



Dummy News and Views

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

Issue Number 71

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Welcome to the Dummy Stamps Study Group's Seventy-first 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 United States Stamp Society's Dummy Stamps Study Group at terryrscott@comcast.net

Four Very Early Test Stamps

by Michael O. Perry

In the last issue of the DSSG Newsletter, we discussed four "test stamps" that were once listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue* but were later deleted. Another test stamp that was mentioned in that article was supposedly made for use in the Burt & Tobey's stamp affixer. We will take a look at that stamp in this article.

In the Winter 2008-2009 issue of the *Dummy Stamps Study Group Newsletter - Dummy News and Views*, James N. Drummond wrote an excellent article titled, "Should it stay or should it go?" He discussed Scott #TD69 and why he felt it was not a test stamp and why it should be removed from the test stamp listings. The text on the stamp said it was a "ROYALTY STAMP" and there was a blank space at the bottom of the stamp design to allow a number to be written or stamped on it after the word "NO" at the lower left corner. Royalty stamps were used by various manufacturers to show that they had paid a fee to the person who had invented the item they were manufacturing, or to show that a license had been obtained from the patentee. As a result of Drummond's article, Scott #TD69 was removed from the test stamp listings in the 2017 *Scott Specialized Catalogue*. This stamp is shown enlarged at the right.



The Burt & Tobey's Stamp Battery test stamp is one of the earliest test stamps listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalogue*. In 2008, there were just three colors known - Scott #TD8 ("light green"), Scott #TD8A ("orange brown"), and Scott #TD8B ("lavender"). In early 2023, a fourth color ("carmine") was reported by a reader of the DSSG Newsletter; it will likely be listed in the 2024 *Scott Specialized Catalogue* as Scott #TD8C. All four stamps have printed perforations - gauge 12 x 12 and actual perforations - gauge 12 x 12.

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This stamp affixer was called a “stamp-battery” since, like an artillery battery, it referred to multiple units or systems designed to increase the speed of application. In his 2008 article, Drummond wrote that while browsing through ancient patents he had come across the patent for the stamp affixing device shown on the Burt & Tobey’s stamps. However, it was Drummond’s opinion that the Burt & Tobey’s stamps were also “Royalty Stamps” like Scott #TD69, and thus should be removed from the test stamp listings. Recently I was able to find a copy of the original 21-page patent for the Burt & Tobey stamp affixer.

We will look at Charles Tobey’s patent application that he submitted on April 11, 1890 - he received his patent on February 24, 1891. The image on the Burt & Tobey’s test stamps is similar to the drawing in the patent application. One major difference is that the image on the patent application only shows two stamp hoppers mounted on a round rotating turret, while the image on the test stamps shows four stamp hoppers that could contain four different stamp denominations. This may explain why Tobey went to the trouble (and expense) of producing four different colors of his test stamps. Up to eight stamp hoppers could be mounted on the turret - with up to eight different denominations of stamps.

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(No Model.)

14 Sheets—Sheet 1.

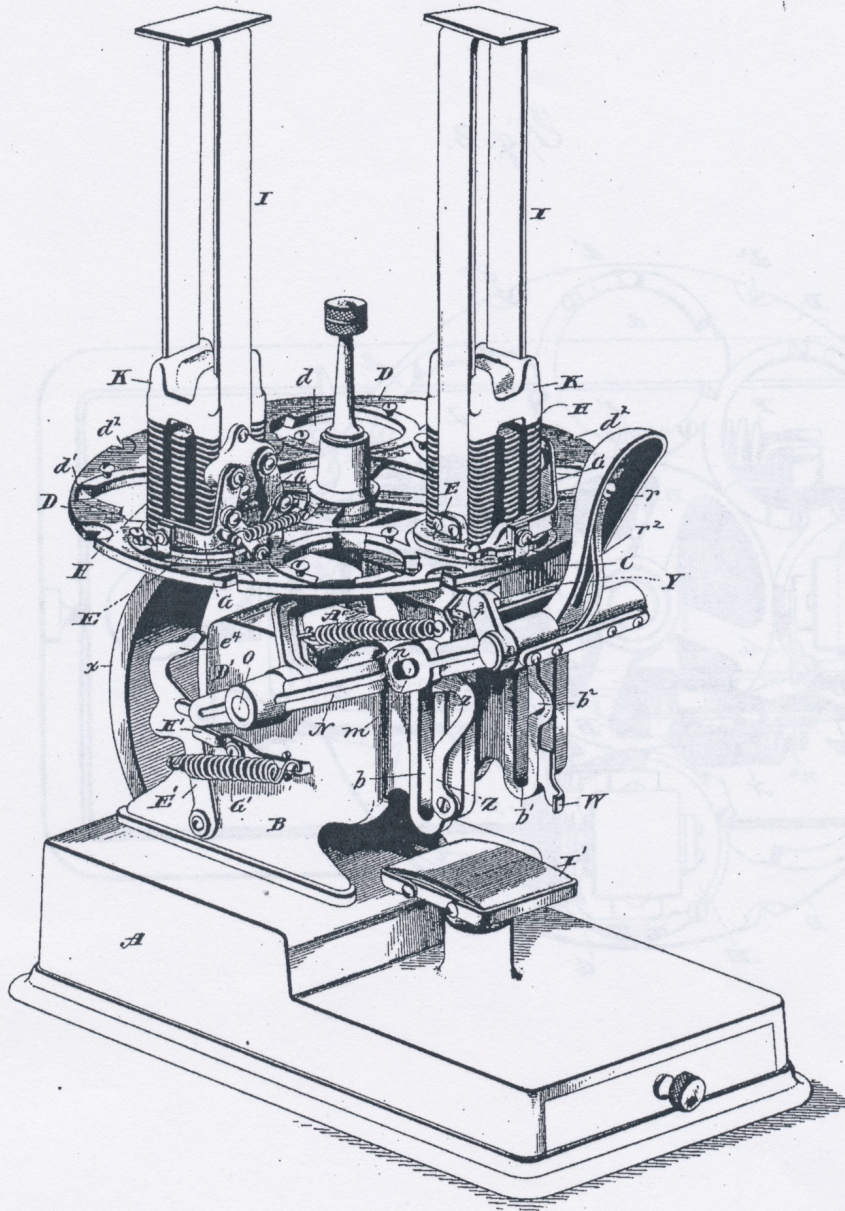
C. W. TOBEY.

APPARATUS FOR ATTACHING ADHESIVE STAMPS.

No. 447,212.

Patented Feb. 24, 1891.

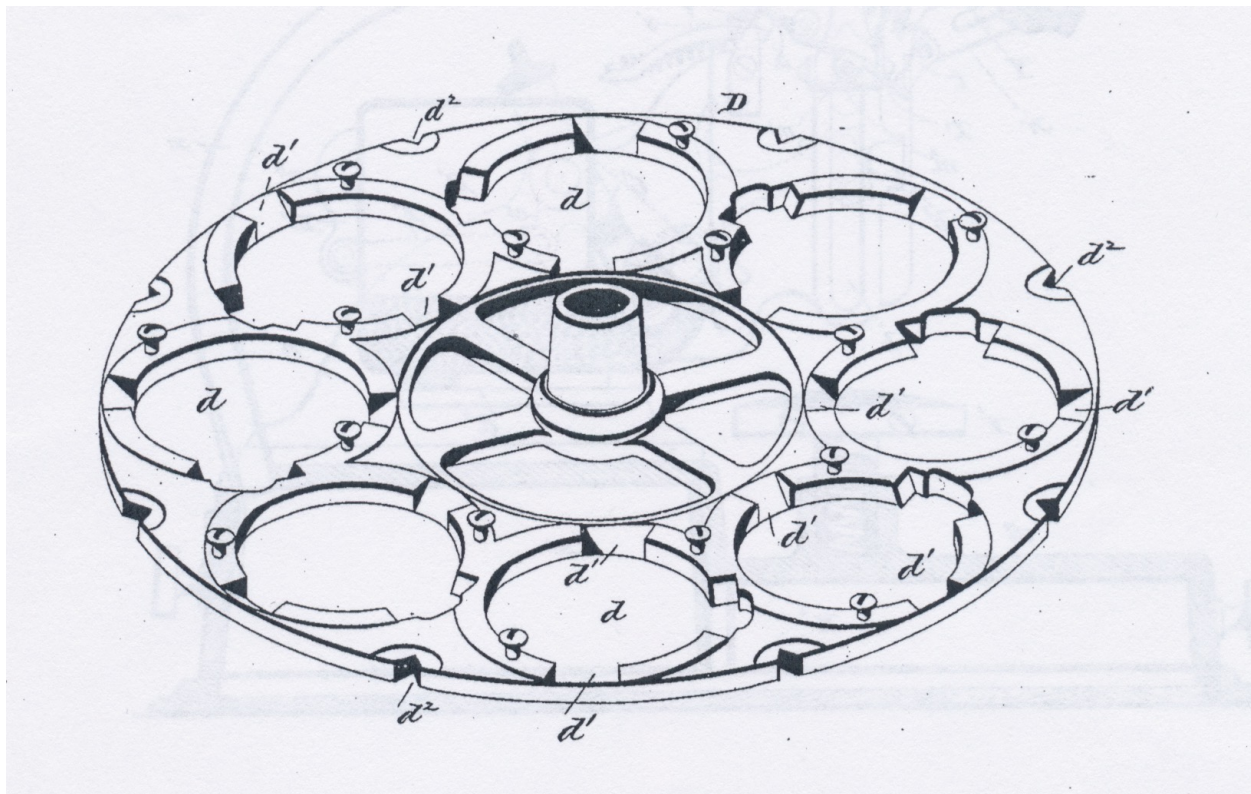
Fig. 1.



Witnesses
Chas. Williamson.
Henry C. Hazard.

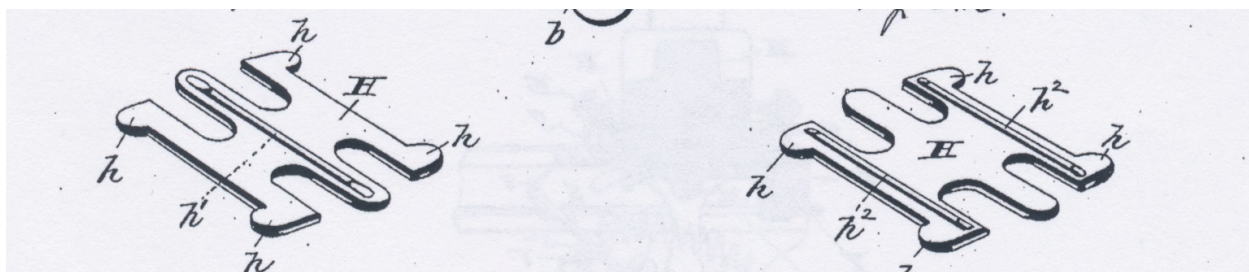
Inventor
Chas. W. Tobey, by
Prindle & Russell, his Attys

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It seems to me that the process of filling the hoppers with stacks of individual stamps torn from sheets of 100 fully perforated stamps was extraordinarily cumbersome. Sheet metal separator plates the same size as the postage stamps had to be manually placed in between every stamp as the hopper was loaded.

times when time is of least value, and the contents of each hopper are indicated by pasting a stamp of the denomination therein contained upon the upper end of each hopper. But an instant is necessary to rotate the turret to bring any desired hopper into position for use, and several hoppers may be filled with the same denomination of



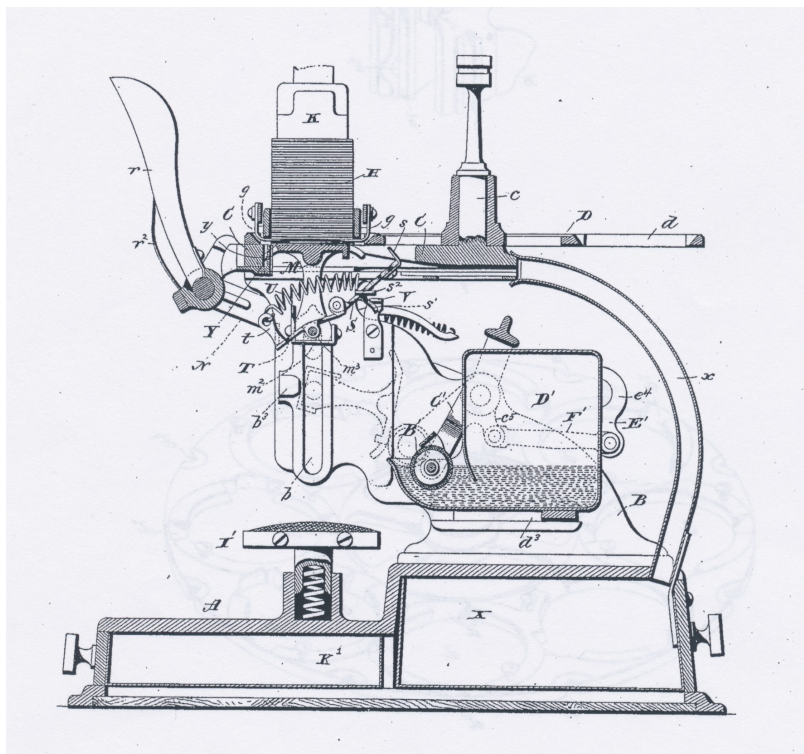
The patent application explains the process thusly: “The filling or charging of the stamp-hoppers is effected by inverting them and inserting the stamps and separators through the opening in their lower ends.” A complicated mechanism was used so the fingers and bars were “moved and held entirely out of the way, so as to permit the ready insertion of stamps and separators into the hoppers.” To me, the process of refilling the stamp hoppers sounds time consuming. In fact, Tobey wrote that “in use the hoppers are filled with stamps and separators at

stamp and successively used when a large number of letters are to be stamped. When the device is not in use, the hoppers may be detached from the turret and placed in a safe, or said turret with its hoppers may be detached and stored.”

The illustrations in this article are not shown to fully enable you to understand how this stamp affixer worked. Instead, the images are shown to illustrate how complicated this device was! It seems unlikely this machine was intended for

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home use, and it stretches the imagination to believe any business would have found it practical either. It is worth noting that there is a drawer at the bottom of the front of the stamp affixer - Tobey wrote that it was intended to be used to store un gummed stamps - which might indicate the device that applied water to the envelope where the stamp was to be placed sometimes applied too much water and the stamps didn't stick to the letter.



The key take-away from reviewing the patent application is that at the top of the first 15 pages it says “APPARATUS FOR ATTACHING ADHESIVE STAMPS”. In fact, in the first page of the eight pages of detailed descriptions, Charles Tobey wrote *“The object of my invention is to enable postage-stamps to be easily and quickly attached to or upon letters by mechanical means; and to this end my said invention consists in the means employed for holding and separating the stamps, for conveying the stamps from their holder to the surface upon which they are to be secured, for moistening stamps, and for causing such mechanism to automatically and in proper order perform their offices whenever an operating handle is moved.”* To my way of thinking, this pretty much refutes James Drummond’s belief

that the Burt & Tobey’s stamps were Royalty Stamps rather than Test Stamps.

You might be interested in some background about the inventor(s) of this stamp affixer. Charles Wyman Tobey was born on March 20, 1867 in New Bedford, Mass. He died August 26, 1944 in New Bedford. There are no 1890 census records (they were destroyed in a 1921 fire), but the 1900 census shows Tobey was a “Toolmaker” in New Bedford. He got married in 1902. In 1910, Charles Tobey was working as an auto repairman; in 1920 and 1930, he was a Master Mechanic at a nail factory. Based on the above timeline, the Burt & Tobey Stamp Battery Company apparently had gone out of business by 1910... maybe by 1900.

Tobey’s partner was Henry Proctor Burt who was born in 1866 in New Bedford, and he died there in 1945. He got married in 1892 - a year after Tobey got his patent for the stamp affixer. Burt was living in New Bedford in 1900. It is likely Burt owned an electrical equipment supply company in 1910, but I can’t verify that. There was no occupation listed for him in the 1900 (or in the 1920 or 1930) census, so I suspect he inherited money from his parents - his father died in 1884 and his mother in 1883. I believe Burt probably financed

Tobey’s stamp affixer startup company. Burt was living in New Bedford in 1910, but he moved to Paris in 1911 to attend school. He returned to America in 1914 and was living in New Bedford in 1920 and 1930 - again, no occupation listed.

There are still a few unassigned catalog numbers at the beginning of the test stamp listings. While there are a couple more early test stamps that may eventually get listed there, anyone who has a possible unlisted test stamp is encouraged to contact Terry Scott at the email address shown in the box at the top of page one of this newsletter.

Thank you Mike for another interesting article on some of these wonderful test stamps.

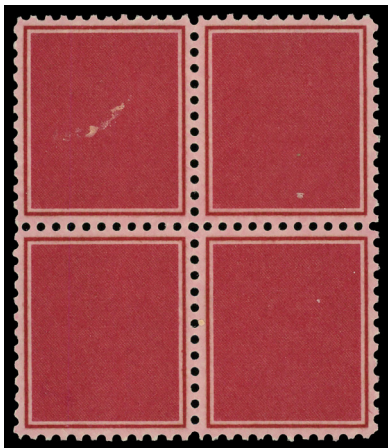
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Recent Auction Results

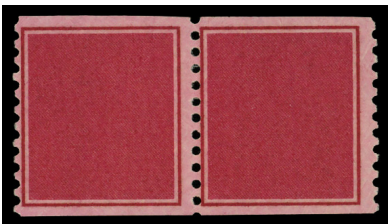
On April 2, 2023 Weekly Online Sales - a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held Sale #5189. There was a 20% Buyer's premium for this sale.



Lot 8644 ** TD94 Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design, carmine, perf'd (Scott TD94), o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$75.00. Realized \$50.00.



Lot 8645 ** **BLOCK** TD94 Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design, carmine, perf'd (Scott TD94), block of 4, o.g., never hinged; 1 stamp small scuffs, Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$300.00. Not sold.



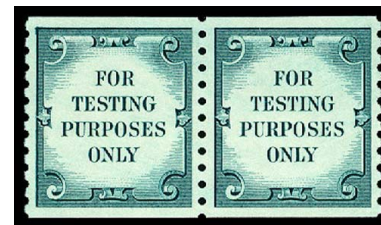
Lot 8646 * TD97 Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design coil, carmine (Scott TD97), pair, o.g., lightly hinged (pencil mark on gum), Fine. Photo. Scott \$400.00. Not sold.

On April 16, 2023 Weekly Online Sales - a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held Sale #5190. There was a 20% Buyer's premium for this sale.



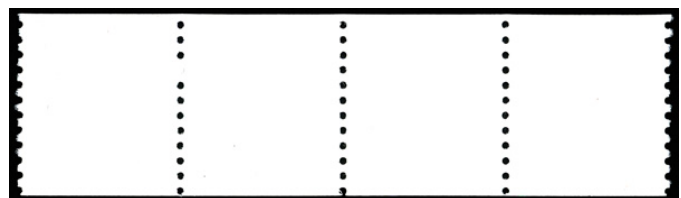
Lot 5673 ** TD94 Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design, carmine, perf'd (Scott TD94), o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$75.00. Not sold.

On April 18, 2023 Michael Aldrich Auctions held Sale #109. There was a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2577 * TD109, Pair, NH, sharp color, fresh and VF. Photo. Cat. \$180.00. Not sold.

On April 25-27, 2023 Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions, LLC, The Kelleher Club Sale - held Sale #2004. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 739 ** TD45 **Test Stamp, 1910-27, blank design, perf 10½ vertically (Scott TD45)**, strip of 4, o.g., never hinged, fresh and sound, measuring approximately 24½mm tall, Very Fine, unpriced (dashed) in Scott. Photo. Not sold.

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Lot 740 ** TD45 Test Stamp, 1910-27, blank design, perf 10½ vertically (Scott TD45), complete roll of 1000 including coil leader, a remarkably sound survivor, the leader paper with light purple "DUMMY COILS" handstamp; light toning to first eight stamp from the leader, otherwise fresh and clean; unpriced (dashed) in Scott, o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Photo. Not sold.



Lot 746 BK ** TDB14, TDB15 vars. 1960s-72, Two different "Dummy" Test Booklets, both with panes miscut vertically (Scott TDB14, TDB15 vars.), complete unexploded booklets, the first miscut by about 7mm, the second 5mm, o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Photo. *(Corrected Catalog numbers - there is a brown cover (w/o felt pen marks) TDB13 and a blue cover TDB15)* Scott \$300.00+ Realized \$190.00.

On April 26, 2023 Sam Houston Philatelics held Sale #310. There was a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 242 ** TD107e TD107e, 1962-88 Black Coil Test Stamps, Roll of 3,000 unopened, centering appears VF-XF, untagged, NH. Photo. Cat. \$3,000.00. Not sold.

On April 27 to May 2, 2023 Schuyler J. Rumsey Philatelic Auctions held Sale #108 - The WESTPEX Sale. There was a 18% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2523 * TD14 Test Stamp, 1906-09, "Mail-O-Meter Stamp", brown, Schermack type III perforations. Left margin strip of 4, o.g., couple perf creases at first stamp sides and small thin in 3rd stamp, otherwise F.-V.F., with 2016 P.F. certificate. Photo. Scott Nos. TD14; Catalog \$700.00. Realized \$350.00.



Lot 2524 ** TD60A Test Stamp, 1922, Mail-O-Meter ("10,000 Envelopes Per Hour") coil, red. Pair, o.g., never hinged, Very Fine, Mail-O-

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Meter Test Stamp Coil. Photo. Scott Nos. TD60A; Catalog \$750.00 Not sold.



Lot 2525 ** TD108 **Test Stamp, 1970, B.E.P. "For Testing Purposes Only"**, carmine, untagged, dull gum. o.g., (*Ed. Note: This stamp is known ONLY with shiny gum.*) never hinged, Extremely Fine, with 2021 P.S.A.G. certificate. Photo. Scott Nos. TD108; \$500.00. Realized \$350.00.

On May 16-18, 2023 Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions, LLC held Sale #781. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

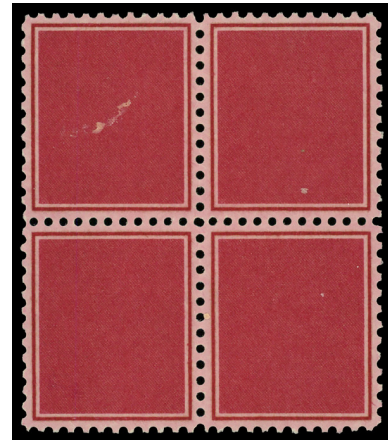



Lot 4517 (*) **Test Stamp, ca. 1880s (?), Manhattan Bank Note Co., rose, unlisted**, position 90 from original sheet, without gum as issued, portraying a Native American in $\frac{3}{4}$ right pose; with clean color and full, balanced margins, Very Fine, *one of only a few sound examples certified by the P.F., with 2023 P.F. Certificate. (#593309) Photos. Estimate \$400.00 - \$600.00. Not sold. (Ed. Note: This stamp is most likely not a test stamp.)*

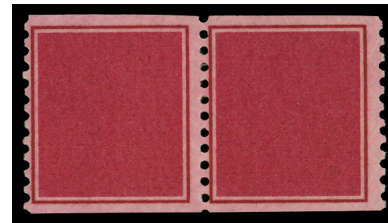


Lot 4518 ** TD60A **Test Stamp, 1922, Mail-O-Meter ("10,000 Envelopes Per Hour") coil, red (Scott TD60A)**, pair, o.g., never hinged, in rich color on like-new paper; well-centered, given the tight vertical spacing, Very Fine, with 2023 P.F. Certificate. (#592380). Photos. Scott \$750.00 as hinged. Not sold.

On May 21, 2023 Weekly Online Sales - a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held Sale #5194. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 6380 **  TD94 **Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design, carmine, perf'd (Scott TD94)**, block of 4, o.g., never hinged, 1 small stamp scuff, Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$300.00. Realized \$70.00.



Lot 6381 * TD97 **Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design coil, carmine, (Scott TD97)**, pair, o.g., lightly hinged (pencil mark on gum), Fine. Photo. Scott \$400.00. Realized \$180.00.

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Requests for Articles for *The United States Specialist*

Martin Kent Miller, the new 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 Martin 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*. Martin Kent Miller can be reached by e-mail at: editor@usstamps.org ☐

The Other Projects

There are several other projects currently being worked on by various members of the DSSG. They are as follows:

- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of dummy test stamp roll sizes, box and roll labels. There are many different styles of labels sometimes found on the same test stamps. This is especially true of Bureau of Engraving and Printing products
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive record of auction appearances and prices realized for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive listing of references for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of plate numbers printed on test stamps and the frequency in which they appear and the frequency of joint lines on test coils when they appear. ☐

This issue and all past issues of the Dummy Stamps Study Group Newsletter - *Dummy News and Views* may be found at:

<http://www.usstamps.org/dssg.html>