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

WHOLE NUMBER 1147



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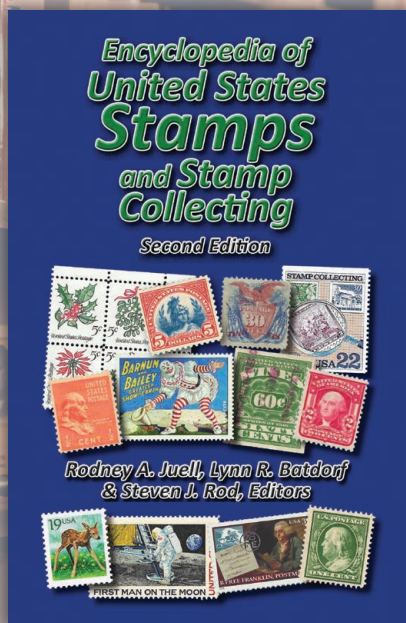


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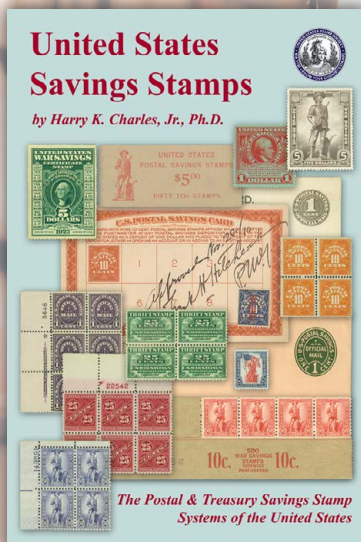
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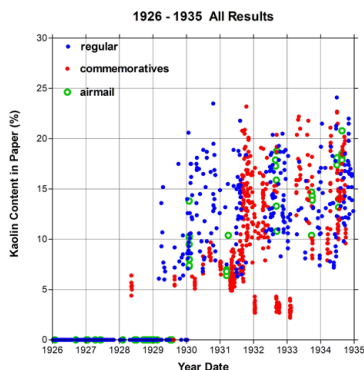
An association of collectors to promote the study of all postage and revenue stamps and stamped paper of the United States and US-administered areas produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and other contract printers.

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Andrew S. Kelley, Editor
9038 East 25th Drive
Denver, CO 80238
(720) 839-5848

email: editor@usstamps.org

www.usstamps.org

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Correspondence concerning business affairs of the Society, including membership and changes in address, should be addressed to the Executive Secretary, PO Box 1602, Hockessin, DE 19707-5602.

Postmaster: Send address changes to U.S.S.S., P.O. Box 1602, Hockessin, DE 19707-5602.



THE UNITED STATES SPECIALIST
Founded 1930 as The Bureau Specialist

EDITOR

ANDREW S. KELLEY

9038 East 25th Drive
Denver, CO 80238
email: editor@usstamps.org

**United States Stamp Society
Bureau Issues Association, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1602
Hockessin, DE 19707-5602

CHAIRMAN

Roger S. Brody

P.O. Box 5836
Somerset, NJ 08875-5836
email: brody@usstamps.org

PRESIDENT

Nicholas Lombardi

P.O. Box 1005
Mountainside, NJ 07092
email: 8605@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Jeffrey Shapiro

P.O. Box 3211
Fayville, MA 01745-3211
email: coverlover@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Joel Cohen

10703 Kings Riding Way, Unit T-1
Rockville, MD 20852-5420
email: cohenji@comcast.net

TREASURER

David S. Sugar

4045 N. Harvard Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
email: david-sugar@wsdd.com

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Lynn Batdorf

Kim Johnson

Mike Lampson

Leonard Piskiewicz

Robert Robinson

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Gregory Shoults

David Steidley

Jay Stotts

Steven Unkrich

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Robert Rufe

P.O. Box 1602
Hockessin, DE 19707-5602
email: execsecretary@usstamps.org

— Committees —

AWARDS

Denise Stotts

email: stottsjd@swbell.net

BOOKLETS & BOOKLET PANES

Michael O. Perry

P.O. Box 1194, Rainier, OR 97048
email: MOPerry@mac.com

DURLAND EDITOR

Kim D. Johnson

310 E N 3rd Street, Georgetown, IL 61846
email: westhome1@aol.com

ESSAY-PROOF

James Patterson

1850 North Central Avenue, No. 1400
Phoenix, AZ 85004
email: jhpatterson@yahoo.com

EXHIBIT PDFs

Chris Steenerson

P.O. Box 1818
Westminster, CO 80038-1818
email: Chris@RxStamps.com

FARLEY ERA

Paul M. Holland

email: pholland.thorleaf@gmail.com

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Jay B. Stotts

email: stottsjd@swbell.net

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Roland Austin

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email: RAustin13@aol.com

MARGINAL MARKINGS

Chris Steenerson

P.O. Box 1818
Westminster, CO 80038-1818
email: Chris@RxStamps.com

MODERN POSTAL HISTORY

Douglas B. Quine

P.O. Box 153, Bethel, CT 06801-0153
email: usss2010@quine.org

PLATE NUMBER & CHECKLIST SERVICE

Kim D. Johnson

310 E N 3rd Street, Georgetown, IL 61846
email: westhome1@aol.com

PRECANCELS

Lynn R. Batdorf

6005 Kingsford Road, Bethesda, MD 20817
email: hollykids@comcast.net

PRESIDENTIAL ERA

Jeffrey Shapiro

P.O. Box 3211, Fayville, MA 01745-3211

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Steven Crippe

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Nicholas Lombardi

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Greg Shoults

11248 Frederick Lane
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email: coilcollector@hotmail.com

Andrew S. Kelley

9038 E 25th Dr, Denver, CO 80238
email: stamps@andrewkelley.net

WEBMASTER

Mike Lampson

P.O. Box 471963, Charlotte, NC 28247
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— Study Groups —

DUMMY STAMPS

Terry R. Scott

P.O. Box 10406, Napa, CA 94581
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53578
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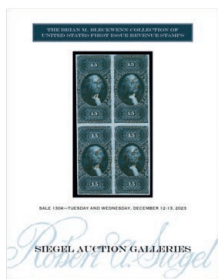
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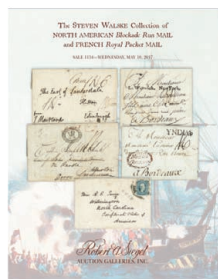
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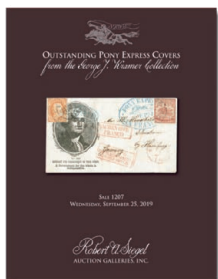
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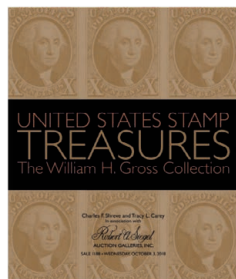
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The Unique Error That Never Was

by **Ken Zierer**

USSS # 12533 | ✉ kenzierer@yahoo.com

A missing color error listed in the Scott catalogue for 34 years doesn't actually exist. It's time to remove it.

Postage stamps issued by the United States for the first 100 years were mostly single-color engraved (intaglio) issues, with a few bicolored stamps occasionally produced. The notable exception was the 1943–44 Overrun Countries issue that incorporated multiple colors by combining an engraved frame and offset-printed flags. This method of printing, unavailable at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) at that time, was performed by the American Bank Note Company.

Increasing demand and improved printing technology resulted in the production of more multicolored stamps. In 1956, the BEP obtained a Giori Press that printed in three colors from a single plate. Many three-colored engraved stamps in the 1960s were produced by this press. However, design limitations with this printing led the BEP to begin designing stamps with an engraved component combined with an offset



The purported error pane (Courtesy Siegel Auction Galleries).



Figure 1. Normal stamp at left, engraved black omitted in center, and offset black omitted at right.

lithography portion. These stamps had the aesthetics of a multicolored image but retained the security and fine details of a line-engraved issue. This was initially accomplished with multiple passes through different presses, but the BEP eventually obtained presses that could perform both elements of printing through a single pass.

Production of multicolored stamps sometimes involved incorporating the same ink color twice: one for the engraved component and one in the offset portion. This was most commonly seen with black ink, and many stamp issues had both elements in their design. This meant that a stamp could have an omitted black component but still show substantial black ink in its design.

For example, Figure 1 shows Scott 2419, with a normal copy on the left, along with two error stamps, the one in the middle missing the engraved black, and the one on the right missing the offset black. The engraved black was used in the design of the astronauts and some of the moon surface while the offset black was used for the moon craters, some of the moon surface, the flagpole, and shadowing in the flag. The omission of the engraved black is dramatic and easily spotted, while the offset black omission is subtle and could be easily missed. Most importantly, note that in some areas, there is an overlap of the two blacks, most pronounced on the moon surface surrounding the boots—which brings us to the main subject of this article.

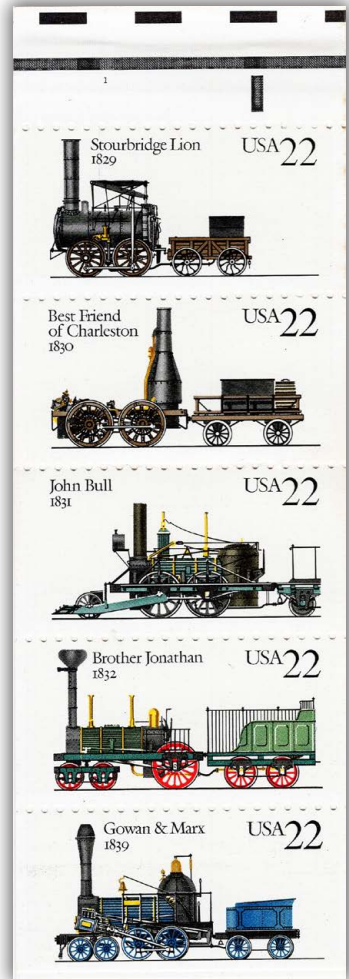


Figure 2. The normal locomotive pane.

The Steam Locomotive issue (Scott BK 163, stamps 2362–66) was a booklet containing four booklet panes, each featuring five different early locomotives. Figure 2.

The stamps were printed on the BEP's D Press, acquired from the Goebel company in 1984. The D press was a web-fed combination press, with six single-color offset lithographic plates and a three-color intaglio sleeve. After printing, the web was placed onto the Goebel booklet forming machine, where the stamps were perforated, cut into strips and assembled with cover stock to produce the finished product.

For this issue, the D Press used green, blue, brown, yellow, red and black for the offset printing with an additional black used for the engraved portion.

The booklet was issued on October 1, 1987, with first-day ceremonies held at the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

On October 26, 1990, after examining a locomotive booklet, the Philatelic Foundation issued certificate 208749

stating: "IT IS GENUINE WITH THE LOWER STAMP IN THE BACK PANE COMPLETELY MISSING INTAGLIO BLACK." (Figure 3)

After the 1990 Philatelic Foundation certificate was issued, the missing engraved black variety was added to the Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* as catalog number 2366b, starting with 1991 edition and continuing for the next 34 years. It is similarly listed in the Scott *Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Stamps*, which additionally states in its listing, "very rare, possibly unique."

But is this really a missing color error? A close-up of the purported error, along with a normal copy, is seen in Figure 4. The black elements of the train are clearly lighter than

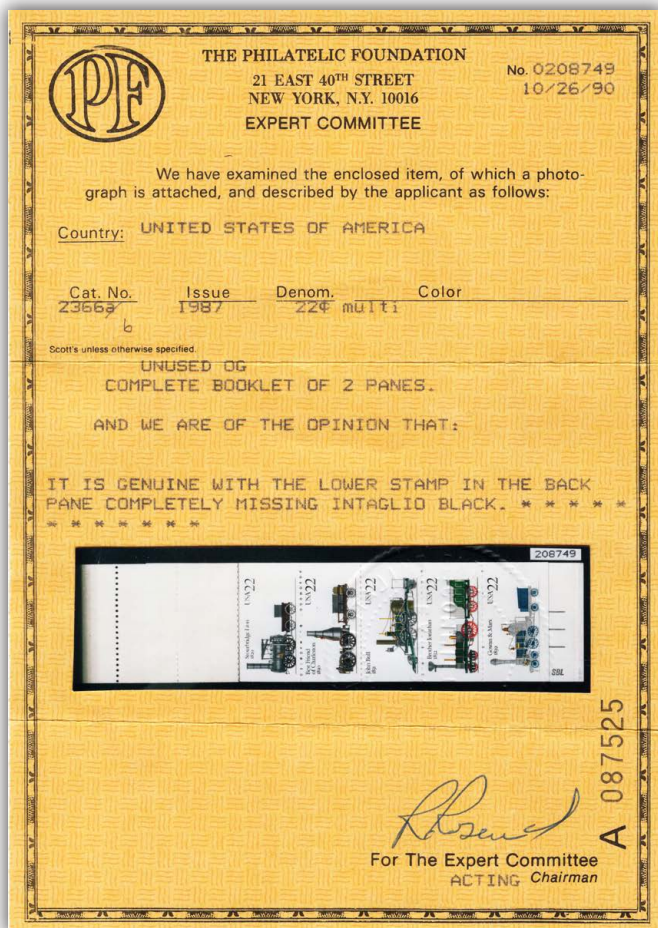


Figure 3. 1990 Philatelic Foundation certificate.



Figure 4. The purported error above a normal copy of the stamp.

the normal copy. Does this represent the omission of an intaglio component in the train, or just an under-inking of the offset black?

The Philatelic Foundation examiner(s) obviously believed there was a missing intaglio component, but this was erroneous. As mentioned in *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1987*, Fred Boughner writes, "Inscriptions on the stamps are in black engraving; all else is printed by the offset method."¹

So if the engraved portion of the stamp is the inscription, in this case, "Gowan & Marx, 1839, USA22", then the error stamp in question is clearly not missing the engraved portion.

Therefore, without an engraved component making up part of the design of the locomotive, the explanation for the appearance of the stamp would have to be characterized as an under-inking freak of the offset black.

But can we be 100% sure that the information in *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1987* is accurate? In this case, we can because we have confirmation from the stamp in Figure 5. It is a close-up of a pane with a misregistration freak showing a 5mm shift of the black engraved portion from the offset colors. Note the overlap of the inscription into the smoke stack of the locomotive. If there were engraved elements within the design of the locomotive, they too would shift, and the locomotive would show a misregistration. But it does not, and confirms there is no engraved portion within the locomotives, and that the inscriptions are the engraved portion.

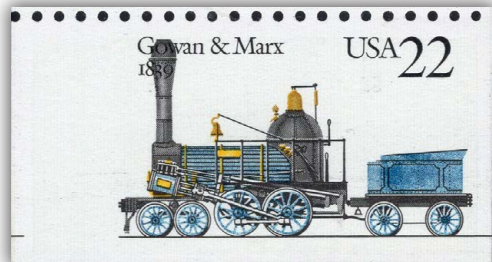


Figure 5. Offset and engraved misregistration.

It is unclear who owned this item since its discovery, but it was part of the massive inventory of William S. Langs, a dealer in errors, essays, proofs, classic US stamps, and much more. After he died in July 2020, his holdings were sold in a series of auctions by Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions. This particular item was sold in sale 760 in September 2021. More recently, it was sold by Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., in their sale 1347 on March 6–7, 2025.

After this most recent sale, the booklet pane was resubmitted to the Philatelic Foundation, and with the new information, they issued a certificate

611348 stating:
 “THERE IS NO MISSING
 COLOR ERROR ON THIS
 PANE THE INTAGLIO
 BLACK IS 100% PRESENT
 THE OFFSET BLACK IS
 LIGHTLY PRINTED BUT
 PRESENT”(Figure 6).

Now that this item
 has been properly cor-
 rected to an under-inking
 freak, it is time for the edi-
 tors of Scott to delist the
 engraved omitted variety,
 Scott 2366b, from their
 catalogues.

References

1. Fred Boughner, *Linn's
 U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1987*
 (Sidney, Ohio: Amos Press,
 1987), 115.

The Philatelic Foundation No. 611348
 353 Lexington Avenue • Room 804
 New York, NY 10016
 EXPERT COMMITTEE

We have examined the enclosed item, of which a photograph is attached, and *described by the applicant* as follows:

Country: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Cat. No.	Issue	Denom.	Color
2366b	1987	22¢	multicolored

Scott's unless otherwise specified.
 UNUSED, OG, BOOKLET PANE.

AND WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT:
 IT IS GENUINE, NEVER HINGED., THERE IS NO MISSING COLOR ERROR
 PRESENT ON THIS PANE THE INTAGLIO BLACK IS 100% PRESENT THE
 OFFSET BLACK IS LIGHTLY PRINTED BUT PRESENT *****

611348

For The Expert Committee
 Chairman

Photocopies of this Certificate are not valid.

M 372543

Figure 6. The updated Philatelic Foundation certificate.

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The Coming and Going of China Clay in BEP Printing Paper. Part II: Detailed Analyses of the Return of Kaolin in the Regular Issue, Commemorative, and Airmail Stamps Printed Between 1926 and 1935

by Harry G. Brittain, PhD
USSS # 16446 | hgbrittain@gmail.com



Figure 1. Representative examples of Fourth Bureau issue stamps for which early stamps were printed on kaolin-free paper, and for which latter stamps were printed on kaolin-containing paper.

At one point, the existence of United States stamps that had possibly been printed on paper containing “China Clay” (i.e., the clay substance known as kaolin) was a topic of considerable controversy. This question was strongly addressed by Liston, who used X-ray diffraction (XRD) to investigate the nature of the printing paper used for a limited

number of “China Clay” stamps.¹ His XRD studies demonstrated that none of the analyzed stamps were printed on paper that contained any detectable amount of kaolin. Liston stated that, “the stamps that are currently ‘Certified China Clay’ stamps are only stamps printed on normal but dirty or defective paper.”

In his two papers, Liston limited his conclusions to the 1908–1910 stamps of the Washington-Franklin issue. Over the past few years, I have used XRD investigations to significantly enlarge the scope of printing paper associated with early United States stamps. The specific goal of my work was to develop a historical timeline indicating when the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) printed stamps on kaolin-containing paper and when it printed stamps on paper consisting only of cellulose.

In a recent paper,² I published the results of XRD studies conducted on a large number of 2¢ stamps derived from the first four BEP general issues. My approach was to only study stamps that had attached plate numbers, since that it made it possible to associate an approximate date of printing for each stamp by collating plate numbers with the associated printing dates compiled in the *B.I.A. Plate Number Checklist*.^{3,4} Specifically, this study consisted of the analysis of 434 uniquely numbered 2¢ stamps from the First Bureau series (Scott numbers 248, 250, 265, 267, and 279B), 1040 2¢ stamps from the Second Bureau series (Scott 301 and Scott 319), 504 2¢ stamps from the Third Bureau series (Scott numbers 332, 375, 406, 425, 463, 499, and 528), and 839 2¢ stamps from the Fourth Bureau Series (Scott numbers 554, 583, 634). The total number of regular issue stamps profiled in this work was 2,817.

The investigations reported in the previous paper demonstrated that the BEP used both kaolin-containing and kaolin-free printing papers during this period. The quantitative analysis results enabled the development of a historical timeline of the 2¢ stamps that I divided into three eras:

First Era: This era began near the end of 1894 when the BEP took over the printing contract from the American Bank Note Company and issued its very first stamps. Initially, all stamps were printed on kaolin-containing paper, and this practice continued roughly until the middle of 1904. At the beginning of 1908, the BEP began using both kaolin-containing and kaolin-free paper for stamp printing.

Second Era: This era spanned roughly from 1908 to the beginning of 1929 and represents the time when all 2¢ stamps were printed on kaolin-free paper. This period spans the entire printing history of stamps from the Third Bureau Series, confirming the correctness of the small study performed by Liston.¹

Third Era: The final era covered in the previous work begins with early 1929 stamps, which the BEP printed on kaolin-containing paper. This type of paper was used continuously to the end of 1937, where the scope of the preceding paper ended.

While the scope and conclusions of the preceding paper are highly useful and important to an understanding of the printing paper used by the BEP, the historical timeline of the preceding paper² must necessarily be limited in its scope to the actual 2¢ stamps of the first four BEP series. Other results of XRD investigations performed on regular-issue and commemorative stamps with 1¢ and 2¢ denominations have confirmed the extensive use of kaolin-containing paper from 1894 to 1908, as well as the exclusive use of kaolin-free printing paper after 1908.⁵⁻⁷ But it is clear that the historical record is far from complete, and therefore needs to be filled in.

The present paper contains a significant expansion of the printing paper timeline, as I will present the results of XRD studies conducted not only on regular issue stamps but also on commemorative and airmail stamps. The results reported in the present study begin with stamps having plate number 17422 (first to press on July 28, 1926) and conclude with plate number 21357 (first to press on December 26, 1934). Thus, the scope of this paper encompasses stamps printed from the beginning of 1926 to the end of 1934. To maintain clarity in the discussions, the results of these new kaolin-content studies will be segmented into three separate categories of regular issue (738 stamps), commemorative (571 stamps), and airmail (140 stamps) stamps. Thus, the present study presents the results of XRD determinations conducted on a total of 1,449 unique, plate-numbered stamps.

Methodology Summary

The forensic methodology used in the present work is essentially the same as the previous one.² When kaolin is present in a sample of printing paper, its presence is indicated by an XRD pattern with two defining peaks observed at angles of 12.3 degrees 2θ and 24.9 degrees 2θ .⁸ The method for determining the kaolin content in a given sample consists of measurement of the intensity of the kaolin peak at 12.3 degrees 2θ , followed by the calculation that uses a simple linear relationship for computation purposes. The equation relating peak intensity to kaolin content was developed through the analysis of prepared reference samples.

It has been suggested to me that although graphs of kaolin content as a function of plate number are useful, plotting kaolin content against an approximate date of stamp printing is a superior way to present the results. *The B.I.A. Plate Number Checklist*^{3,4} provides “Hardened” or “First to Press” dates corresponding to when a given stamp was first used for printing, tabulated by plate and Scott number. As described in the preceding paper,² I used functions in Microsoft Excel to convert the listed “month/day/year” dates into a decimal-based format suitable for plotting. Accordingly, in the present paper, all kaolin-content results will be plotted only against these decimal-based dates, and not against plate numbers. This approach will improve the conceptualization of the printing paper timelines.

Kaolin Content in the Regular Issue Stamps of 1926 to 1935

Most of the regular-issue stamps that went to press during the 1926–1935 time period fall within the auspices of the Fourth Bureau Issue. Scott 720 stamps represent an exception, as they were a stand-alone regular issue printed during this period. The scope of the preceding paper² was focused on the kaolin content of the printing paper used for 2¢ stamps from this series, but as we all know, the Fourth Issue encompasses a large number of additional denominations. Table 1 contains a summary of the 738 stamps studied in the present work, broken down according to denomination, Scott number, plate sequences, stamp numbers studied within each denomination, and the image of the individual featured on the stamp.

A number of denominations featured Scott numbers for which the earlier stamps were printed on kaolin-free paper, and later stamps on kaolin-containing paper. Figure 1 presents representative examples of Fourth Bureau issue stamps that fall within this category. Note that some of the longer series were printed at different times on both

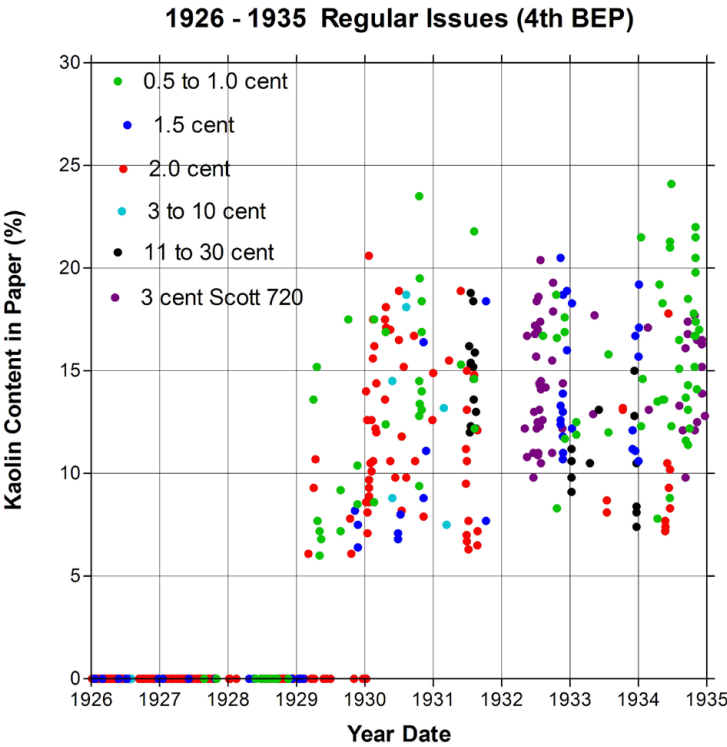


Figure 2. Plot of kaolin content results for Fourth Bureau Issue stamps.

kaolin-free and kaolin-containing paper, while others printed on kaolin-free and kaolin-containing paper have been classified by different Scott numbers.

Figure 2 contains a plot of all kaolin content results for the regular issue stamps that first went to press between 1926 and 1935. A historical timeline can be developed by the correlation of “First to Press” dates with kaolin content values, and this correlation enables a subdivision of the results of Figure 2 into three distinct time periods. The delineations of these time periods are shown most clearly in the following short table:

Period-R1	Year Date Begins 1926.01 (i.e., 1/5/1926): Scott 554 (plate 17862)	Year Date Ends 1929.12 (i.e., 2/16/1929): Scott 634 (plate 19421)	All stamps were printed on kaolin-free paper
Period-R2	Year Date Begins 1929.18 (i.e., 3/5/1929): Scott 634 (plate 19432)	Year Date Ends 1930.02 (i.e., 1/30/1930): Scott 634 (plate 19847)	Some stamps printed on kaolin- free paper while others printed on kaolin-containing paper
Period-R3	Year Date Begins 1930.04 (i.e., 1/15/1930): Scott 634 (plate 19857)	Year Date Ends 1934.97 (i.e., 12/26/1934): Scott 720 (plate 21357)	All stamps were printed on kaolin-containing paper, for which the content ranged between 5% and 20%

Category from Figure 2	Denomination	Scott Number (# stamps assayed)
0.5 to	1½¢	653(3)
1.0 cent	1¢	632(93)
1.5 cent	1½¢	582(2), 633(27), 684(27)
2.0 cent	2¢	554(58), 583(74), 634(283)
	3¢	555(8), 584(2)
	4¢	585(3), 636(2), 685(6)
	5¢	586(10)
	6¢	587(4)
3.0 to 10 cent	7¢	559(5), 588(5)
	8¢	560(3), 589(4)
	9¢	561(4), 590(2)
	10¢	591(2)
	11¢	563(4), 692(4)
	12¢	564(2), 693(4)
	13¢	694(4)
	14¢	695(2)
	15¢	566(12), 696(2)
	20¢	567(12), 698(4)
11 to 30 cent	25¢	699(1)
	30¢	569(4), 700(4)
Scott 720	3¢	720(53)

Table 1. Classifications of the Regular Issue Stamps, According to the Categories of Figure 2.

It should be noted that the end of Period-R3 corresponds to the end of the scope of the present paper.

As part of its routine quality control, the Bureau would have specified a minimal “ash content” in the paper it purchased. The ash value of a paper sample was (and still is) established by completely burning a known amount of paper as completely as possible, and then weighing the residual non-combustible content. This test is designed to yield an estimation of the mineral content of the paper, and the largest contributor to the ash content would most likely have been any kaolin present in the paper. Thus, by requesting an ash content value for each batch of incoming printing paper, the BEP would have sought to establish some degree of conformity in this raw material. The results of Figure 2 can be taken to demonstrate that for the kaolin-containing regular issue stamps, one outcome of the ash content specification is that the printing paper would contain a kaolin content of at least 5%. The spread of higher values in the kaolin content results can be taken to imply that the purchasing agents of the BEP were not overly concerned with any upper limit for ash (i.e., mineral) content.

Kaolin Content in the Commemorative Stamps of 1926 to 1935

During the 1926–1935 period, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing also printed a significant number of stamps commemorating various events. Table 2 contains a summary of the 571 stamps profiled in the course of the present work. As with the regular analysis study, this summary has been broken down according to denomination, Scott number, plate sequence, the number of stamps studied within each denomination, and the reason for their issuance. Representative examples of the commemorative stamps examined in this study are illustrated in Figure 3.

As reported above for the regular issue stamps, various commemorative stamps from the 1926 to 1935 period were printed on kaolin-free paper, while others were printed on kaolin-containing paper. Figure 4 contains a plot of all kaolin content results for the



Figure 3. Representative sample of commemorative stamps included in the study.

commemorative stamps that first went to press during this time period. With a few significant exceptions that will be discussed below, the historical timeline of commemorative stamp printing has been summarized in the following table:

Period-C1	Year Date Begins 1926.34 (i.e., 5/4/1926): Scott 627 (plate 18540)	Year Date Ends 1929.61 (i.e., 8/14/1929): Scott 655 (plate 19809)	With the exception of Scott 645, all stamps printed on kaolin- free paper
Period-C2	Year Date Begins 1929.64 (i.e., 8/26/1929): Scott 681 (plate 19838)	Year Date Ends 1931.61 (i.e., 8/14/1931): Scott 703 (plate 20602)	All stamps were printed on kaolin-containing paper, for which the content ranged between 5% and 10%
Period-C3	Year Date Begins 1931.61 (i.e., 8/14/1931): Scott 707 (plate 20555)	Year Date Ends 1934.75 (i.e., 10/4/1934): Scott 749 (plate 21342)	With the exception of Scott 716, 724, 725, and 726, most stamps were printed on kaolin-contain- ing paper. The kaolin content ranged roughly between 10% and 20%

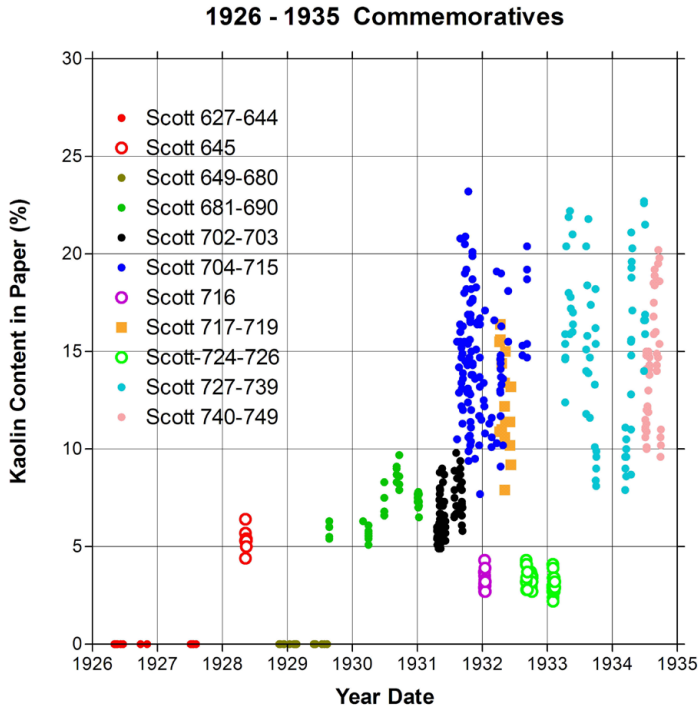


Figure 4. Plot of all kaolin content results for commemorative of 1926–1935.

It is worth noting that while regular Period-R₁ and commemorative Period-C₁ are roughly of the same length of time, the other periods do not correspond. When printing regular stamps, the BEP vacillated between the two types of printing paper in Period R₂ and only switched to the exclusive use of kaolin-containing paper in Period R₃. However, when printing commemorative stamps, the BEP used exclusively kaolin-containing paper in Period-C₂ and Period-C₃, where the only differences between the two were in the amount of kaolin contained in the paper.

However, as illustrated in Figure 4 and noted in the preceding table, the BEP utilized printing papers for certain commemorative stamps (Figure 5), which were not within the trends observed in the preceding table. For example, all plates of Scott 645 (first to press May 21–25, 1928) were printed on low-content kaolin-containing paper (content ranging



Figure 5. Commemorative stamps printed on low-content kaolin-containing paper.

Category from Figure 4	Denomination	Scott Number(# stamps assayed)
Scott 627-644	2¢	627(24), 629(5), 643(6), 644(10)
	5¢	628(12)
Scott 645	2¢	645(8)
Scott 649-680	2¢	649(12), 651(24), 654(4), 655(8), 657(4), 680(8)
	5¢	650(4)
Scott 681-690	2¢	681(5), 682(8), 683(4), 688(4), 689(8), 690(12)
Scott 702-703	2¢	702(44), 703(54)
	½¢	704(6)
	1¢	705(25)
	1½¢	706(8)
	2¢	707(46)
	3¢	708(9)
	4¢	709(4)
	5¢	710(4)
	6¢	711(2)
Scott 704-715	7¢	712(4)
	8¢	713(2)
	9¢	714(2)
	10¢	715(4)
	2¢	716(12)
	2¢	717(6)
	3¢	718(6)
	5¢	719(4)
	3¢	724(12), 725(10), 726(13)
Scott 724-726	1¢	728(7)
	3¢	727(6), 729(6), 732(14), 733(4), 736(8), 737(8), 738(4), 739(8)
Scott 727-739	5¢	734(4)

Table 2. Classifications of the commemorative stamps, according to the categories of Figure 4.

from 4.4% to 6.4%) even though the BEP would not initiate the use of kaolin-containing paper for commemorative printing for another year.

Even after August 1929, when the BEP elected to print commemorative stamps using paper containing 5% or 10% kaolin content, for some reason, the BEP chose to print the issues of Scott 716, 724, 725, and 726 on low-kaolin paper (i.e., containing less than 5% kaolin content). As in the case of Scott 645, it is reasonable to conclude that the printing of these stamps on low-kaolin paper most likely represents instances where the BEP obtained paper from an alternative source, rather than from its usual suppliers.

Kaolin Content in the Airmail Stamps of 1926 to 1935

The need for airmail stamps arose when the first regular airmail flights were initiated, resulting in the issuance of the first three airmail stamps (Scott C1 through Scott C3) in 1918. In 1923, the BEP issued three new airmail stamps (Scott C4 through Scott C6) to meet the demands of a new set of airmail rates. I conducted XRD studies (unpublished as of yet) on every plate number and position of these early airmail stamps; all were printed on kaolin-free paper.

During the 1926–1935 period, the BEP printed a number of stamps whose purpose was to cover the cost of airmail. Table 3 summarizes the 140 stamps profiled in the course of the present work. Although the database of airmail stamps is significantly smaller than for the other issues, it can still be subdivided according to denomination, Scott number, plate sequences, the number of stamps studied within each denomination, and the image on the stamp. Representative examples of the airmail stamps of the present study are shown in Figure 6.

As reported above for the regular and commemorative stamps, some airmail stamps were printed on kaolin-free paper, while others on kaolin-containing paper. Figure 7 contains a plot of all kaolin content results for the airmail stamps that first went to press during the 1926 to 1935 time period, and the historical timeline of commemorative stamp printing is summarized in the table on the top of the following page.

It is interesting that the three timeline periods associated the 1926 to 1935 commemorative stamps are roughly equivalent in both elapsed years and kaolin content to the three timeline periods of the airmail stamps. This finding suggests that the BEP did not use any special paper to print the airmail stamps, but instead printed these stamps from whatever stock was on hand at the time.



Figure 6. Representative sample of airmail / airmail special delivery stamps used in the study.

Period-A1	Year Date Begins 1926.07 (i.e., 1/28/1926): Scott C7 (plate 18246)	Year Date Ends 1929.60 (i.e., 7/29/1929): Scott C11 (plate 19694)	All stamps printed on kaolin-free paper
Period-A2	Year Date Begins 1930.08 (i.e., 1/30/1930): Scott C12 (plate 19942)	Year Date Ends 1931.24 (i.e., 3/30/1931): Scott C12 (plate 20323)	All stamps printed on kaolin-containing paper, where the clay content ranged between 5% and 10%
Period-A3	Year Date Begins 1931.61 (i.e., 8/14/1931): Scott C16 (plate 20606)	Year Date Ends 1934.64 (i.e., 8/23/1934): Scott CE1 (plate 21314)	All stamps printed on kaolin-containing paper, where the clay content ranged between 10% and 20%

Summary

In the previous paper,² I developed a historical timeline for kaolin content based on my XRD studies of the 2¢ stamps contained within the first four general issue series of the BEP. As I pointed out above, the information content of this work must necessarily be limited in its scope owing to the types of stamps that were profiled. However, the scope of the present investigation now includes not only the 2¢ general issue stamps of the 1926 to 1935 time period, but also studies of the other general issue denominations within the Fourth BEP series. Furthermore, the study now also includes XRD studies of all the commemorative and airmail stamps of this time frame. When viewed in its entirety, the canonical ensemble of XRD results reported in the present paper comprises

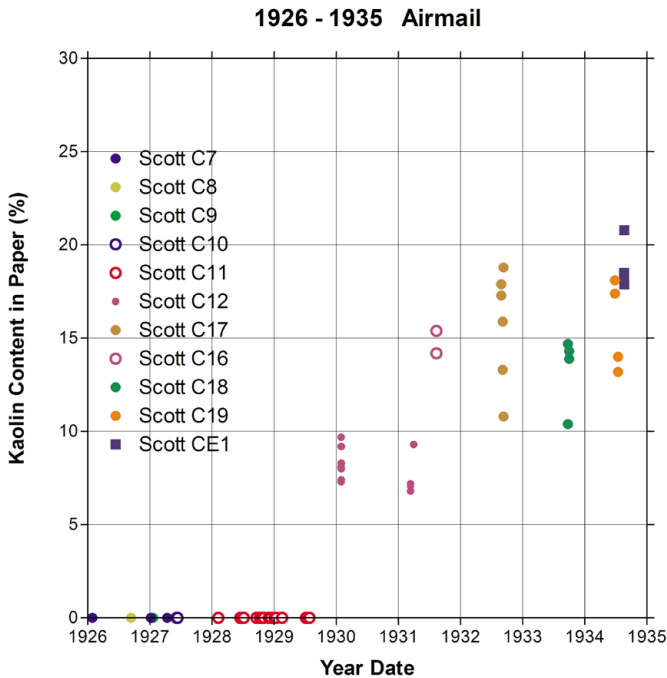


Figure 7. Plot of all kaolin content results for the airmail stamps that first went to press between 1926 and 1935.

Category from Figure 7	Denomination	Scott Number (# stamps assayed)
Scott C7	10¢	C7(8)
Scott C8	15¢	C8(4)
Scott C9	20¢	C9(8)
Scott C10	10¢	C10(12)
Scott C11	5¢	C11(48)
Scott C12	5¢	C12(13)
Scott C16	5¢	C16(2)
Scott C17	8¢	C17(6)
Scott C18	50¢	C18(4)
Scott C19	6¢	C19(6)
Scott CE1	16¢	CE1(4)

Table 3. Classifications of the commemorative stamps, according to the categories of Figure 7.

a total of 1,449 stamp results, namely 738 regular issues, 571 commemorative issues, and 140 airmail issues. The expansion of the number of analyses conducted on nearly all BEP issues during the 1926–1935 time period leads to a refinement of the previously described historical timeline into a much more detailed and reliable database.

When the BEP took over the printing contract from the American Bank Note Company near the end of 1894, all regular issue and commemorative stamps were printed on kaolin-containing paper. This practice was maintained without exception until roughly the middle of 1904.

For reasons that are not yet clear, around the beginning of 1905, the BEP began to print stamps on either kaolin-containing or kaolin-free paper. This era of mixed-paper printing lasted until midway through 1908, whereupon the BEP stopped printing any stamps on kaolin-containing paper.

Between the middle of 1908 and the beginning of 1929, the BEP printed all regular, commemorative, and airmail issue stamps exclusively on kaolin-free paper.

Early in 1929, and continuing to the beginning of 1930, the BEP printed regular issue stamps of the Fourth Bureau series on either kaolin-free or kaolin-containing paper. However, within this time period, the BEP elected to use only kaolin-containing paper (kaolin content between 5% and 10%) to print all commemorative and airmail stamps. This aspect of the timeline ran between the middle of 1929 and the middle of 1931.

Finally, at the beginning of 1930, the BEP initiated stamp printing exclusively using kaolin-containing paper. While the commemorative and airmail issues were printed on paper containing 10% to 20% kaolin, the regular issues were printed on paper having a wider range of 5% to 20% kaolin. This practice continued through the end of 1934, at which point the scope of the current study was concluded.

The 1926 to 1935 portion of the BEP stamp printing timeline is most easily viewed in Figure 8, where the XRD-determined kaolin contents of every regular, commemorative, and airmail stamp of the present study are shown. The kaolin values in the figure

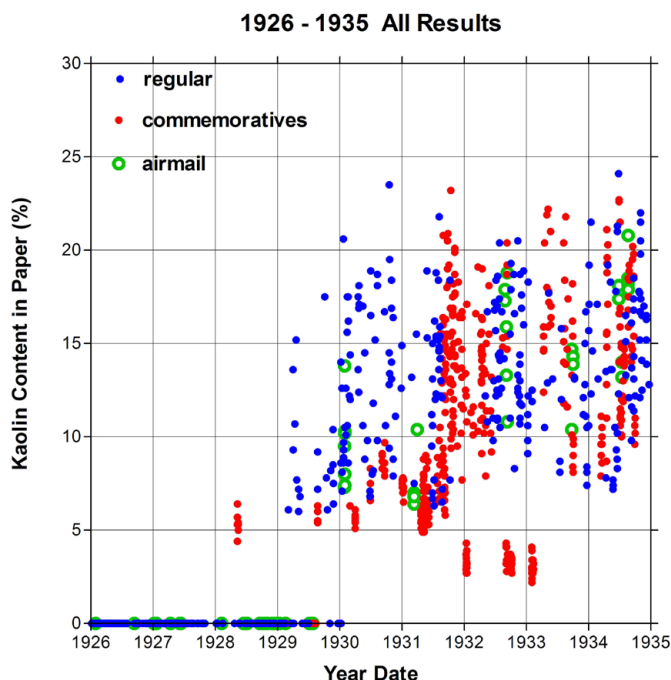


Figure 8, where the XRD-determined kaolin contents of every regular, commemorative, and airmail stamp of the present study.

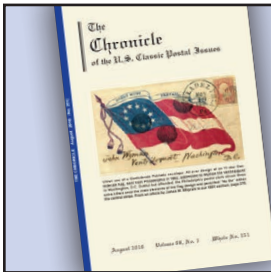
lead to the conclusion that the nature of the printing paper used by the BEP during this time period was strongly influenced by the timing of the Great Depression, an era that completely overshadows the timeline of the present paper. Figure 8 should be viewed as completely documenting what I have termed “the Return of Kaolin.”

However, all members of our Society are aware that the BEP did not cease printing stamps at the end of 1934, and in fact continued to print regular issues, commemorative, and airmail stamps throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. The story of kaolin content in the printing papers of these stamps remains to be told. For instance, the BEP began releasing regular issues of the Fifth Bureau Series (also known as the Presidential Series) in 1938. The printing paper history of this series will be documented (along with the contemporary commemorative and airmail issues) in the next paper in the series.

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2. Harry G. Brittain, “The Coming and Going of China Clay in BEP Printing Paper: Kaolin Content in the 2¢ Stamps of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Issues,” *The United States Specialist* 96, no. 6 (2025): 268–81.
3. W. Wallace Cleland, *B.I.A. Plate Number Checklist, Plates 1–20,000* (Belleville, IL: Bureau Issues Association, 1990).
4. *Ibid.*

5. Harry G. Brittain, "X-Ray Diffraction Study of the Paper Used by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to Produce 1¢ and 2¢ Stamps Between 1894 and 1913," *The United States Specialist* 87, no. 8 (2016): 345–61.
6. Harry G. Brittain, "X-Ray Diffraction Study of the Kaolin Content in Paper Used to Produce Stamps During 1903–1908," *The United States Specialist* 89, no. 9 (2018): 403–16.
7. Harry G. Brittain, "Kaolin Content in Paper Used by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to Produce 1¢ and 2¢ Stamps Between 1894 and 1908," *The United States Specialist* 90, no. 2 (2019): 61–71.
8. The XRD diffraction patterns reported in this work were obtained using a Rigaku MiniFlex-II powder diffraction system, equipped with a vertical goniometer operating in the $2\theta/\theta$ mode, and a copper X-ray source (using the $K\alpha$ emission of 1.54184 \AA). Each stamp was fixed in a horizontal sample holder, and was scanned over the range of 3.0 to 41.0 degrees 2θ , at a scan rate of 2.0 degrees $2\theta/\text{min}$, and using a step size of 0.01 degrees 2θ . The intensity scale for each individual diffraction pattern was normalized so that the relative intensity of the most intense peak (namely that of the cellulose component) in the pattern equaled 100% .



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WANTED

I collect plate number blocks of Scott E12, the 10-cent Motorcycle Special Delivery issue of 1922. 69 different printing plates were used by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing from 1922 to 1927 to print approximately 333 million E12 stamps. That output corresponds to the potential of more than 13 million plate number blocks of which fewer than 100 probably exist today. I have plate number blocks for 51 of the 69 different plate numbers, but lack plate number blocks for the following plate numbers.

13919	13921	13922	13923	14329	14331
14579	15232	16093	16094	16120	16121
17223	17641	17642	17644	18685	18686

It is very likely that plate number blocks for most of the missing plate numbers do not exist today. I wish to purchase, trade, or receive scans of any of the missing plate number blocks that do exist. Condition is not a priority. I am not interested in obtaining duplicates of what I already have or plate number singles which I do not need. Can you help out an old time plate number collector? More of what is known about E12 plates and plate number blocks can be found on my extensive internet site at e12plates.wordpress.com.

Jerry A. Katz, USSS 5873

Email: jerryakatz@aol.com



The Fourth Bureau Issue

Unlisted Plate Variety of \$1 Lincoln Memorial Scott 571 Confirmed by Pair of Stamps

by **Michael Tanner**

USSF #17602 | ✉ tannerma1@gmail.com



Figure 1. \$1 Lincoln Memorial Stamp with a scratch in right “1” indicated by an arrow.

While preparing a few extra Fourth Bureau Issue stamps for sale on eBay, I came across a copy of the \$1 Lincoln Memorial, Scott 571. As I was scanning an image of the stamp, I saw what I initially thought was a hair on the stamp that would require me to re-scan it; it turned out to be a tiny line of ink across the right numeral (Figure 1). I did not think much more about it and listed the stamp on eBay for \$16 as follows:

Note: Interesting plate anomaly over right “1”. Very thin line – maybe from a slight plate scratch. Does look like from the printing and not some post printing effect or smear (thought it was a hair at first and needed another scan). Original gum, well centered example with small area of gum skips.



Figure 2. Second copy of the Lincoln Memorial stamp with a flaw in the right “1”, confirming the variety.

Soon after listing the stamp, while searching for auction deals on eBay, just 90 minutes after listing the 571 stamp, I noticed the exact same plate flaw on another Scott 571 stamp (Figure 2). It was an inferior copy with F-VF centering, many gum skips, and a light hinge stain. Although I would not have normally bid on this stamp (probably not worth more than a few dollars in this condition), I decided, just in case, to bid a much higher level close to the catalog value, and to my surprise, the under bidder did the same. I ended up paying \$24 for the stamp.

Most plate varieties listed for Scott 571 are double transfers, including the two listings in the Scott Catalog. After searching through literature on plate varieties of the \$1 Lincoln Memorial stamp, including Cloudy French's *Encyclopedia of Plate Varieties on U.S. Bureau-Printed Postage Stamps*,¹ I determined it was an unlisted variety.

Later, I decided to check all the other Scott 571 listings on eBay, HipStamp, and other sites, and with over 500 listings, I did not see another like it. Thus, it seemed to me quite a long shot to find this second identical plate flaw within 90 minutes of seeing the plate flaw on the first stamp in my possession. Ironically, I did recently move to the Las Vegas Valley!

References

1. Loran C. French, *Encyclopedia of Plate Varieties on U.S. Bureau-Printed Postage Stamps*. (Belleville, IL: Bureau Issues Association, Inc., 1979).

*Vintage Photo of the Month*

7¢ Airmail Stamp

by **Rodney A. Juell**

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



This month's photo shows designer William H. Buckley at work on the 7¢ airmail stamp (Scott C51) which was issued on July 31, 1958, to meet the airmail rate that went into effect the next day. Shown nearby is a First Day Cover signed by Buckley and the stamp's engravers. Also shown nearby is a freak gutter snipe.





The Great Americans

Great Americans Issue Part XVI— Downsized 32¢ Commemoratives

by Jay Stotts

USSS #10921 | ✉ stottsjd@swbell.net

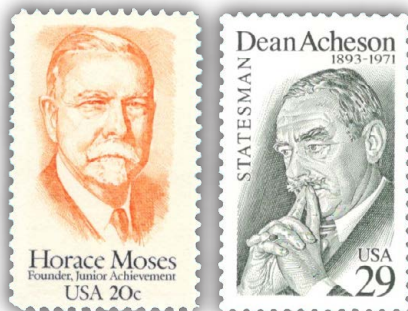


Figure 1. Commemorative issues conceived as Great Americans.

The title for this installment of the Great Americans (GA) series is inspired by philatelic author Fred Baumann’s description of a group of four GA stamps issued during 1995, 1996, and 1998, all featuring different subjects but with the same 32¢ face value, the then-current first-class letter rate. The 32¢ domestic first-class letter rate took effect on January 1, 1995.

On page 20 of the December 15, 1997, edition of *Stamp Collector*, Baumann wrote, “The reason for all these stamps is not demand for sheet definitives (now at an all-time low, it seems), but rather the need to accommodate the demand for a downsized, cut-rate commemorative.”

Baumann further alluded to two commemorative stamps that he reported were conceived as Great Americans stamps but were released in commemorative formats to accommodate additional detail. Those two stamps are shown in Figure 1. They are the 20¢ Horace Moses stamp (Scott 2095) and the 29¢ Dean Acheson stamp (Scott 2755).

The 32¢ Milton S. Hershey Stamp

For the first 32¢ GA stamp, released to honor chocolatier and philanthropist Milton S. Hershey, the Banknote Corporation of America (BCA) continued to be the contract stamp printer for the United States Postal Service (USPS). Figure 2 shows the Hershey stamp.

The stamp was issued on September 13, 1995, in Hershey, Pennsylvania, on the 138th anniversary of Hershey's birth. Postmaster General Marvin Runyon dedicated the stamp in the Hersheypark Arena in front of a capacity audience of 8,000. The Postal Service processed 121,228 first day cancellations for the stamp.

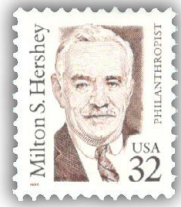


Figure 2. Milton S. Hershey stamp.



Figure 3. Plate block B2.

Like its GA predecessor, the 78¢ Alice Paul stamp, issued 26 days earlier, BCA printed the Hershey stamp on a T/A-2 sheet fed intaglio press in Browns Summit, North Carolina. Two plates, B1 and B2, were used to print the issued quantity of 100,276,000 stamps. Two plate blocks were printed on each post office pane of 100 stamps. A plate block from plate B2 is shown in Figure 3.

The stamps are printed on coated prephosphored paper with low-gloss gum. An off-line stroke perforator produced perforations that gauge 11.2 × 11.1 with a comb punch pattern.

The Hershey stamp carried a USPS promotional ad in the margin, as shown in Figure 4. Going forward, such promotions were not printed in the margin of GA stamps.



Figure 4. USPS promotional ad in the margin of Hershey stamp.



Figure 5. Cal Farley stamp.

The 32¢ Cal Farley Stamp

A 32¢ Great Americans stamp commemorating humanitarian Cal Farley followed just seven months later, on April 26, 1996. The site of the first day ceremony was the Amarillo, Texas, Civic Center. The Farley stamp is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 6. Farley plate block.

Production details were the same as those of the Hershey stamp. Only one plate, B1, was used to print Farley stamps. A plate block is shown in Figure 6. Marginal markings are shown in Figure 7 and were limited to a plate position diagram, a copyright notation, and the multiplication formula designating the cost of a full pane of stamps.

Production for this stamp was 150 million, so almost 50 percent higher than the Hershey stamp, but first day cancellations were only 90 percent of those of the Hershey stamp.



Figure 7. Farley marginal markings.

The 32¢ Henry R. Luce Stamp

Almost two years passed between the issue of the Farley stamp and the release of the next GA stamp. A 32¢ value honoring Henry R. Luce was issued on April 3, 1998. Luce was the co-founder of *Time* magazine and subsequently launched other significant periodicals, including *Fortune*, *Life*, and *Sports Illustrated*.

The Luce stamp was issued in post office panes of 20, becoming the first GA stamp below the dollar values to be released in this format. A pane of Luce stamps is shown in Figure 8. The Banknote Corporation of America also printed this stamp on a sheet-fed T/A-2 intaglio press in Browns Summit, North Carolina.

Each press sheet contained sixteen 20-stamp panes, so 320 images were printed on each sheet fed through the press. These 320-subject sheets were halved horizontally to produce two 160-subject sheets before further processing was done. Note that the position plate diagram on the pane shown in Figure 8 shows only eight positions, indicating the position of the pane in the 160-subject sheet *after* the original sheet of 320 subjects was cut horizontally.

This means that there are two different printing positions on the plate with the same position diagram. Panes from one of those positions could show a repetitive plate flaw

unique to its position on the plate, but only half of the panes with the applicable plate diagram would show the flaw. There are two unique panes printed with each revolution of the printing drum that have the same plate location diagram, but the two panes are not printed from the same plate images.

Speaking of plate varieties, some Luce stamps show plate scratches. There were several minor scratches on the plate that were reproduced as printed lines. The details can be seen on the Errors, Freaks & Oddities Collectors Club website. To see enhanced images, visit https://efocc.org/Resources/Ryskamp_LuceScratches/main.php.

On that site, John Ryskamp provided scans of all eight pane position diagrams showing “enhanced” (darkened) lines representing the plate scratches that existed and were reproduced when the sheets were printed. I compared my pane of 20 from plate position four to his enhanced image and identified the scratches that he illustrated. This is the same pane that I scanned that appears as Figure 8. You won’t see the scratches in Figure 8 because I didn’t enhance them, and they are extremely light. It took a good



Figure 8. Luce post office pane of 20.

glass, good lighting, and concentration to find them, so a casual look at these panes of Luce stamps won't indicate that there were plate scratches, but they are there. Hats off to John Ryskamp for finding these very light plate scratches.

Ryskamp shows all eight pane diagram positions on the EFOCC website and associates some light scratches with every one of the eight, but remember there are sixteen pane positions, not just eight. I compared a pane from plate position eight with Ryskamp's enhanced pane position eight and was not able to match any of his identified scratches, so I determined that my plate position eight was the other plate position eight from the one he examined.

The stamps were printed on prephosphored paper with embedded taggant and low-gloss gum. BCA used a Wista 9070 stroke perforator with a comb pattern, gauge 11.2×11.1 .

According to the chapter on the 32¢ Henry R. Luce stamp in the *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook, 1998*, by George Amick, the issued quantity was relatively low, only 30,250,000 (or about one-fifth of the Farley quantity). Reportedly, the public had developed a desire to use self-adhesive stamps instead of traditional lick-and-stick stamps, so sales of the traditional stamps were on the wane. The *Linn's* yearbook also lists that only plate B1 was reported.

The issued quantity in the *Linn's* yearbook apparently was calculated from printing data supplied by BCA. GA student Stephen Esrati reported that BCA provided the following data: BCA produced 31,703 net impressions from plate B1 ($31,703 \times 320$ subjects = 10,144,960 stamps). BCA also reported net impressions from a second printing plate, B2, of $62,828.25$ impressions $\times 320$ subjects = 20,105,040 stamps. The two printings add up to 30,250,000 stamps as the *Yearbook* reported.

But, again, according to Esrati, the USPS said the initial quantity printed was 25.25 million, significantly less than the combined quantity reported by BCA. Whether accepting 30.25 million or 25.25 million as the correct issued quantity, a mystery remains. According to BCA, only 10.14 million stamps were printed from plate B1, so the majority must have been printed from plate B2. In fact, according to another report by Esrati, the USPS claimed that 20.1 (the same number reported by BCA above) stamps were printed from plate B2 and put on sale.

All very interesting, you might think, but there's a problem. The problem is that stamps from plate B2 are unknown to the collecting community. Do you have a plate block of Luce stamps or a pane of 20 showing B2? Is there a plate block or a pane of 20 printed from plate B2 for sale on the internet? Where are the B2 printings?

The 32¢ Lila and DeWitt Wallace Stamp

Lila and DeWitt Wallace were the founders of another notable magazine, *Reader's Digest*, and were philanthropists. The stamp was issued on July 16, 1998, in Pleasantville, New York, at the DeWitt Wallace Auditorium at Reader's Digest Association, Inc. headquarters. The stamp is shown in Figure 9. It was the only GA stamp to picture two people on one stamp.

The USPS agreed to let the *Reader's Digest* magazine make the first announcement of the stamp to the public, even before their own press releases. The announcement was printed on page 2 of the December



Figure 9. Lila and DeWitt Wallace stamp.

A Lifetime of Service

THE EDITORS

THIS MONTH the United States Postal Service unveils its design for the new Lila and DeWitt Wallace postage stamp. Part of the Postal Service's Great Americans series, it honors the founders of Reader's Digest for their contribution to American culture and their charitable giving.

Early in his life DeWitt Wallace wrote, "Whatever my occupation may be, I intend to do as much good in the world as possible." His major contribution to the world was Reader's Digest magazine, which he and Lila launched in 1922.

As their resources grew, so did their service to others. Childless, the Wallaces became legendary givers, supporting many different efforts across the nation and around the world. As with the magazine, their personal touch was often apparent. Wallace donated nearly \$1.8 million to refurbish the periodicals room in the New York Public Library, where as an editor starting out, he'd copied articles by hand. Visitors to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art are greeted by five huge bouquets of fresh flowers, thanks to a permanent fund set up by Mrs. Wallace as part of her

recurring wish to surround art with nature's beauty.

Today the Wallace legacy lives on through the nine charitable foundations they created. The two largest are the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, which works to improve education, and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, which supports the arts, urban parks and adult literacy.

The stamp, featuring a pencil drawing by veteran artist Paul Calle, is slated to appear in mid-1998. "Stamps mark the extraordinary achievements that have shaped this country," says Postmaster General Marvin Runyon. "We are pleased to honor Lila and DeWitt Wallace, two of our nation's foremost philanthropists."



2

Figure 10. Reader's Digest announcement of the Wallace stamp.

1997 issue, which was distributed in mid-November. See Figure 10 for a copy of the article. The USPS followed with its press release on November 25, 1997.

Unlike the three previous 32¢ Great Americans, this stamp was printed by a different contractor, Ashton-Potter USA Ltd. of Amherst, New York. Ashton-Potter began printing stamps for Canada in 1970. It opened facilities in the US in about 1990. Their first US stamps were the 1993 29¢ Circus stamps (Scott 2750–53).

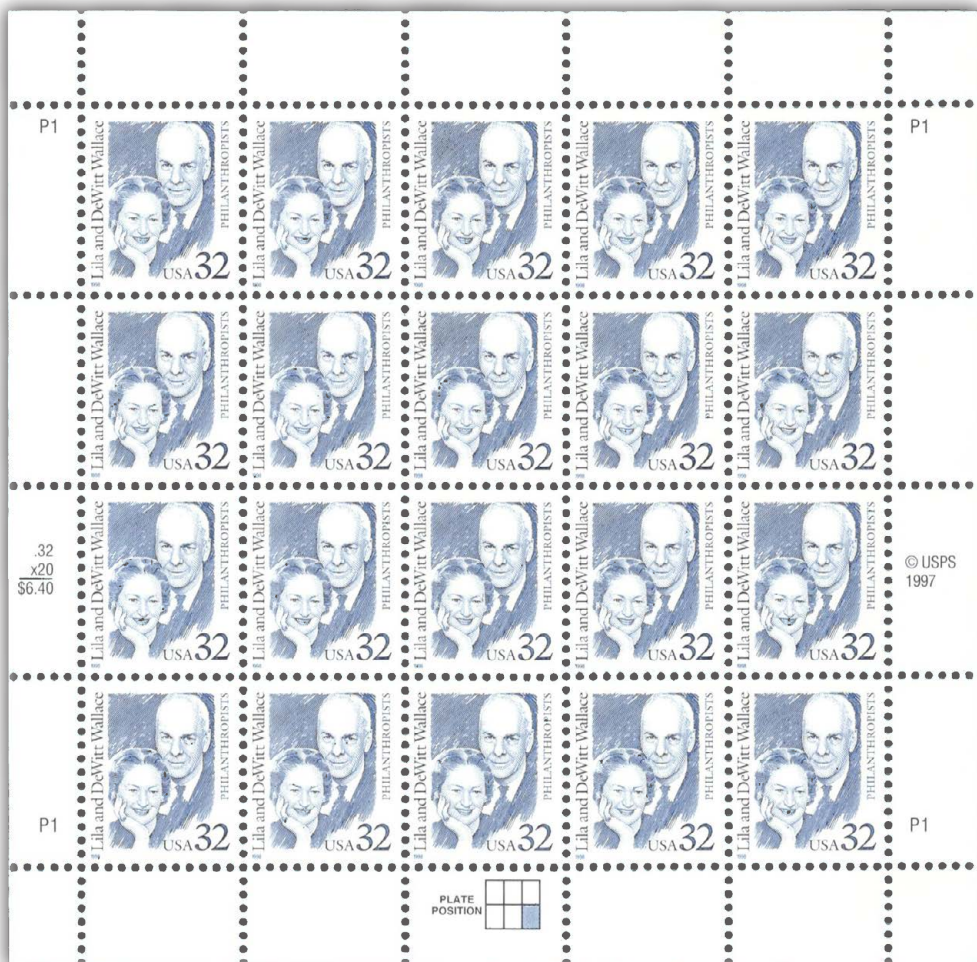


Figure 11. Wallace stamp pane of 20.

This stamp was also issued in post office panes of 20 stamps. The stamps were printed on a Stevens intaglio press. The press sheets contained 12 panes or 240 stamps. Like the Luce press sheets, these sheets were also horizontally halved prior to further processing, into sheets of six panes. Plate position diagrams show just six positions, although there were 12 printed plate positions. Again, like the Luce stamps, a pane from any one of the given plate positions is actually one of two different panes that exist. A pane of 20 of the Wallace stamp is shown in Figure 11.

Only one plate, plate P1 was used for the printing. The “P” was assigned to identify Potter of Ashton-Potter. These stamps were printed on coated prephosphored paper. The gum is less glossy than that of the Luce stamp.

The issued quantity was reported at 30,250,000, a low quantity, even for a commemorative stamp, but the age of self-adhesive stamps was here, and that was what the public preferred. The Wallace stamp was the last of the long line of Great Americans

with water-activated adhesive, so the next GA stamp to be issued would be one issued in a self-adhesive format.

The 32¢ GA Commemorative Stamps

We started this chapter with a quote from philatelic writer Fred Baumann, so we'll end it with another of his quotes. In the March 30, 1998, issue of *Stamp Collector*, page 12, Baumann wrote, "New 32¢ definitive for Luce and Wallace this year, along with those already issued for Hershey and Farley, almost constitute a philanthropical series-within-a-series among recent Great Americans."

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Airmail

FDR, Lytle S. Adams, and Experimental Pickup Airmail Flights

by **Paul M. Holland**

USSS #16849 | ✉pholland.thorleaf@gmail.com



Innovation has been an enduring theme in American life. Among the curiosities of philately during the Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) era are experiments in picking up airmail letters by airplane without landing at an airport. The concept was pioneered by Dr. Lytle S. Adams, DDS, an inventor and entrepreneur, perhaps inspired by mail pickup systems used on speeding trains that allowed bags of mail to be “captured” while the train was in motion. This scheme for airmail pickup and delivery borrowed from techniques used by dive bombers, by dropping a sealed mail pouch for delivery and picking up another using a boom with hook to snag a line attached to a mailbag, then hauling it aboard the flying aircraft.

Such a system was demonstrated at the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago beginning on September 20, 1934, as shown in the airmail cover sent to FDR in Figure 1. Franked with a pair of the then-current 3¢ National Parks stamps, the cachet shows an airplane flying over the lagoon at the World’s Fair and picking up a mailbag. The handstamp below the cachet reveals that this pickup mail was then flown to the nearby airport in Chicago, where it was transferred to regular airmail service. The back of the cover bears a special souvenir label from the American Air Mail Society, celebrating their convention held in Chicago earlier that month. On the first day of the convention, the



Figure 1. *Experimental Pickup Air Mail cover sent to FDR from Century of Progress exposition in Chicago on September 20, 1934.*

new 16¢ Air Mail Special Delivery stamp, designed by FDR himself, was debuted (more about this in an upcoming article). Lytle Adams's demonstrations of airmail pickup at the Century of Progress exposition continued until October 31, 1934.



A photograph showing the Air Mail Pickup Flight demonstration at the Century of Progress exposition is shown in Figure 2. This event was repeated three times daily.

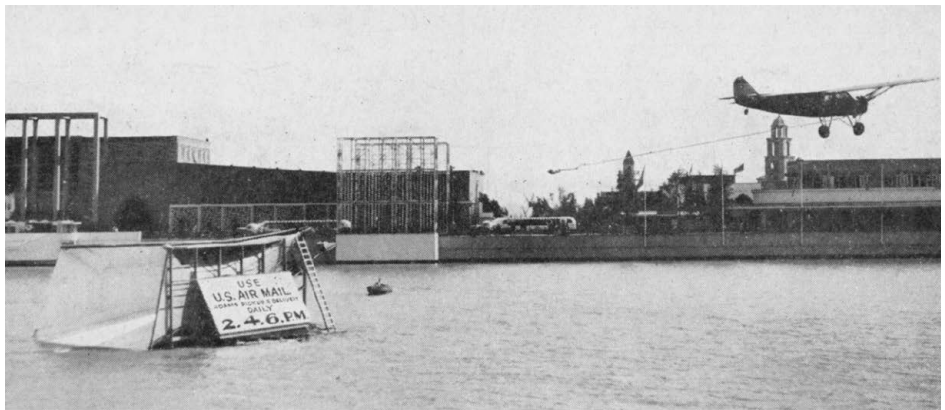


Figure 2. *Air Mail Pickup Flight demonstration at the Century of Progress exposition.*

Some years earlier, during the late 1920s, while others experimented with shipboard catapult planes to speed delivery of mail from ships at sea, Lytle Adams aspired to demonstrate a system in which an airplane could fly by and pluck mail from a moving ship.



Figure 3. Lytle S. Adams signed airmail cover picked up from the SS Leviathan at sea (auction image).

After several failures, the first successful demonstration of this technology was in June 1929, with an example airmail cover picked up from the SS *Leviathan* of United States Lines shown in Figure 3. The *Leviathan*, formerly the luxury German liner *Vaterland*, had been impounded in New York during World War I, then seized as a war prize once the United States entered the war. Renamed the *Leviathan*, after the war it returned to service as an ocean liner operated by United States Lines. The serial-numbered cover with printed cachet is signed by “Dr. Lytle S. Adams” and was postmarked aboard the SS *Leviathan* on June 12, 1929.¹

However, the logistics of picking up mail from ships at sea proved to be problematic at best, and Adams turned his sights instead to providing airmail service to smaller



Figure 4. Lytle S. Adams signed first flight pickup airmail cover from Lexington, Kentucky.

Lytle S. Adams
inventor

communities that lacked an airport. Following his extensive and successful demonstrations of picking up mail by airplane without landing at the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago (Figures 1 and 2), Lytle Adams incorporated both All American Aviation (as a patent holding company) and a sister company Tri-State Aviation, in 1937. Further efforts to commercialize this technology continued. I'm fortunate in having the airmail cover signed "Lytle S. Adams, Inventor" shown in Figure 4. Hand-addressed with the notation "Via-Tri-State Aviation Corporation's 1st Pickup flight" with hand-stamped cachet showing it originated in Lexington, Kentucky, it is postmarked in Louisville, July 25, 1937.

Finally, in 1938, Congress passed a bill that allowed the Post Office Department to experiment with airmail pickup systems, and the du Pont brothers Richard and Alexis began buying a controlling share of stock in All American Aviation, and its patents were acquired. Richard du Pont then became the president of All American Aviation based in Pittsburgh, and two routes were established to service forty-eight communities in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Delaware beginning in May 1939.

These two Experimental Pickup Air Mail routes were designated AM 1001 and AM 1002. Overview maps are shown in Figure 5. AM 1001 coverage extended from Pittsburgh generally eastward to Philadelphia, dipping briefly into Delaware. The coverage of AM 1002 from Pittsburgh to Huntington, West Virginia, was generally southward, crossing into southeastern Ohio in a few places.^{2,3}

All American Aviation's initial 1939 contract for experimental airmail pickup was for one year of service using the patented scheme developed by Dr. Lytle S. Adams. Again, this concept for airmail pickup and delivery borrowed from techniques used by dive bombers, by dropping a sealed mail pouch for delivery while retrieving another for pickup by using a boom with a hook to snag a rope attached to a mail pouch

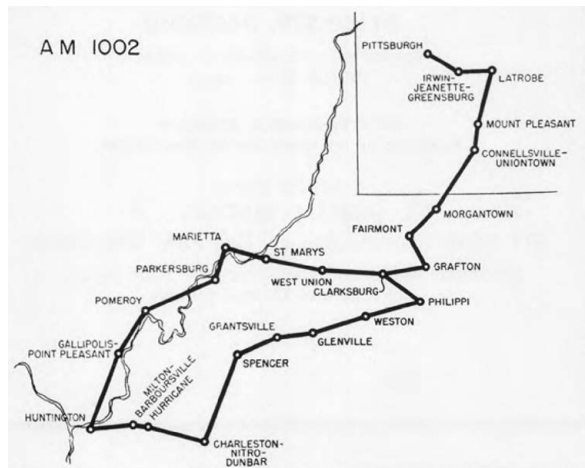
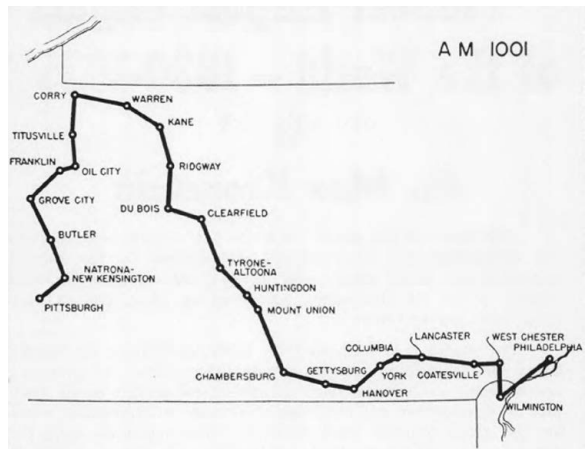


Figure 5. Experimental Pickup Air Mail routes AM 1001 and AM 1002.³



Figure 6. Experimental Pickup Air Mail.

while it was suspended between two forty-foot poles, as shown in Figure 6. For this task, the rugged single-engine Stinson Reliant aircraft was utilized, using an onboard winch to retrieve the mail pouch via an opening in the fuselage.

Among my various Experimental Pickup Air Mail first flight covers from 1939 is the one sent to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, shown in Figure 7. Preserved in his personal stamp collection, it is simply addressed to "The President, Washington, D.C." Picked up on a northbound flight from Huntington to Pittsburgh from Glenville, West Virginia, on May 28, 1939 (see lower loop on the AM 1002 map in Figure 5), the mail pouch weighed 34 pounds and contained 2,175 pieces of mail.

This cover to FDR is franked by singles of the Golden Gate International Exposition and the 1939 New York World's Fair stamps. These two pre-World War II events highlighted an optimistic era that looked forward to a dazzling and innovative future. The Golden Gate Exposition celebrated the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge and Bay Bridge that spanned San Francisco Bay for the first time, with the Golden Gate Bridge holding the world's record for the longest span of any suspension bridge from 1937 until 1964. New York's 1939 World's Fair was designed to offer visitors an exciting glimpse of the "World of Tomorrow," including GM's legendary Futurama, an enormous scale model



Figure 7. Experimental Pickup Air Mail first flight cover sent to FDR from Glenville, West Virginia, on May 28, 1939.

of a city in the year 1960, demonstrations of television by RCA, and Elektro Motoman, a seven-foot-tall robot built by Westinghouse.

An assortment of other AM 1002 Experimental Pickup airmail first flight covers from my collection are shown in Figure 8. These include examples from the small communities of Grantsville and Dunbar, West Virginia, and Gallipolis, Ohio. Note the use of a corner margin plate number pair of Golden Gate International Exposition stamps on the cover from Grantsville. The others are franked with the 1938 bi-color airmail stamp.

In Figure 9, I show AM 1001 Experimental Pickup airmail first flight covers. My example from Columbia, Pennsylvania, is franked with a pair of the 1938 Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps and is signed by the postmaster. The covers from Lancaster and Franklin, Pennsylvania, are franked using 1938 bi-color airmail stamps.

All American Aviation's initial 1939 contract for one year of experimental airmail pickup successfully demonstrated the feasibility of using feeder lines to serve smaller communities where airport facilities or volume of mail were insufficient to justify full airmail service. The routes totaled 1,040 miles in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Delaware, and by February 1940, over 325,000 miles had been flown and more than 14,000 pickups made.

In July 1940, the Civil Aeronautics Authority approved a request by All American Aviation to expand its service to five routes radiating from Pittsburgh, reaching as far west as Cincinnati, Ohio. The new service under AM 49 was inaugurated in stages during 1940, labeled A through F between August 12 and December 2, with other cities or towns to be added later. This was a very complex routing scheme, as shown in the route maps of Figure 10, and the reader is referred elsewhere for details.²

Again, the patented method developed by Dr. Lytle S. Adams was used for airmail pickup and delivery, with yet another photo of this scheme with the Stinson Reliant aircraft shown in Figure 11. Details of the approach are also illustrated in the cachet on my AM 49 F cover for Blairsville, Pennsylvania, that is shown in Figure 12.



Figure 8. Various AM 1002 Experimental Pickup Air Mail first flight covers from 1939.



Figure 9. Various AM 1001 Experimental Pickup Air Mail first flight covers from 1939.

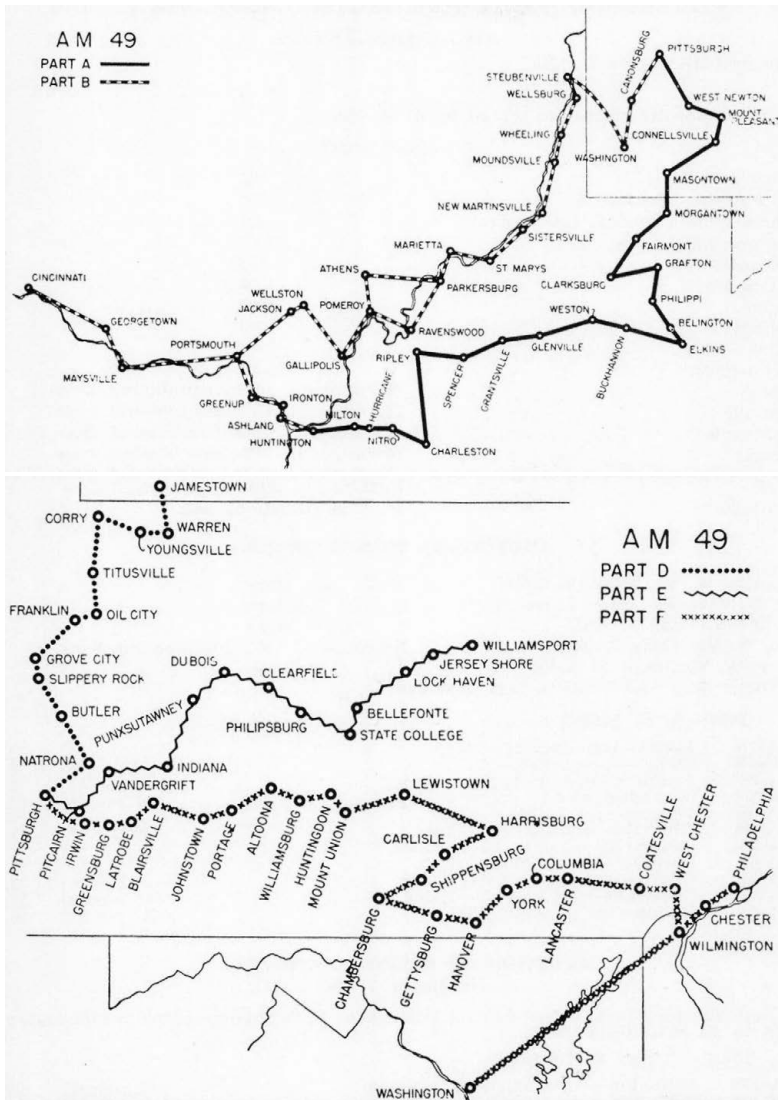


Figure 10. Route maps for expanded pickup mail service under AM 49 parts A-F beginning in 1940.²

Dr. Lytle S. Adams himself was one of the most intriguing and colorful characters of the FDR era. He even knew Eleanor Roosevelt, helping to give him entrée to the FDR administration. Following the December 1941 Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into World War II, the fertile imagination of Dr. Lytle S. Adams continued apace, and after a visit to Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, Adams came up with the idea of incendiary Bat Bombs, where bats carrying incendiary devices with timers would be dropped on Japanese cities to roost in eaves and attics. He wrote a letter about this concept to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in January 1942, who thought it was "worth looking into" and it was passed on to the United States Army Air Force for further consideration.

Figure 11. Stinson Reliant aircraft swooping down to snatch a mailbag suspended on a rope between two poles.



Figure 12. Route AM 49 F Pickup Air Mail first flight cover from Blairsville, Pennsylvania, in 1941.

Regarding Lytle S. Adams's innovative pickup airmail service for small communities, it ultimately proved to be too costly for the benefits provided and in January 1949, it was discontinued. However, All American Aviation expanded its range of services to include ordinary passenger flights, changing its name to All American Airways in 1949. As the company continued to grow, it became Allegheny Airlines in 1952, USAir in 1979, US Airways in 1996, and finally merged with American Airlines in 2013.

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1. Mike Dovey, "The Adams Pickup Service," *Ships Monthly*, March 2025, 56–59.
2. *American Air Mail Catalogue*, 5th ed., vol. 2 (Cinnaminson, NJ: American Air Mail Society, 1977), 899–913.
3. *American Air Mail Catalogue*, 5th ed., vol. 3 (Cinnaminson, NJ: American Air Mail Society, 1978), 1297.

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