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for the Collector of Postage & Revenue Stamp Issues of the United States

WHOLE NUMBER 1119



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Prologue

- 194 Leadership & Committees**
- 198 Vintage Photo of the Month**
by Rodney A. Juell
- 202 Request for Member Comments**



Features

- 195 PSAG Issues Cert for Unlisted Lake Shade**
by Kevin G. Lowther
- 196 Rare Use of "Forwarded – Fee Not Claimed" Marking on Liberty Series Cover**
by Roland Austin
- 200 Vending and Affixing Machine Perforations – A New Beginning**
by Dan Ryterband
- 203 2¢ Navy Stamp of the Army-Navy Series**
by Paul M. Holland
- 212 "Attleboro" Cover Comes Home to Roost**
by Kevin G. Lowther
- 213 On Cover - Scott 849, The Underappreciated, Undervalued Prexie Coil**
by William "Bill" DiPaolo
- 218 Authenticating Scott 530c—Triple Impression on the Three Cent Offset**
by Andrew S. Kelley
- 226 Worked Over... The Vignettes of the 1895 Newspaper and Periodical High Values**
by Chris Jenkins

Epilogue

- 236 Plate Number Report**
by Kim D. Johnson
- 239 Executive Secretary's Report**
by Rodney A. Juell
- 240 Classified Advertising**
- 240 Index of Advertisers**

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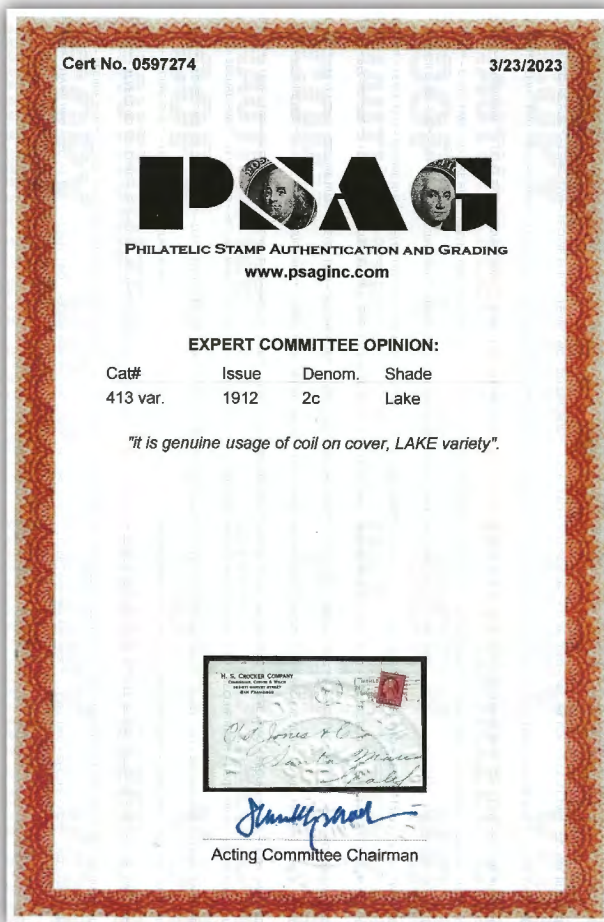
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Philatelic Discoveries



PSAG Issues Cert for Recently Discovered Unlisted Lake Shade

by **Kevin G. Lowther**
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The philatelic authentication agency PSAG has issued a certificate for Scott 413 var in a lake shade. This is the latest unlisted lake shade found by the author and documented by forensic chemist Harry G. Brittain. The stamp is a paste-up single on a cover formerly owned by the late Al Parsons.



from the 1954 Liberty Series Committee

Rare Use of “Forwarded – Fee Not Claimed” Marking on Liberty Series Cover

by Roland Austin

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Figure 1. Only known use of the “Forwarded – Fee Not Claimed” handstamp on a 1954 Liberty series special delivery cover, October 31, 1957.

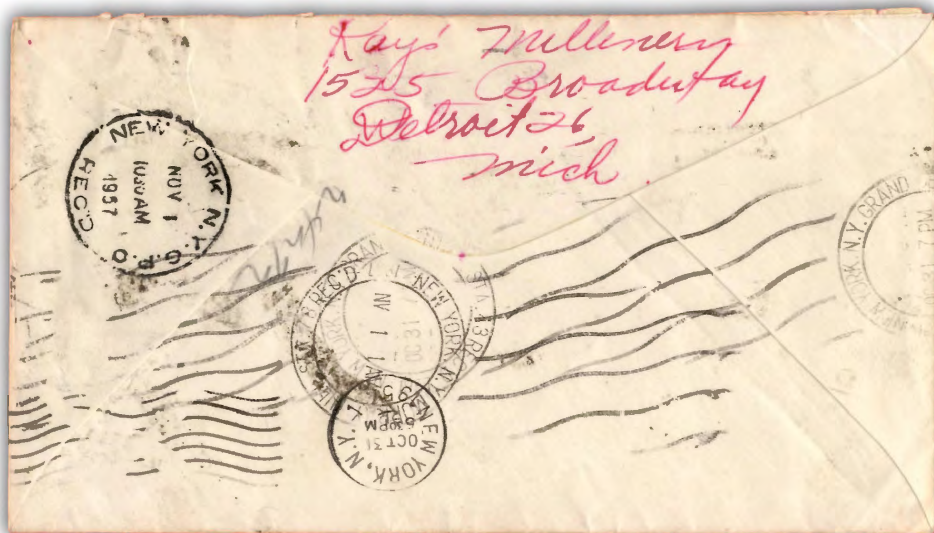


Figure 2. Reverse of the cover in Figure 1.

The two-part study of forwarding special delivery mail by member Terence Hines in the October and November 2020 issues of *The US Specialist* was very informative. It will be an excellent resource for future collectors. Of particular interest were the sections about forwarded special delivery mail when the fee was not collected and his explanation for the scarcity of forwarded special delivery covers after around 1955, relating to the subject cover of this article.

The scarce “Forwarded – Fee Not Claimed” handstamp is known used as early as August 6, 1903, but should not have been needed after June 30, 1945 (when special delivery messengers became salaried and no longer paid a fee per delivery).

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate a rare use of this marking – the only known use on a 1954 Liberty series special delivery cover (according to a 1954 Liberty Series Committee census).

Its use is also within the scarce post-1955 period for seldom-seen, forwarded special delivery covers, making it the latest known use of this marking.

The cover is postmarked October 31, 1957, in Detroit, MI, with a manuscript “AIR MAIL SPECIAL/DELIVERY” marking and a “VIA AIR MAIL / SPECIAL DELIVERY” violet handstamp applied by the originating post office. It is a 2¢ oval die government stationery envelope with a combination of Liberty series stamps (which all appear to be dry printed varieties) of a single 1¢ sheet stamp (Scott 1031b), two 3¢ sheet stamps (Scott 1035c), and nine 3¢ coils (Scott 1057a), totaling 36¢, which covers the 6¢ airmail letter rate plus the 30¢ special delivery fee.

The postmarks on the front and reverse track its travels to and across New York City:

October 31, 11:00 a.m.	mailed in Detroit, Michigan
October 31, 5:30 p.m.	received at office of first address, New York City, Grand Central Sta.
October 31, 7:00 p.m.	forwarded from Grand Central Sta.
November 1, 1:00 a.m.	received at NYC, Murray Hill Sta.
November 1, 10:30 a.m.	received at NYC GPO.

When this letter arrived at the Grand Central Station Post Office for delivery at the first address, the postmaster knew the Dynamo Tulle Importing Company had moved (most likely by advance authorization supplied by the addressee) and therefore did not attempt special delivery. Instead, still having the “Forwarded – Fee Not Claimed” handstamp in their supply, they applied it to preserve the special delivery status of the letter when it was forwarded across the city to the office of final destination.

In conclusion, this marking should not exist on this cover – or any 1954 Liberty series cover – as this use is well past 1945. Regardless, it is a remarkable use, a unique Liberty series item. Most likely, the New York post office must have considered it an important situation to employ it this late – possibly, due to so few forwarded special delivery covers occurring during this later period.

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*Vintage Photo of the Month*

50th Anniversary U.S. Air Mail Service

by **Rodney A. Juell**

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This month's photo shows Hordur Karlsson, an Icelandic man on the International Monetary Fund graphics staff, working on the sketch used for the vignette of the "50th Anniversary U.S. Air Mail Service" stamp (Scott C74) issued in 1968. The Post Office Department authorized an official cachet to be used on first day covers dispatched by air from Washington, Philadelphia and New York. The original 1918 air mail route linked these three cities. First day covers were backstamped when they arrived at their destination on the original route. Shown nearby is a first day cover with the official Post Office Department cachet, dispatched from New York and backstamped on arrival in Washington.



VIA AIR MAIL

Richard S. Thompson
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50th ANNIVERSARY U.S. AIR MAIL SERVICE



Vending & Affixing Machine Perforations Committee

Vending and Affixing Machine Perforations – A New Beginning

by **Dan Ryterband**

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The recent passing of Melvin Getlan marks the loss of a giant in numerous avenues of philately, most notably for me in the specialized area of vending and affixing machine perforations (VAMPs), where he spent a lifetime assembling a truly legendary collection.

I was first introduced to these fascinating and unusual stamps in the mid-1990s when I discovered some at a show in White Plains, New York. I purchased a few inexpensive examples with the intent to study and learn. I subsequently met Steven Belasco, who coincidentally lived just a few blocks from my home in Scarsdale, New York, and we quickly became friends. Steve was broadly recognized as the world's foremost expert on VAMPs. He had assembled an award-winning collection and had published several important articles in *The United States Specialist* on how to expertise VAMPs. Steve was the then-chairman of the Vending and Affixing Machine Perforations Committee of the United States Stamp Society. He served as a consultant to the expert committees at the Philatelic Foundation, Professional Stamp Experts, and the American Philatelic Society. Steve spent significant time working with me to share what he had learned and impart that knowledge to a younger and eager collector. Following Steve's unexpected passing in 2012, Mel stepped in to assume the chairmanship of the Committee. Mel's passing in 2020 created a need for new leadership, and I have assumed the role of Committee chair. I am using this article to invite interested collectors and dealers to engage.

Steve's collection was distributed to the collecting community by the Robert A. Siegel Auction firm in June 2010. This event was a watershed opportunity for collectors because Steve's collection was extensive and, as a result of the publication of his book in 2009 by the USSS, information previously unavailable to most collectors was readily accessible. For the first time, new collectors could purchase these scarce items with a high degree of confidence. Mel's passing and the distribution of his extensive collection via the Siegel firm in three separate sales between April 2022 and February 2023 marks a second watershed event. In fact, it represented a truly "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity for existing collectors and the newly interested to acquire, study, and advance the knowledge base in this area. Mel's holdings were so extensive that, as a collector, I often thought that genuine material in sound condition was rare, despite the often low catalog values. It seemed he owned virtually everything, and everyone with a deep interest in VAMPs understood that Mel had cornered the market on numerous items. Now that this material has been widely disbursed, it will freely trade in the market and enable

numerous philatelists to assemble substantial collections. Pictured in Figures 1 and 2 are two of the many rarities from Mel's holdings.



Figure 1 – Scott number 373, Attleboro Stamp Co. private perforations, strip of four with paste-up at center, described by the Siegel firm as having original gum with hinge remnants to reinforce the fragile perforations. This is the largest size multiple of this issue and possibly the only example with a paste-up.



Figure 2 – Scott number 315, Schermack Type III block of 8, described by the Siegel firm as having original gum with top left and bottom center stamps being never hinged and the top right stamp with a small thin spot at bottom. This is the largest recorded multiple of this scarce stamp and a “Magnificent Philatelic Rarity,” according to Siegel.

The rarities presented above were offered in the first and second Getlan sales, respectively. Notably for the collecting community, each of the three sales included numerous items that are significantly more affordable but no less interesting and, ultimately, the third sale included “balance” lots representing large numbers of stamps and covers for each of the companies that prepared VAMPs between 1908 and the late 1920s.

Scott Trepel, president of the Siegel firm, shared the following comments with me regarding Mel's holdings: “Distribution of the Getlan collection was a challenge because Mel had so much quantity and duplication in a specialized area. We tackled it by having three sales over an extended period, allowing material from each sale to be absorbed into the collecting community before the next sale occurred. The first sale was heavier in major items and the last sale was focused more on group lots. In the end, we sold everything

and prices were strong, indicating substantial competition among collectors. I know of at least three major new collections that came out of the Getlan dispersal, and I suspect that many smaller collections have been seeded."

There was a time when philatelists ignored this field and considered it unworthy of great collections. According to *Stamps* columnist Katheryn Van Den Berg in September 1941, "Schermack perforated stamps were long so much junk, being rated as damaged by collectors at large," and she continued, "There is now... a small and growing market for these since Scott's *Specialized* lists them. Few wholesalers carry them as yet... Some day they will be in big demand."

To my knowledge, few specialized dealers maintain extensive inventories in this area, making it much more important that interested collectors gather among ourselves to share knowledge and enjoy these visually appealing and fascinating stamps. I would like to thank fellow collector Kevin Lowther for encouraging this article, assisting in its preparation, and joining me on the VAMP committee. Others who are interested can contact me at djryterband@fwcook.com.

Request for Member Comments

A member recently wrote and said, "I am seriously considering parting with my collection... Please give me directions on the best place I should contact for this... Thank you in advance for any way you can provide assistance in education on this issue."

The letter was detailed and contained other topics, but this is a common question among members, and others in the hobby at large. While many of us have our approach to this inquiry, I am hopeful that you will share your ideas and experiences. Please consider writing me with your approach and what you have heard from others. I will prepare the responses and present them in a future edition of *The US Specialist*. Please sign your message and I will withhold your name, if desired. Please send your comments to editor@usstamps.org.

ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



USSS Members can log into the society's website (www.usstamps.org) and download the digital version of *THE TRANSPORTS* by G. H. Davis

This thorough study of the 1941-44 Transport Airmail stamp issue is now available in the RESOURCES section of the website. Explore the publications section for this and other valuable resources.





from the Farley Era Committee



2¢ Navy Stamp of the Army-Navy Series

by **Paul M. Holland**

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I am pleased to mail you this letter, to which is affixed the two-cent stamp of the special series issued in honor of the Navy.

The central design of this stamp includes the portraits of Stephen Decatur and Thomas MacDonough, who rendered exceptional service to the early American Navy.

— From a signed January 15, 1937 letter sent with a favor fFirst day cover of the 2¢ Navy Stamp to His Eminence, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, by Postmaster General James A. Farley.

The 2¢ Navy Stamp was issued to honor early heroes of the United States Navy. The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) design by A. R. Meissner features Stephen Decatur and Thomas MacDonough, whose portraits were based on photographs of engravings, themselves based on paintings. Closeups of these portraits engraved by John Eisler at the BEP are shown in Figure 1 from a large die essay at the National Postal Museum. These were incorporated into the engraved progressive large die essay shown in Figure 2. On the final stamp die, Carl T. Arlt engraved the vignette and border, with E. M. Weeks engraving the lettering.¹



Figure 1. Closeup portraits of Stephen Decatur and Thomas MacDonough engraved by John Eisler at the BEP (Image courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum).

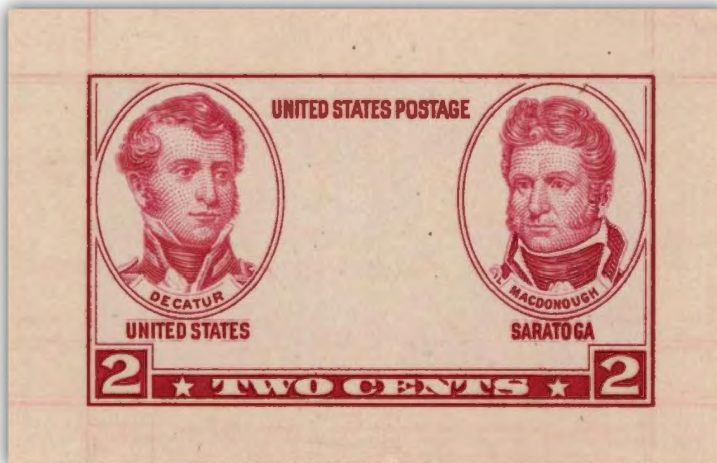


Figure 2. Progressive die essay of the 2¢ Navy Stamp (Image courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum).

Below each of the portraits are names of ships from the War of 1812, mainly the *United States* and *Saratoga*, that were commanded at the time by Decatur and MacDonough, respectively. Interestingly, Decatur began his naval career as a midshipman aboard the *United States* in 1798, serving under Commodore John Barry, whose portrait is on the 1¢ Navy Stamp. The central vignette for the 2¢ stamp (not seen in the essay) shows a contemporary warship under full sail. This is almost certainly a three-masted, 44-gun frigate such as the *United States*, one of six original frigates authorized for construction by the Naval Act of 1794, which also included the *Constitution* (known as “Old Ironsides”). The four printing plates used for the 2¢ Navy Stamp were plate numbers 21612 through 21615.¹

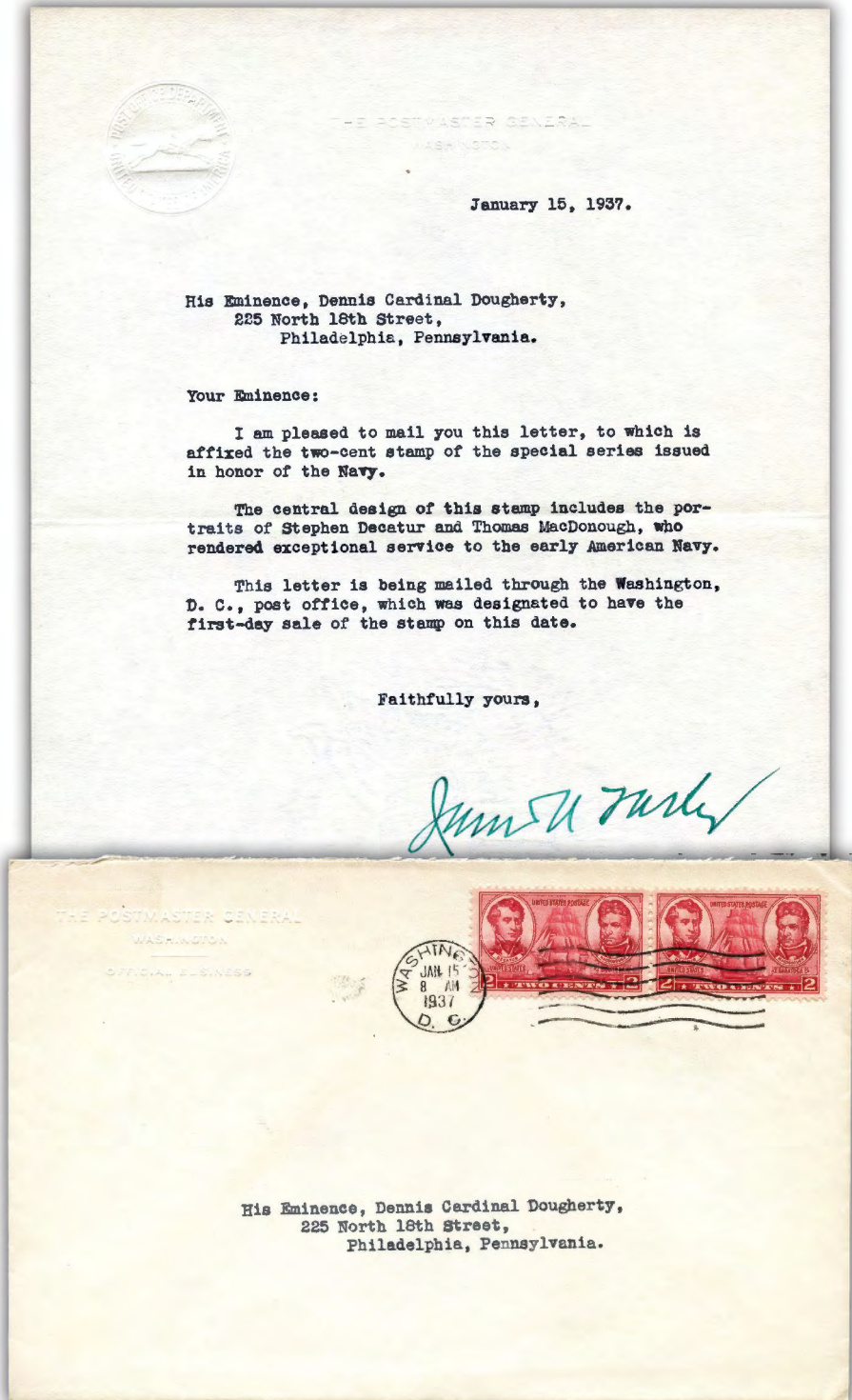


Figure 3. Favor FDC for the 2¢ Navy stamp sent to Cardinal Dougherty by PMG Farley.

The 2¢ Navy Stamp was issued on January 15, 1937, and a favor first day cover on official stationery sent to Dennis Cardinal Dougherty with signed letter from Postmaster General James A. Farley is shown in Figure 3. Note the honorific “Your Eminence” and “Faithfully Yours” preceding Farley’s signature in green ink. Dougherty had been Archbishop of Philadelphia and was made a Cardinal in 1921. Interestingly, in 1948 both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions were held in Philadelphia, and Cardinal Dougherty gave the invocations.

An unusual registered mail first day cover on official Postmaster General stationery is shown in Figure 4. This is franked with a plate number block of four, plus a 25¢ transpacific airmail stamp (Scott 20), and shows a January 15 dated handcancel instead of the usual double-blind oval registration cancellations. Sent to Dr. R. E. Jacques in Kansas City, Missouri, the registration backstamps that show that it was delivered on January 18, 1937.



Figure 4. Registered first day cover with plate block on official Postmaster General stationery.

An FDC of the 2¢ Navy stamp on official White House stationery sent to Jules Rodier is shown in Figure 5. Rodier was a long-time telegraph operator at the White House who had been there since the Spanish American War and the presidency of William McKinley.

One of the more interesting items in my collection is the FDC with Grimsland cachet with a plate number block of four sent to FDR, shown in Figure 6. Note the plate block number of 21615, which, together with the plate number 21612 block shown previously in Figure 4, spans the range of plate numbers.

Of the two men depicted on the 2¢ Navy stamp, Stephen Decatur was especially remarkable, being noted for his exceptional daring. For example, when Barbary pirates in Tripoli captured the frigate *Philadelphia*, which had run aground, Decatur led a volunteer

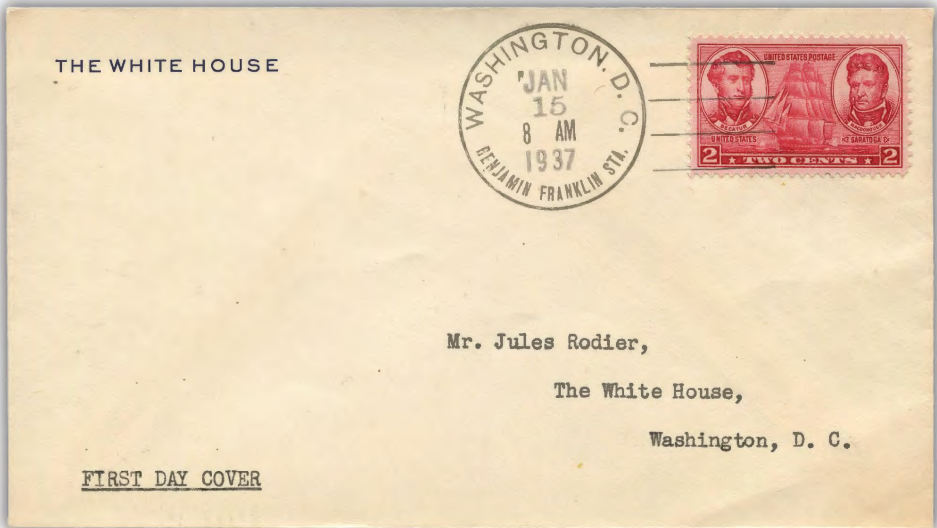


Figure 5. FDC of 2¢ Navy stamp sent to Jules Rodier on White House stationery.



Figure 6. FDC with Grimsland cachet and plate number block of four sent to FDR.

force, including MacDonough, aboard a small ship disguised as a merchant vessel into Tripoli harbor the night of February 16, 1804, during the First Barbary War. Armed with cutlasses and pikes, they managed to capture the *Philadelphia* and set it ablaze before escaping. It is said that on hearing of this exploit, the famed British admiral Lord Horatio Nelson pronounced this "the most daring act of its age." For this action, Decatur was promoted to captain at the age of twenty-five, the youngest man ever to hold this rank in the United States Navy.

In August 1804, Decatur commanded furious attacks on Tripolian gunboats. On learning that his younger brother James was mortally wounded by the Barbary pirate captain of a gunboat that had pretended to surrender, Decatur found the boat and,

boarding it with his crew, killed the vessel's captain himself in fierce hand-to-hand fighting, thereby avenging his brother's death (see Figure 7). When naval attacks alone failed to cause Tripoli (then part of the Ottoman Empire) to surrender American captives, a continuation of the naval blockade of the harbor and Tripoli, coupled with a land campaign by a small force of US Marines plus 400-500 mercenaries invading from Egypt resulted in the capture of the fortress of Derna in April 1805. This resulted in the signing of a treaty whereby all American captives were returned, including the captain and crew of the *Philadelphia*. It also eventually led to the inclusion of the lyrics "to the shores of Tripoli" in *The Marines' Hymn*.



Figure 7. Decatur Boarding the Tripolitan Gunboat (painting by Dennis Malone Carter).

By the War of 1812, Stephen Decatur had been promoted to commodore, then the highest rank in the United States Navy. While commanding the *United States* in a sea battle against the British frigate HMS *Macedonian* south of the Azores in October 1812, Decatur captured it as a prize-of-war, and the HMS *Macedonian* became the first major British warship to suffer the humiliation of being brought into an American harbor following defeat at sea. Ironically in January 1815, Decatur himself was forced to surrender to the HMS *Endymion* following a fierce sea battle while trying to break the British blockade of New York. The wounded Decatur and his surviving crew of the frigate USS *President* were taken prisoner and held captive in Bermuda until the end of the war.

However, it was Thomas MacDonough's exploits aboard the *Saratoga* in Lake Champlain at Plattsburgh, New York, that had a more important influence on the outcome of the War of 1812. Here he faced a decidedly superior British naval force in September 1814. Nonetheless, through foresight and daring, he trapped the British by deploying

his small fleet across the mouth of Plattsburg Bay and, after several hours of severe fighting, forced them to surrender (see Figure 8). This saved New York and Vermont from invasion by the nearby British army of some 14,000 battle-hardened veterans of the Duke of Wellington's Peninsular campaign against Napoleon, who, after the naval battle, were forced to return to Canada. Had MacDonough's naval victory not occurred, these battle-hardened British regulars would have been pitted against relatively inexperienced militiamen, and large parts of upper New York and Vermont might have been occupied by British troops. According to the writings of Admiral Mahan, this victory "more nearly than any other incident of the War of 1812 merits the word 'decisive,'" and Theodore Roosevelt believed that "down to the time of the Civil War Macdonough is the greatest figure in our naval history." In any event, MacDonough's decisive naval victory in Lake Champlain at Plattsburgh in late 1814 denied the British leverage to make territorial demands against the United States during peace negotiations.



Figure 8. Macdonough's victory at Plattsburgh on Lake Champlain.

Following the War of 1812, both men remained in the Navy. Commodore Stephen Decatur commanded a squadron of ships in the Second Barbary War, capturing the flagship of the Algerian fleet and extracting concessions from the government in Algiers. However, Decatur's life and naval career abruptly came to an end in 1820 when he was killed in a duel with Commodore James Barron, who was still embittered by comments about his conduct in the Chesapeake-Leopard affair of 1807 and Decatur's opposition to Barron being reinstated in the navy. Thomas MacDonough's victory at the battle of Lake Champlain brought him both thanks and a gold medal from the US Congress, along with promotion to captain. He died aboard ship in 1825 while passing Gibraltar after commanding the *USS Constitution* in the Mediterranean Sea.

The 2¢ Navy stamp was also used on ordinary mail sent to FDR at the White House. An example sent from the Military Order of the World War based in Washington, DC, on April 4, 1937, is shown in Figure 9. This allowed first class franking at a solo rate of 2¢ for local delivery. The Military Order of the World War itself was an organization created at the suggestion of General of the Armies John J. Pershing in 1919 as a fraternity

for American military officers following World War I. Interestingly, the White House visitor's log shows that FDR was visited by the national leader of the Military Order of the World War on September 17, 1936, suggesting that FDR, as the former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, may have been a member.

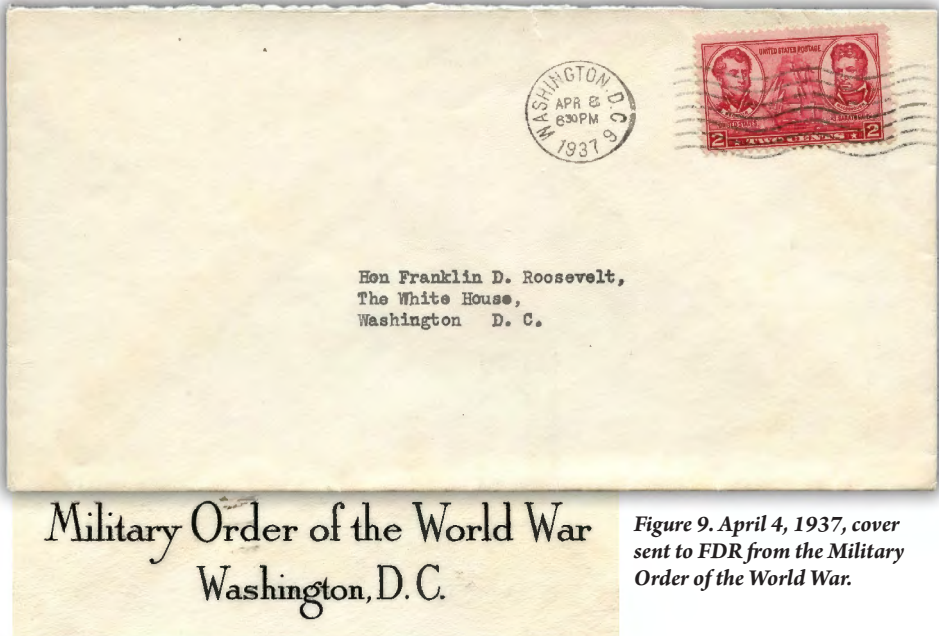


Figure 9. April 4, 1937, cover sent to FDR from the Military Order of the World War.



Besides being well-known as a stamp collector, President Franklin D. Roosevelt avidly collected naval prints, amassing more than 5,000 maritime prints, paintings and engravings. FDR is shown with some of these displayed behind him at his White House desk in Figure 10. I'm fortunate in having a December 15, 1933 letter on official White House stationery signed by FDR's private secretary "Missy" LeHand that apparently encloses payment of \$6.50 for a naval print. This is shown in Figure 11.

The fact that FDR collected naval prints, paintings and engravings, as well as being immersed in the history of the

Figure 10. FDR collected naval prints, paintings and engravings.

United States Navy, made him somewhat of an expert on this subject. Postmaster General Farley recalls in his book *Behind the Ballots* that FDR was personally involved in the design of the Army-Navy series of stamps, carefully questioning whether the guns, cannons, and sabers “were typical of the period which they were supposed to represent.”²

FDR seemed to be especially fond of artwork that showed sailing ships, such as the USS *Constitution*, nicknamed “Old Ironsides.” Curiously, this nickname arose following a ferocious exchange of cannon fire during the War of 1812 between the *Constitution* and British frigate HMS *Guerriere*, where it is said that the cannon balls of the *Guerriere* simply bounced off the thick live oak planking used on the sides of the *Constitution*, leading one of the British sailors to call out “Her sides are made of IRON!” When it was rumored that the *Constitution* was to be scrapped in 1830, a poem titled “Old Ironsides” by Oliver Wendell Holmes appeared, creating a public outcry. Ultimately, the USS *Constitution* was preserved and has remained a fully commissioned United States Navy ship since 1797, the oldest such vessel in the world.

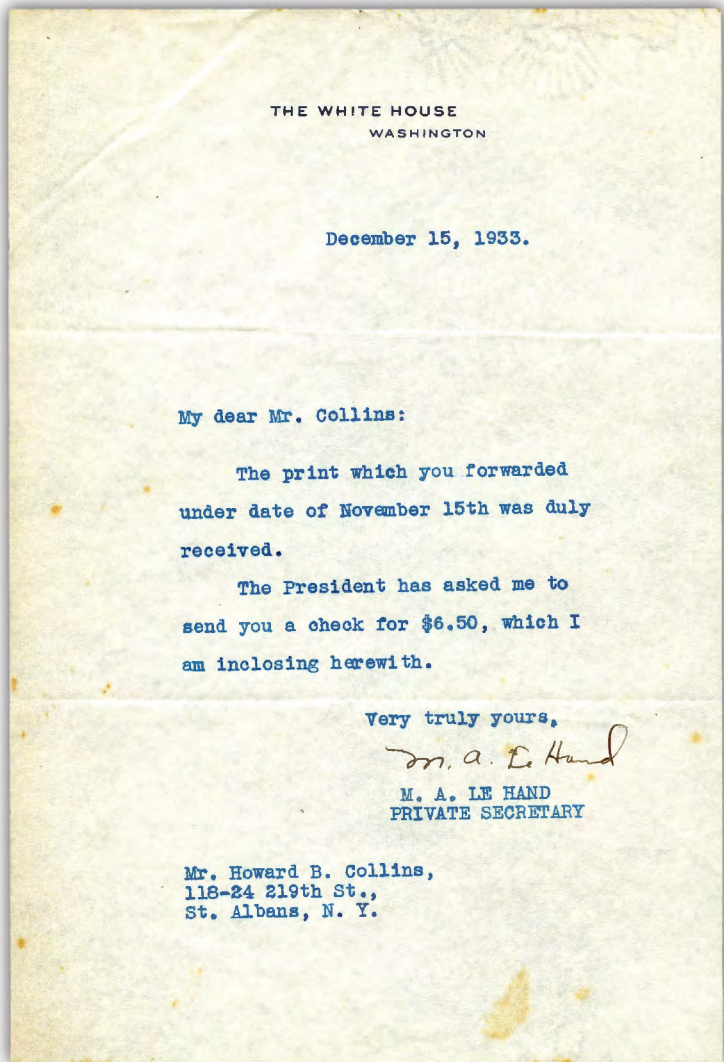


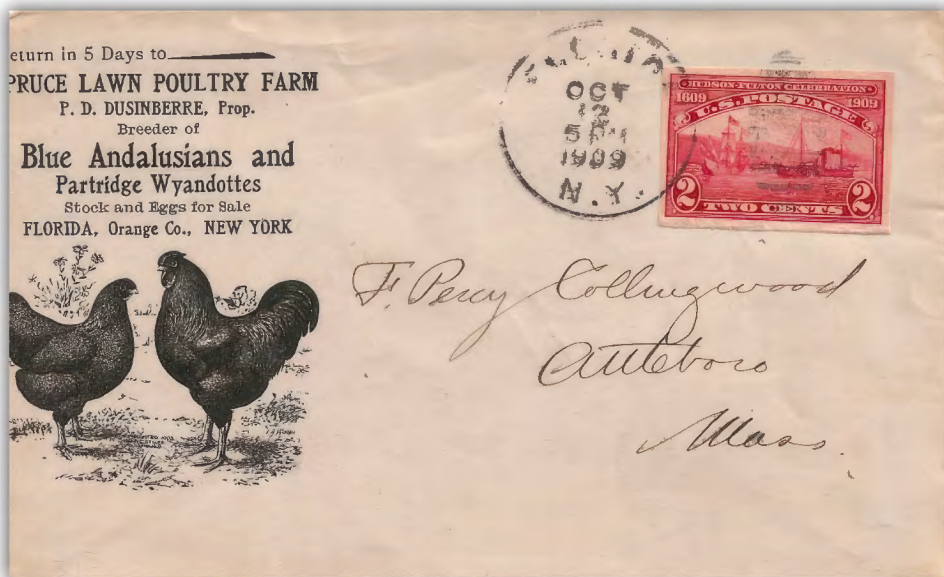
Figure 11. December 15, 1933, letter on White House stationery with FDR's payment for a print.

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Postal History



“Attleboro” Cover Comes Home to Roost

by Kevin G. Lowther

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Most United States collectors know about the unique Attleboro private perforations, but how many know that the creator of these curiosities was F. Percy Collingwood? This cover was mailed to Collingwood on October 12, 1909 not long after he began publishing *The Attleboro Philatelist*. Judging by the imperfect two-cent Hudson-Fulton commemorative (Scott 373) used by the sender, the New York farmer was replying to Collingwood's stamp advertisements and not flogging chickens. After more than a century, this cover has finally found a philatelic roost.

The Attleboro Philatelist.

Vol. I ATTLEBORO, MASS. SEPTEMBER, 1909 No. 1



New Machine Perforation

The perforation, illustrated above, which has been in use by The Attleboro Stamp Co., during the past month, and in mailing this first number of *The Attleboro Philatelist*, has created considerable interest among those collecting the varieties of private perforations, therefore an explanation may be received with favor by our readers. During July the Attleboro Stamp Co. gave orders for a stamp affixing machine that would affix stamps to the envelopes used in sending the Monthly Bargain List, issued by them at that time. It was first used in mailing the August number of the above named List and has been in use by them since that date. It has also been used in mailing this first number of *The Attleboro Philatelist*.

This machine, unlike some others in affixing the stamp, does not mangle the stamp, but instead, gives the perforation in the usual way by licking the envelope instead of the stamp, and is practiced by many in preference, particularly by those who are haunted with the idea that germs exist in the stamps and gum, from handling by the employees of the P. O. Department.

It will be noticed in the illustration that a very small V is shown at one end of each stamp. This is so placed as to hold the stamp when it is being torn from the adjoining stamp, and will always be found at the bottom. Those having stamps used, will find, that in

some instances, the two legs, which form the connection, are nearly, if not entirely, detached, this being caused by the tearing.

In some cases, the perforation which is found to have cut the design, which is almost impossible to overcome, owing to the variation of the spaces between the stamps, caused by an uneven shrinkage of the paper, during the process of gumming.

The stamps are secured from the Department in rolls of 500, attached endwise, imperforate. The rolls are constructed from the ordinary sheets of 500 stamps, the sheets being cut horizontally, or vertically, as the case may be, and attached by mounting the gum of one strip, and joining it to the front or printed side of the next strip. The strips contain 20 stamps each.

Hudson-Fulton Commemorative

A new 2c stamp is to be issued September 20th, to commemorate the Hudson-Fulton celebration to be held in New York Sept. 23th to Oct. 9th. The stamp is of the shape about 7/8 by 1 1/8 inches in size. The design includes the inscription, "Hudson-Fulton Celebration," at the top, with the dates, 1809 and 1909, immediately below on either side. Below this in a curved line, are the words, "U. S. Postage." At the bottom, on each side, is an Arabic numeral 2, with the words, "Two Cents" in a panel between the figures. In the center is engraved a picture showing the palisades of the Hudson in the background, with the Half Moon sailing up the river and the Clermont steaming in the opposite direction. In the foreground is an Indian in a canoe, and in the distance another canoe containing four Indians. The stamp will be printed in the usual color and will be issued in sheets of 50 stamps each. They will be no taste of envelopes, newspaper wrappers or envelopes to commemorate the event.



from the 1938 Presidential-Era Committee

On Cover - Scott 849

The Underappreciated, Undervalued Prexie Coil

by **William “Bill” DiPaolo**
 USSS #13766 | ✉Bill dip1@gmail.com



Figure 1. Line pair of the 1½¢ vertical coil.

In the world of Prexies, the 1½¢ value is an unremarkable stamp in almost every respect. With its humdrum bister brown color, the non-Presidential design (Martha Washington), and its purpose to pay the common printed matter rate, the stamp is often quickly passed by postal history collectors. This Prexie value was offered in three formats, each with its own Scott number – perforated sheet, horizontal coil and vertical coil. The focus here is on just one – Scott 849, the 1½¢ vertical coil (Figure 1).

Of the nine values printed in the coil format only four were printed vertically, 1¢, 1½¢, 2¢, 3¢. During the Prexie era, coil stamps were primarily the province of commercial enterprises using them with affixing machines. They were available only in large roll sizes designed for business or to be used in post office vending machines. Widespread utilization of coil stamps by the general public was not apparent until the time of the Liberty Series in 1954. It was also the period of the swift rise of meter usage, substantially reducing the need for any coil stamps. Though affixing machines were rapidly disappearing, most remaining machines required only the horizontal format. There was very little need for vertical coils at any point during the Prexie era. Examining production numbers puts this in perspective.

During the twenty-year Prexie period beginning in 1938, 225 billion stamps in all formats were printed just for the denominations 1¢ - 10¢, which were the coil values. Of those stamps, only 18% were horizontal coil stamps, and only 0.05% were vertical coils.¹ To extrapolate these numbers in a broad sense, this means that when searching for just the 1¢ through 10¢ values on cover, a vertical coil of any value would appear only once every 2,000 covers. And of the vertical coils, the 1½¢ value had the smallest production. Table 1 below looks at the quantities of the **least** produced stamps of the entire Prexie series. These quantities are minuscule when compared to the over 100,000,000,000 printed for the 3¢ value in only the sheet format.

Table 1. Stamps with the smallest quantities produced for the 1938 Presidential Series

STAMP	QUANTITY
1½¢ Vertical Coil	8,700,000
\$5	9,300,000
\$2	13,600,000
4½¢ Horizontal Coil	16,200,000
2¢ Vertical Coil	22,000,000

There are some surprises in this little table that should give pause to some Prexie cover collectors. The much sought-after 10¢ horizontal coil is not even in the top 5. It is number 6 at 22.5 million. This is not a large quantity; nonetheless, more than five others of the series. We know that since there was no single rate for it, the 4½¢ value would not be freely found on cover. That value has developed a reputation as an oddball, creating collector demand. And collectors are always on the hunt for the \$2 and \$5 values. Usually ignored and usually well underpriced based on their scarcity are all the vertical coils. The rates they paid may be common, but the stamps on cover are not.

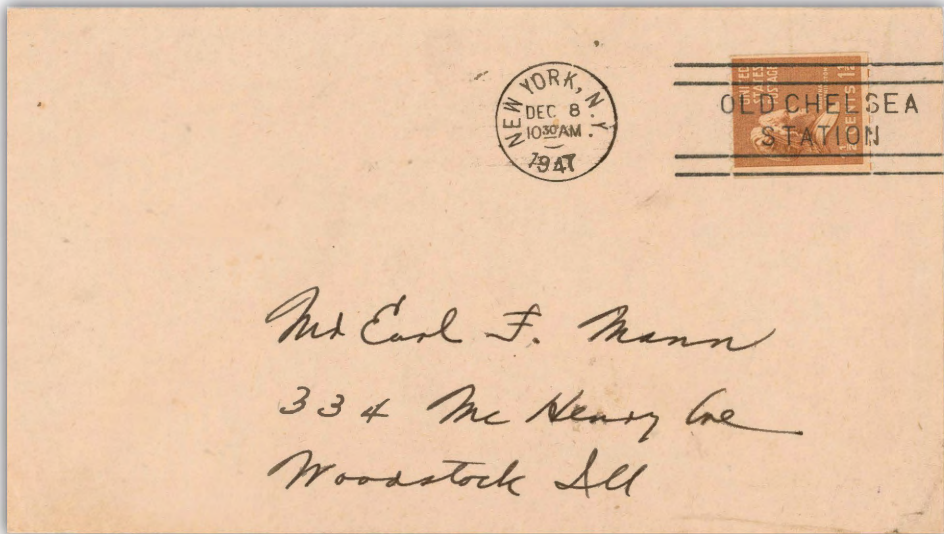


Figure 2. Scarce solo use of the 1½¢ Vertical Coil paying the single piece third class rate.

That brings us to the stamp with the smallest production run of all Prexies, regardless of format – Scott 849, the 1½¢ vertical coil. It weighs in at a paltry 8,700,000 issued stamps, only a little more than one-third of the production of the 10¢ coil value. Even so, it seems that collectors, flipping through dealer cover boxes, flip right by these little bister brown beauties in search of what they believe to be more exciting specimens, especially solo usages. Designed to pay an uninteresting third class (Figure 2) or international printed matter rate and with a lack of real collector interest, this stamp is available on cover at a bargain price considering its scarcity. Though it is one of the more difficult

stamps to discover properly used on cover, it can be found because it is not hoarded by collectors, as are the more exciting Prexie values. In my specialty coil collection of the Prexies, there are almost twice as many examples of the 10¢ coil as those of the 1½¢ vertical coil.

Table 2 seeks to put a little perspective on value. The stamps listed in Table 2, like Table 1, are listed according to the volume of issued stamps, lowest to highest. Catalog values are Scott's.

Table 2. Catalog value is for the most common on cover solo use.

Scott does not list a solo value for the \$5 stamp.

STAMP	ON COVER	SOLO USE
1½¢ Vertical Coil	\$ 20.00	\$ 60.00
\$5	\$ 500.00	
\$2	\$ 300.00	\$ 2,000.00
4½¢ Horizontal Coil	\$ 25.00	\$ 200.00
2¢ Vertical Coil	\$ 5.00	\$ 50.00
10¢ Horizontal Coil	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00

One has only to review these catalog values to see the law of supply and demand at work. The two listed vertical coils (1½¢ and 2¢) are usually found selling below the listed catalog values. The 2¢ vertical faces pretty much the same fate as the 1½¢ value - no respect. It is often that the other listed stamps sell above catalog. While supply is almost equal for each stamp, demand is setting the price.

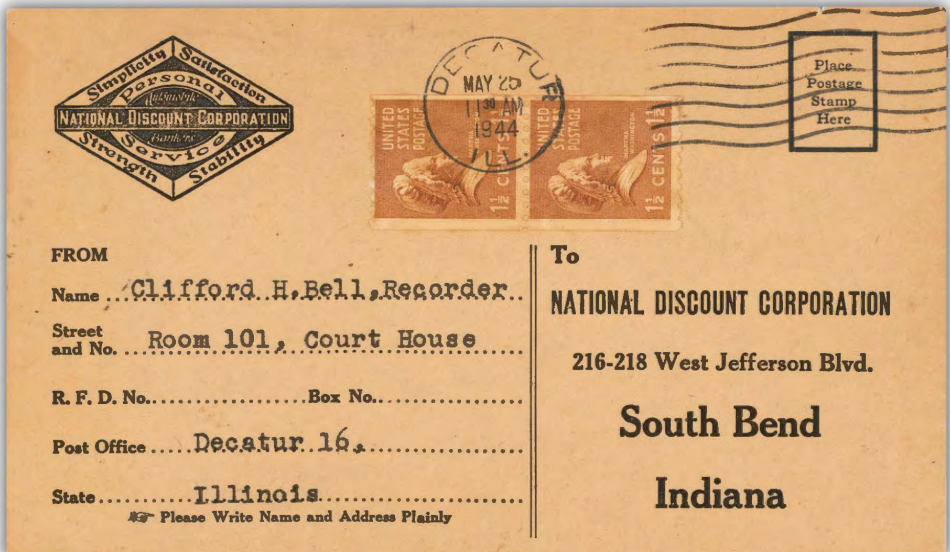


Figure 3. There are a number of extant covers to the National Discount Corporation. All are from different cities with the stamps applied in the same position. The company financed cars and airplanes and was asking for information from agencies in various states. Courtesy postage was affixed in advance.



Figure 4. This official envelope is required to pay 6¢ for requested air mail service, which it does with 4 1½¢ stamps.

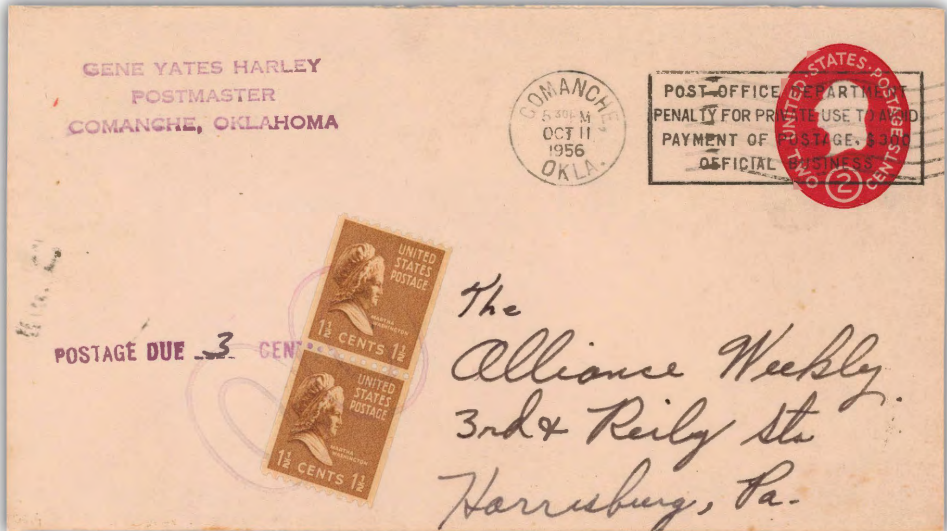


Figure 5. This is most likely a unique usage of the 1½¢ vertical coil. The service fee for address correction was 3¢ and normally paid by postage due stamps on form 3578. In this example the form was enclosed in a penalty envelope and the fee paid by the two coil stamps.

When examining usages, a solo use of the 1½¢ vertical for a common third-class rate is remarkably elusive. Most usages were on junk mail and probably discarded. The stamp is likely easier (though not often) found in multiples paying a first-class rate (Figure 3) or 6¢ airmail (Figure 4) of the period. Usages beyond those common rates are real finds (Figure 5).

The good news for Prexie collectors is that while this is a very scarce stamp on cover, its scarcity is not widely recognized. So, there are good examples sitting in dealer

inventories at very inexpensive prices. The 1½¢ vertical coil on cover – undervalued and underappreciated. Get 'em while you can.

Endnotes

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from the Washington-Franklin Issues Committee

Authenticating Scott 530c— Triple Impression on the Three Cent Offset

by **Andrew S. Kelley**

USSS #16734 | ✉ stamps@andrewkelley.net

Scott 530c—a triple impression—is one of the most intriguing and mysterious varieties of the offset lithographed Washington-Franklin heads. Although specialists noted the variety in the 1920s and 1930s, it received little attention until 2007, when it was listed in the *Scott Specialized Catalog*. The expertizing services have certified only three examples, though all three are actually double impressions, as I will demonstrate below. This article aims to demystify these stamps by illustrating genuine triple impressions and explaining how to detect double impressions that look like triples.

Background

530c has received remarkably little attention in the literature. Philip H. Ward Jr., writing in 1920, provides the only detailed description that I have been able to locate:

Mr. John E. Lord has shown me quite an oddity, namely the 3c offset print, perforated 11, unwatermarked, showing several impressions. It seems the rubber roller was somewhat dirty from previous use, and several very light layers of ink were left upon it, resulting in the stamp just described. At first glance, the variety appears as if it were printed upon a violet-coated paper, but close examination reveals the other impressions.¹

Ward reported on another triple impression in an earlier article. Since he did not see the specimen in question, however, he cautioned that many supposed triple impressions are an “optical delusion.”² Donald Lybarger, the dean of the offset issues, mentions the variety in his offset treatise but does not illustrate or describe it.³ Ward is likely the source for Lybarger’s listing; Lybarger cites the 1920 Ward article in his bibliography. Max Johl, for his part, does not mention a triple impression in his treatise.⁴ Nor does Louis G. Barrett, who wrote an early pamphlet on the three-cent offset.⁵ David Bennett (née David Berest), who devoted considerable attention to the offsets, mentions the existence of the triple impressions only in passing.⁶

To my knowledge, only three triple impressions have been certified: one by the Philatelic Foundation (“PF”) in 1988 (certificate 191619), one by the American Philatelic Society’s Expertizing Service (“APEX”) in 2014 (certificate 206611), and one by Professional Stamp Experts, Inc. (“PSE”) in 2009 (certificate 1208326).⁷ As explained below, all three certified stamps are double impressions, not triple impressions. Notably, after issuing the 1988 certificate, the PF examined at least ten similar items submitted as triple impressions that it (correctly) certified as double impressions.⁸ I am aware of only one “triple impression” offered at auction in the last few decades, at a Schuyler Rumsey auction in December 2014.⁹ See Figure 7. After the auction, the PF (correctly) determined that the stamp is a double impression, not a triple impression.¹⁰

The Scott *Specialized Catalog* did not list the variety until the 2007 edition. Presumably, it did so based on the 1988 PF certificate, though records to conclusively establish that are not presently available.

Three Cent Double Impressions: Two Types

It is helpful to understand the two types of double impressions on the three-cent offsets to assess the triple impressions. There are true double impressions, which went through the press twice, and pseudo doubles, which only went through the press once but have two different stamp images, with the doubling created by difficulties with the offset press.¹¹



Figure 1: True double impressions.

On true double impressions, the doubled image is offset above the primary impression and often offset a bit to the left or the right. Bureau workers created these intentionally. The pressman ran the sheets through again to avoid wasting paper when the initial impression was too faint to be used.¹² See Figure 1 for some examples. True double impressions can be found with two different plate numbers in the margins, demonstrating that these stamps went through the press twice.¹³ See Figure 2.

On pseudo doubles, the doubled impression appears to the left or right of the primary impression, with the two images in perfect vertical alignment. The multiple impressions were caused by “presswork difficulties,” to use George Brett’s term.¹⁴ No definitive cause



Figure 2: True double impression on Scott 530, with two different plate numbers (Courtesy of the late Gerald Nylander).



Figure 3: Pseudo Double Impressions. Note that only the right stamp is doubled on the strip of three.

for these varieties has been accepted. They may have been caused by improper cleaning of the rubber offset roller, stretched offset rollers, imperfect tracking between offset blanket and plate, stoppage of the press for adjustments, backlash, vibration, slippage, etc.¹⁵ Possibly all these factors played a role. Whatever the cause, the result is that stamps picked up a faint impression with “leftover” ink from the prior press revolution, plus a stronger image from the current revolution. Sometimes, the presswork difficulties affected only a portion of a sheet, as with the strip of three in Figure 5. The stamps went through the press from left to right, which explains why the impressions are offset to the left or right.

As we will see, the true triple impressions are a combination of the two types: they appear to have gone through the press twice while also exhibiting some “pseudo” style doubling.



Figure 4: Stamp that the PF certified as a triple impression (image from the PF website).



Figure 5: Stamp that PSE certified as a triple impression (image from PSE website).



Figure 6: Stamp that the APEX certified as a triple impression (image from APEX website).

The Certified Stamps Are Not Triple Impressions

Figure 4 depicts the stamp that the PF certified as a triple impression (certificate 191619), Figure 5 illustrates the stamp that PSE certified as a triple impression (certificate 1208326), and Figure 6 shows the stamp that the APEX certified as a triple (certificate 206611). Because of the low resolution of the images from the certificates, I have included a high-resolution scan of a similar stamp from my collection, as Figure 7.¹⁶



Figure 7: A strong double impression that looks like a triple impression (and was offered at auction as such).

These stamps look like triple impressions: the left three look tripled, and there appear to be three frame lines on the right. However, the tripling is the sort of “optical delusion” Ward warned about; these stamps can be duplicated with only two impressions.

I created a mockup in Adobe Photoshop to demonstrate that these are double impressions, overlaying two scans of a

normal stamp. To further simulate the purported triples, I reduced the opacity of one of the images so that it is fainter than the other. The result is in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Digital mockup created by overlaying two stamp images to simulate a double impression. Note the strong resemblance to the certified “triple” impressions.



Figure 9: Colorized version of Figure 8 showing the two “impressions.”

This mockup has the same features as the certified triple impressions in Figures 3, 4 and 5. The threes look the same. The frame lines look the same. But the mockup was created with two “impressions,” not three. Figure 9 is the same mockup as Figure 8, but the two “impressions” are reproduced in different colors to make them more distinct. It is interesting to see which impression contributes to which part of the finished mockup.

True Triple Impressions

Although the three certified triple impressions are really double impressions, that is not the end of the story. Figure 10 and Figure 11 illustrate two actual triple impressions.

The stamp in Figure 10 is a true triple impression. It is not possible to recreate it with just two impressions. Instead, the stamp shows three distinct impressions created during (at least) two runs through the press. One press run created the faint impression (1), visible as a faint frame line at the top of the stamp and in the frame line that runs through the “3 Cents 3” at the bottom. This impression is a true double: it is offset vertically and horizontally from the main impression. A second run through the press created two additional impressions: a faint impression most visible to the right of the primary impression (2) and the primary impression (3). The faint impression marked (2) is probably a pseudo-double.

I believe that Figure 11 is another example of a triple impression, though it is somewhat less clear than Figure 10. The impressions are as follows: (1) A faint impression directly above the main impression, with many horizontal shading lines. (2) A second



Figure 10: True triple impression with (1) faint impression above the main impression, (2) faint impression to the right of the main impression, and (3) strong main impression.



Figure 11: Used Triple Impression with (1) faint impression above, (2) smeary, faint impression to the right, and (3) main impression.

faint impression is visible to the right of the main impression. This shows both another frame line and some horizontal shading lines. And (3) the main impression. This stamp bears a striking resemblance to the one described by Philip Ward Jr. in 1920: "at first glance, it appears to be printed on violet-colored paper, but on close examination, several impressions are apparent."¹⁷ It is impossible to duplicate this stamp using only two "impressions."

Note that Figure 11 is not an example of the tinted-paper variety, where, perhaps due to a worn plate or a dirty offset roller, the entire surface of the stamp takes on a uniform, light-colored tint.¹⁸ The faint impressions in Figure 11 show shading lines and other details, while tinted paper stamps have a uniform tint without such detail.

I welcome reports of other triple impressions.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the late Gerald Nylander for consulting with me regarding the triple impressions, Lewis Kaufman for helping me search the PF database, and Kevin Lowther, and Larry Weiss for their comments on a draft of this article.

Endnotes

1. Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," December 11, 1920.

2. Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," January 25, 1919 ("Mr. Milton P. Lyons, Jr., informs us that he has located the current 3c stamp, surface print, type IV, with a distinct triple impression. Unfortunately, the writer did not have the opportunity of viewing the stamp, but as Mr. Lyons is well-posted on such matters, we do not feel that this was an optical delusion as is quite often the case with many varieties sent us for inspection.").

3. Lybarger, *The United States Issues of 1918-20*, 44.

4. Johl, *United States Postage Stamps 1902-1935*, 199-202. I cite the 1976 reprint because it uses updated Scott numbers and is likely more accessible to collectors.

5. Barrett, *United States Three Cents Violet: War and Victory*. Barrett's pamphlet was serialized in Mekeel's. "The U.S. 3c Violet War and Peace," May 1, 1920; "The U.S. 3c Violet War and Peace," May 15, 1920; "The U.S. 3c Violet War and Peace," May 29, 1920.

6. Berest, "Why I Collect the Offset Issue," 244 ("Double prints, and in some cases, triple prints, are known."); Berest, "Offset Issues," 162 ("Also, there were retouches, double-prints, triple-prints, printed-on-both-sides, and 'what-have-you.'").

7. See "PF Search: Search the PF Database for the PF certificate." For the PSE certificate, see "Professional Stamp Experts." It is impossible to link

directly to the APEX certificate, but it can be found at <https://stamps.org/certificate-archive>.

8. "PF Search: Search the PF Database."

9. "Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions, Inc., Sale 58 - Lot 1501." This stamp is in my collection, though I did not purchase it from Rumsey.

10. See Certificate 525207. "PF Search: Search the PF Database."

11. Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," April 19, 1919 (early report discussing the two types of double impressions); Centonze, "True Double Impression on 3c Washington Head Printed by Offset Lithography" (modern discussion of true and pseudo double impressions).

12. Charles J. Phillips published a first-hand account of an interview with a Bureau pressman who ran three-cent sheets through the press twice. "U.S. 1918—3c Purple, Double Printed." For confirmatory accounts, see Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," March 1, 1919 (reporting on three cent sheet printed from plates 9374 and 9396); Leavy and Owen, "The Plates and Printings of the 3 Cent Offset Printing," 199 (same, and explaining that the variety was created intentionally).

13. Centonze, "True Double Impression on 3c Washington Head Printed by Offset Lithography."

14. Brett, "Doubled Offset Revenue."

15. Ibid.; Phillips, "U.S. 1918—3c Purple, Double Printed" reports that at least one Bureau printing supervisor attributed the doubles to "slippage." So

did printing expert George Brett. "Double Prints/Impressions."

16. This is the same stamp that was in the 2014 Schuyler Rumsey auction. As noted, the Philatelic Foundation apparently certified this stamp as a double impression after the auction. See Certificate 525207. "PF Search: Search the PF Database."

17. Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," December 11, 1920.

18. Ward, Jr., "Chronicle of New Issues and Varieties, United States," February 22, 1919 (reporting on the tinted paper variety and speculating about its origin); Lybarger, *The United States Issues of 1918-20*, 42 ("As the offset plates became worn from use, the ink at times had a tendency to spread out over the entire surface of the plate. This meant that the white portions of the stamp and the gutters and margins became tinted and took on a light purple hue.").

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from the Revenue Issues Committee



Figure 1. The \$10-\$100 values of the 1895 Newspaper & Periodical series

Worked Over... The Vignettes of the 1895 Newspaper and Periodical High Values

by **Chris Jenkins**

USSF #16951 | ✉ alton45@comcast.net

A remarkable volume of work was performed by the Engraving Division of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in the year 1894. The Bureau had just taken over responsibility for producing postage stamps. Stamp projects included re-engraving the small banknote issues to improve color depth, incorporating triangles in the designs, adding \$1, \$2 and \$5 small banknote values, creating a new set of postage due stamps, and producing a series of Newspaper and Periodical stamps in new denominations. The Bureau went above and beyond the requirements of the Post Office Department. The report of the Postmaster General for the year ended June 30, 1894, states that it was the Bureau and not the Post Office department who suggested redesigning the Postage Due stamps. The same page of that report also said, "A new series of Newspaper Stamps has been decided on, differing materially in size from the old issues, but maintaining their general characteristics..." While the 25-cent and higher values of the new series did retain the general appearance of the vignettes in the 1875 series, the Bureau made many subtle improvements in those vignettes.

In an article published in the April 2022 issue of *The United States Specialist*, I outlined the process of creating the vignettes for the 2- through 10-cent values of the new Newspaper & Periodical stamps. There was also the need to create frame designs, numerals, and lettering for the new 25-cent through \$100 denominations. Figure 1 shows the \$10 through \$100 values, Scott PR 122-125 on watermarked paper. These were originally

issued on unwatermarked paper and are designated as Scott numbers PR110-113. This work was all to be done on stamps that were not expected to leave the Newspaper stamp ledger books at the nation's post offices.

The Newspaper stamp project benefited from the extraordinary talents of designer Thomas F. Morris, Sr, and vignette engraver G.F.C Smillie. Also critical to the success of the project were the highly skilled engravers Lyman Ellis, James Kennedy, and J.S. King. The latter three handled the frame and numeral work for the new stamps. Morris served as both head of BEP's Engraving Division and as a designer, and he was instrumental in creating the new frame designs. Although the vignettes of the stamps appear nearly identical to those of the 1875 series, evidence suggests that G.F.C. Smillie did substantial work on the vignettes.



Figure 2. Large die proof of the 1875 \$9 stamp with pencil notation.



Figure 3. Large die proof of the 1875 \$12 value with pencil notation.

Use of the Continental Banknote Designs

Creating the new Newspaper stamps was apparently subject to at least one false start. The starting points for the new 25 cents though \$100 values were the vignettes of the old Continental Banknote Company designs created for the 1875 series of the Newspaper stamps. Figures 2 and 3 show large die proofs of the 1875 Continental issue. The pencil notations on the die proofs indicate that the initial plan was quite different than that finally adopted. The old \$9 value is noted with "use for \$10," and the old \$12 value is noted "use for \$20." Had those pencil notations been reflected in the final designs, the \$10 and \$20 values would have had a far different appearance. Of course, the vignette of the \$9 value was not used at all, and the old \$12 design became the basis of the new \$10 stamp.

Thomas F. Morris II, son of Thomas F. Morris, authored an excellent article that appeared in the January and April 1957 issues of the *Essay Proof Journal*, describing the steps taken to engrave the

new Newspaper stamps. I recommend that article to those desiring more detail. In summary, impressions from the old Continental dies were taken up on new transfer rolls and then laid down on new dies as the starting point for the new values. Extensive work was required for the 25- and 50-cent values, including new frame designs, lettering, numerals, and re-engraving of the vignettes. The amount of work required on each of the other values varied.

Figure 4 shows one of the steps in that process. It is an essay for the \$20 value, with part of the old \$24 value cut away, as well as portions of the upper left and right sides. It is identified as Scott PR111-E1. Thomas Morris II wrote that the essay was

made by cutting away part of the image on the transfer roll and that the image was laid down on the new die with the cut-away parts already removed.



Figure 4. An essay for the \$20 value of the 1895 Newspaper & Periodical series.

Extensive Work on New Vignettes

While it would be logical to assume that new denominations and frames were all that was needed, Morris Sr. and his team did not stop there. In an article in the May 1971 issue of the *United States Specialist*, J. Frank Braceland provided a partially complete table showing the engravers who had worked on most of the new stamps. One of the gaps in the table was the identity of the vignette engraver of the \$5 issue. Figure 5, a large die proof with the pencil notation “worked over GFC Smillie,” seems to address that gap. Because the vignette began with the die from the 1875 issue, I believe the phrase “worked over” was used to make it clear that the vignette was not entirely Smillie’s original engraving. J.S. King handled some or all of the frame and other engraving work on the stamp and signed his name.

Figure 6 shows a large die proof of the \$10 value, with notations identical to those of the \$5 large die proof. Two interesting changes not specifically mentioned by Thomas Morris II exist in the \$10 value. The highlights on the head of the goddess Vesta are in the shape of “U S” on the new \$10 vignette. In the old Continental \$12 vignette, the U and the S are separated by a large white highlight. Differences also exist in the upper edge of the vignette background. The Continental version ended the vignette background



Figure 5. A large die proof with the notation "worked over GFC Smillie."

shading lines in free space, creating a ragged appearance when enlarged. The Bureau's new version bounded these lines with a fine curved line. These differences are shown by arrows in the enlarged views of Figures 7 and 8.

The \$100 Essay

Thomas Morris II wrote that the \$100 value was almost entirely re-engraved, with very little of the old Continental vignette remaining in the new die. I made an appointment to view the 1875 Newspaper trial color die proofs in the Eagle Collection at the National Postal Museum. Those items from the Eagle collection are not on public display but can be viewed if advance arrangements are made.

In the Eagle collection is also the 1895 series essay shown in Figure 9. The essay shows the vignette to be incomplete in the upper left- and right-hand corners, leaving



Figure 6. A large die proof with the same notation seen in Figure 5 (Image courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum).

white spaces. The essay is in purple, identical or very similar to the selected color for the stamp. The *Scott Catalog* lists a PR113 E-1 but in black with similar incomplete vignette corners.

Conclusion

The most intriguing aspect is that changes in the vignettes were made at all. The Continental vignettes had achieved critical acclaim, and the Bureau already had a substantial workload associated with other projects. Surely, the reuse of the Continental vignettes would have sufficed. Yet Morris and Smillie took the process a step further, demonstrating their tremendous capacity for work and what may have been a desire to distinguish their work from that done earlier by the banknote companies.



Figure 7. Enlarged die proof of the Continental \$12 design.



Figure 8. Enlarged die proof of the redesigned \$10 value with arrows showing changes from the Continental \$12 design.

My sincere thanks to Susan Smith, Ph.D., who is the William M. Blount Research Chair at the Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum, and Manda Kowalczyk, Preservation Technician of the Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum, for their expert assistance with the Newspaper stamp materials in the Eagle and Ackerman collections, and for furnishing the digital image in Figure 9 of this article.

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Figure 9. An essay of the \$100 value, 1895 series (Image courtesy Smithsonian Institution, National Postal Museum).



I WANT YOUR MANUSCRIPT

FOR THE US SPECIALIST

SUBMISSIONS NEEDED FOR THE U.S. SPECIALIST

The United States Specialist is dependent on member-submitted content in order to maintain high-quality and diverse philatelic articles. However, in spite of the increased time many collectors have been able to dedicate to the hobby, the availability of material for publication is currently constrained.

Consequently, I am appealing to you to submit story ideas, working manuscripts and, especially, completed articles to be considered for publication. The goal is to maintain a balance between longer, multiple part articles and short vignettes — both of which need compelling narrative and a strong philatelic thread centered around US material. All materials submitted are subject to peer review and comment prior to acceptance for publication. Once a manuscript is accepted, the article is edited and then composed for production. Authors then receive a link for the online proof of their work.

I am grateful for the materials that have been submitted and the work that many of you are continuing. If you have contributed materials, thank you! If you have submitted material and haven't heard back from me, please email again. If you haven't submitted anything for review, please consider preparing a manuscript soon. In the world of non-profits, it is often said that many people are willing to contribute if they are asked to get involved. So, with this, I am officially asking for your help.

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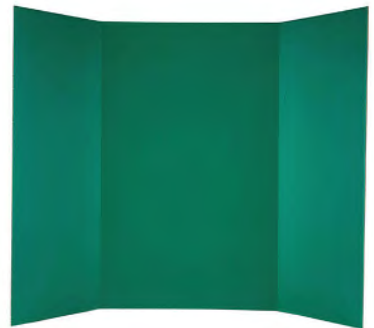


Figure 2. Possible photo background.

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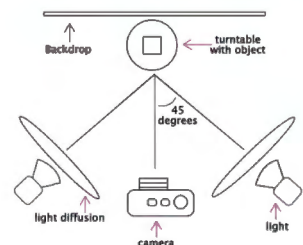


Figure 3. Ideal lighting for 3D objects.

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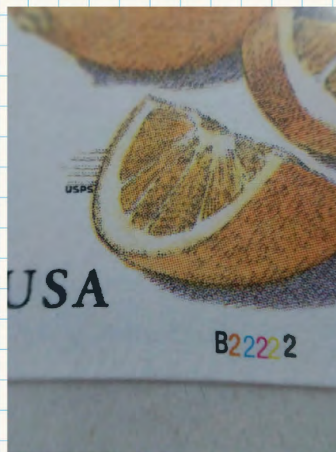
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compiled by **Kim D. Johnson**

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B2222

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Postcard rate

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5r x 2c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10*

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B1111 UL † † LR

3r x 2c 1,2,3,4,5,6*



▲ #5757 Toni Morrison
 B1111 UL UR LL LR
 3r x 2c 1,2,3,4,5,6*



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 B111111111 UL UR LL LR
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B11111

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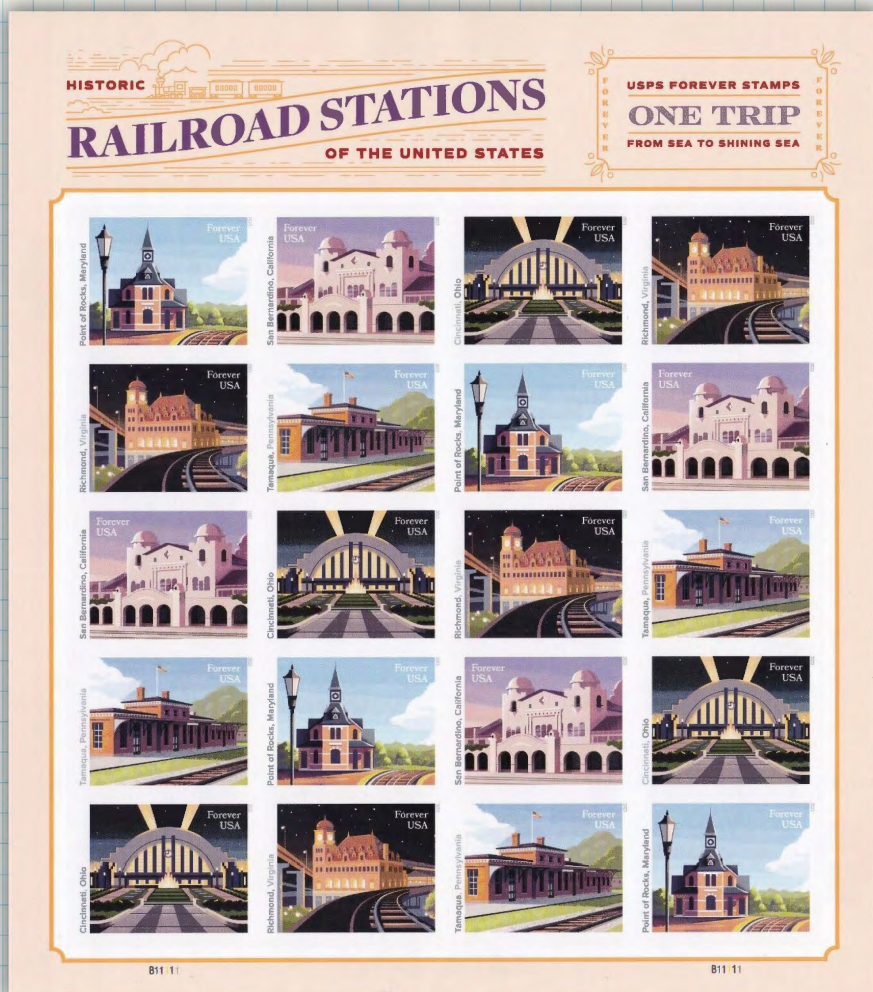
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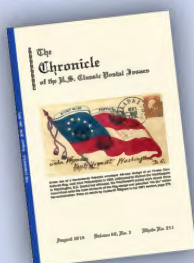
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