



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-third 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

George Clinton

by Michael O. Perry and Terry R. Scott



George Clinton by John Trumbull
(1791)

“Who am I and what am I doing here?” Those are the immortal words of retired Admiral James Stockdale (Ross Perot's 1992 running mate) in his opening remarks at the vice presidential debate. Likewise, most people who hear the name George Clinton have no idea who he was either. Unless, perhaps, you collect dummy and test stamps!

George Clinton was an American soldier and statesman. He is considered to be a founding father of the United States, but was opposed to the ratification of the Constitution in 1776 (surprisingly, Clinton served as the United State's fourth Vice President for seven years - 1805 until he died from a heart attack in 1812).

George Clinton is one of the men depicted in the image on the back of the current \$2 bill. That engraving is based on John Trumbull's painting titled “The Declaration of Independence.” The event, as pictured, never happened. It is actually an imaginary scene that Trumbull started painting a decade after the event (Trumbull took 30 years

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to complete his oil painting). While it includes 42 of the 56 men who signed it, it also includes five men who didn't sign the Declaration of Independence. George Clinton shouldn't have been in the painting since he didn't sign the document. That said, John Trumbull also painted a portrait of George Clinton that is the basis for some test stamps listed in the Scott Catalogue... TD130F is a sheet stamp printed in panes of 100, while TDB93 and TDB93A are from a convertible booklet the size of an ATM pane of 18 stamps.



Shown above is an enlarged image of a single cropped from a sheet of TD130F George Clinton stamps to show the detail.

Examples of these Clinton test stamps were unknown to collectors until 2006, eight years after a USPS trial conducted to evaluate self adhesive gum impact in recycling plants. You are encouraged to read the comprehensive article in the November 2006 *United States Specialist*; it contained the first report of three previously unknown test stamps and explains how the USPS had conducted an extensive evaluation of various self adhesive stamps and their impact on waste paper recycling. This article will focus on just one of those test stamps, the George Clinton intaglio test stamp TDB93 (from the ATM panes) was used in this trial.

Let's start at the beginning

In the 1998 trial, three different stamp designs were used to evaluate the effects of different printing methods and self adhesive gum formulations on paper recycling. The test stamp that is the subject of this article featured an intaglio engraving of the head of George Clinton.



Two other test stamps were used in the trial. A "Star Spangled Banner" coil was printed on a 5-color printing press using 225-subject gravure cylinders to produce TD130B.



The third test stamp used in the trial was a commemorative sized stamp containing six octagons printed on an offset press (TD130E).



The trial involved applying 14 different pressure sensitive adhesives to the three different formats of test stamps that had been printed on different papers. The test stamps were then applied to 3.95 million envelopes. Five commemorative size or eight definitive size test stamps were applied to the middle of the back side of standard USPS #10 business envelopes that had a pre-printed 32¢ Liberty Bell stamp (Scott U632) on them.



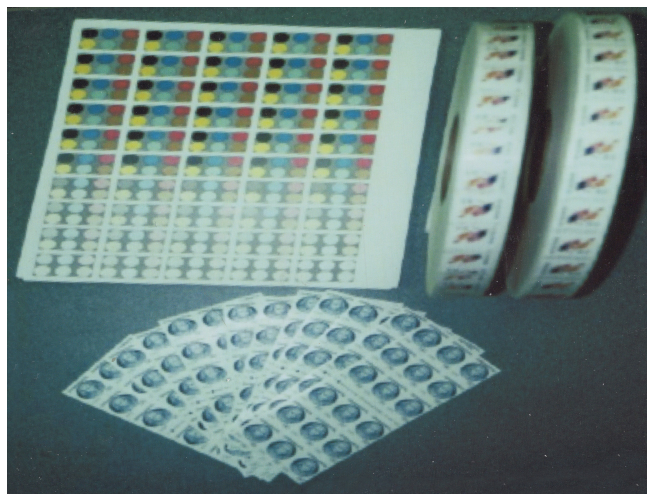
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Those envelopes were mailed in the normal mail stream from 50 different USPS regions in order to replicate the same conditions as regular first class mail. Five or eight of the test stamps were applied to the back of the envelopes in an attempt to “fool” the facer cancelling machinery; this was necessary since the test stamps were tagged. A small number of the 4 million envelopes (36,000) were cancelled on the back; 21,000 of those envelopes were reprocessed and thus had cancellations on both sides.

Examples of the test stamps used in the trial were first seen by an alert stamp collector in late 1998 when a postal clerk at his local post office showed him some of the test envelopes. The postal clerk was unwilling to give the collector a test envelope, but he did make a photocopy.

After the envelopes had completed their journey thru the mail, they were prepared for the recycling tests in 1999. The primary goal was to find an environmentally benign pressure-sensitive adhesive (BPSA) that wouldn't leave small balls of 'stickies' in the recycled pulp that would negatively impact the quality of the paper made with the recycled fiber.

Examples of actual stamps removed from the backs of envelopes were not reported for several years. A photograph of the three test stamps was seen on a USPS website shortly after the trial was completed, but it was quickly removed when an inquiry was made by a stamp collector.



Efforts by stamp collectors to find any information about the test stamps was futile - and examples of the actual stamps didn't show up until eight years later. The first time these test stamps appeared in an auction was in a Harmer-Schau auction at the August 2007 APS StampShow in Portland, Oregon. One of each envelope was sold (see the Summer 2007 DSSG Newsletter). Gradually, a few more test envelopes with the test stamps on the back were offered for sale. These envelopes were likely obtained from the recycling plant after the trial was completed..

In April of 2012, Cherrystone Auctions sold two essay proofs and one finished die proof of the Clinton test stamp design (more about these proofs later in this article). The finished die proof had a pencil notation “BEP - #2” which indicated the Clinton test stamps used in the 1998 USPS recycling trial might have been produced by the BEP. In a later Cherrystone Auction (September 2019), a second finished Clinton die proof was sold that had a pencil notation “BEP- #1” on it. These two die proofs seemed to indicate the BEP produced two Clinton dies that were used by private printers to produce test stamps for the Postal Service.

In May of 2012, the Bureau of Engraving's Historical Resource Center (HRC) was contacted to see what they might know about the George Clinton test stamps. Their reply was confusing. The HRC had no information about the proofs. They said “while we have a “miscellaneous die card indicating an experimental stamp of George Clinton was engraved by the BEP in 1993, we do not have any proofs of it.” However, the HRC did find records that showed miscellaneous die #18247 was used to make at least four plates that were used in experimental printing (plates 173403, 173404, 173405 and 174408).

While they didn't say what those plates were used for, a copy of another BEP record dated July 28, 1993 stated the Clinton die was used to create plates to print “experimental 400 subject sheet and 480 subject coil stamps.” It said “Order 178-93” was for an “Experimental Stamp Design for Superior Paper/Universal Adhesive Press Evaluation.” In addition, that same record stated “Two duplicate intaglio dies to be furnished to

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U.S. Postal Service for use by American Bank Note Company and Stamp Venturers” to be used in a “Universal Adhesive Press Evaluation” where the three printers would “participate in their respective manufacturing facilities with this Universal Paper Test.” The Miscellaneous Die Cards for the two duplicate Clinton dies made in April of 1994 for American Bank Note Co. and Stamp Venturers said “Deliver to Postal Service / to be returned.” The Postal Service acknowledged receipt of “original art of ‘George Clinton’ for ‘print trial’ only”.

In 2015, Bill Langs sold a full sheet of 100 water activated gum Clinton sheet stamps on eBay. In 2016, at the World Stamp Show in New York, an auction firm had two panes of 100 Clinton test stamps for sale that had been obtained from an ex-ABN employee. In 2019, a sheet of 100 Clinton test stamps was sold in auction, and another sheet was sold in 2020 - possibly the same two sheets seen in New York in 2016.



So far, nobody has reported finding examples of a George Clinton coil, but the BEP's records indicate they made two intaglio sleeves for printing sheet stamps and two intaglio sleeves for printing coils. The BEP record indicates the sleeves were supposed to include a 4-step intaglio tone bar in the margin, but that marking would have only appeared once every revolution of the printing sleeves. Thus, even though there was no

plate number or EE markings printed in the margins of the sheet of Clinton stamps, it is likely that it was produced by the BEP.

In 2017, examples of TD130A and TD130C (the Star Spangled Banner self adhesive test coil) were found on some short web sections (some were imperforate and some had serpentine die cutting). See the articles in the Fall 2018 and the Winter 2018 DSSG Newsletter.

No mint examples of the TD130E “Stoplight” test stamps have been reported.

A few of the Clinton stamps on the backs of the envelopes from the 1998 BPSA trial were miscut, and at least one envelope was found with a stamp miscut enough to show part of the plate number “P1” in what appeared to be a peel strip found on self adhesive convertible booklets or ATM panes. This was the first clue that the Clinton test stamps were produced by Ashton Potter rather than the BEP.



A report written after the trial mentioned that one version of the intaglio printed test stamps with the George Clinton design had to be destroyed before the trial since the paper manufacturer had forgotten to apply the layer of release agent to the backing paper before attaching the printed web with the self adhesive glue to it. As a result, those stamps could not be applied to the trial envelopes.

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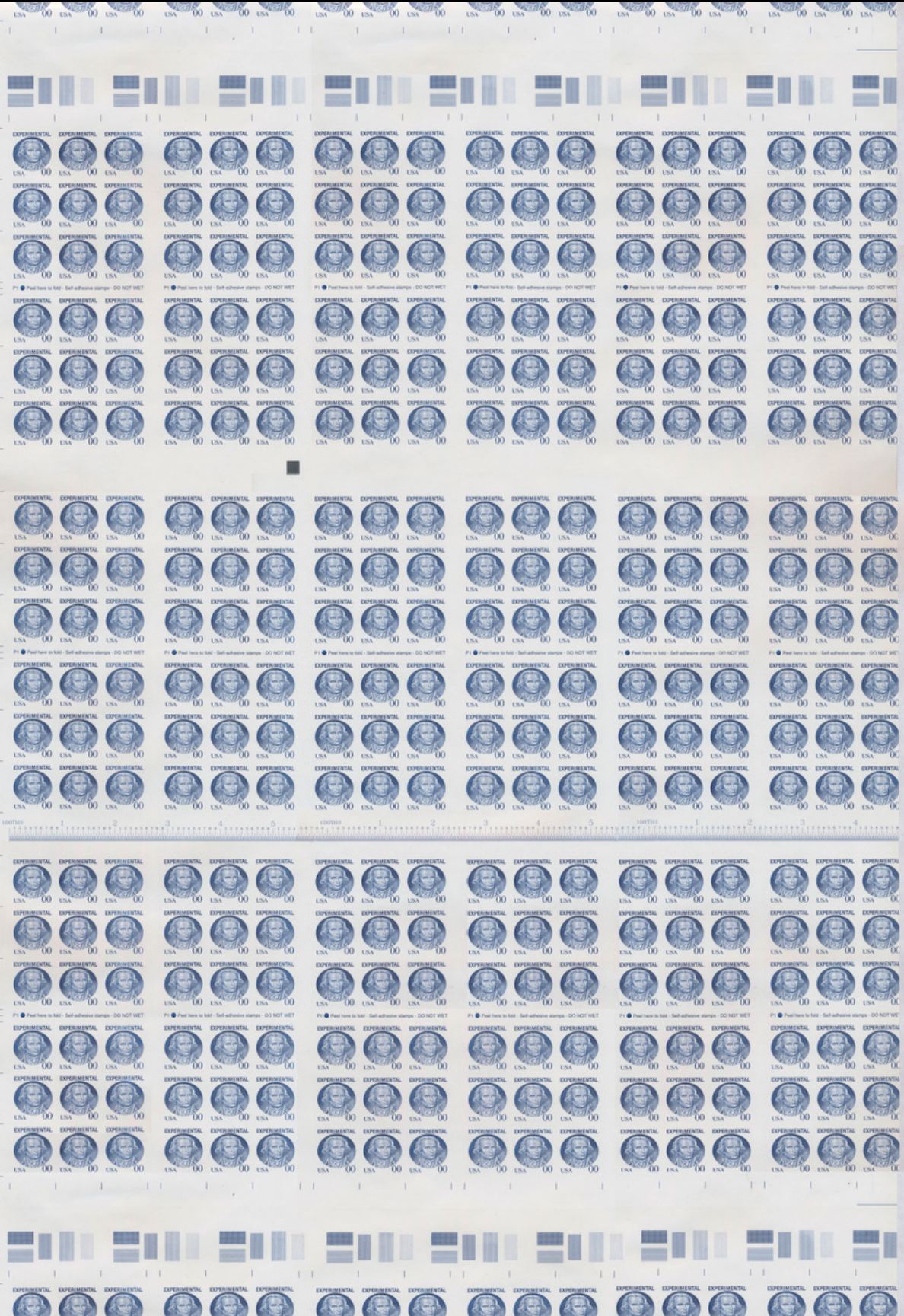
In 2017, odd shaped pieces cut from Clinton ATM test panes were offered for sale on eBay. The seller had a few larger pieces that contained full ATM-sized panes showing plate number “P1” proving they were produced by Ashton Potter using a 324-subject intaglio printing sleeve that was laid out for 18-stamp ATM test panes (TDB93). All the stamps were imperforate, and the backing paper was still attached to the stamps. The seller said he had some larger pieces cut from a roll, and eventually he sold his holdings. He said a neighbor had been storing them “about 20 years”. This fits with what we now know - one of the rolls of Clinton ATM panes made for the self adhesive recycling trial in 1998 was destroyed because they forgot to apply the release agent the to backing paper; the printed web had adhered completely to the backing paper.

If you look closely at the press sheet image on the following page you can see some black ink-jet printing in the left margin that is shown enlarged below. This information shows the test stamps were printed at 10:15 AM on May 28, 1998, and they were printed as part of the 3M Benign Pressure Sensitive Adhesive trial to be conducted later that year. The number printed at the end of the string of ink jet printing is the number of impressions made since the counter was reset. It almost certainly doesn't mean Ashton Potter made 67,855 impressions from the 324-subject intaglio sleeve (that would be 1,221,390 Clinton ATM panes, containing almost 22 million Clinton stamps).



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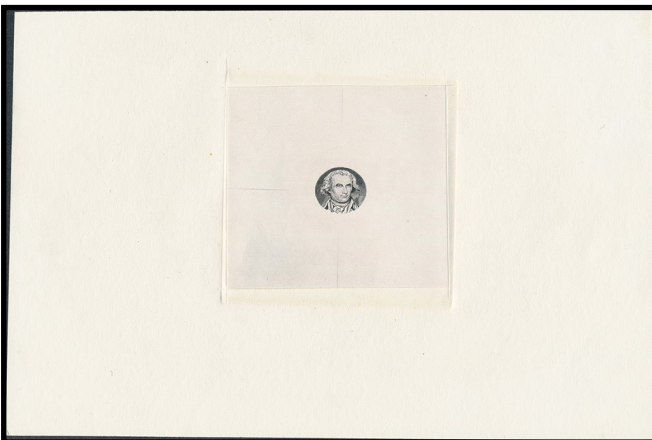
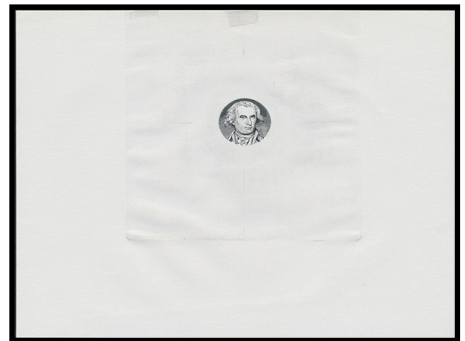
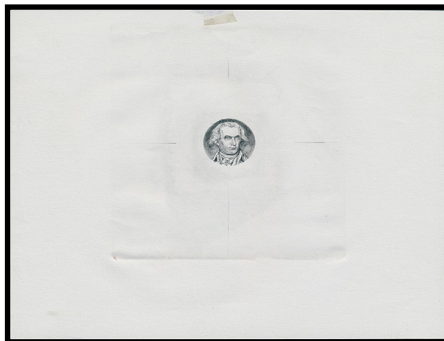
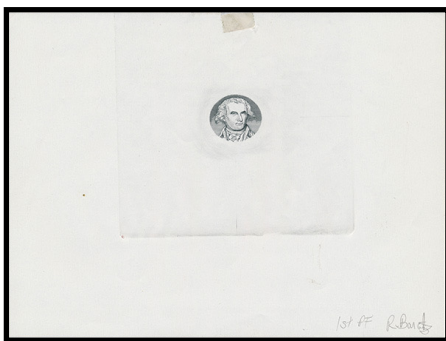
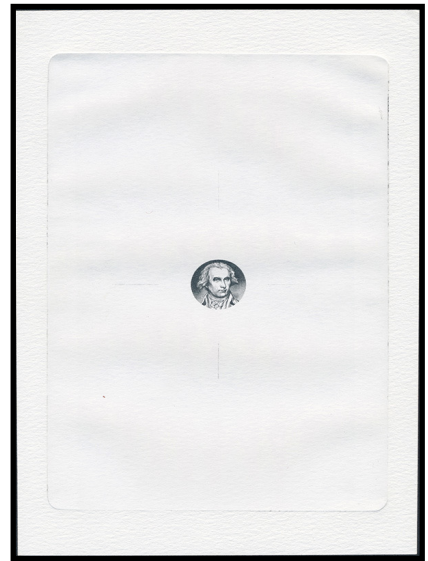
There have been at least 18 George Clinton Essay and Die Proofs sold in auctions over the last eleven years. At first glance, the 15 black essay proofs (with just the oval containing Clinton's head) appear to be identical, but that isn't the case. Shown on this page is a montage of the seven different essay proofs and the finished die proof that are known in collector's hands - on the following two pages you will see enlargements of the engraving found on the different proofs, followed by a description of the differences.

Top row: TD130F-E1

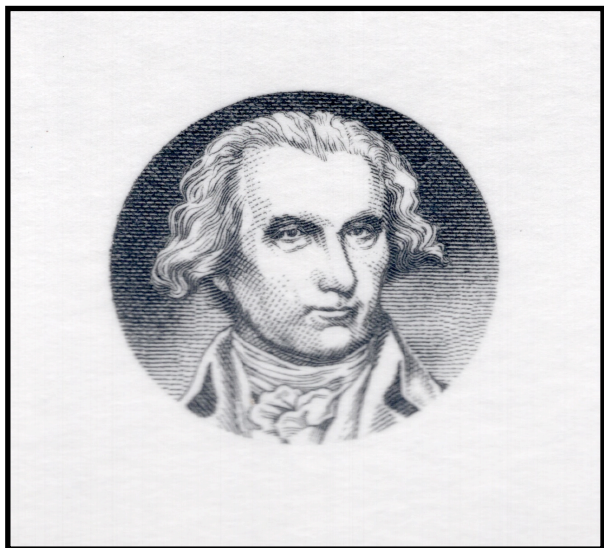
2nd row: TD130F-E2, TD130F-E3 and TD130F-E4

3rd row: TD130F-E5 and TD130F-E6

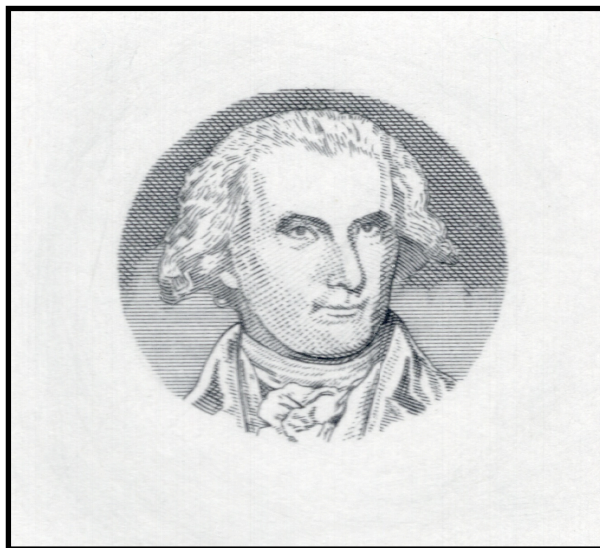
4th row: TD130F-E7 and TD130F-P1



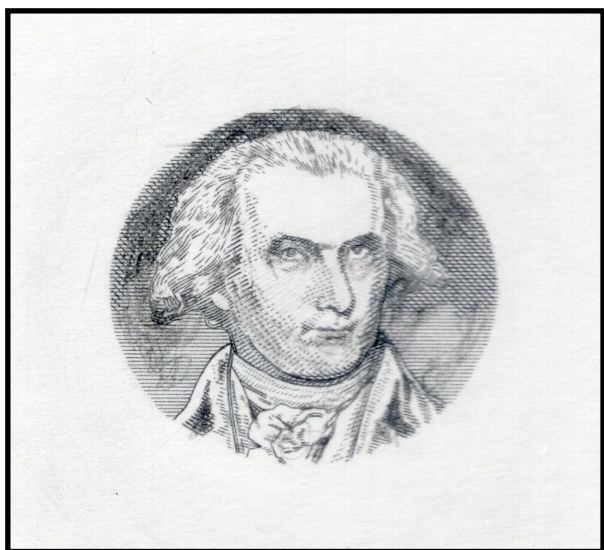
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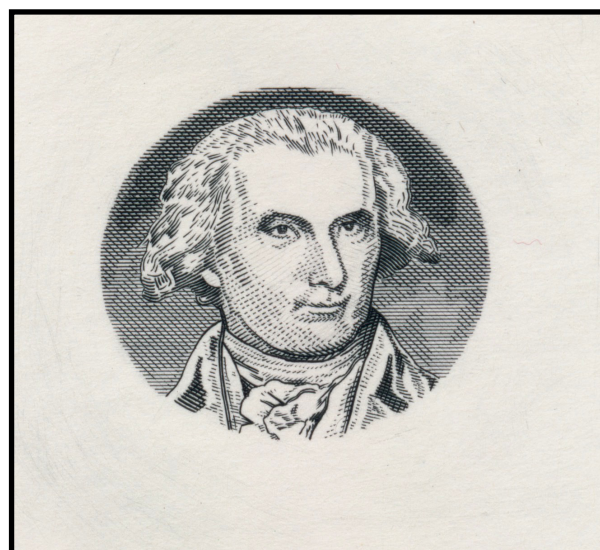
TD130F-E1 - Die I. 18 x 16 ½ mm oval. Horizontal lines in lower background are neither continuous nor straight, eyes are dark and squinty, little shading on forehead, nose and chin. Lines in Clinton's hair are long and flowing. Crosshairs at all four sides within the die imprint. Apparently found to be unacceptable and neither improved nor used further. There is 1 of these known in collector's hands.



TD130F-E2 - Die II. 18 x 16 ½ mm oval. First state of the die. Straight horizontal lines in the lower background, hair consists of many short lines, no forehead shading. One example is known with thin crosshair lines printed outside the design at the right and bottom; one example known with "1st PF R. Baratz" in pencil at bottom right of paper. There are 3 of these known in collector's hands.

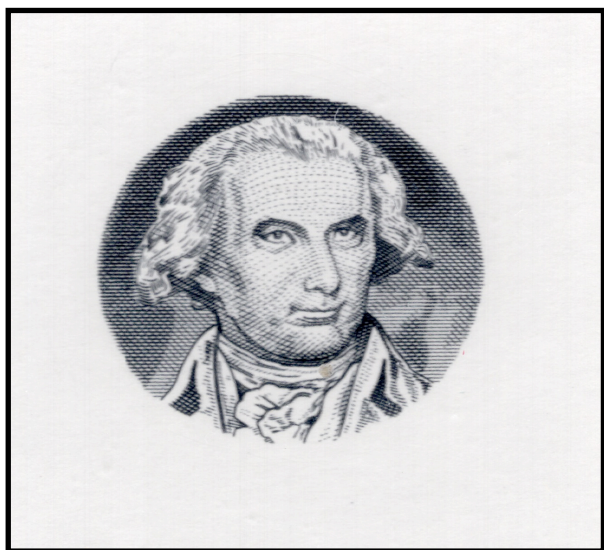


TD130F-E3 - 18 x 16 ½ mm oval. As TD130F-E2, but with pencil shading added to the background to suggest improvements to be made. One example is known with crosshairs on the die on all four sides within the die imprint. There is 1 of these known in collector's hands.

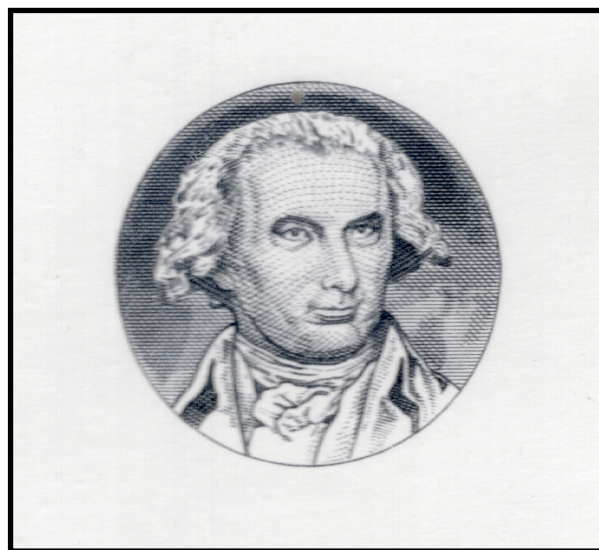


TD130F-E4 - 18 x 16 ½ mm oval. The darker shading lines in the background have been engraved further as suggested on No. TD130F-E3. One example is known with thin crossbar lines on the die on all four sides within the die imprint. There is 1 of these known in collector's hands.

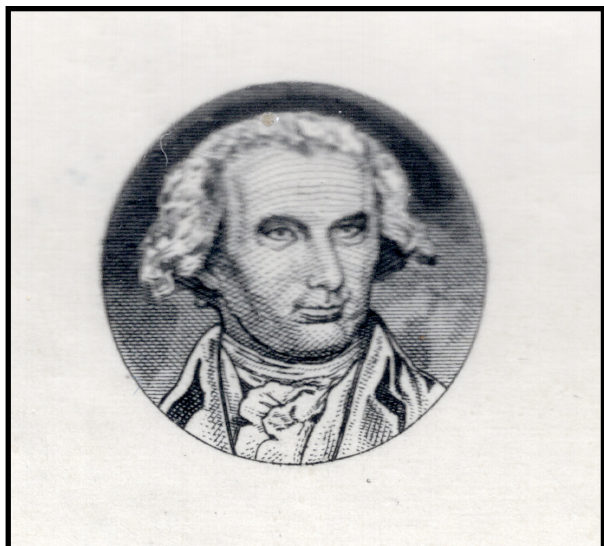
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TD130F-E5 - 18 x 16 ½ mm oval. Several additions were made to the TD130F-E4 die, adding dashed shading lines over Clinton's entire face including cross-hatched lines on the right side of his face and additions to background engraving. Two examples are known with small holes near the outside edges spaced 52 mm apart top and bottom, 46 mm apart left and right. Thus is the final oval design before it was converted into a round circle design. There are 5 of these known in collector's hands.



TD130F-E6 - Die II oval design converted to a circular, 18 mm round design. Outline added all around and areas at top and bottom partly engraved to fill in the design. One example is known with small holes near the outside edges spaced 52 mm apart top and bottom, 46 mm apart left and right. One example is known with pencil notation "4/21/94 RB" (R. Baratz) at bottom right. There are 2 of these known in collector's hands.



TD130F-E7 - Similar to No. TD130F-E6 with 18 mm round design, but it has additional engraving added at the bottom to fill the design. As was the case with Die I, this Die II also was not used to create the final TD130F-P1 die proof. One example is known with small holes near the outside edges spaced 52 mm apart top and bottom, 46 mm apart left and right. There are 2 of these known in collector's hands.



TD130F-P1 Die III. 18 x 16-1/2 mm oval. Almost nothing on the Die I or Die II essay proofs matches the details on the vignette of the Die III proof. Engraved complete design of finished die as adopted. Both lines of the background grid shading are at an angle. Two examples known with "BEP #1" pencil notation, and one known with "BEP #2" pencil notation. There are 3 of these die proofs known in collector's hands.

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In Memoriam Joann Ruth Lenz

It is with a sad heart that we announce a good friend to many dummy stamp collectors has passed away unexpectedly.



Joann Ruth Lenz
June 1, 1938 - November 19, 2023

Joann had a deep interest and knowledge of dummy and test stamps. She was a charter member of the Dummy Stamps Study Group and contributed to, and edited many of, these Newsletters. She also had a love for plate number coils (PNC) that were first issued in 1981.

Joann was a member of the United States Stamp Society for 33 years, joining in 1990. She was elected to the USSS Board of Governors in 1995 and served as Secretary for over 20 years. Many of you likely met Joann at one of the USSS annual meetings - Joann was known as "The Purple Lady" as she always wore purple. In 2009, Joann was presented the USSS George W. Brett Century of Service Award for her extraordinary dedication to the USSS.

Many of us who were first introduced to test stamps by the late Alfred "Tag" Boerger likely came into contact with Joann about the same time. She was an early dummy stamp collector and had a wonderful collection of test stamps.

Joann and her husband Kurt (who passed in 2021) exhibited portions of their test stamp collection and won several major awards for their single frame exhibit. They won a vermeil medal for their exhibit titled "Early U.S. Dummy and Test Stamps of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing" at the 2009 APS "AmeriStamp Expo". In addition to the vermeil award, they also received the "Most Popular" exhibit award. After expanding the exhibit, it was a Gold Medal winner at the 2011 APS show. While links to those exhibit pages were included in the Summer 2011 DSSG Newsletter, we plan to show each of the 16 exhibit pages in a future DSSG Newsletter.

Joann was a member of the APS for 50 years, serving as a Director at Large on their Board from 2007 to 2011. Joann also chaired the APS Nicholas Carder Volunteer Award Committee and was an original member of the APS Campaign for Philately committee.

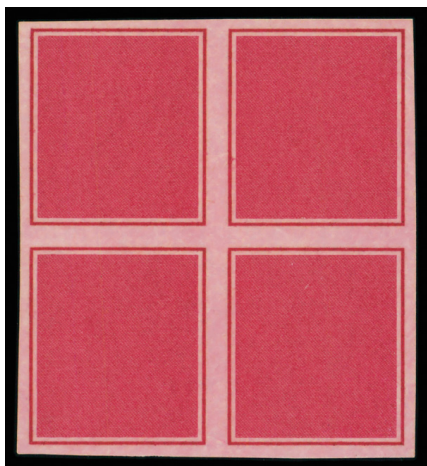
Joann and her husband Kurt were prolific collectors and exhibitors. Besides dummy stamps, their interests included the Liberty Series, tagging varieties, personalized postage, postal counterfeits, computer vended postage stamps and PNC's. The "Lenz Paper Variety" of the 29¢ Mount Rushmore coil (Scott 2523d) was discovered by Joann in 1991 and named in her honor.

Joann was well known as a mentor to others who shared her collecting interests. She maintained several web sites with images and information about her interests... this link will take you to them: <http://stampsjoann.net>. Joann will be missed by many.

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Recent Auction Realizations

On October 24 & 25, 2023 Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions, LLC held Sale - 2006 - Kelleher Club Sale. There was a Buyer's Premium of 20% for this sale.



Lot 3630 ** BLOCK. TD94A. Test Stamp, 1954, B.E.P. framed rectangle design, carmine, imperf (Scott TD94A), block of 4, o.g., never hinged (fingerprints on gum), Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$450.00. Realized \$150.00.

On October 31 and November 1 & 2, 2023 Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc. held Sale 1297. There was a Buyer's Premium of 18% for this sale.

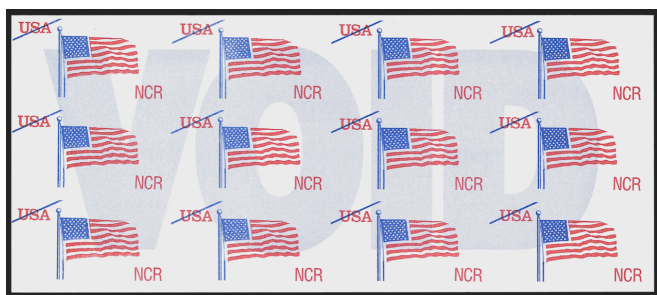


Lot 1263 ★★田 “For Testing Purposes Only”, \$1 & \$2 Test Booklets (Scott TDB13-TDB15). Each complete and unexploded, No. TDB14 panes with no perforated stapling tab, No. TDB15 with panes inverted; each cover with “Dummy” handstamp, No. TDB13 with edge markings for machine adjustments, No. TDB14 with black felt pen lines on back cover as usual, Very Fine group of test booklets. Photo. SCV \$500.00. Realized \$140.00.

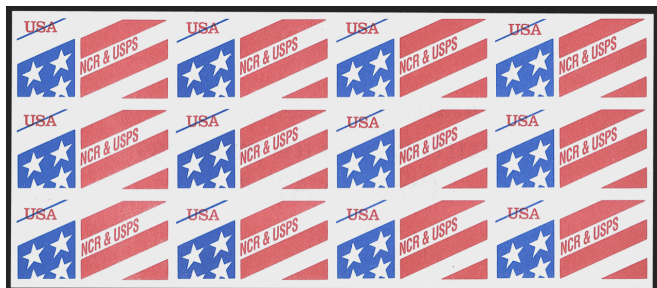


Lot 1264 ★★田 (no denomination) Red and Black, Test Booklet. Pane of eight, rich color, Very Fine, reportedly printed by Avery Denison in the 1970s. Photo. E. \$300.00 - \$400.00. Realized \$150.00.

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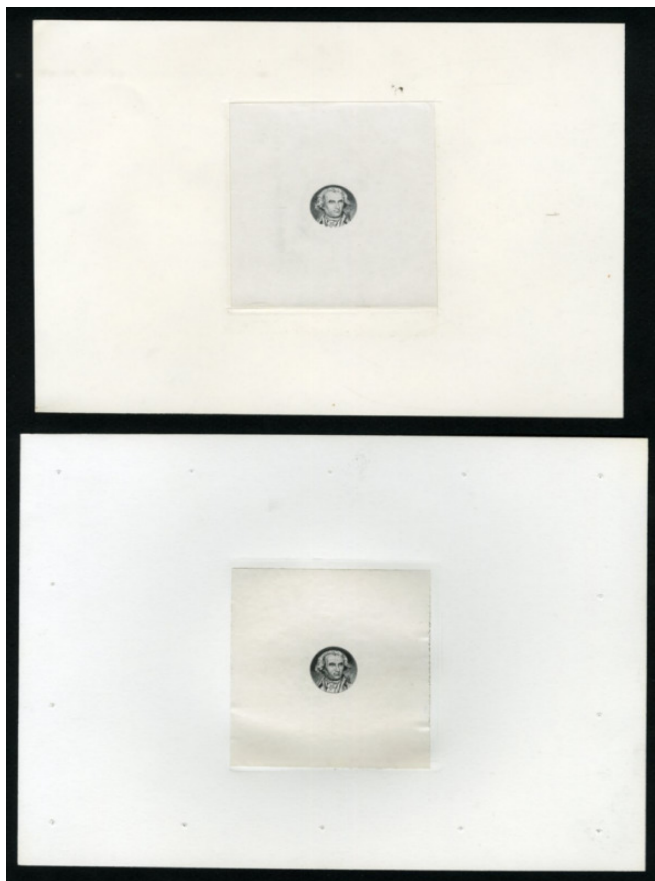


Lot 62 P TD130FP 1993 George Clinton, two different stage proofs of center only in black, each card mounted, v.f., extremely rare (Cat No. TD130FP). Photo. Catalogue ??, Realized \$450.00. (Ed. Note: These were Scott #TD130F-E5 catalog value \$350.00 and TD130F-E7 catalog value \$350.00.)



Lot 1265 ★★田 (no denomination) Waving Flag, Test Booklet Panes (TD84Bc, TD84De). One pane of each, without gum as issued, Very Fine and scarce, unpriced in Scott, ex Undersander. Photo. E. \$300.00 - \$400.00. Realized \$325.00.

On November 7 & 8, 2023 Cherrystone Auctions Sale #1123. There was a Buyer's Premium of 15% for this sale.



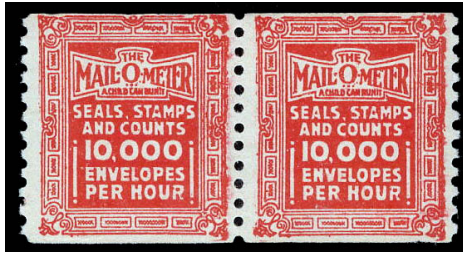
On November 22, 2023 Vance Auctions Ltd. held Sale #365. There was no Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 3939 TD29, Rarely offered TEST STAMP FOR OFFSET PRINTING with Minerva facing left & text reversed. XF, NG. Has 2021 Philatelic Foundation Certificate graded "XF-S 95". Photo. Estimate 900.00+ \$Cdn. Realized 675 \$Cdn. (\$495.00 USD).

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On December 8 & 9, 2023 Golden Oak Auctions held an auction. There was a 20% Buyers Premium for this sale.



Lot 1209 ** TD60A Test Stamp, 1922, Mail-O-Meter ("10,000 Envelopes Per Hour") coil, red (Scott TD60A), pair, o.g., never hinged, Fine to Very Fine, with 2023 P.F. certificate, *extremely rare*. PHOTO. Scott \$750.00. Not sold.



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>