plate (6262) went to press and this plate supplied all of the early printings. Whenever a \$1 parcel post plate number appears, it is usually 6262. The other 3 plates (6263-65) went to press with 6262 in March of 1913 and only 500 impressions of each were printed. In my experience, these three plates are rare and probably the most difficult of the entire parcel post issue.

The parcel postage due stamps consisted of 5 stamps in the denominations of 1c, 2, 5c, 10c, and 25c. The central design was the numeral of value on a background similar to currency. Four plates were used for each of the denominations except for the 5c where 6 plates went to press. The most difficult plates are the four 10c plates and the last two 5c plates.

The parcel post issue is one of my favorites. I like the designs and with only 142 plates to locate instead of thousands on some on the regular issues, the goal of 100% seems possible. It took me a few years, but I finally completed this issue and there was a lot of satisfaction in crossing that last plate number off of my want list. I would highly recommend this issue to all plate number enthusiasts.

The 7000 section of plate numbers is next and there are major difficulties for the collector who chases all of the plate numbers.

Chapter 11-ParcelPost

		Parcel Post Series Totals					
Series	Subject	Plate Type	Assigned	To Press	Available	Unreported	I Have
	(totals)		214	143	142	0	
1912	1c Parcel Post	180F	32	25	25	0	
1912	2c Parcel Post	180F	35	24	24	0	
1912	3c Parcel Post	180F	4	4	4	0	
1912	4c Parcel Post	180F	16	13	13	0	
1912	5c Parcel Post	180F	21	20	20	0	
1912	10c Parcel Post	180F	9	8	8	0	
1912	15c Parcel Post	180F	8	4	4	0	
1912	20c Parcel Post	180F	8	4	4	0	
1912	25c Parcel Post	180F	12	6	6	0	
1912	50c Parcel Post 1st design	180F	4	1	0		
1912	50c Parcel Post 2nd design	180F	4	4	4	0	
1912	75c Parcel Post	180F	8	4	4	0	
1912	\$1 Parcel Post	180F	4	4	4	0	
1912	1c Parcel Postage Due	180F	8	4	4	0	
1912	2c Parcel Postage Due	180F	5	4	4	0	
1912	5c Parcel Postage Due	180F	8	6	6	0	
1912	10c Parcel Postage Due	180F	4	4	4	0	
1912	25c Parcel Postage Due	180F	4	4	4	0	
1913	1c Parcel Post	400F	8	0	0		
1913	2c Parcel Post	400F	8	0	0		
1913	5c Parcel Post	400F	4	0	0		