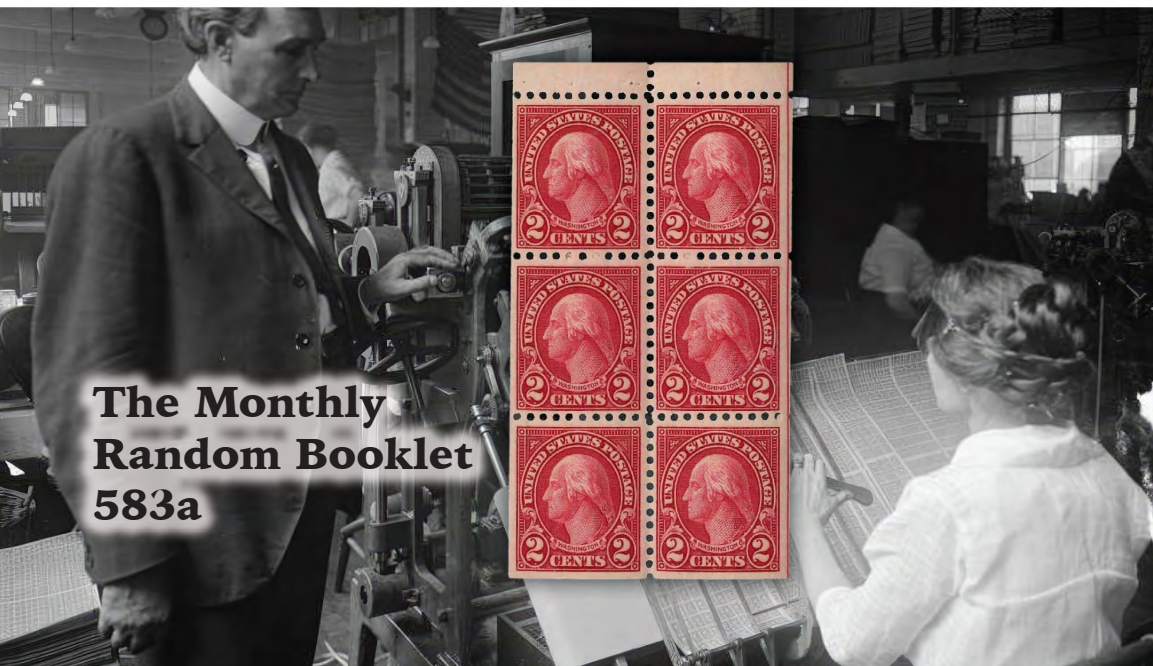




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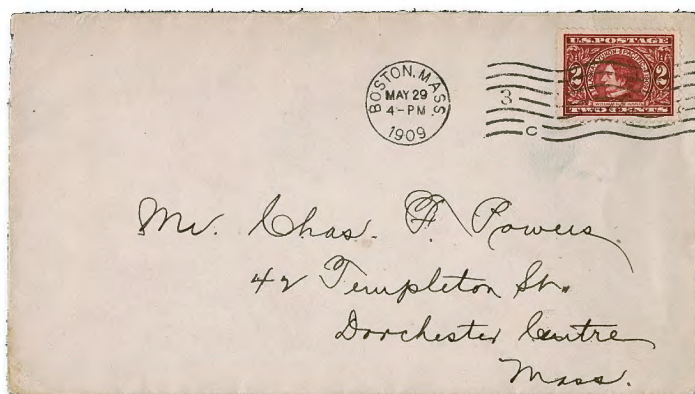
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*the journal of the United States Stamp Society*

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## Society News

### **Andrew S. Kelley and Gregory Shoults to Co-Chair the Washington-Franklin Head Issues Committee**

Gerald “Jerry” Nylander had served as the Chairman of this committee for twelve years prior to his untimely passing in January of this year. His work was greatly appreciated, and he will be sorely missed.

In what I believe may be a break in tradition, I have decided to appoint Andrew Kelley and Gregory Shoults as committee co-chairmen. Each is eminently qualified for the position, and each will bring a different perspective to it.

Andrew began collecting stamps in fourth grade when he purchased a beginner stamp album from his school’s book club. He became fascinated with the Washington-Franklins after attending the APS Summer Seminar as a teenager. With mentorship from Larry Weiss and many others, he assembled a youth exhibit of the two-cent Washington-Franklin head, which he exhibited nationally and internationally. More recently, Andrew has written extensively about the Washington-Franklins and Washington-Franklin era postal history. He also assembled a large gold medal exhibit of the offset-lithographed Washington-Franklins. Andrew is an active member of many philatelic organizations, including the APS, where he serves on the expert committee; the Auxiliary Markings Club, where he edits the quarterly journal; and the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show, where he serves on the show committee. Andrew lives in Denver, Colorado, with his wife and children.

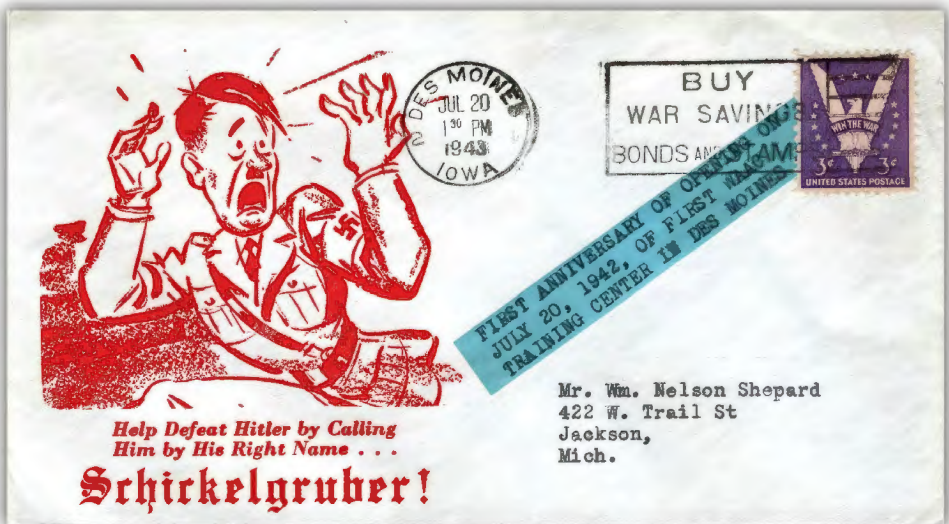
Greg’s grandfather, a collector and an employee at Goodyear Tire & Rubber for 45 years, got him started in stamp collecting. He mainly collected United States, but also a few foreign countries due to business contacts throughout the world. Greg attended local shows as a teenager and developed a basic United States collection. He still remembers his mother being mad at his grandfather for allowing him to buy a stamp for \$25. Having sat dormant for a number of years, Greg started up again in his mid-20s when he began a teaching career. He collected United States for a number of years without any real direction. It wasn’t until he had attended a show at Garfield Perry and a long-time dealer, Richard Champaign, took some time to discuss with him the challenge of collecting specific issues. Richard talked about certain issues of the Washington and Franklin coil stamps that were a real challenge. He advised looking for the difficult-to-find issues first and the common issues later, no matter how expensive the more difficult issues were. He challenged Greg to find a nice mint 453 joint line pair, and the following year Greg produced a used joint line pair of 453, to his surprise. From that point on, Greg started collecting the Washington and Franklin coil issues. Determining the different types as well as the fakes and forgeries of the many different issues is what caught his interest. His first attempt at exhibiting started around 2006 and began with a single frame of the 1910 coil issues. Since then, he has developed several different single frame exhibits on various issues of the Third Bureau coil issues. A few years later, he started with a multi-frame exhibit and since has had the opportunity to exhibit at many of the WSP shows

across the country as well as three international shows. His first international show was Brazil in 2013, where he also served as commissioner for the United States. He also exhibited at New York 2016 and most recently at CAPEX 2022 in Toronto, Canada, where he served as commissioner for the United States. For the past several years, Greg has served as exhibits chairman for the Garfield Perry stamp show.

— Nicholas Lombardi, President



Letters to the Editor



### Regarding “The 3-Cent Win the War Stamp”

I very much enjoyed Paul Holland’s (3-Cent Win the War stamp) article in the March 2023 issue of *The United States Specialist*. I thought I would share with you a picture of a cover I recently acquired with the 3-cent stamp and an amusing cachet taking aim at Hitler. I used to live in Des Moines, so I found this cover doubly appealing.

I plan to include a truncated version of a write-up I did on this cover (see “Hitler is a Schickelgruber!”, 1943 at <https://www.mypostalhistory.com/post/hitler-is-a-schickelgruber-1943>) in the Greater Philadelphia Stamp and Collectors Club March news-

letter (circulation 56!). I give a shout-out to both *The United States Specialist* and Paul’s article.

**Mike Wilson**

USSS #17371

Doylestown, Pennsylvania

### Regarding “First United States ½¢ Postage Due Stamp and the 3rd Class Mail Rate Increase of 1925”

*The U.S. Specialist*, February 2023, page 65

Correct: Bulk third-class rate first announced and started on April 15, 1925. This rate, since it was a new one, could not have increased on that date. But, regular third-class rate did increase to 1 1/2¢ on April 15, 1925.



So Figure 2 stating "Bulk rate increase" is wrong. This same incorrect phrase restated at bottom of page 67 text.

I'm confused by two sentences. On page 74 under Covers he says Even though J68 was in use for about 5 years, it is difficult to find J68 on cover... But then on page 83 in the summary he says: "J68 was in exclusive use for about 5 years, and many examples can be found on cover."



Finally, on page 70 in the Figure 10 description, he says, (I believe correctly) about "the modernization of the outline of the '1'." But then he contradicts himself at the top of page 71 when he says: "The J68

postage due stamp was used for approximately 5 years until it was replaced by the more modern 1/2 design in 1930. Scott J69." True, it was replaced, but, to me, the new design is not more modern.

**Tony Wawrukiewicz**

USSS #13995

Portland, Oregon

**Author's reply:** I want thank Tony for bringing these concerns to my attention. He is right about my cavalier use of the word bulk when it was the actual regular third class rate that was changed abruptly on April 15, 2025; although the bulk rate change was announced on that date. So the word "bulk" should be replaced by "third class" in six locations (page 65, Figures 1, 2, 6, and 7 captions, and page 67.).

As far as the statements about J68 availability on cover, J68 on cover alone or with another denomination of postage due stamp making up a receipt for a deficient rate are difficult to find. Multiples of J68 used to document the payment of 1-cent, 2-cent, and 3-cent postal deficiencies are more common and easier to find. So the statement in the summary "many examples can be found on cover" needed to be caveated with the previous statement about single and multiple J68 stamp use.

As to whether J69 is a more modern design is probably up to the perception of the beholder, but to me it is a cleaner more easily readable design."

**Harry K. Charles, Jr.**

USSS #15663

Laurel, Maryland

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## Missing Essays and Proofs from the American Banknote Company Archives of the Overrun Countries Series (909- 921)

opinion by **Thomas K. Schilling**

✉ [cbtkschilling@yahoo.com](mailto:cbtkschilling@yahoo.com)

genealogy and census research by **Peggy Bartholomew**

*Note – This is an update of James H. Patterson’s article “American Banknote Company Proofs and Essays for the Overrun Countries Series of 1943-44,” printed December 2003 in The United States Stamp Specialist. James H. Patterson is the Chairman of the Essay-Proof Committee. This article was written with his consent.*

Whatever became of the essays and proofs produced by the American Banknote Company (ABNC)? During bankruptcy auctions conducted by Cherrystone and Christies (both in 1998), it was discovered that most of the ABNC archive material was missing from 1935 through 1963. It is believed that only two sets of the Overrun Country Series (ORCS) stamp and frame essays, proofs (small and large), and color trials exist. I have yet to be able to access the National Archives (Treasury Department) in Silver Springs, Maryland, to obtain a copy of the contract between the BEP and ABNC. ABNC also printed essays of unapproved designs from a contest sponsored by the Post Office Department. These designs were produced by the Society of Illustrators and the Citizens Advisory Stamp Committee. A portion of these essays was highlighted in the Ken Lawrence article published in *The American Philatelist* (January 1998) as “The US Stamps that went to War.” This article was the basis for my interest in building my exhibits of the ORCS.

Clearance Brazer published a photograph of a die frame essay of the ORCS in the *Essay-Proof Journal* (April 1948) in a very short notice attributing the specimen courtesy of G.S. Knoth. He contributed that Alfonzo E. Foringer designed the frame and Arthur C. Vogel was the frame engraver. How did Knoth obtain the die frame essay from the ABNC archives? In a December 2003 article in the *Stamp Specialist*, author James Patterson stated that in 1948, Knoth’s holdings of ABNC essay and proof material were undoubtedly the largest private holding of such material known. How was this true? He lived the life of a middle-class citizen. Who was G.S. Knoth? What was his connection to the ABNC?

G.S. Knoth was born in Celina, Ohio, on September 28, 1902. He went by the nickname “Dutch,” maybe due to his Netherlands ancestry. Genealogy and census records show he was named Godfrey Sabastian Knoth. He married the former Ann Lawrence McConnell. Dutch worked as a shipping clerk, and Ann worked as an administrative

clerk for the P.B. Paper Company. I don't know if the ABNC bought paper from the P.B. Paper Company. If so, this might have been his connection to the ABNC.

Knoth moved his family to Miami, Florida, in 1935 at age 33. He starts a philatelic business in the AI DuPont Building at 169 East Flagler Street. In 1941, Dutch registered for the draft as the law required. He was assigned Order Number 11492 and Serial Number 231. He was never drafted or served in the military in any capacity during World War II.

In early 1944, he joined the Essay – Proof Society and was assigned member number 266. Knoth listed himself as a dealer, but he was also a collector. He paid for many full-page ads in the *Essay – Proof Journal* from 1944 through 1955. Knoth sold ABNC essays and proofs of Luxembourg, Yugoslavia, Haiti, Dutch Indies, Curacao, Liberia, Congo, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Salvador, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia, Surinam, Uruguay, Venezuela, and China. He also specialized in mounting and writing up collections for his clients. A catalog of his essay and proof collection was featured in the *Essay – Proof Journal* dated January 1950. It did not contain any essays or proofs from the Overrun Countries Series. By this time, he has sold his ORCS holdings.

Knoth was a charter member and past president of the Miami Stamp Club, a member of the University Stamp Club, and a founding member of the Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs. In June 1964, Godfrey Sebastian (Dutch) Knoth passed at age 61 after a six-month illness. Dutch bequeathed his valuable stamp and philatelic reference collection to the Miami Public Library.

ABNC started a steep financial decline beginning in the mid to late 1980s. They had borrowed heavily to finance expansion operations in Europe, Australia, and Asia. Substantial investments were also made in security technology relating to holograms and micro-printing. The company became over-leveraged and deep in debt. ABNC began losing multiple millions of dollars year after year.

ABNC contracted Cherrystone Auctions in early 1998 to sell some archival material. Only two lots of ORCS material were offered. First was a large die proof of the frame. The second was a complete large die proof set. I believe that both lots became part of the W. Curtis Livingston collection. ABNC also contracted Christie's Auctions to sell archival material in 1998. According to Christie's, no ORCS material was available at this auction. This was repeated in early 2006 when ABNC was declaring bankruptcy. Cherrystone publicly stated that no ORCS material was available for this auction.

Ivey and Mader Philatelic Auctions, in 2002, brought two lots of ORCS material to the market. Neither lot sold at auction. Lot 2989 consisted of five earlier essay designs. The five essays were slightly larger than the issued stamp and were not approved. This lot was purchased post-auction by James Patterson of the United States Stamp Society. Lot 2990 was a card of mounted essays in the final format. This card contained all of the approved essays, with the exception of Poland and Czechoslovakia. The card contained two disapproved essays of Poland and one of Czechoslovakia. I believe this lot was purchased for W. Curtis Livingston. In August 2003, Cherrystone Auctions listed lots 249 – 253, a second set of the same five essays offered a year earlier by Ivey and Mader. Lot 254 was an approved essay of the Netherlands as issued.



In 2003, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History was invited to visit the ABNC to review any records they may be interested in purchasing. A purchase was realized with the material being transported to Washington, DC. The only item relating to the ORCS is a thank you letter from the BEP to the ABNC dated December 31, 1943.

So, how did the Knoth essays and proofs end up in the spectacular essay and proof collection of W. Curtis Livingston? When Livingston (Wall Street Multi-millionaire) first started collecting essays and proofs, he hired Missi Purser of Purser and Associates as his purchasing agent. Missi did the detective work to track down the owners of essays and proofs that she thought essential to the Livingston collection and then made the owner a financial offer that could not be refused. Money was no object to Livingston in assembling this collection. This world-class collection was the culmination of a twenty-five-year spending spree (according to Livingston in the catalog forward). The Livingston collection effectively locked up the 20<sup>th</sup>-century world essay and proof market for at least thirty-five years. No other collector could compete with the amount of money he was willing to spend.

*The Livingston Collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Essays and Proofs* finally came to auction in June 2006 by Shreves Philatelic Galleries. The sale catalog is still a must-have for every essay and proof collector. In my opinion, it is one of the most descriptive, well-written, researched, and photographed catalogs ever produced. The ORCS material consisted of lot 1263E large die frame essay on

India, lot 1264E (909-921) essays mounted on card with two unapproved versions of Poland and one of Czechoslovakia. There is no approved Poland in this lot. William Langs may have purchased those two lots. Lot 1265P is a complete set of thirteen large die proofs on wove paper. Lot 1266P is an incomplete set of large die proofs on wove paper missing Greece and Yugoslavia. I believe this lot was purchased by Charles and Tracy Shreve and donated to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in their name. Lot 1267P is a complete immaculate set of small die proofs on wove paper. At the back of the catalog was a hidden surprise! Lot 1507E is a large group of 1915 – 1949 commemorative essays, an immense photograph accumulation of wash artist's models, largely unaccepted designs, and a total of 191 items with only minor duplication. Also noted are five ORCS designs from the ABNC archives. I would have loved to have looked at that lot. No picture of the lot was printed for the catalog.

In November 2013, Siegel Auctions placed on sale two lots of ORCS material. Lot 3255E was two color ink (blue and red) die proofs using the flag of France. Lot 3256E was a large die frame essay that William Langs may have purchased. Lot 3233E was not purchased during the auction, but Henry Gitner may have put in a post-auction offer. I bought one of the two from Gitner during NOJEX 2016. At that time, I also purchased a complete set of what looked like essays (minus Korea) from Gitner, which he claimed were from the estate of Sol Glass. Gitner claimed that they came from the BEP and not ABNC. APS certified them as photographs taken professionally for Sol Glass for a book he planned to write.

In November 2015, Siegel Auction placed on sale another two lots of ORCS material. Lot 2422 was a large die frame essay, and Lot 2423 was a complete set of small die proofs on wove.

Two of the lots sold by Shreves Galleries in 2006 reappeared for sale by Kelleher's Auctions in February 2021 from the estate of William Langs. Lot 1079 was an incomplete set of essays on card, including two unapproved Poland essays and one of Czechoslovakia. Only the approved Poland essay is missing. Lot 1080 was a large die frame essay. I believe both lots currently reside on the west coast of Florida and lead a very leisurely lifestyle with their new owner.

Traditionally, designers and engravers are allowed to keep one example of all completed work for portfolio purposes. It is unknown if Alfonzo Earl Foringer (1879-1948) or Arthur C. Vogel (1893-1959) were allowed to do so with all the secrecy surrounding the production of the ORCS. It will never be known as private purchases are not recorded, and auction purchases are not revealed due to privacy concerns.

I'm seeking feedback on this article. Please contact me if you can correct a mistake or provide additional information. Thank you for taking the time to read my first philatelic article.

I am also searching for philatelic collectors interested in the ORCS (909-921) to join a study group sanctioned by the USSS. You do not have to be a member of the USSS or APS to join, but it would benefit you in the long run. If you exhibit any material, you need to join AAPE. Contact me at the above email address.

I extend special thanks to Ken Lawrence, James Patterson, Paul Holland, and many other philatelic writers for their previous research and articles, which have inspired me to write, continuing the philatelic tradition.

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*Obituary: Stamps Magazine* (July 1964), *Florida Philatelist* (July 1964), *Palm Beach Post* (June 1964), *Journal and Courier Newspapers*, Lafayette, Indiana (June 1964).

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# 1948 California Gold Centennial Stamp

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*Please accept with my best wishes this first day cover to which is affixed the 3-cent postage stamp issued today in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the discovery of gold in California. The design is a reproduction of Sutter's Mill at Coloma, where James W. Marshall's discovery started the rush of the Argonauts.*

— From a signed January 24, 1948 letter sent with a favor first day cover of the 3¢ California Gold Centennial stamp by Postmaster General Jesse M. Donaldson to the Truman White House

The discovery of gold by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848, and the resulting California Gold Rush became a transformative event in American history, unleashing a massive migration of people to California. Curiously, following the Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was not actually signed until February 2, 1848, before news of the discovery of gold became known. This treaty formally ceded control of California to the United States, along with other vast tracts of land in the West gained by the war. Fueled by its rapid growth in population and the wealth generated by the gold rush, California became a state in 1850.





Figure 1. Design submitted by the California Centennial Celebration Commission (photo essay courtesy American Philatelic Research Library).



Figure 2. BEP's prospector panning for gold stamp design (not used).



Figure 3. BEP's Marshall at Sutter's Mill stamp design (not used).

Requests for a special commemorative stamp celebrating the centennial of the discovery of gold in California were made as early as 1946, and on November 27, 1947, the Post Office Department announced that this had been approved.<sup>1</sup> A suggested design for the stamp was submitted by the California Centennial Celebration Commission.<sup>1</sup> Shown in Figure 1, this provides a view of Sutter's Mill, with the denomination located on a gold pan placed over a crossed pickaxe and shovel at

the upper right, dates in the bottom corners, and a paste-up at the upper left with the words "California Gold Centennial Sutter's Mill, Coloma, where James W. Marshall's discovery started rush of the Argonauts." Argonauts, of course, refers to the band of heroes in Greek mythology who accompanied Jason in his quest to find the Golden Fleece.

Two other designs for the California Gold Centennial stamp were developed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). The first, shown in Figure 2, shows a prospector panning for gold in a stream, and the second, in Figure 3, shows James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill, Coloma. Both also feature the words "Gold Discovered in California" with the dates.<sup>1</sup>

The final design selected for the stamp very closely resembles the design submitted by the California Centennial Cele-

bration Commission. The only notable change is combining the dates and “U. S. Postage” onto a banner now placed below the image showing Sutter’s Mill. The selected BEP model by Charles R. Pickering with an added surrounding border is shown in Figure 4. Matthew D. Fenton engraved the vignette and ribbon on the stamp die, with the outline frame, lettering and numerals by A. W. Christensen. This model was approved by Postmaster General Jesse M. Donaldson on December 18, 1947, and the die proof on January 2, 1948.<sup>1</sup> Six printing plates numbered 23772-23777 were used.



**Figure 4.** Final design selected for the California Gold Centennial stamp (image courtesy American Philatelic Research Library).

The first day ceremony in Coloma, California, was held on January 24, 1948, in sight of the spot where James W. Marshall first discovered gold near Sutter’s Mill. The first sheet of stamps was presented to Earl Warren, the popular governor of California. Warren is shown in Figure 5 in a publicity photo taken by the California Centennials Commission with a young “prospector.” Curiously, Earl Warren was chosen later that year to be Thomas E. Dewey’s running mate in the 1948 presidential election, with California becoming an important tipping point in President Harry S. Truman’s hard-fought re-election campaign.

I’m fortunate to have a January 24, 1948, favor first day cover (FDC) for the California Gold Centennial stamp. It includes a letter signed by Postmaster General Jesse M. Donaldson that was sent to Reathel Odum at the Truman White House as shown in Figure 6. She was Harry S. Truman’s secretary from 1936-1945, and once Truman became president following FDR’s death, Odum moved to the White House and became Mrs. Truman’s social secretary. Reathel Odum is shown at her desk in the Truman White House on August 11, 1948, in Figure 7.



**Figure 5.** California Governor Earl Warren poses with a young “prospector” as part of the centennial celebration.



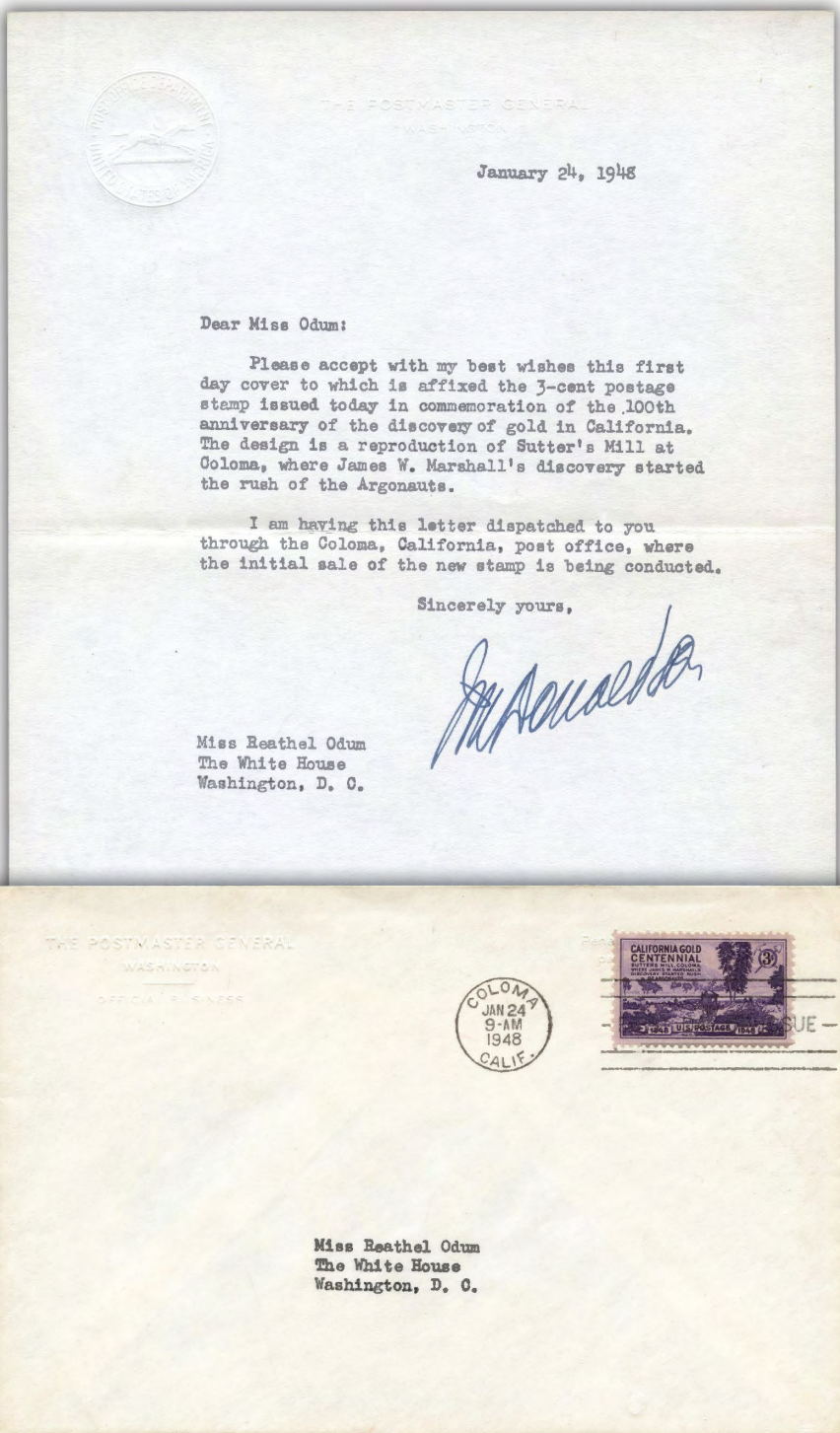


Figure 6. Postmaster General favor first day cover for the California Gold Centennial stamp sent to Reathel Odum at the Truman White House with letter signed by PMG Donaldson.



Going into the 1948 election, things looked terrible for Truman. Besides his low standing in the polls, the Democratic Party was badly split over civil rights and Truman's steadfast policy toward the Soviet Union. At the 1948 convention, the "Dixiecrats" walked out and nominated Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina as the candidate of the States' Rights Democratic Party.

Henry Wallace (FDR's former vice president) was nominated by the left-leaning Progressive Party. Furthermore, in 1946 the Republicans had taken full control of both houses of Congress along with a majority of state governorships.

Dewey was at once the overwhelming favorite, with virtually all polling and political pundits predicting an easy victory. As a consequence, Dewey ran a cautious campaign, often speaking in platitudes and being very careful to avoid controversy. Meanwhile, Truman's feisty and combative campaign style aboard his whistle-stop train tour that crisscrossed the country energized traditional Democrats and appealed to both labor and small farmers.



*Figure 7. Reathel Odum at her desk at the Truman White House.*



*Figure 8. Truman with early edition of the Chicago Daily Tribune.*

THE DEPUTY THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON

January 24, 1948

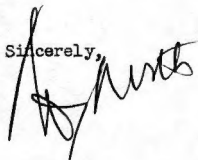
Dr. Billy Bob Felts,  
Judsonia, Arkansas.

Dear Billy Bob:

It is a pleasure for me to send you  
this first day cover bearing the new stamp  
issued to commemorate the one-hundredth  
anniversary of the discovery of gold in  
California.

This stamp is first placed on sale  
today at Coloma, California, where this  
precious metal was first discovered in  
that State.

Sincerely,



THE DEPUTY  
THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON



Dr. Billy Bob Felts,  
Judsonia, Arkansas.

Figure 9. Third Assistant PMG favor first day cover for the California Gold Centennial stamp with signed letter sent by Roy North to Dr. Billy Bob Felts.

In California, even though popular incumbent governor Earl Warren was Dewey's running mate, Truman eked out a win by 0.44% or 17,865 votes out of over 4 million cast. Similarly, Truman carried Illinois by 0.85% or 33,612 votes and Ohio by only 0.24% or 7,107 votes. Had Dewey won these three states, he would have won the election. Since Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats won four states and 39 electoral votes, had Dewey won even two of these three states, the election would have been decided by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. As it was, Truman won re-election in one of the greatest political upsets in American history, leading to his famous pose with an early edition of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Figure 8).

Dewey did not run for president in 1952. Still, he played a key role in supporting General Dwight D. Eisenhower for the Republican presidential nomination and helping get Richard M. Nixon selected as his running mate. After Eisenhower's victory, Earl Warren was appointed Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court and played an important role in many key court decisions.

Finally, Roy North, the Deputy Third Assistant Postmaster General, continued to send favor first day covers with signed letters to his nephew "Billy Bob," and I'm fortunate to have a number of these in my collection. An example of the California Gold Centennial stamp is shown in Figure 9.

Note that this is now addressed to "Dr. Billy Bob Felts" as he had grown up and was now a physician. Roy North and his wife evidently had a long and very close relationship with their nephew Billy Bob as shown by a hometown (Judsonia, Arkansas) newspaper clipping of August 10, 1939, that mentions a visit:

*Billy Bob Felts, who has been visiting aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Roy North in Washington DC the past month, sailed Saturday with Mr. and Mrs. North and family for a visit to the West Indies and the Panama Canal. They will attend the 20th anniversary of the Panama Canal at Balboa, Canal Zone, on August 15.*

Besides close family ties to Billy Bob Felts, this indicates that Roy North (with his family) would have been present at the ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the Panama Canal.<sup>2</sup> As for Billy Bob, he served in the Army in the mid-1940s, graduated from the University of Arkansas (including its medical school), and became a professor of internal medicine (1951-1993) at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

## Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank Scott Tiffney of the American Philatelic Research Library for providing the images used in Figures 1 and 4.

## References

1. Sol Glass, *United States Postage Stamps 1945-1952*, Bureau Issues Association: West Summerville, MA, 1954, pages 75-77.
2. Paul M. Holland, "The 25th Anniversary of the Panama Canal Stamp", *The United States Specialist*, January 2023, pages 24-33.






## Errors, Freaks and Oddities

# U.S. Constitution (Scott 2360) Error Returns Home

**Blank Constitution**

A collector friend from Italy sent me the enclosed photograph of the normal United States 22¢ Signing of the Constitution stamp



The stamp at right appears to be a color-missing error of Scott 2360, the 22¢ Signing of the Constitution stamp of 1987.

of 1987, Scott 2360, and the apparent variety of the same stamp without the manuscript duplicating the U.S. Constitution.

He claims to have found the variety in a stamp mixture. Since my knowledge of U.S. stamps is extremely limited, could you please help him?

Umberto Bellini  
204 Kingswood Court  
Danville, CA 94506

The 22¢ Signing of the Constitution stamp was printed on the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's offset/intaglio D Press. Offset colors account for everything seen on the stamp except the manuscript in the background of the design. Black intaglio printed the handwriting.

In offset lithography, the printed image is offset from the plate cylinder to another cylinder that lays down the impression on the paper. Intaglio refers to a method of printing with the design recessed into a metal plate, with the original engraving being a die.

A black (intaglio) missing error of this stamp is not listed in the Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers or in Stephen Datz's Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps.

However, other combination lithographed and engraved stamps of the period produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing are known with such an error. Scott 2361, the 22¢ Certified Public Accounting stamp issued, is known with the intaglio black missing.

The next logical step for your friend to take is to have the stamp expertized. The expertizing organizations in the United States are the American Philatelic Society, Box 8000, State College, PA 16803; Professional Stamp Experts Inc., 9300 S. Dadeland Drive, Suite 600, Miami, FL 33156; and the Philatelic Foundation, 501 Fifth Ave., Room 1901, New York, NY 10017.

Figure 1. A letter with reply from the December 28, 1998 edition of Linn's Stamp News.

In the December 28, 1998 edition of *Linn's Stamp News*, a letter (Figure 1) detailed the European discovery of an error (Figure 2) in a stamp mixture. The letter sought help for the collector who discovered the variety. The reply offered some production details and suggested the owner's next step would be expertizing.

As evidenced by the 1999 APEX certificate shown in Figure 3, the collector in possession of the stamp followed the suggestion and sent the item to the American Philatelic Expertizing Service, then located in State College, Pennsylvania. The stamp was determined to be genuine.

In February 2023, Fred Steinberg (USSS #17431) of Newton, New Jersey, wrote to share that the Constitution error was coming home. Steinberg reports that he recently acquired the error from Europe via auction and that the variety would be listed in a future edition of the *Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue*.

Congratulations to Fred Steinberg on this acquisition, and thanks for sharing the update and images.



Figure 2. The image on the left is from a color copy of a black-omitted 1987 U.S. Constitution stamp (Scott 2360). The scan on the right shows the issue as designed.

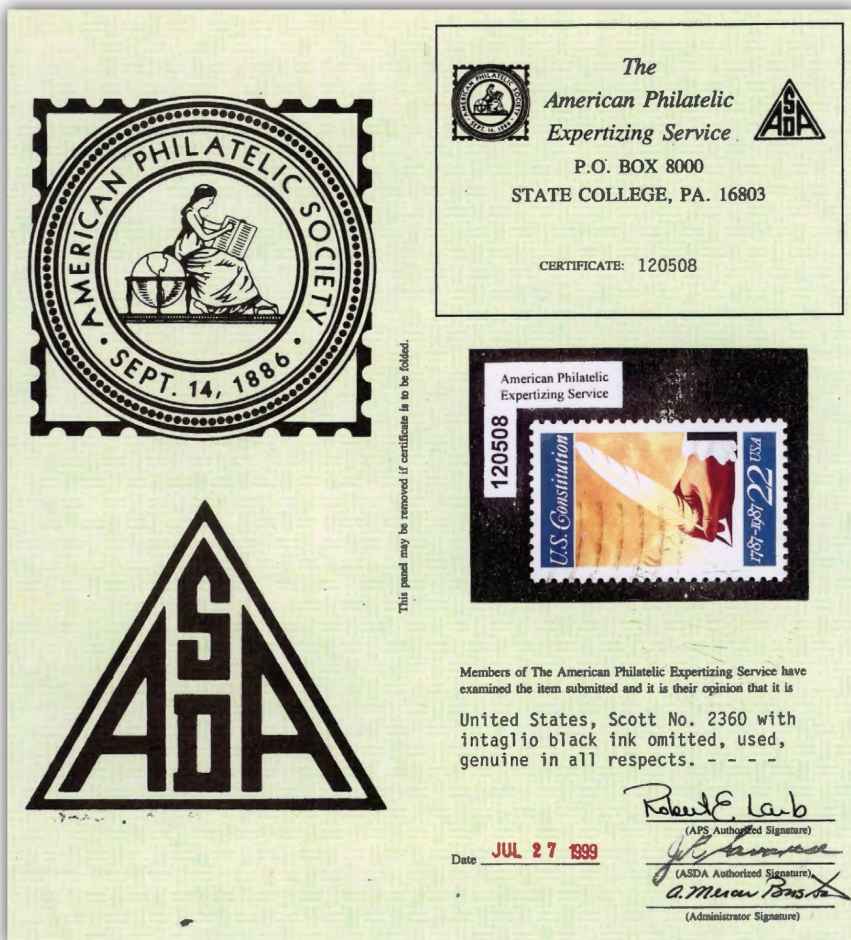


Figure 3.



## Postal History

# The Win the War Stamp: A Postscript

by Jeffrey Shapiro

✉ coverlover@gmail.com

Early in 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, suggested that the US Post Office issue a postage stamp to help the American public support America's war effort on a daily basis.

The result was the 3¢ Win the War stamp, issued on July 4, 1942. With over 20 billion copies printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the 3¢ violet Eagle was used extensively to frank the mail during the World War II era.

While admittedly an unremarkable stamp, the Win the War stamp can be found franking some extraordinary postal history.

NOBUICHI Tsutsumoto  
Bx. #67  
SANTA FE DETENTION CAMP  
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO



MR. IWAO MATSUSHITA

2-12-D

HUNT, IDAHO

Figure 1. A cover sent from one interned Japanese-American to another.



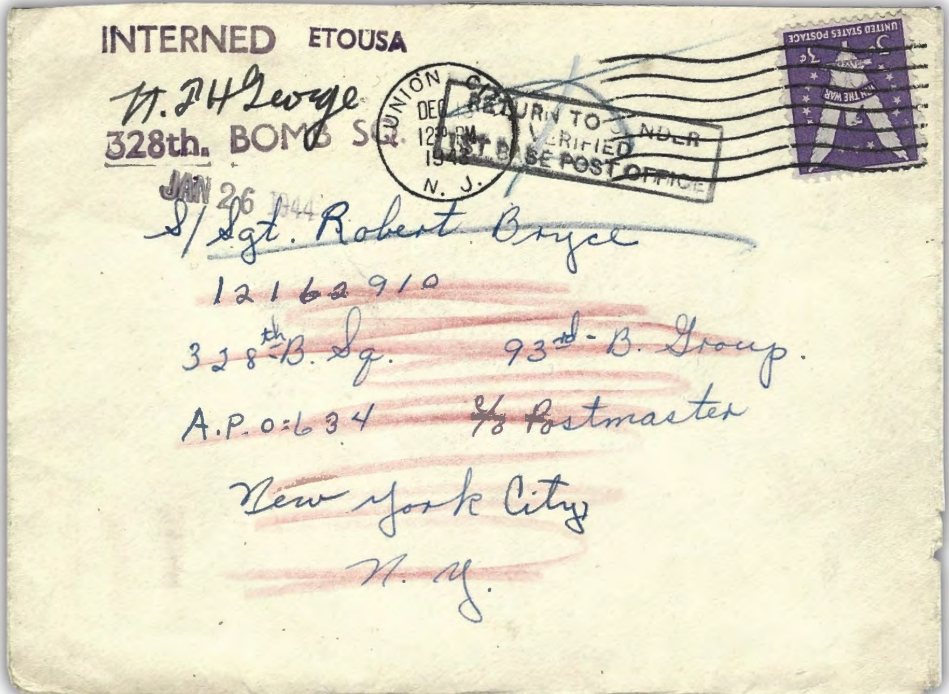


Figure 2. This cover was sent to a military deserter.



Figure 3. An "atomic cover" sent to a "secret" post office box.

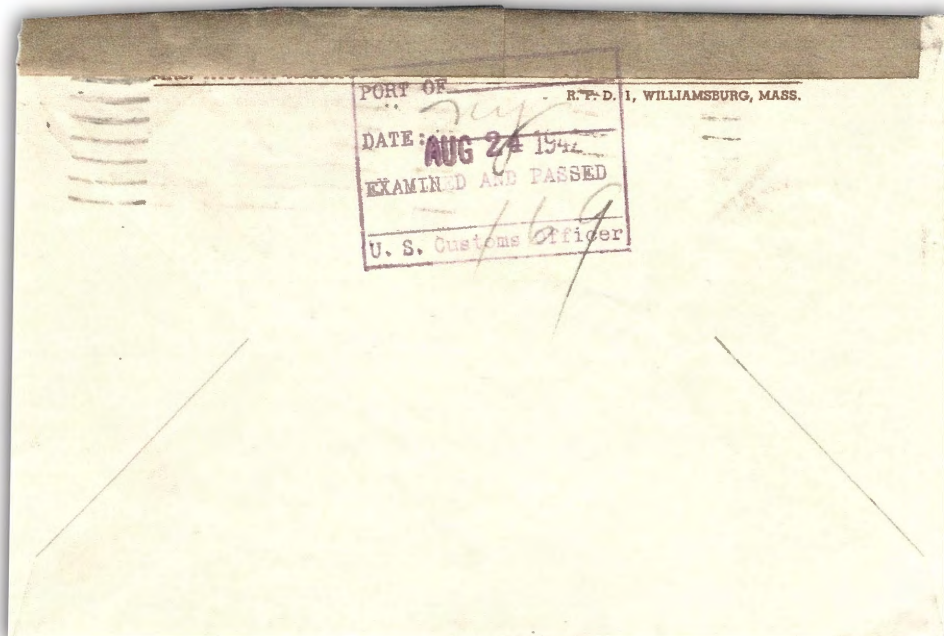
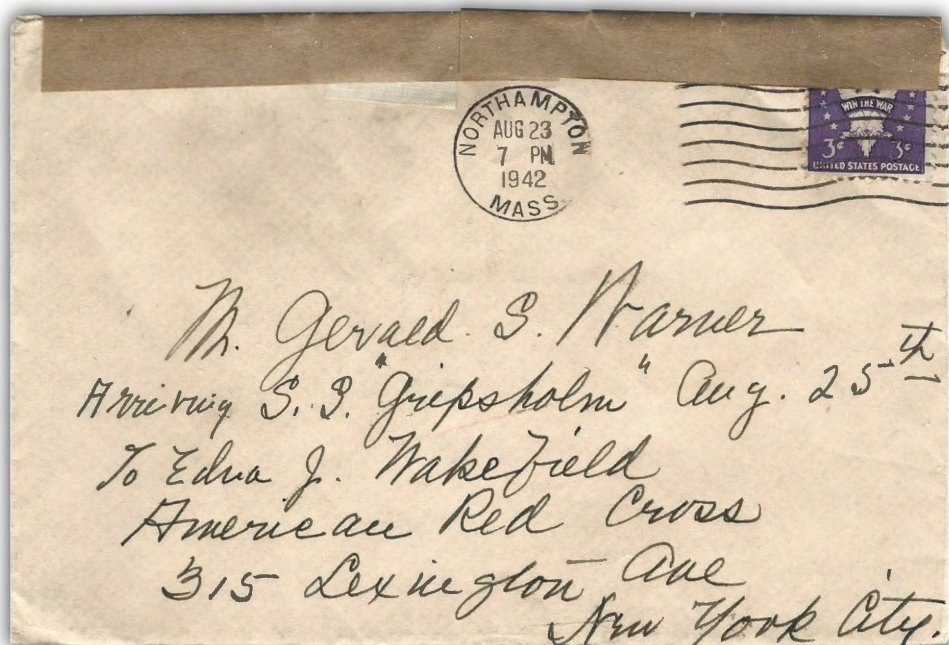


Figure 4. This cover was addressed to a passenger on the SS Gripsholm (below) and bears a "traveler's censorship" mark dated August 24, 1942.







Figure 5. This cover was sent from the French destroyer *Le Terrible*, pictured above.

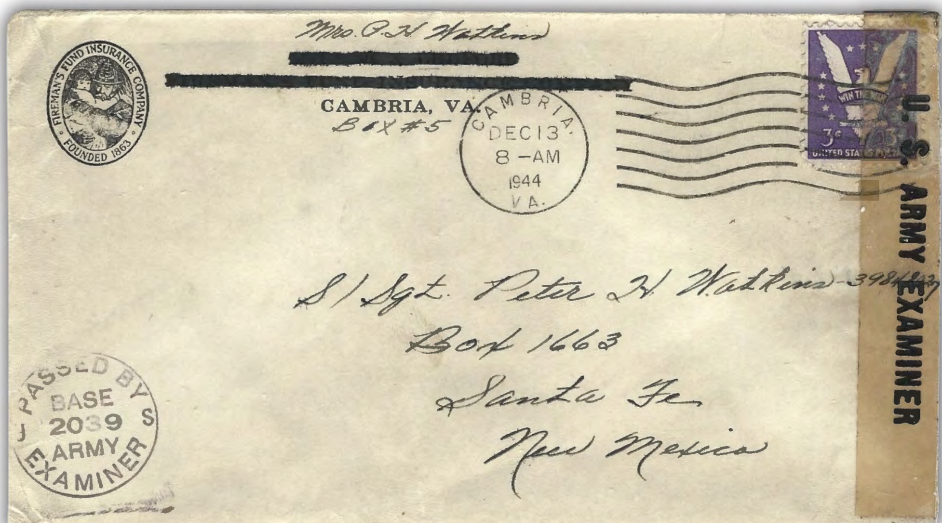


Figure 6. Another "atomic cover" sent to a "secret" post office box in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



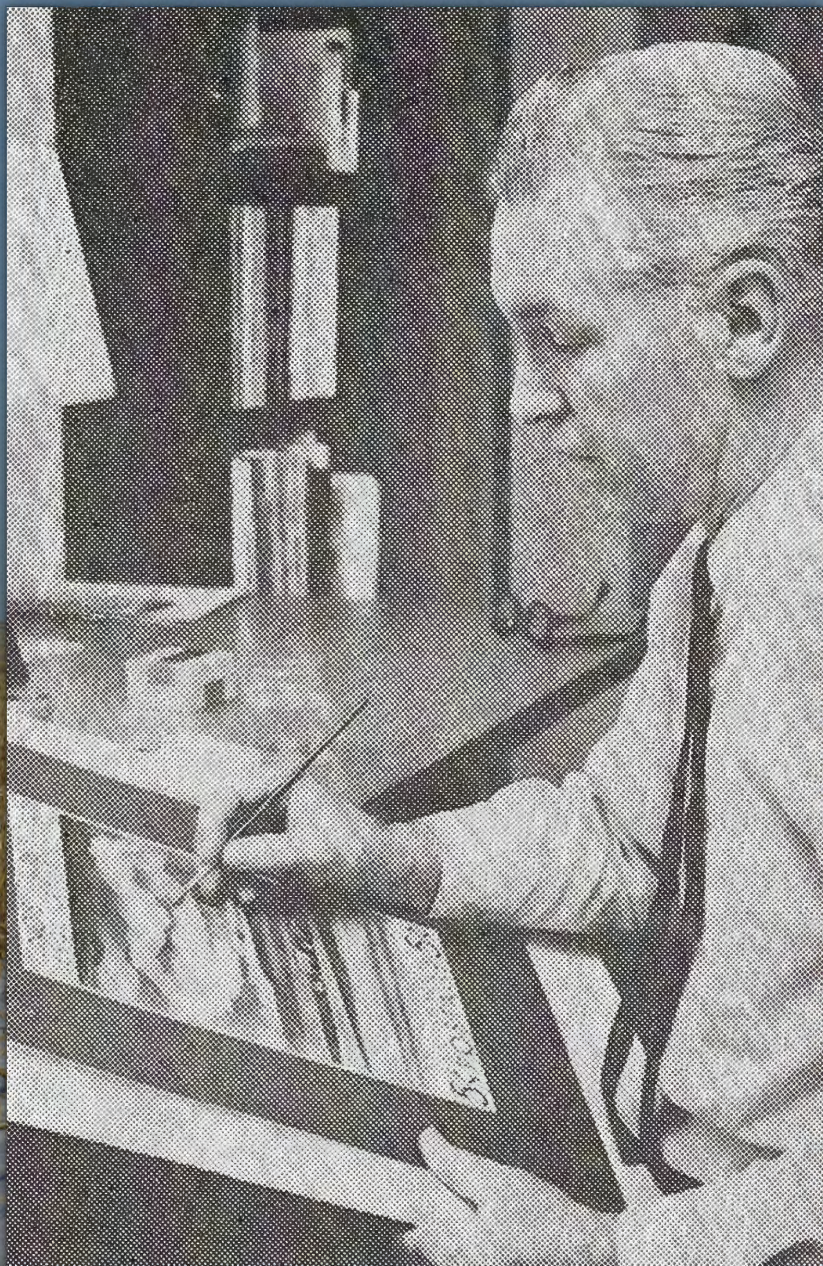


*Vintage Photo of the Month*

## Illinois Statehood

by **Rodney A. Juell**

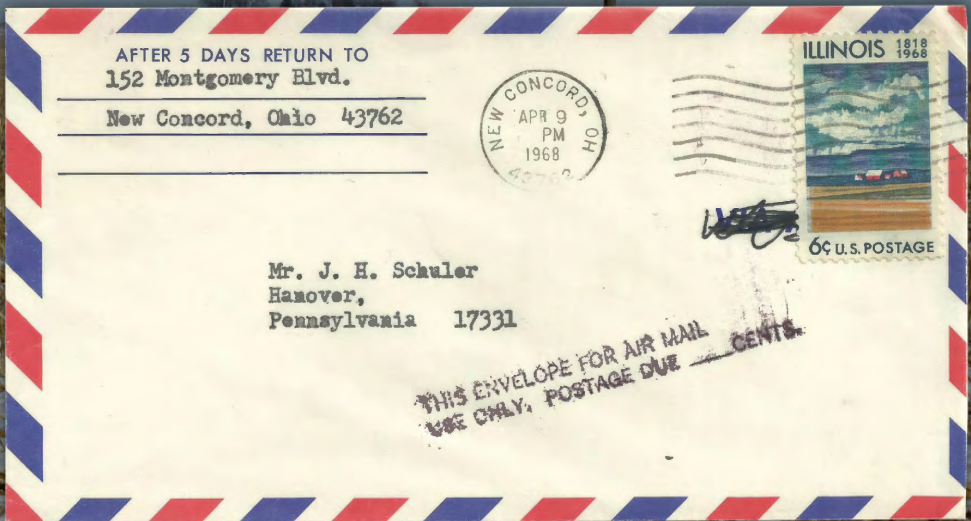
USSS #13852 | P.O. Box 3508, Joliet, IL 60434





This month's photo shows George Barford, associate professor of art at Illinois State University, working on his design for the 1968 Illinois Statehood stamp. The scene is a farm about four miles from his home in Normal, Illinois. Note the drawing is dominated 5¢, which was later changed to 6¢.

A cover is shown below with the Illinois Statehood stamp a couple of months after the stamp was issued. The sender affixed the stamp to an airmail envelope, perhaps unaware that the use of such an envelope required airmail postage, even though the sender had obliterated the "via air mail" marking. Air mail at the time was 8¢. Postage due was correctly charged.





### Fourth Bureau Collecting

## Collecting Thematic Pairs of the 4th Bureau

by **Francis J. Crown, Jr.**

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Some years ago, I began collecting uses of the different 4th Bureau stamps on cover. I soon favored the 14¢ American Indian stamp for the appeal of the design. Little did I realize then that it would lead to a hunt for thematic pairs of the 4th Bureau.

It all began when I was sitting at a dealer's table and asked to see uses of the 4th Bureau on cover. I was really looking for the 14¢ American Indian. I found it is always better to ask for a general topic rather than a specific one because that way, I might find something I like that would otherwise be missed.



*Figure 1. The 14¢ American Indian and 30¢ Buffalo were used on an airmail letter mailed from New York to Saigon, French Indochina, on September 15, 1936. The cover was routed through Europe to French Indochina. The rate was 5¢ by surface to France (airmail service to Europe had not been established) and then by airmail to the destination. The airmail fee from France to Indochina was 39¢ per 1/2 ounce. The total postage was 44 cents.*



As I looked through a small stack of covers, I saw the cover in Figure 1. It was certainly a nice cover with the 14¢ Indian stamp and an unusual destination, but it was not really what I was looking for. I did put the cover aside with several others. After going through the stack of covers, I started looking at the covers I set aside and was soon conversing with the dealer about the cover to Indochina. Eventually, I decided to take the cover along with a few others.

A short time later, I realized that the two stamps: the 14¢ American Indian and 30¢ Buffalo were a thematic pair representing the plains Indians and the buffalo which are closely associated. Thus began my quest for covers with both the Indian and Buffalo stamps (Figure 2). I soon realized that finding such uses was not going to be easy. Finding covers with just the two stamps was exceedingly difficult.



Figure 2. The 14¢ American Indian and 30¢ Buffalo, plus an assortment of other stamps, were used on a letter Mailed from Chicago on October 21, 1928 to meet the first Graf Zeppelin flight leaving Lakehurst, New Jersey, for Germany. Zeppelin postage is \$1.00, plus 5¢ domestic airmail postage total of \$1.05. The cover was overpaid by 2 cents.

Experiencing long dry spells between acquiring covers with the desired Indian and Buffalo pairs, I decided to look for other pairs. I came up with the theme “from sea to shining sea” for the 15¢ Statue of Liberty and the 20¢ Golden Gate pair of stamps (Figure 3).



Little did I realize that these two stamps, which are relatively common on cover either alone or with other stamps, were not often found together. I persisted and now have several examples (Figure 4). But just as with the

Indian and Buffalo, just the pair of stamps on cover is a challenge.

As I prepared this article, I thought of another pairing – the 50¢ Arlington Amphitheater and the \$1 Lincoln Memorial. The theme for this pair is “Monuments of the Nation’s Capital.” To my surprise, one of the “Sea to Shining Sea” covers includes the “Monuments of the Nation’s Capital” pair (Figure 4). I am sure other pairings can be found.

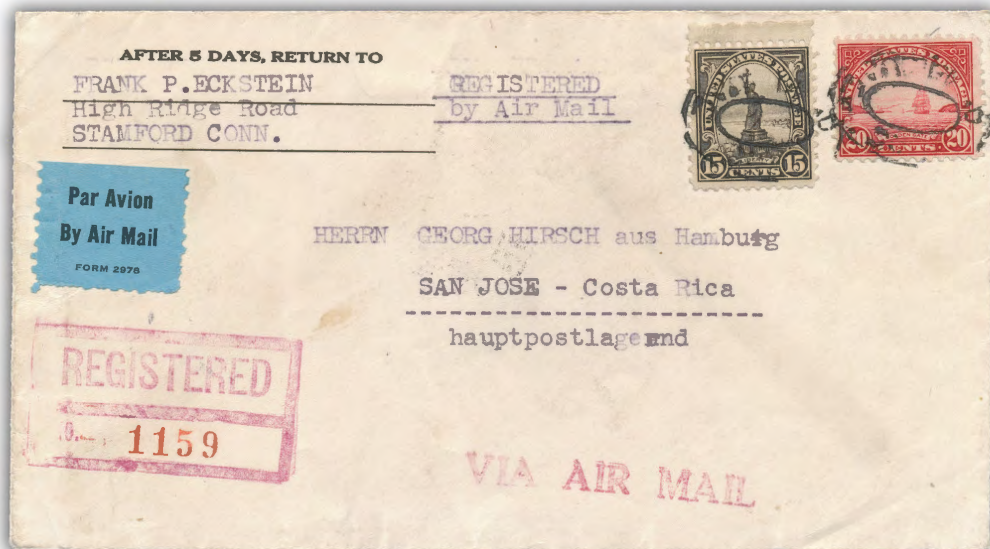


Figure 3. The 14¢ Statue of Liberty and 20¢ Golden Gate were used on a letter mailed from Stamford, Connecticut on February 14, 1939 to Costa Rica, Airmail fee 15¢, registration fee for an article valued between \$25.01 and \$50.00, 20¢. The total postage was 35 cents.



Figure 4. Letter with 15¢ Statue of Liberty and 20¢ Golden Gate plus 50¢ Arlington Amphitheater and \$1 Lincoln Memorial stamps mailed from Los Angeles to Friedrichshafen, Germany, on that leg of the first round the world Graf Zeppelin flight (October-November 1928). Zeppelin postage \$1.80, airmail fee from Orange to Los Angeles 5¢. Total postage \$1.85.





*from the Booklets & Booklet Panes Committee*



## The Monthly Random Booklet 583a

by **Dieter R. Kohler, Ph.D.**

USSS #12538 | Basel, Switzerland

### Introduction

August 27, 1926, saw the appearance of Scott 583a, the first booklet panes printed on the Stickney rotary press. Unfortunately, general collectors and even most specialists did not notice its appearance as the insides and outsides of the booklets looked identical to the booklets issued for the last flat plate issue, Scott 554c. It took a keen eye to actually notice that the contents of the new booklets differed from the old ones. A frantic search for the elusive first run of booklets started once it was known that they might contain a real surprise, rotary press booklet panes that still included flat plate guide lines. Over the following years, many articles on Scott 583a panes appeared in various journals, some correct, some not so much. The not-so-much part was due to no one actually finding a pane with a guide line for many years.

This article allows us to refresh the collective memory and clarify some points made in the original articles about Scott 583a. It also offers a detailed look at a booklet pane variety that has mostly evaded scrutiny and shines a light on a most unusual (and mostly inexplicable) proof sheet. The article has something for every collector grade, starting with entry grade 1 and ending with the "flyspecker" grade 4 (for the grades, see the introductory article<sup>1</sup>).



Some background on rotary booklet panes

In the 1910s, the Stickney rotary press solved the problem of producing large numbers of coil stamps, which made up an increasing part of stamp demands. Less important was handling the demand for booklet stamps. The BEP (Bureau of Engraving and Printing) assigned three rotary plates for booklet panes on December 6, 1916, using a modified layout for the 170 subject rotary coil plates. Allowing for the pane tabs, this created odd 153 subject plates, 8.5 panes wide by 3 panes high. Since two plates were needed on the Stickney press, this resulted in 51 panes per cylinder revolution, 17 panes wide by 3 panes high (three panes would have plate joint lines right down the middle of the panes). The relatively short story of those plates was described in an article by Don Littlefield,<sup>2</sup> but only a little is known about them. The plates were never finished, so the experiment was aborted before it even started. The demand simply wasn't large enough to warrant an increase in booklet stamp production (ongoing flat plate printings could easily fulfill the need), and the BEP was working on building a larger version of the Stickney press that used larger plates capable of printing 400-subject sheet stamps, beginning in July 1919 with Scott 542.

In 1925, the BEP started printing rotary press booklet panes on the larger Stickney presses. Over a three-year period, 14 plates were used for Scott 583a. The BEP only recorded the number of plate impressions but not the perforation gauge applied by the two-way perforator. Hence, exact printing quantities for Scott 583a (perforation 10) and Scott 634d (perforation 11 by 10.5) panes cannot be determined since some plates were used for both issues.

Table 1. Plate Printing History for Scott 583a

First to press	Plate number	Impressions	Reported panes (1962)	Largest known percentage	
				at upper left	at lower left
07-24-25	17450	15947	5	-	60%
	17451	15948	3	-	65%
05-15-26*	18550	30996	4	-	45%
	18551	30995	5	-	35%
07-09-26	18662**	454716	29	20%	-
	18663**	454715	23	25%	30%
07-27-26	18695	14763	0	-	-
	18696	14763	0	30%	-
10-04-26	18697**	362181	9	40%	60%
	18698**	362181	15	40%	55%
08-23-26	18705**	300600	11	40%	70%
	18706**	300600	8	30%	30%
09-13-26	18708**	115370	5	40%	-
04-19-27	18710**	119161	8	40%	-

\* Plates 17450 and 17451 were on a second press run for two days just before this date.

\*\* also used for Scott 634d.

Table 1 includes the number of reported panes with partial plate numbers in a survey from BIA members in 1962.<sup>3</sup> Since then, a few more 583a plate number panes were reported, and the 1962 numbers did not correct for misidentified plate numbers. Impression numbers in Table 1 include both 583a and 634d panes.

Miscut booklet panes showing some percentages of the plate number at left exist for almost all plates. None are reported with partial plate numbers at right. Most examples are from plates 18662 and 18663. Currently not reported is plate number 18695, and examples of plates 18550 and 18551 have not been seen for decades. If a reader happens to own an example, the author would like to see a scan of it.



**Figure 1.** The first two plates 17450 and 17451 - plate numbers partially showing at bottom left. At right is the back of a pane showing the slanted standard 4.5mm gum breaker ridges.

As was the case with regular rotary printed stamps, standard gum breaker ridges were applied to the sheets as experience showed that curling of panes would occur without the ridges. By August 27, 1926, the first day of issue, booklet panes made from eight plates could theoretically have been sent to post offices, four of them on very short notice. Most likely, booklet panes from just the first four plates were ready at that time.

Figure 2 shows the proof sheet for plate 17450 (plate 17451 had the same layout). The vertical guide line can clearly be seen, while the horizontal guide line is barely visible, as it was entered very close to the bottom stamps of the third pane row. When considering the plate printing history, roughly one million 25¢ booklets could have been made from the first two plates. Of those, approximately 30% should contain panes with a guide line at left/right or at the bottom (or at the top due to a vertical miscut, as shown in Figure 7).

For decades, this has been the conundrum: Where are all those guide line panes? In the first years after the stamps were issued, not a single pane was reported, and almost a hundred years later, we stand at two panes with a guide line at right. One 583a position H pane was stolen in the 1960s and has recently been re-discovered by Ken Zierer in an eBay auction, as told in the June 2022 issue of *The U.S. Specialist*.<sup>4</sup> Three single stamps with a guide line at the bottom or the right have surfaced over the years. The so-called



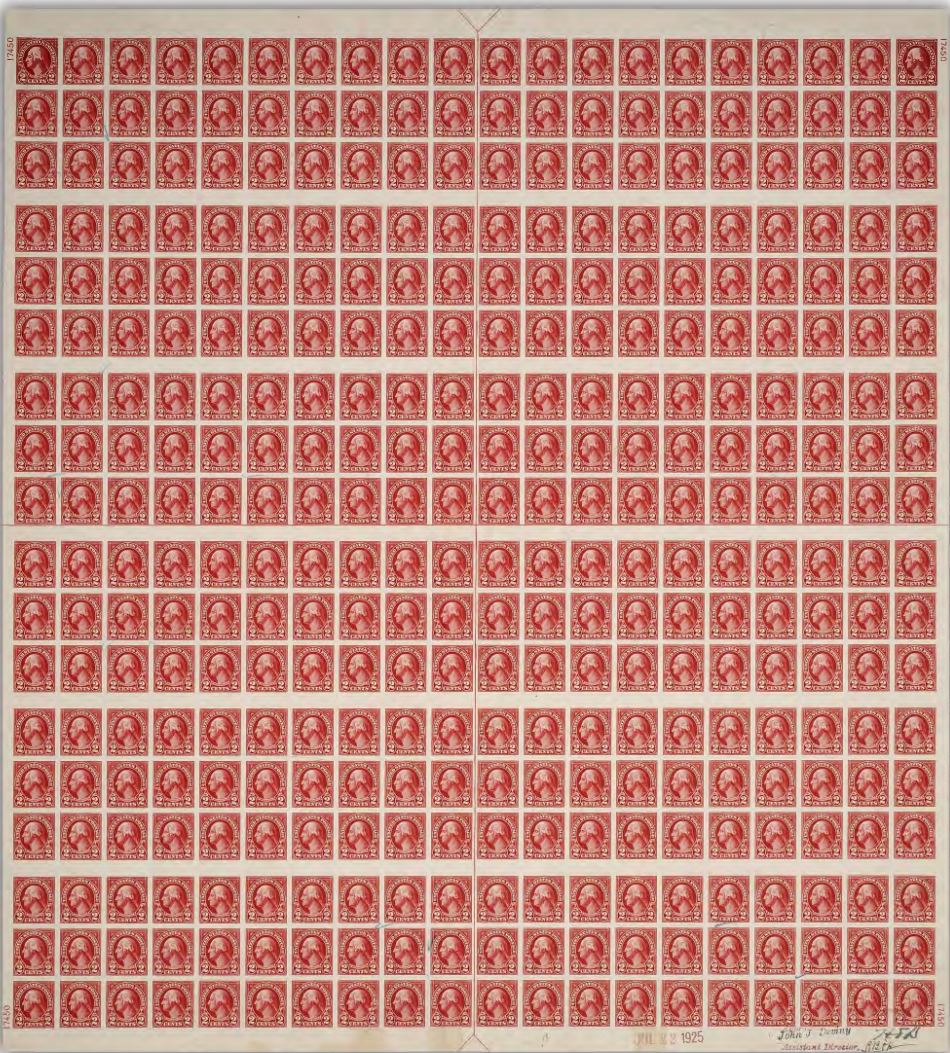


Figure 2. Proof sheet for plate 17450.

“Bristol Pane” and its companion (the “Zierer pane”) are shown in Figure 9. The story of its discovery by Thomas Bristol is told in Gary Griffith’s 1990 article in *The U.S. Specialist*.<sup>5</sup>

## First Day Covers

There are only a few first day covers (FDCs) reported; none have a guide line on the panes – Table 2 lists most of the known FDCs. A few more surely exist, but the total number of covers is relatively small. The stamps were issued in Washington, DC, on very short notice, so only a few well-known FDC service providers living nearby were alert and quick enough to arrive in time to prepare FDCs. Only one FDC is reported (with the middle pair of stamps) from a collector. The table includes two key numbers, “IP gap” and “Stamp gap,” that will be explained below in this article.



**Table 2. List of First Day Covers issued in Washington, DC**

Number	Addressed to	Time	Serviced by	IP gap	Stamp gap
1	Karl Koslowski	12 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	130
2	Wm O. Siebold	12 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	124
3	A. Gorham	12 p.m.	A. Gorham	-	126
4	R. Jenkins	12 p.m.	A. Gorham	-	125
5	Raymond C. Schaffer	12 p.m.	Raymond C. Schaffer	(pair)	-
6	Wm E. Siever	1:30 p.m.	William E. Siever	-	129
7	Wm E. Siever	1:30 p.m.	William E. Siever	-	124
8	R. Hastings	3 p.m.	Henry H. Hammelmann	-	133
9	C. E. Nickles	4 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	335	135
10	C. E. Nickles	4 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	.	129
11	R. Storms	4 p.m.	C. E. Nickles?	-	127
12	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	135
13	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	340	128
14	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	128
15	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	129
16	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	132
17	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	129
18	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	134
19	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	335	127
20	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	133
21	Wm H. Cornish	4:30 p.m.	C. E. Nickles	-	136
22	H. Robinette	6:30 p.m.	Henry H. Hammelmann	-	131
23	H. Robinette	6:30 p.m.	Henry H. Hammelmann	333	125
24	Wm O. Siebold	8:30 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	133
25	Wm O. Siebold	8:30 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	129
26	Miss M. Siebold	8:30 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	132
27	Clara Helff	8:30 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	131
28	Laura Walker	8:30 p.m.	William O. Siebold	-	130

## The Experimental Plates

Contrary to previous articles, the real story of Scott 583a experimental plates may not be with plates 17450 and 17451. It may be plates 18550 and 18551 that should be considered experimental plates. There is nothing experimental with the first two plates (except being the first two on the Stickney rotary press). They contained vertical and horizontal guide lines, possibly for two reasons:

Siderographers were accustomed to the guide lines, so they simply added them to the first two booklet plates for Scott 583a. The plates were standard flat pieces of steel until they were bent to fit the Stickney press (which happened after a proof sheet was made).



Figure 3. The only recorded FDC to a foreign destination. Serviced by William O. Siebold.



Figure 4. Bottom rows from proof sheets for plates 18550 and 18551 (Images courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum).

The guide lines were dropped on all subsequent rotary plates as they were not required anymore.

Siderographers were told to retain the guide lines for the first two plates so that in case of a rotary perforator problem (which had to be adapted to the booklet plate layout), a standard flat plate perforator could be used (which relied on those lines).

Figure 4 shows the bottom areas from the proof sheets for the second set of plates 18550 and 18551.

The proof sheet for plate 18551 has the standard layout for rotary booklet plates as used for plates 17450 and 17451. No workman's initials or center guide lines are present, only the plate number at the sides of the four corners. However, the proof sheet for plate 18550 is downright bizarre.

## A Proof Sheet That Proves...Nothing

The proof sheet for plate 18550 is an absolute oddity. It has most of the standard markings of a flat plate layout — a siderographer initial for Clarence I. Ronsaville (CIR) at bottom left, and two plate finisher initials at bottom right, Ralph F. Wurtz (RFW) and Robert J. Little (RJL). The proof sheet also contains two handwritten initials, EEM and EMW, both unidentified.

Figure 5 shows a closeup of the top right area. The black circle marks the flat plate number position, but the number is completely missing.



*Figure 5. Top right area of the proof sheet for plate 18550. Circled: the plate position of a flat plate issue. At right: Scott 554c, plate number F18373, from the plate proof sheet (inside the black circle on the sheet).*

Figure 6 shows that plate number 18550 was manually entered into the four corners of the proof sheet but is located above the initials in the bottom locations as the initials occupied the area. The slanted numbers were placed further away from the edges of the left and right stamp column when compared to standard rotary plates. They appear to be aligned with the right baselines of the initials.



*Figure 6. Plate numbers on the proof sheet for plate 18550. From left to right: top left, top right, bottom left, bottom right.*

The combination of the siderographer and plate finisher initials is recorded to exist on plate 18373 only, a flat plate booklet pane (Scott 554c). Plate 18373 was made and



used on a four-plate power press. At the same time, 583a booklet panes were being printed with plates 18550 and 18551 on the Stickney rotary press. Table 3 lists the important dates for these three plates.

*Table 3. Printing data<sup>5</sup> for plates 18373 and 1855x*

Plate number	Assigned	Certified	First to Press	Last dropped
18373	Feb. 16, 1926	May 17, 1926	May 29, 1926	July 1, 1926
18550, 18551	May 1, 1926	May 13, 1926	May 15, 1926	July 7, 1926

The reason for the weird 18550 plate proof sheet is noted at the bottom of the sheet: “This proof is from plate 18373 – (18850 was bent without proof).” It is unknown who wrote the note and at what point. There are traces of two heavily degraded pieces of Scotch tape that fell off the sheet. This could put the note somewhere between the late 1930s (Scotch tape was invented in the early 1930s) and the early 1960s when stabilizers were added to all things plastic (stabilized Scotch tape will not noticeably deteriorate for decades in an archival storage room).

It could be that an employee of the BEP added the note after Southgate, Williams, or some unknown specialist inquired about this plate sometime in early 1939. Williams mentioned the note in his May 1939 article,<sup>6</sup> setting an upper time limit before 1939.

What is the story of the proof sheet for plate 18550? The only fact we have is that plate 18550 was curved before a proof sheet was made (which would always be done on a flatbed press). Plate proofs were required for plate certification to correct any defects before the plate went to press. So what are the possible remedies for a missing proof once there was no longer a flat plate 18550? Here are some ideas (in descending order of probability):

1. The short version: Forget it – hope nobody will look for this plate proof.
2. The logical version: Start printing, cut a sheet from the printed web, and call it a proof sheet.
3. The expensive version: Make a new plate 18550 (or a plate with a higher number and cancel the curved plate 18550).
4. The weird version: Use another (flat or not yet curved rotary) plate and create a fake plate 18550 proof.

Almost all of the readers would choose options 1 or 2. Given the money and time, perhaps a few would go route 3, and no one would go route 4. So why did the BEP go route 4? We will never know, but a possible scenario could have been:

1. Somebody noticed they forgot to make a “flat plate proof” of plate 18550.
2. Flat plate 18373 was in the making. The plate number and guide lines still needed to be entered onto 18373 (but the siderographer and the plate finisher initials had been). Plate 18550 numbers were finely entered onto the 18373 plate in the four corners of a rotary plate layout.

3. A proof sheet was made from the jury-rigged plate.
4. The temporary rotary plate numbers 18550 were erased by the plate finishers. Plate 18373 was finished by entering the vertical and horizontal guide lines and the correct plate number in the tab of the flat plate position D pane (and below one stamp in the bottom row, which was always trimmed off on flat plate sheets).

This took four days, as the “normal” 18373 plate was certified four days after the faked plate 18550 was certified. Why this was done is anyone’s guess, as this proof sheet for plate 18550 is a pure fabrication and obviously has no connection to the actual plate 18550 used for printing. We are left with a proof that tells us nothing about the true plate 18850 other than there was major confusion.

### Going by the numbers

An extensive examination of existing Scott 583a panes shows a surprising number of vertically miscut panes showing a small piece of the stamps of the pane above along the top of the tabs. This allows us to measure two key numbers for Scott 583a panes, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7. Definition of Interpane gap (a) on a miscut pane and Stamp gap (b) on all Scott 583a panes.

To account for possible shrinkage effects, the height of a stamp in a pane is arbitrarily set as 1000 units. One of two defined numbers determines if a pane is from plates 18550 or 18551 or the other plate numbers:

- a. Interpane (IP) gap: On a vertically miscut pane, the tab might be large enough to show a piece of the frame of the bottom stamps on the pane above it. IP gap is the width of the full unprinted stapling tab
- b. Stamp gap: The gap between two stamp rows within a pane.

The last two columns in table 2 list the numbers measured for all the FDCs where images were available from internet sources.

Measurements on many panes and proof sheets show there are three different plate layouts for Scott 583a, as shown in Figure 8, side by side.



**Figure 8.** Center pieces of stamp proof sheets showing the three different plate layouts. At left: Plate 18740, Middle: Plate 18551, At right: all subsequent plates.

First plates: Small (7.5mm) IP gap, large (3mm) stamp gap, with flat plate guide lines.

Second plates: Large (8.5mm) IP gap, small (2.5mm) stamp gap, no flat plate guide lines.

All subsequent plates: Small (7.5mm) IP gap, large (3mm) stamp gap, no flat plate guide lines.

Table 4 lists the measured (averaged) numbers from available Scott 583a panes and proof sheets.

**Table 4. Measured plate characteristics**

Plates	IP Gap	Stamp Gap
17450, 17451	335 (7.5mm)	130 (3mm)
18550*, 18551	380 (8.5mm)	115 (2.5mm)
All Other Plates	335 (7.5mm)	130 (3mm)

\* assumed the same layout as 18551

The difference in the stamp gap was mentioned in the September 1941 article by Williams<sup>7</sup> but unfortunately laid to rest by making an incorrect paper-shrinking argument. The article also included a statement that reports early Scott 634d panes (common plates with Scott 583a) also had that difference. This is not correct. All examined Scott 634d panes containing early to late partial plate numbers show the "normal" gaps.

The differences are small and almost unnoticeable when one doesn't look for them. It doesn't help that panes from plates 18550 and 18551 seem to be extremely rare. A look at the usual internet suspects reveals that some Scott 583a panes are misdescribed as



554c or 634d panes (it is eBay, after all), but the rest are not from plates 18550 or 18551. The change in the layout from plates 1745x to 1855x was short-lived and reverted to the previous layout for all the other plates used (and on all issues following Scott 583a).

Notice that all full panes on known FDCs clearly fall into the first category, so they are from plates 17450 or 17451. Panes from plates 18550 and 18551 would show narrower spaced stamp rows and larger interpane gaps, which are not present.



*Figure 9. Two of the rarest US booklet panes. At left: The Bristol pane. At right: A pane from plate 18550 or 18551.*

We can only speculate about the reasons for the layout change on plates 18550 and 18551. What is remarkable about the panes from the first two plates is the relatively large number of existing miscuts, particularly vertical miscuts, and panes cut close at the bottom, often slightly into the bottom row of the stamps. A simple reduction of the stamp gap and an increase in the IP gap reduced that problem considerably. However, a quick remedy seems to have been found for that problem, so the plate layouts after plates 18550 and 18551 reverted to the first layout (though without guide lines), which is true for the rest of the plates. Hence panes from all later plates are indistinguishable from panes from the first two plates (without guide lines).

None of the above solves the conundrum of why almost no panes or single stamps with flat plate layout lines have been found. The usual explanation that the panes were used up so quickly that specialists could not save them only works if almost all of those early letters with Scott 583a “flat plate lines” were quickly discarded.

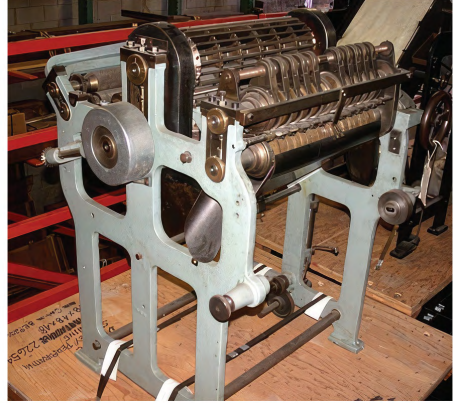
We also do not know what happened between the first time when webs from plates 17450 and 17451 were first printed and when the booklets were manufactured and finally went on sale on August 27, 1926, which is roughly an entire year. Something bad could have happened during that time. Given the many surviving miscut or misperforated panes, it is not unlikely that spoilage was excessively high, particularly since it was the

first attempt for rotary printed booklet stamps. The Stickney two-way rotary perforator had to be adopted for booklet webs and was the main cause of excessive spoilage.

Photos in the Smithsonian archives show various 2-way perforators in action. The Stickney 2-way perforator saw many hardware iterations during its time, and it is difficult to figure out the exact functionality of the machines from those photos only. An article by Louis Repeta<sup>8</sup> describes one model in great detail.



**Figure 10: Early model of a 2-way rotary perforator. Web alignment controlled by two operators.**



**Figure 11: Late model in the Smithsonian depository. Web alignment controlled by electric eye circuitry.**

Early models had to be controlled by two operators. The operator at the feed point ensured that the vertical perforations did not veer off by keeping the web roll centered, while the operator at the endpoint could use a hand-operated mechanism to correct for horizontal perforation deviations. All Smithsonian photos show the perforator with 400 subject sheets. Still, the vertical and horizontal perforator units had to be exchanged for booklet panes. The perforators ran at a constant speed, so any corrections had to be done on the fly.

All non-electric eye models had a metal indicator attached to the front end. This indicator pointed to the horizontal center of the machine. The red circle in Figure 12 (unfortunately, an out-of-focus photograph in the Smithsonian library) marks the pointer. The woman looks at the pointer and readjusts the web roll by turning a knob at the right. Aligning would be easy using the vertical guide line on webs from flat plates (which marked the horizontal center of the web). This might be why the first two rotary 583a plates still contained the guide lines. However, the vertical guide line wasn't really needed, so the flat plate guide lines were dropped from all subsequent rotary plates.



**Figure 12: Front end of the perforator. Web alignment controlled by a metal pointer.**

The pulling mechanism for the web roll was a pair of rollers clamping the web (not visible in the images above). The pull strength limited the perforation gauge as the web could tear if a perforation row or column were weakened too much by too many holes. Perforation 10 proved to be strong enough. This early model likely had no gum breaker rolls, as seen by the strong curling of the perforated sheets. All later models (and the model used for perforating 583a webs) had textured gum breaker rolls installed, mainly at the back end of later models. The model in the Smithsonian collection is a late model and visibly more compact. It was controlled by electric eye detection and correction circuitry for correcting perforation runoffs and significantly reduced web waste.

Notice the extremely unhealthy work conditions with the early models. Masses of trimmed-off paper strips clogged the floor, and paper dust from perforation hole punches was likely floating around in the room. Later versions of the 2-way perforator were equipped with a vacuum system covering the bottom of the machine.

The distance between the horizontal perforator unit and the sheet cutter blade was fixed and carefully adjusted. Temperature, humidity and random tiny web slips would cause the horizontal perforations to slowly wander off (as in the right pane in Figure 9). Only the operator at the back end of the perforator saw if that had happened. Pulling the handle swung a roller (mounted in a yoke) downward into the web and increased the path length between the horizontal perforator and the sheet cutter. The increase in path length also slightly shifted the horizontal perforations to a new position. The upper roller mechanism of the sheet cutter can be seen in Figure 10. The six wheels (and the lower wheel containing the cutting blade, not visible in the picture) had a circumference exactly matching the plate joint line distances.

Adjusting the horizontal perforations certainly required a lot of experience by the handle operator. It likely created a lot of misperforated sheet waste, some of which escaped destruction or were considered still usable in cases of minor shifts.

In late 1926, the BEP had eight 2-way perforators in use. The BEP produced 20 million experimental 2-cent stamps for a test in New York City during the 1926 Christmas rush. Benjamin Stickney had converted one of the perforators to apply gauge 11 by 10.5 perforations. The experiment was a success, and by June 1927, the BEP converted all perforators to the new gauge. This was the end of Scott 583a production.

However, high spoilage or excessive use of the first printing of panes does not explain the minuscule fraction of panes or single stamps found with guide lines. It would simply reduce the number of available panes, not change the 30% to 70% ratio between panes with guide lines and panes without lines.

It might be that the BEP decided to cull all panes with flat plate marks in the months between printing and issuing the Scott 583a panes. As usual, with any stamps produced, a few flukes survived. At this time, only two panes with the right guide line coming from one exploded booklet are known, along with three single stamps on cover. Either way, the actual number of distributed booklets from the first press runs was likely much smaller than the maximum number of booklets that could have been made, estimated from the plate impression data.



## Collecting booklets and panes, one grade at a time

For the beginner's grade 1, it is advisable to stay away from complete booklets altogether, so a single pane will do.

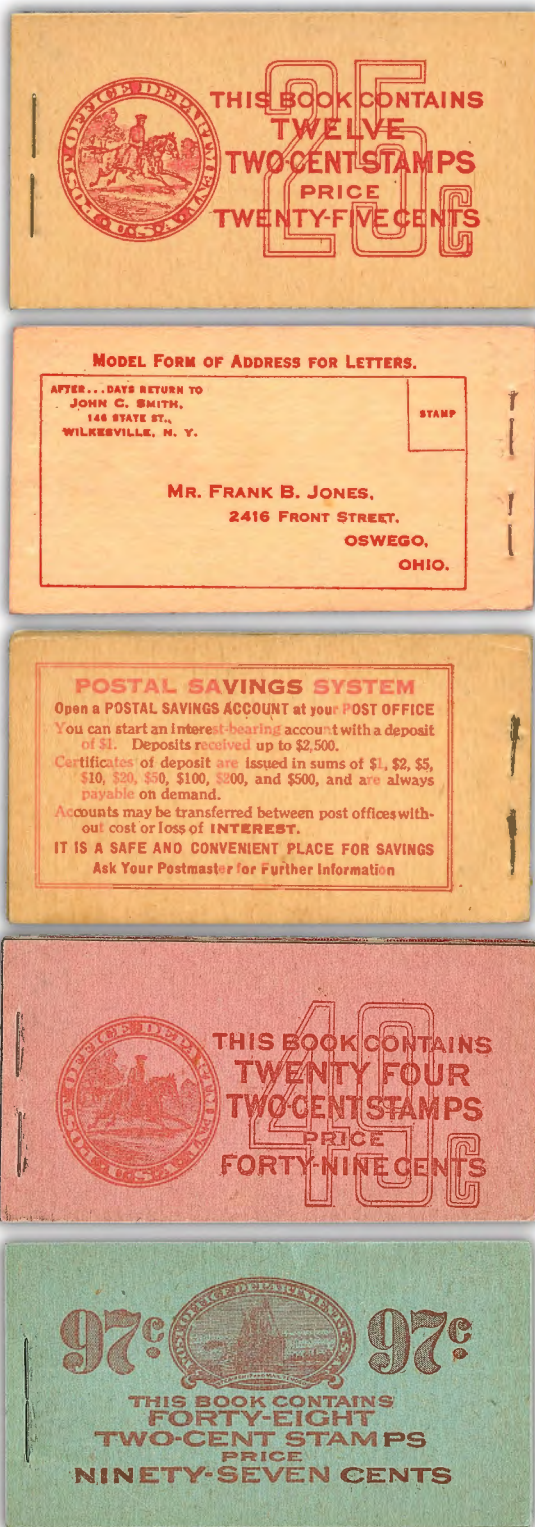
For the next level, grade 2, booklets come into play. Five different booklets were issued containing panes of Scott 583a, and they are costly to acquire. The main difference is the number of panes in a booklet, either 2, 4 or 8. Booklets with two panes can have two different back covers, and to make things even more complicated, one of the back cover varieties has two different versions of the text on the inside. No booklets were produced that contained a mix of 1¢ and 2¢ stamps.

Great care must be exercised when buying these booklets, as other (much cheaper) booklets (containing Scott 554c or 634d panes) have identical cover varieties. The backs of the panes should be examined to ensure there are no color set-offs that absolutely point to flat plate panes, and the perforations should be checked to be perforation 10 panes.

For the expert grade 3, collecting panes with all 14 different identifiable partial plate numbers is a huge task. Another idea is to find a pane from plates 18550 or 18551; they are very elusive panes.

For the ultimate grade 4, find a plate 17450 or 17451 pane with a flat plate layout line. This goal could be a task for the rest of your life!

*Figure 13. Booklet fronts and backs. The 25¢ booklets come in three different front covers.*



**Table 5. The five different covers containing Scott 583a panes**

BK	Front Cover	Inside Front	Back Cover	Inside Back
72	Rider Seal (25 mm)	Domestic Rates (16 lines)	Letter Oswego 63 x 31mm	Foreign Postal Rates (18 lines)
		Letter Oswego 55 x 27 mm	Postal Savings System, line 9: out cost or loss...	Postal Instructions (34.5 mm)
		Letter Oswego 55 x 27 mm	Postal Savings System, line 9: out cost or loss...	Postal Instructions (30 mm)
73	Rider Seal (24 mm)	Letter Oswego 55 x 27 mm	Postal Savings System, line 9: out cost or loss...	Postal Instructions (30 mm)
74	Ship Seal (29 mm)	Letter Oswego 55 x 27 mm	Postal Savings System, line 9: out cost or loss...	Postal Instructions (30 mm)

Special thanks go to Ms. Manda Kowalczyk of the National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution, for digging through the archives and finding plate proofs of plates 18550, 18551 and 18373. Thanks also to Michael O. Perry, Chairman of the Booklets and Booklet panes committee, for valuable and extensive discussions of the article.

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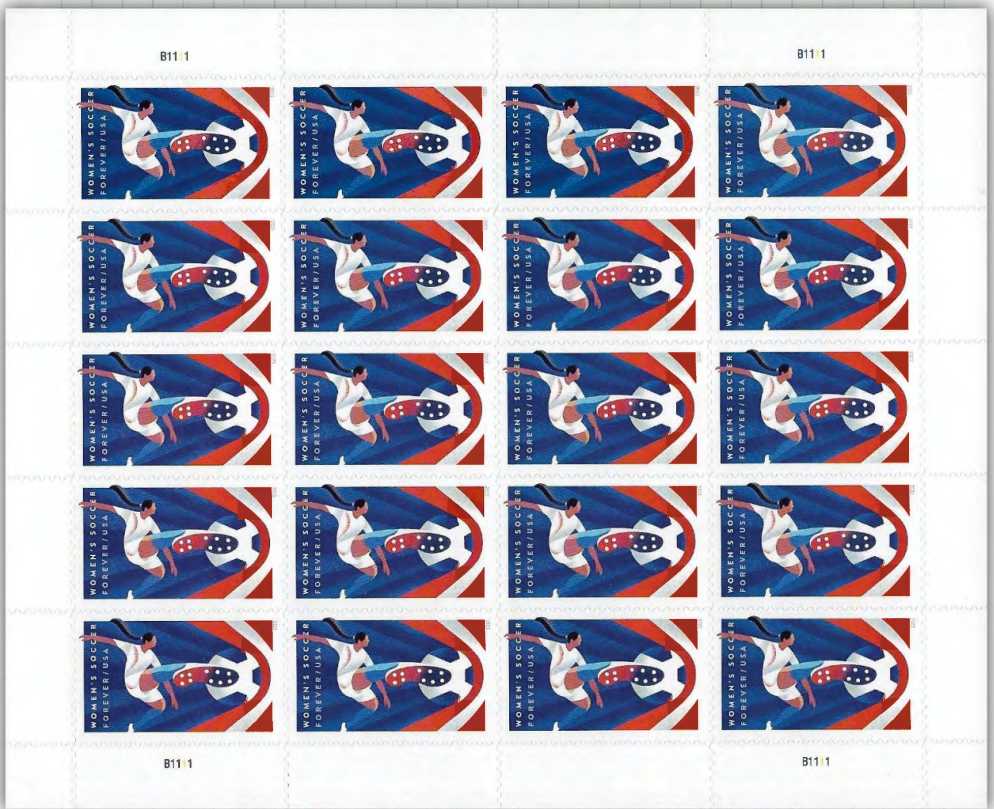
P1111	UL	UR	LL	LR
5r x 2c	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10			

▼ #5751 \$9.65 Florida Everglades

B1111	UL	+	+	LR
3r x 5c	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14,15			







▲ #???? Women's Soccer  
 B1111 UL UR LL LR  
 2r x 3c 1,2,3,4,5,6\*

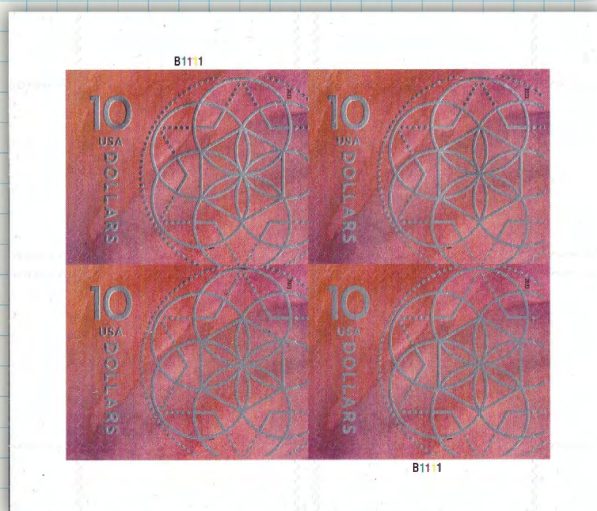


▼ #C83 13c Air Mail Coil  
 34741 5%  
 34742 10%





- ▲ #5752 \$28.75 Great Smoky Mountains  
3r x 5c 1,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15



- ▲ #???? \$10 Floral Geometry  
B1111 UL ‡ ‡ LR  
3r x 2c 1,4

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17446 Frank Geiger, Sr., Pinehurst, NC  
17447 Frank Jamison, Hemet, CA  
17448 Christina Howland Stitt,  
Gainesville, FL  
17449 David Rutherford, Skokie, IL

### APPLICATIONS PENDING

17432, 17434-17438, 17440-17443

### NEW MEMBERS

17427-17431

### REINSTATED

15001 David Ennist

16165 David Clayton  
16557 Lloyd Hogg

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New members 5  
Reinstatements 3  
**Total 8**

#### SUBTRACTIONS:

**Total 0**

**NET CHANGE 8**

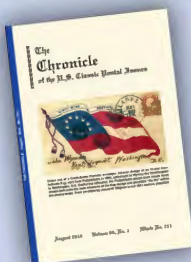
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