



# 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 Seventy-second 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](mailto:terryrscott@comcast.net)

## The History of Dummy Booklets

by Michael O. Perry

As a collector of United States booklets for over 60 years, I have seen many changes in how the *Bureau of Engraving & Printing* (BEP) printed and manufactured booklets. About 60 years ago I became aware of dummy test booklets, and tried to figure out how and why they were produced. Initially they were undoubtedly created to evaluate some new or proposed changes in the booklet manufacturing process, but by the early 1960's it was likely most dummy booklets were created for use in evaluating and adjusting vending machines that were being installed in post office lobbies across America. Some of those dummy booklets contained panes made from rolls of test stamps printed from plates originally created for coil stamps, and as a result they sometimes contained panes that showed marginal markings seldom seen on regular booklet or coil stamps (such as scribe lines, EE bars and EE dashes). I became fascinated with dummy booklets and they helped me better understand how the BEP produced stamps.

As the years went by, the number of stamps required by the public began to overwhelm the BEP. Booklet panes were originally printed from 180 or 360-subject flat plates on sheets of paper hand fed into old printing presses... a very slow

and labor intensive process. Benjamin Stickney's original rotary printing press that was developed between 1909 and 1914 was too narrow to print booklet panes. After he built wider presses in 1923, the BEP began printing booklet panes on them in 1926, soon phasing out the old flat plate presses.

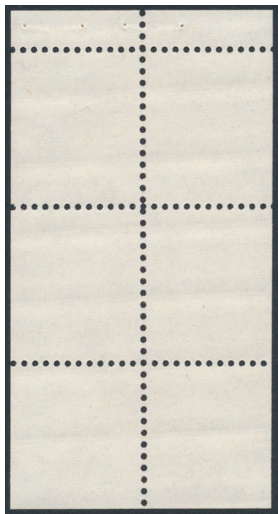
Around 1930, the BEP produced several dummy booklets containing blank perforated gummed panes; TDB1, TDB2 and TDB4 were manufactured before vending machines were in use, so they were probably used to test or evaluate gum breaker spacings, new perforating or improved cutting equipment; examples are rare.

I've never seen records of any printing plates made specifically for dummy booklet production prior to 1940, but they certainly could have existed. Apparently the BEP used blank paper for test purposes in order to avoid having to deal with accountable paper.

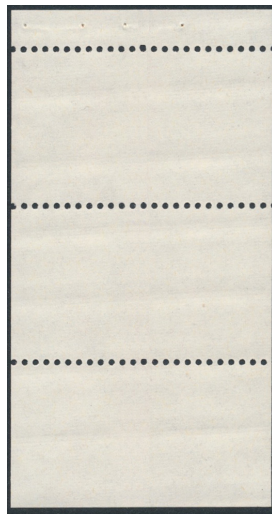
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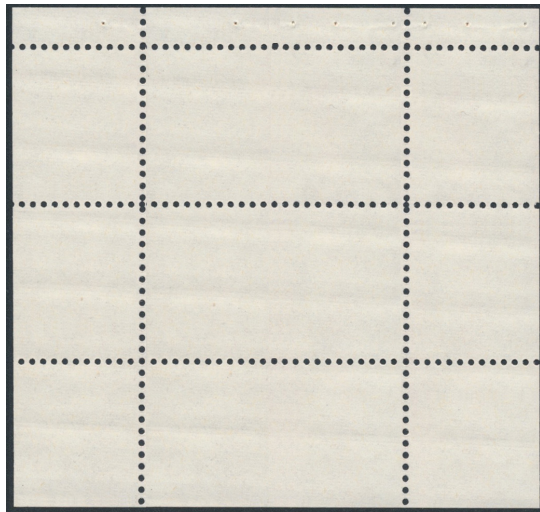
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TDB1a

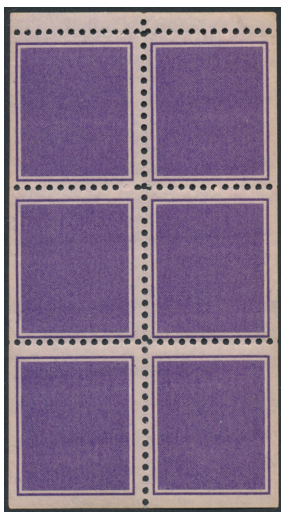


TDB4b (fabricated)



TDB2c (fabricated)

In October of 1940, the BEP made a set of 360-subject booklet plates to evaluate a new automatic cutting machine made by the *E. R. Lawson Company* in New York. Uncut strips containing 120,000 dummy booklets (TDB3) were made, but virtually all were destroyed after testing was finished. A few examples of TDB3 escaped from that trial.



The printing plates for the panes in TDB3 were laid out specifically for testing the new automatic booklet cutting machine; an initial trial with blank dummy books failed since they needed panes with properly positioned test stamps inside the covers in order to evaluate the cutting machine. Unfortunately, the BEP laid out those printing plates for use on the old “pre-EE” printing presses; the plates lacked the electric eye markings required for later booklet production).

The fact that the BEP apparently never made any other Cottrell or Stickney press printing plates specifically for stapled era dummy booklets might be due to the fact they didn’t need a printed design on the dummy booklet panes that they used inside the BEP... and, the only requirement for dummy booklets supplied to vending machine technicians was that the booklets needed to be the correct size and they had to have the correct number of panes inside.

The Post Office Department (POD) was rapidly modernizing their mail processing equipment by the mid-1950’s. The BEP supplied rolls of dummy coils (TD95 and TD96), along with some dummy booklets (TDB5 and TDB6), for use by the POD in Detroit’s Parade of Postal Progress featuring new facer-cancellation machinery in October, 1959. A vending machine at the Postal Parade of Progress distributed dummy postal cards and envelopes, dummy coil stamps and dummy booklets.

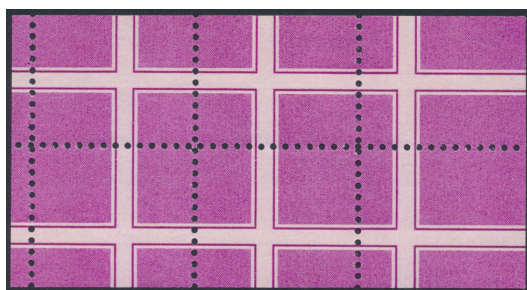


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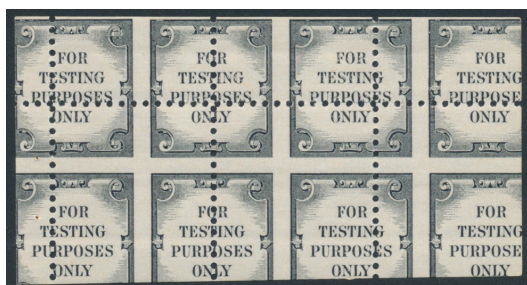


Similar postal exhibitions were reportedly held in Washington, D.C., New York City and Buffalo, NY. In the following years, as vending machines became more common, the BEP supplied vending machine service technicians with large rolls of dummy coil stamps and boxes of dummy booklets. Most of those were blank test stamps, but occasionally examples with printed designs found their way into collector hands.

Sometime after the Detroit exhibition, the BEP ran a roll of an imperforate TD96 red violet rectangle test coil stamps on their booklet perforator and made Scott TDB7 dummy booklets. Some of the booklets contained panes with coil plate joint lines. These dummy booklets have the same covers as TDB5 dummy books that contain blank panes, so check inside those books!



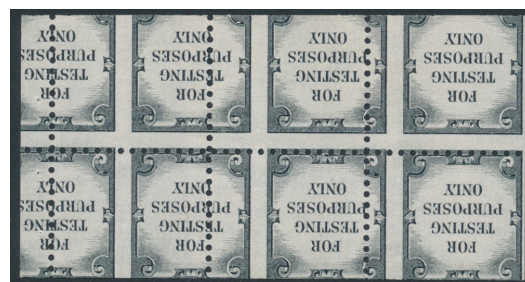
Between 1966 and 1972, dummy booklets were made with panes with the For Testing Purposes Only (FTPO) design printed from 432-subject coil plates. After the coil web was processed on perforating machines set up for 360-subject booklet panes containing six stamps, it was cut into sheets to be collated with sheets containing 60 booklet covers. Little effort was made to keep the panes and covers properly aligned or oriented. As a result, small size FTPO dummy booklet panes of six can be found in five different variations. (In this case, the panes should be viewed with the STAPLE HOLES positioned at the LEFT END).



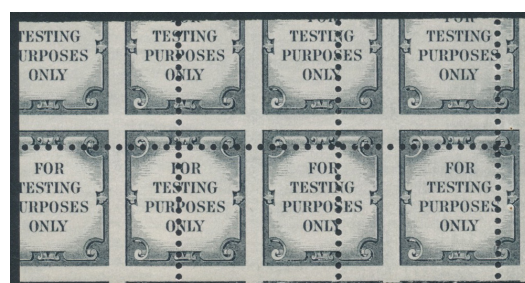
Normal pane, stapling tab at left (TDB8a)



No stapling tab (TDB14a)



Inverted design (TDB15a)



Stapling tab at right (TDB16f)

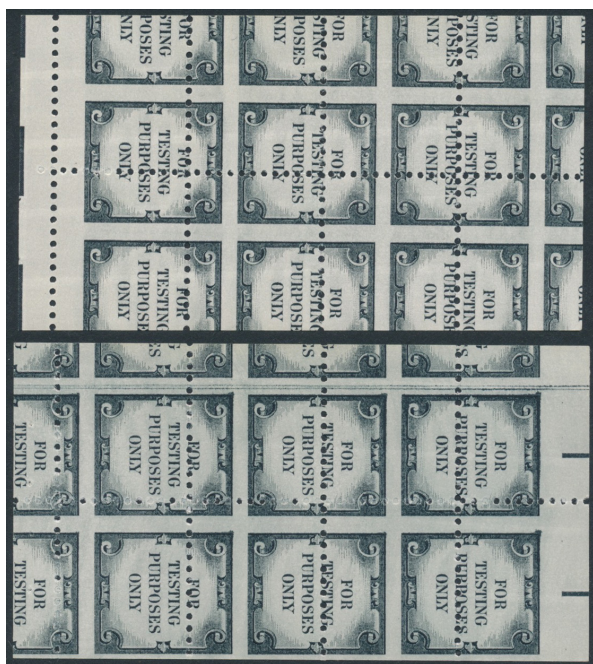


Pane made from web perforated on the 400-subject booklet perforator (TDB16d - very rare).

The larger Dummy booklets (TDB13, TDB18 and TDB19 contain panes of 8 stamps). They used the same 432-subject coil web with the FTPO designs. However, that web was perforated on the 400-subject booklet perforator rather than the 360-subject perforator. Some of those booklet panes show part of the vertical EE Dashes or the horizontal EE Bars that were printed in the left and right margin of the coil web.

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The coil plate joint line can occasionally be found on FTPO booklet panes - on both panes of 6 and panes of 8. The short scribe line located in the center of the plate on each side of the joint line can also be found on some dummy booklet panes, but you need to look close.



We are going to stop at this point. In a future issue of the DSSG Newsletter, we will pick up in 1977 when the BEP made the shift from hand assembled booklets to an automated process that used a booklet forming machine made by [Goebel GmbH](#) of Germany. Anyone who has studied the listings of the Dummy booklets produced in the last 45 years knows there are many varieties. I am quite sure that for every test stamp we know about (sheet, coil or booklet), there are at least twice as many more that were produced that we don't know about - YET!

The next installment will cover FTPO booklets produced on Goebel booklet forming machines.

## Recent Auction Results

On August 7-9, 2023 Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held LLC Sale - 2005 - The Kelleher Club Sale. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 1068 \*\* 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, Photo. Very Fine, unpriced (dashed) in Scott. Realized \$70.00.

On August 22, 2023 Cherrystone Auctions held Sale #8823, United States Stamps and Currency, featuring the Gerald Nylander Collection. There was a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



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Lot 5145 E 1910 3c Minerva, Harris Automatic Press Company Offset Essay on Hard White Wove Paper (TD28-TD29), two singles showing both orientations, large margins, v.f. (Harris installed one of their presses in the BEP to demonstrate production of stamps by the offset method, the design was taken from the 2c 1903 Issue, the presses were not adopted at that time but were used for printing some Revenue stamps) Photo. Cat. \$1,300.00 Realized \$475.00.



Lot 5144 E 1910 3c Minerva, Harris Automatic Press Company Offset Test, five different Large Die Essays on India (gray black, dark brown, blue, green, carmine (TD28TC1), each die sunk on card (119x132mm), several removed and rehinged on cards, occasional slight wrinkling of the India paper, one or two minor card creases, mostly v.f. and rare group of essays, Photo Cat. \$5,000.00. Realized \$1,800.00.



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Lot 5146 E 田 1910 Bureau of Engraving and Printing (No Denomination) Red, Rotary Press Test Development, Imperforate (TD19, TD23), perf. and imperf. singles, also imperf. block of four, unused without gum as issued, creases, mostly fine. Photo. Est. \$250.00. Realized \$525.00.

On August 30-31, 2023 Raritan Stamps, Inc. held Sale #97. There was a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 276 SB Scott #TDB13 1967-68, intact booklet of \$2, brown cover with "DUMMY" handstamp in purple, 5 panes of 8 test stamps separated by 5 silicone interleaves, usual alignment markings at top and bottom, still VF. Photo. C.V. \$200.00 Realized \$95.00



Lot 277 SB Scott #TDB14 1960's-72, intact booklet of \$1, brown cover with "DUMMY" handstamp in purple, 4 panes of 6 test stamps separated by 4 silicone interleaves, fresh and VF with usual black alignment markings on reverse. Photo. C.V. \$150, Est. \$100.00-\$150.00 Realized \$95.00.

On September 3, 2023 Weekly Online Sales - a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held Sale - 5201. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 5390 \*\* TD91 Test Stamp, 1944-49, Multipost mailMaster Commercial Controls coil, purple (Scott TD91), pair, o.g., never hinged, Extremely Fine to Superb. Photo. Scott \$50.00. Not sold.

On September 17, 2023 Weekly Online Sales - a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions held Sale - 5203. There was a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

Lot 5430 \*\* TD91 Test Stamp, 1944-49,



Multipost mailMaster Commercial Controls coil, purple (Scott TD91), pair, o.g., never hinged, Extremely Fine to Superb. Photo. Scott \$50.00. Realized \$31.00.

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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](mailto: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>