

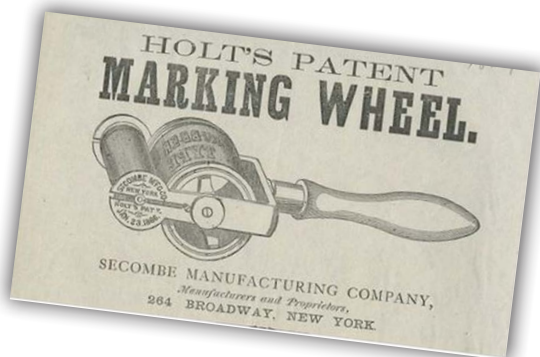


The United States SPECIALIST

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

WHOLE NUMBER 1148

Rubber Stamped Cancellation of Late Nineteenth- Century Revenue Stamps



— plus —



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the General*

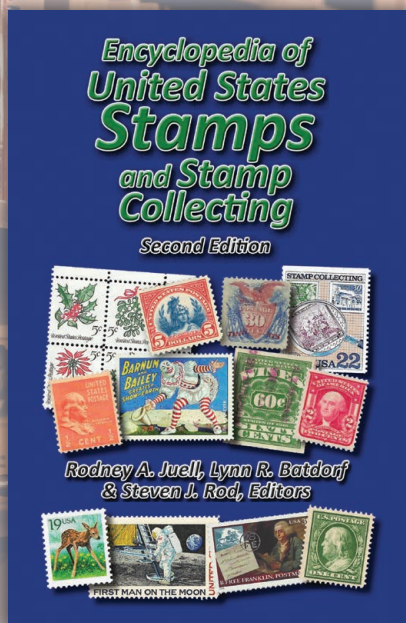
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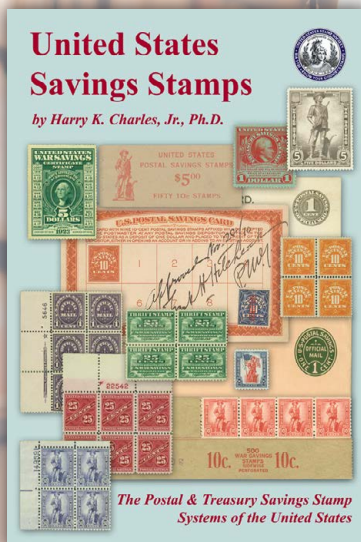
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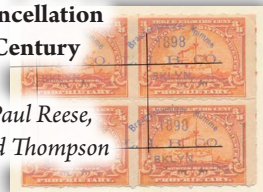
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USSS at APS Great American Stamp Show

by Roger Brody



Governors Roger Brody and Kim Johnson manning the usss booth, in discussion with Rod Juell.

The United States Stamp Society was represented at the American Philatelic Society's annual Great American Stamp Show (GASS) held this year at the Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center in Schaumburg, Illinois. The four-day event held from Thursday August 14 through Sunday August 17 featured three major philatelic organizations, the American Philatelic Society, the American Topical Association and the American First Day Cover Society.

Numerous specialized philatelic organizations held meetings and seminars over the weekend show.

Ninety-five dealers, publishers, and auction houses were present at the show, and twenty-seven stamp societies had booths. The United States Stamp Society was represented at Booth #127, shared with the Puerto Rico Philatelic Society.

Manning the USSS Booth were Executive Secretary Robert Rufe, Roger Brody, Kim Johnson, Denise and Jay Stotts. Over 60 members stopped and signed in at the USSS booth:

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Ronald Harris	Piszkiwicz
John Hotchner	Robert Rose
Kim Johnson	Robert Rufe
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The USSS cosponsored a joint society dinner with the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, The Collectors Club, and the Royal Philatelic Society London and the Collectors Club of Chicago on Wednesday evening Aug 13 at Westwood Tavern in Schaumburg, Illinois.

The winner of the United States Stamp Society Barbara J. Mueller Award was announced at the GASS Awards dinner on August 16. The USSS/Barbara Mueller Award goes to the author of the best article published in a single year of *The American Philatelist*, monthly journal of the American Philatelic Society. The award is named for the United States Stamp Society (USSS) and for one of its most prominent members, authors, and



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

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The United States Stamp Society is the largest public organization dedicated to the research and study of United States postage and revenue stamps. The Society is a non-profit, collector-focused organization with a worldwide membership of nearly 1,400. Since 1926, the Society has encouraged philatelic study through committees specializing in specific stamp issues like the Washington-Franklin Heads and the Prexies.

Other committees study specialized areas of US philately such as Plate Numbers and Marginal Markings, Private Vending and Affixing Perforations, Booklets and Panes, and Luminescence. Our research is made available through published books, research papers and articles in our monthly journal, *The United States Specialist*. All members receive a copy of the journal each month and are also entitled to significant discounts on all other Society publications.

Members of the United States Stamp Society will be on hand at the Great American Stamp Show. Please visit us at Booth #127 to learn more about our research, our publications and especially the benefits of membership in the Society. We look forward to meeting you there!

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USSS ad from the GASS program.

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editors, APS Life Member Barbara R. Mueller. Among her numerous honors in six decades of devotion to philately, Mueller was a member of the Hall of Fame of both the USSS and APS Writers Unit #30, and the recipient of the APS John N. Luff Award for Distinguished Philatelic Research in 1956.

In 2007, the United States Stamp Society founded the award to promote the USSS, its goals and its mission to the 26,000 members of the APS, an estimated 75 percent of whom collect U.S. material.

The 2025 Mueller award was awarded to Rick Barrett for his article “One of Philately’s Most Unabashed Forgers! The Astounding Story of Georges Carion,” published in the June 2024 issue of *The American Philatelist*.

Both the United States Postal Service and the United Nations Postal Administration were represented at GASS and held first day ceremonies at the show. On Thursday, August 14 the USPS held the First Day of Issue ceremony for the Boston 2026 International Stamp Show. The two-stamp issue illustrated the Old North Church and Paul Revere.

The USPS also officially celebrated the first day issue of the “250 Years of Delivering” and “Putting a Stamp on the American a Stamp on the American Experience” stamps on July 23 in Washington, D.C., but celebrated again at GASS with a special dedication ceremony

On August 16, the U.S. Postal Service issued Luna Moth, a nondenominated stamp priced at the non-machinable surcharge rate, at the Great American Stamp Show



Luna Moth Stamp.

The 2026 APS Great American Stamp Show will be held in conjunction with the international Boston 2026 World Expo May 22–29, 2026 in Boston.



Letters to the Editor

Farley's Newburgh Peace Stamp Sheet Signing Revisited

Dear Editor,

I was looking through Paul Holland's article concerning the Newburgh Peace Stamp in the August 2025 *Specialist*, and I'm somewhat puzzled by page 353. Figure 7 shows Farley (apparently) signing the first sheet. Figure 8 shows the first sheet now at the Smithsonian. It is perfectly obvious that the sheet in Figure 7 is not the sheet in Figure 8. [These Figures are reproduced on the facing page —Ed.]

So I am guessing as to how the picture in Figure 7 came to light: First of all, it would have been very difficult to sign anything on the Stickney Press at this location. The press would have had to come to a complete stop, which messed up the web roll. Then Farley would have had to sign a sheet on the web roll no longer under tension (there is nothing behind the web roll at this location except maybe a small roller or two). The place he is standing was the end of the vertical up/down path that served as a detour to gain time for the printing ink to dry.

The web roll would then pass the gumming station and finally a very long horizontal "conveyor belt" where the gum could dry (which would have been my choice of location to sign a sheet but it would look "stupid" being photographed there). So my guess is:

In Figure 7, Farley only holds a pen close to the sheet and does nothing and the photographer later added the text onto the sheet which was supposed to be the text on figure 8. Farley must have signed multiple sheets, but the photographer picked the wrong one for his photo-op.

Maybe Paul M. Holland has an idea?

Sincerely,
Dieter Kohler

The Author Responds:

Dear Dieter,

Many thanks for your perceptive examination of Figures 7 and 8 in my recent article. Clearly the sheet being signed by Farley in the press photo is not the same one shown in the collection at the National Postal Museum. I had not noticed this. Sorting out this discrepancy has led me to an interesting "behind the scenes" philatelic story that would not otherwise have come to light. Details of this event are recounted in the (earlier) 1938 edition of Max Johl's book, not in his chapter on the Newburgh Peace Commemorative stamp, but in another chapter titled *The New Era in Philately* (see reference).

Your suggestion that "it would have been very difficult to sign anything on the Stickney Press at this location" is largely correct. However, since multiple press photographs exist that show Farley "signing" the sheet, it's not plausible that the photographer could have later added the text onto the stamp sheet.



Figure 7 from the original article. PMG Farley signing the first sheet of the Newburgh stamps as it came off the press in the presence of A. W. Hall, the BEP's director.

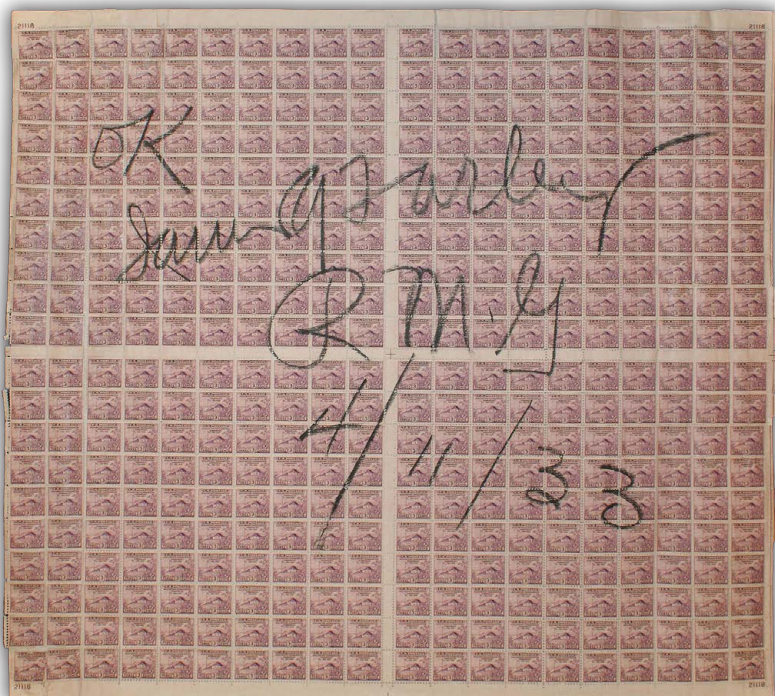


Figure 8 from the original article. First sheet of Newburgh Peace stamp (courtesy Smithsonian National Postal Museum).

According to Johl's account, after the press was stopped and the "Postmaster General was autographing the sheets, the heat of the drying trough caused the paper at the top of the trough to become brittle and made it impossible to pull these sheets through the remainder of the rotary press." The autographed sheets were then removed, and "being a short length were of necessity perforated on the flat plate machine," resulting in 11×11 perforations, different from the regular issue. As a result, this original lot of six signed sheets were officially destroyed and replaced by other signed sheets with the standard $10\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ perforations. Thus, the marked difference you note in Farley's inscription on the first sheet of Newburgh stamps is fully explained.

It is also interesting to note that following the problems encountered with signing the Newburgh Peace stamps on a stopped rotary press, PMG Farley did not repeat it. In fact, all of the other "Farley's Folly" stamps were produced using flat plate printing presses where each full sheet was removed from the press before signing.

Best Regards,
Paul M. Holland

Reference: Max G. Johl, *The United States Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century: Volume IV 1933–1937*, H. L. Lindquist: New York, 1938, pages 2–3.

It should also be pointed out that this story is not mentioned on the National Postal Museum's website, which simply says:

Uncut sheet of 400 3-cent perforate stamps, Peace of 1783, full gum. Crayoned as it came off the press and personally certified, "OK, James A. Farley, PMG, 4/11/33." Plate number 21118. Attached label "First Newburgh Stamps" from a government exhibit.





Rubber Stamped Cancellation of Late Nineteenth-Century Revenue Stamps

by **Robert Mustacich, Paul Reese, Frank Sente, and David Thompson**

USSS # 16340 (Mustacich), # 15984 (Thompson) | ✉ bob@mustacich.com, paul5958@yahoo.com, sente2@earthlink.net, thompson.david26@gmail.com



Figure 1. Comparing high-resolution scans of hand-stamped and printed cancel edges.

Cancels are widely collected on postage and revenue stamps. While the postal system controlled the cancellation of postage stamps, revenue stamp cancellation was the responsibility of the public. Relatively little is known about the details of revenue

stamp cancellation owing to the wide range of methods, some quite simple, that could comply with the laws. Moreover, cancellation varied by the needs of the user: some large companies that consumed large numbers of revenue stamps did turn to commercial canceling by printing press. On the other end of the spectrum, individuals often canceled a few stamps with a pen. In the middle were a huge number of rubber cancellers, the subject of this article. (Some revenue stamps were also canceled by cutting, typically in parallel lines with a scoring device. Cut cancels are not discussed further in this article.)

Historical Context

The rubber stamp industry experienced a boom in the late nineteenth century, with more than four thousand manufacturers in the United States by 1892.¹ Rubber stamps became commonplace in business use, and the need to cancel revenue stamps in the late 1890s with the Spanish-American War tax gave a considerable boost to the manufacture of inexpensive rubber stamps² as nearly all financial transactions, along with a wide range of proprietary medicine and related products, were subject to the tax.

United States revenue stamps of the Spanish-American War tax period (1898–1902) came in two flavors—documentary stamps for financial transactions and proprietary stamps for medicinal products, perfumes, wines, and chewing gum. As their name suggests, the documentary stamps were largely applied directly to paper documents. These consisted of the so-called “battleship” documentary series of revenue stamps and some higher denomination revenue stamps. These were typically canceled after being attached to documents by manuscript, rubber stamping, or cutting (or other physical damage). In contrast, the proprietary battleship revenues were applied to products or their packaging, and cancellation was done primarily off-package before the stamps were attached. Printing methods could also be used to precancel stamps before application to documents or products.

Methodology

This article focuses on the use of rubber stamps for stamp cancellation based on our study of stamp cancellations, together with information we have gathered. For this study, we have taken advantage of the massive compilation of cancels on the proprietary revenue stamps of the Spanish-American War period that is available online as the Battleship Desk Reference (BDR), together with our private collections.³

Analysis of Cancellation Methods

Stamp Cancellation Approaches

A few hundred large companies, such as medicine companies, railroads, and express companies, wanting to have a large number of ready-to-use stamps, precanceled stamps with a printing press. These cancels used opaque ink, and the printed cancels typically have sharp edges and regular, consistent placement of the cancels.

More commonly, however, businesses used inexpensive rubber stamps as an alternative to the tedium of manuscript canceling and the complexity and expense of purchasing large numbers of press-canceled revenues. Rubber stamps were advertised at the implementation of the 1898 revenue tax as inexpensive, labor-saving devices.⁴ Rubber stamping

generally used relatively transparent inks compared to the inks used in printed cancels, and the resulting cancels feature more diffuse edges and mostly irregular placement.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of edge features between examples of hand-stamped and printed cancels. Widely off-center cancels were selected for the best viewing of edge features, free of the background of the revenue stamp. Regions of the upper left corners of the leading letter in the cancels, illustrated by the rectangular boxes in the center images, were enlarged at right. The upper two examples of hand-stamped cancels (Long Island Bottling Co. and Merchant's Gargling Oil) reveal a transparent ink with diffuse edges compared to the lower two examples of typical printed cancels (Aschenbach & Miller, and E. Fougera & Co.). Aside from some minor variations in their printing (detailed in the online BDR), the printed cancels are quite uniform in their appearance and are typically done as regular arrays on sheets.

Individual Hand Stamping

The great majority of proprietary revenue stamps used during the 1898 tax period were cancelled with hand stamps. Used multiples of these stamps suggest different types of cancellers. It is clear from these multiples that there are at least three patterns of cancellation to consider: individually struck cancels on stamps, stamps with cancellations aligned in rows, and stamps with cancellation in rectangular arrays that appear hand stamped rather than printed.



Figure 2. Block of individually struck hand stamps of the Merchant's Gargling Oil Co.

The individually struck stamps required only the simplest use of a rubber stamp and display the expected irregularity of individual stampings. An example of this irregular cancel placement is shown in Figure 2, a block of nine stamps cancelled by Merchant's Gargling Oil Co. (BDR reference MGOCO-6880). Simple handstamps appear to dominate

most of the cancels in the BDR, consistent with the multitude of smaller manufacturers and numerous retail proprietors.

Array Patterns

The multiples that show a more regular placement of cancels raise questions about the nature of the canceller that was used. Considering first the possibility that a two-dimensional array pattern could be rubber-stamped, there is evidence in the literature that self-inking presses did exist. An example is shown by the 1888 advertisement by the Wheless Stamp Press Co. of Augusta, Georgia, as shown in Figure 3.⁵ The company's 1886 incorporation announcement mentions uses for their self-inking rubber stamp press, including letterheads, business cards, and postal forms.⁶ This suggests the possibility of relief printing a size smaller than a sheet of stamps with a self-inking rubber stamp press. We have no further information on the Wheless or other flat presses with rubber type. Without a press, the uniform transfer of ink to the paper is expected to be a problem with large print areas. To address this issue, large rubber hand stamps have been made in a rocker style with a handle so that greater contact pressure is applied to the paper as the canceller rolls over a surface.

We have only a few examples of hand-stamped cancels in rectangular arrays, whether made by a flat press or a rocker. An example is provided by a block of four cancelled by the Long Island Bottling Co. (LIBCO-6392) shown in Figure 4. Parallel, orthogonal lines have been superimposed on the image to show the alignment of the four cancels. Note that this pattern does not continue to the right, suggesting this handstamp applies to a limited portion of the sheet. A region of the block in Figure 4 was included in Figure 1, showing that this cancel has the properties of a typical rubber stamping. Some exam-

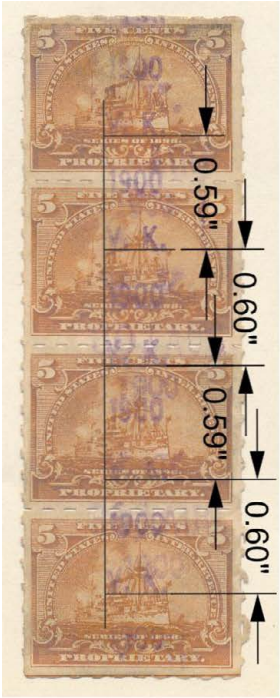


Figure 4. Hand-stamped cancels of the Long Island Bottling Co. applied in a uniform rectangular array.

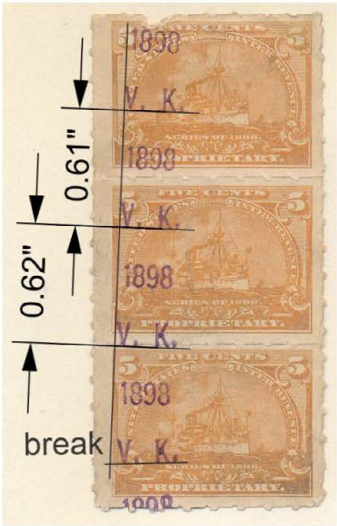


Figure 3. An 1888 advertisement for a self-inking, rubber stamp printing press.

ples provided by other company cancels with blocks of as large as fifteen stamps, do not show breaks in the pattern that would be expected if a smaller stamping covering fewer than 5×3 stamps were used. In the online BDR, these cancels have the following indices and reference numbers: CPCO-1984; LIBCO-6392; and TSSWDMCO-10036. While some of these display some minor irregularity of the placements, we have not found any patterns within these arrays to suggest repeated use of a smaller canceller.



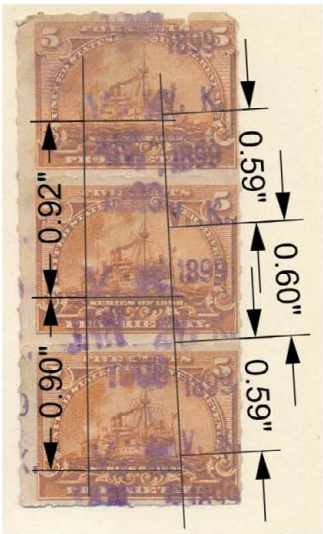
VK-10280



VK-10280



VK-10280



VK-10281 VK-10280



VK-10281

Figure 5. Two types of cancels used by New York perfumer Victor Klotz applied relatively uniformly in vertical columns.

Column and Row Patterns

The final category of cancellation pattern sometimes observed in multiples consists of columns, or occasionally rows, of cancels in alignment. Figure 5 contains examples of two types of cancels used by Victor Klotz, a New York perfumer. The first cancel type with small initials (VK-10280) includes only the year with the initials, and this appears to have been replaced with a cancel having larger initials and the date (VK-10281) to comply with 1899 federal requirements for the full date in the cancel. Some of these examples in Figure 5 have both types of cancels, thought to be an update of the cancellation to comply with the law. The VK-10280 cancel has a uniform spacing of about 0.6 inches. Note that the inking is also fairly uniform. The example at top right reveals non-parallel columns (and a faint VK-10281 cancel runs down the center). The top center example exhibits a break in the column with a different angle of the cancel in the bottom stamp. The VK-10281 cancel is relatively uniform, but exhibits more variation than the VK-10280 cancel. Perhaps a flat stamp is possible, but the consistency seen in the ink transfer and the difficulty of applying a large flat stamp cast some doubt on this possibility.

Evidence for Roller Cancellers

A stamping device that could offer great efficiency for precancelling sheets of stamps by hand would be a self-inking roller canceller. Examples of roller cancellers that were developed and marketed in the late nineteenth century are shown in Figure 6. Two of these advertisements reference the patent of Holt shown in the lower right. The cancels in Figure 5 could have been produced by such a device.

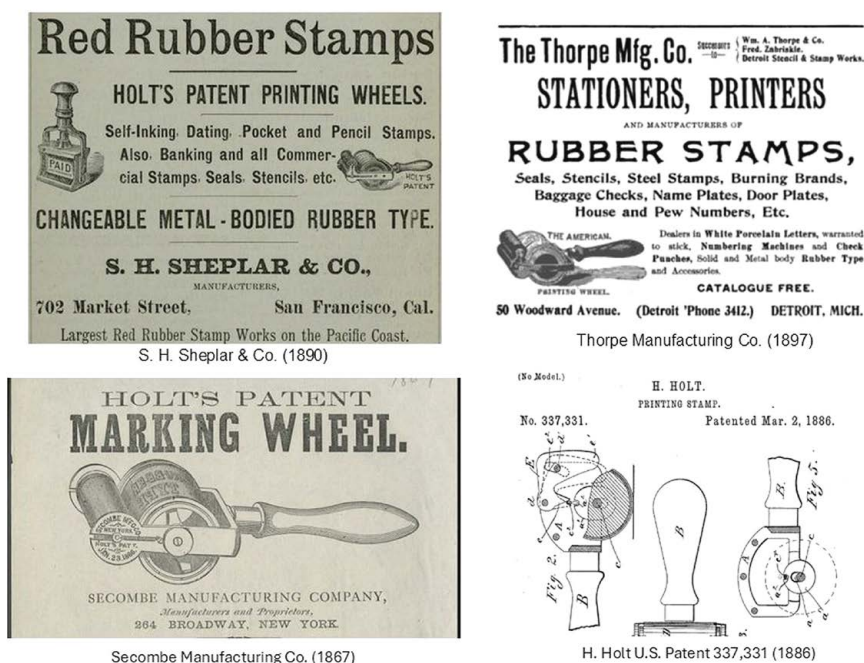


Figure 6. Examples of rolling, self-inking rubber stamping devices.

Figure 7 shows an interesting example that we speculate may have been produced by a rolling canceller based on additional artifacts in this multiple. This block of eight cancels has two sets of vertically aligned cancels with distances measured from the bottom of the lettering in each line. The patterns of spacing repeat, and the columns of cancels are not parallel. The repetition of the cancel pattern was also verified by a good alignment of a transparency image of the first column over the second column of the original with a small rotation. The cancelling was begun separately for the two vertical columns of cancels with different starting positions. Device images in Figure 7 suggest diameters of approximately 2–3 inches, and it's unknown why a presumed roller pattern would start in almost the same position.

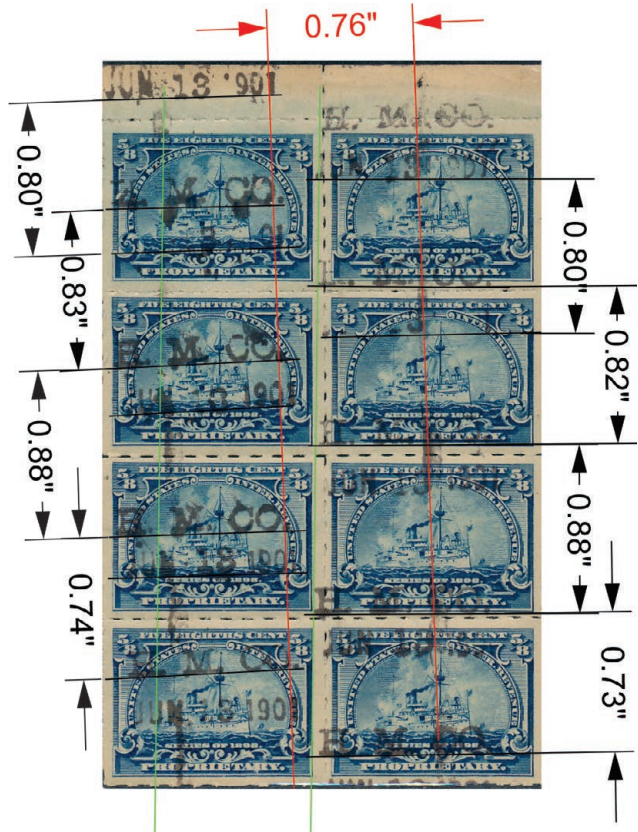


Figure 7. A multiple showing a repeated vertical pattern of cancel spacings.

An interesting feature is the presence of two dashed ink lines also running vertically. A red line is superimposed over the dashed ink line on the right. A parallel red line shows that this is approximately 0.75 inches offset to the right from the H.M.CO. lettering in the left column of cancels. A green line and its parallel are aligned with the left edge of the H.M.CO. in the right column of cancels. The parallel green line near the dashed ink line to the left are not parallel. A possible explanation for these dashed lines could be contact of a roller's right edge with the paper. A right-handed user using a roller front and center might naturally tip such a device to the right when rolling forward or backward on a sheet of stamps. This placement of this artifact would be consistent with gaps in the relief of the lettering of the rubber stamp that would allow the edge of the roller to descend closer to the paper.

Figure 8 shows the approximate distance between the centers of each dash in the two dashed ink lines. Both lines have similar spacings between the dashes, and the dashes to the right are aligned with the gaps between cancels to the left. Another block of eight of this same cancel shows columns with two spacing patterns very similar to the patterns



Figure 8. The same multiple as Figure 7 showing the approximate patterns of ink dashes likely introduced by the edge of a rolling canceller.

M&CO-6586; M&K-6621; MDCO-6805; MNF-7016; PFC-7698; RWG-8364 (hz); S&J-8503; SB-13461; SMC0-8896; SP-8975; TB-9230; TCHPCCO-13553; TCHPCCO-13554; VK-10280; VK-10281; WJW&S-10821; and WMTCO-10881.

Conclusion

In conclusion, besides the preprinted cancels and simple individually struck hand stamps, we show that there are a few cancels that appear to be hand stamped in arrays, some more uniform in positioning than others. There is the possibility that some type of press with rubber plates was used for making these. Many more examples with columns or rows of aligned cancels exist. The consistency of inking over a run of several stamps suggests that a self-inking roller canceller may have been used. Such devices were known to have existed, and would have appealed to a manufacturer or proprietor with a modestly large volume of products requiring canceled stamps. We have further presented one example cancel, which contains artifacts consistent with intermittent edge contact by a rolling canceller. Since so little is documented about the use of rubber stamps for canceling revenue stamps, it appears in retrospect that rubber stamping was a technology so widespread, inexpensive, and pedestrian in its usage that it has been effectively ignored in philately despite being central to collectors of cancels. This study

shown in Figure 7. This additional block also exhibits two dashed lines that are both offset by 0.75 inch to the right of the H.M.CO. lettering in the cancel columns.

In our collections of canceled multiples, we find several companies with aligned columns or rows of cancels that were rubber stamped and appear regularly spaced. In the online BDR, these cancels can be viewed with the following indices and reference numbers (most are columns, but the few with aligned rows are labeled 'hz'): ACCO-185(hz); BCCO-905; BCCO-907; C&CO-1290; CMCO-1904; CNCCO-1947; EAO-2802; EL&S-3027; EMCO-3056; H&CO-4294; HMC0-4815; HP&S-4848; JMS-5716(hz); JWW-12636; L&F-6220; L&F-6219; M-6533; M-6534; M-6535; M-15989; M&CO-6568(hz); M&CO-6588;

is our attempt to shed some light on the practice of hand stamping cancels on late nineteenth-century revenue stamps.

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The Great Americans

Great Americans Issue Part XVII— Self-Adhesives

by **Jay Stotts**

USSF #10921 | ✉ stottsjd@swbell.net



Figure 1. 1974 self-adhesive issue.

Throughout their first eighteen years, the Great Americans (GA) had endured many changes in production techniques at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing as well as with three stamp contractors, but there was still one major change to be made. American stamp consumers had, by 1998, made clear their preference for self-adhesive stamps over the lick-and-stick technology that had persevered since 1847.

Evolving Self-adhesives

The United States offered its first self-adhesive stamp during the 1974 Christmas season (Scott 1552), shown in Figure 1. The experiment was deemed a failure because of the cost of production and the failure to prevent reuse. The stamp used a rubber-based adhesive, which had long-term adverse effects on this stamp as a collectible.

The next experimental self-adhesive was a 25¢ definitive-sized eagle and shield design (Scott 2431), which debuted on November 10, 1981. This stamp, shown in Figure 2, was test marketed in 15 cities



Figure 2. 1981 self-adhesive issue.

and through the philatelic stamp agency. Consumers were charged a 50¢ premium over face value for a pane of 18 stamps to deflect the production costs, so this experiment was deemed a failure.



Figure 3. 1990 self-adhesive issue.

A stylized 25¢ US flag, printed on plastic, was the third self-adhesive experiment. Figure 3 shows this stamp (Scott 2475). For a six-month period, these stamps were available in 22 Seattle-area bank automatic teller machines. These were sold for face value. Paper recyclers complained because of the plastic substitute for paper, so this experiment was also deemed a failure. Additional self-adhesives (Scott 2522, 2531A) were tested in the Seattle area in 1991.

Finally, available on September 25, 1992, the first nationally distributed self-adhesives were deemed a success. There were three stamps, all featuring an eagle and shield and a 29¢ value, printed by three different contractors. The stamps are distinguishable by supplier by the color of the 29¢ value. The suppliers were Banknote Corporation of America (Scott 2595, value in brown), Dittler Brothers, Inc. (Scott 2596, value color in green), and Stamp Ventures (Scott 2597, value color in red). The stamps were issued in booklets of 17 plus a label and sold for \$5 per booklet, a 7¢ premium over face value. An example is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. 1992 Dittler Brothers, Inc. self-adhesive issue.

Philatelic author Ken Lawrence, writing in 1999, reported that, for fiscal year 1994, self-adhesives represented 8% of US stamp consumption. He reported annual percentages as follows: 1995–25%, 1996–60%, 1997–80% and 1998–85%.



Figure 5. 1995 Pink Rose stamp.

The four issues previously discussed were die-cut designs with straight edges. As self-adhesives evolved, the edges were still die cut, but serrated “perforations” or teeth replaced the straight edges. Many philatelic authors noted that adding serrated teeth to self-adhesives eased the consumer transition between traditional and self-adhesive stamps. Aesthetic appeal has been cited as another reason for adding serrated edges. The teeth of these serpentine die cuts may have also allowed easier separation of a die cut stamp from its backing liner and from the adjacent stamps. The 1995 32¢ Pink Rose stamp (Scott 2492) was the first US self-adhesive to show serpentine die-cut edges. The stamp is shown in Figure 5.

77¢ Mary Breckenridge Stamp

The January 10, 1999, domestic letter rate increase, from 32¢ to 33¢, actually created a rate decrease for triple-weight letters. The previous triple weight rate of 78¢ (32¢ + 23¢ + 23¢) could be paid by the Alice Paul stamp of the Great Americans Series, but with the rate change, the triple rate became 77¢ (33¢ + 22¢ + 22¢).

In anticipation of acceptance of the proposed rate change, the United States Postal Service (USPS) issued the 77¢ Mary Breckenridge stamp on November 9, 1998. As explained earlier, the age of the self-adhesive stamp had escalated by 1998, so this was the first GA stamp issued as a self-adhesive. Mary Breckenridge, after the loss of two



Figure 6. Publicity photo for the Mary Breckinridge stamp.

children, returned to the field of nursing, dedicating her life's work to an organization she founded, Frontier Nursing Service, which significantly lowered the death rate in childbirth in rural Kentucky.

The publicity photo for the Breckenridge stamp is shown in Figure 6. A stamp honoring Breckenridge had been in the works for several years. Back in 1988, plans were to place her on a 21¢ stamp, but the stamp finally released was the 21¢ Chester Carlson stamp.

The Banknote Corporation of America (BCA) printed the stamp using an Epikos 5009 intaglio press located in Browns Summit, North Carolina. Like the previous GA issue produced by BCA, the 32¢ Luce stamp, this stamp was issued in counter panes of 20 stamps. There were 240 subjects (12 panes of 20) on the printing plates. The sheet was halved prior to final processing, creating two sheets of 120 stamps (6 panes of 20 stamps) arranged in a 2×3 pattern as shown on the plate diagrams in the margin of each pane of stamps. A pane from plate B1 is shown in Figure 7.

Two plates, B1 and B2, were used to print the stamps. Prephosphored paper was used, and the tagging appears smooth.

The pane of 20 self-adhesive stamps had serpentine die cuts simulating gauge 11.7 by 11.5 perforations. The die cuts allowed separation of the stamps from one another but did not cut through the backing paper. The die cuts were made by an Arpeco rotary die cutter.



Figure 7. Counter pane of Breckenridge stamps.

55¢ Justin Morrill Stamp

Justin Smith Morrill was a United States Representative and Senator from Vermont from 1855 until he died in 1898. He is remembered for sponsoring his namesake legislation, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, which established land-grant colleges. These acts significantly expanded educational opportunities in the US.

Although the USPS already had a 55¢ value in the form of the Alice Hamilton Great Americans stamp, it had had plans to honor Morrill for some time, so it elected to issue a 55¢ self-adhesive stamp on July 17, 1999, in Stafford, Vermont.

The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee reportedly had planned a Morrill stamp during the previous 16 years. A sketch was made for a stamp in 1983 by Burt Silverman, and the stamp was considered as a 20¢ stamp meeting the first-class letter rate. In 1984, a die was made for a Morrill stamp with a 24¢ value in anticipation of a rate increase, but when the rate increase came, it was limited to 22¢, so the stamp wasn't produced.



Figure 8. Publicity photo for the Justin Morrill stamp.

The next rate increase was to 25¢, and again, probably in anticipation of a rate increase to 24¢, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing had made a printing sleeve for its A Press for a 24¢ Morrill stamp. The sleeve was never used.

A new die was made in 1998 for the 55¢ stamp and was photographed by computer in the plate production process. Figure 8 shows the publicity photo of the stamp. The 55¢ rate met the two-ounce domestic letter rate of 33¢ for the first ounce and 22¢ for the second ounce. There was also a new 55¢ international letter rate for mail bound to Canada and a 55¢ international postcard rate, so the validation on a new self-adhesive seemed merited.

All production details of this self-adhesive stamp are identical to those of the Breckenridge stamp. The BCA printed them in panes of 20 stamps with the Epikos 5009 press and with 11.7 by 11.5 die-cut simulated perforations. Only plate B1 has been reported. A pane of 20 is shown in Figure 9.

Looking Back at the Great Americans

The Justin Morrill stamp was the last stamp issued in the Great Americans Series. In the next installment of the series, we'll take a look back at the numbers created through the nineteen-year history of the GA series that was brought forth during the heyday of intaglio rotary press printing at the BEP and left the scene at the dawn of self-adhesive stamp printing by private sector printers.



Figure 9. Counter pane of Morrill stamps.

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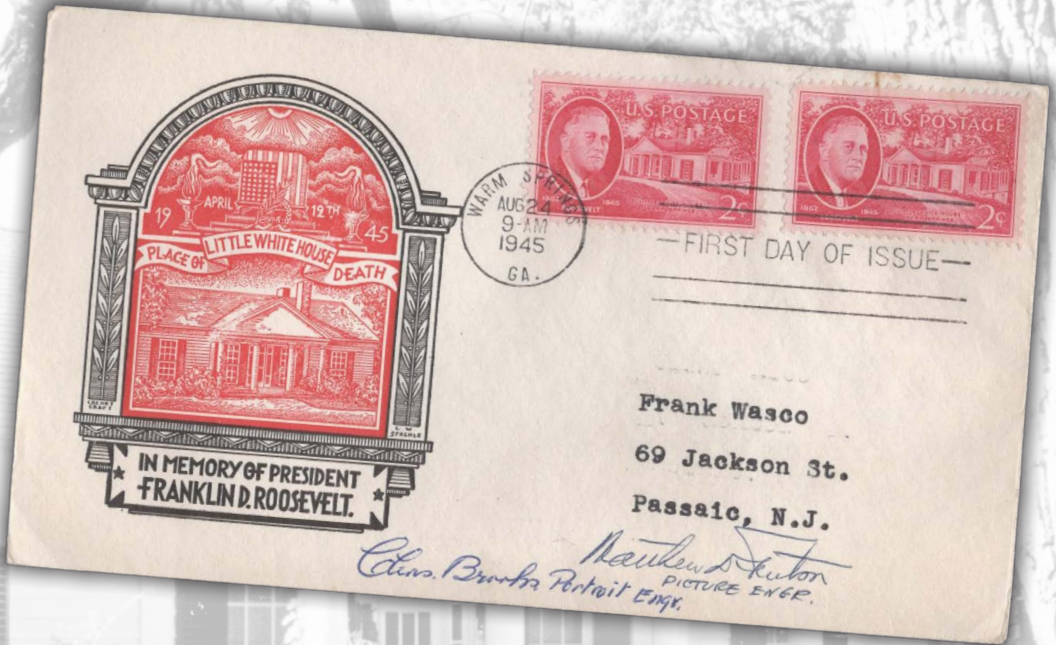
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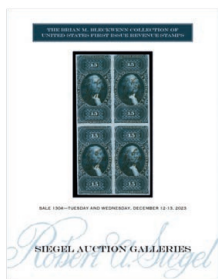
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This month's photo shows Postmaster General Robert E. Hannigan (center) greeting polio patients in Warm Springs, Georgia during ceremonies dedicating the 2¢ Roosevelt Memorial stamp on August 24, 1945. President Roosevelt, who was himself a polio victim, died at the "Little White House" in Warm Springs on April 12. The First Day Cover shown nearby is signed by Matthew D. Fenton, who engraved the picture and Charles Brooks, who engraved the portrait.



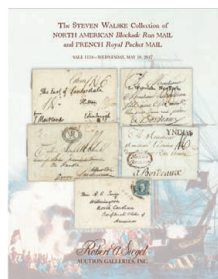
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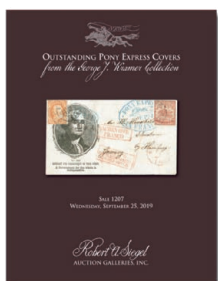
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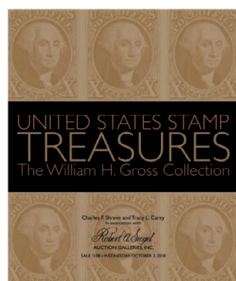
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*Airmail*

FDR and 1934–36 Airmail Special Delivery Stamps

by **Paul M. Holland**

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



“ I am pleased to send you this letter, to which is affixed the new 16-cent special-delivery air-mail stamp, printed in bi-color.

The stamp is identical in design with the old issue except that the color has been changed to red and blue to make the stamp more distinctive. ”

—From a signed February 10, 1936 letter sent with a Favor First Day Cover for the 16¢ combined airmail special delivery stamp sent to Henry A. Wallace, FDR’s Secretary of Agriculture (and later Vice-President) by Postmaster General James A. Farley.

To speed up the delivery of letters sent by airmail once they arrived in the local delivery area, a combined airmail special delivery stamp to pay the overall 16¢ rate was proposed in the early 1930s by the Post Office Department. Interestingly, the first two US airmail stamps issued in 1918 also included special delivery service as part of the postage paid. Examples from my representative worldwide collection are shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Airmail stamps that included special delivery service.

The first of these was a 24¢ bi-color stamp that depicted the Curtiss JN-4HM “Jenny.” Complaints by the public about the high cost of airmail service and an improved profitability situation for the Post Office soon led to a sharp price reduction to 16¢ (6¢ for airmail, with 10¢ for special delivery). This resulted in the green single-color stamp shown.

The origin of the design for a new combined airmail special delivery stamp, which would pay the overall 16¢ rate, came from President Franklin D. Roosevelt himself. It was a simple concept based on using the Great Seal of the United States as a motif. In his memoirs, former Postmaster General James A. Farley recalls that “Roosevelt drew the rough design for the sixteen-cent special delivery air-mail stamp showing the American Eagle, and as a special flourish he wrote the Latin word ‘facio’ above his signature.”¹ For those of us whose Latin is a bit rusty, “facio” loosely means “created by” in this context. Unfortunately, unlike FDR’s original design sketches for several other stamps, this sketch does not appear to be in the museum collection at the Smithsonian Institution among the many items donated by Farley. Interestingly, Ralph Sloat indicates that at one time Alvin W. Hall, director of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving (BEP), had this drawing.²

Victor S. McCloskey Jr. made the formal drawings of the proposed stamp for the BEP that were submitted to the postmaster general for approval, as shown in Figure 2. In the first version, “Special Delivery” is abbreviated, reading vertically down on the right. The second drawing, where this is spelled out in full, was tentatively selected, but this version was later modified by placing “Special Delivery” along the top, “U.S. Postage” at the left, and “Air Mail” at the right, with the final engraved version attributed to John Eissler and Edward Helmuth.^{2,3}

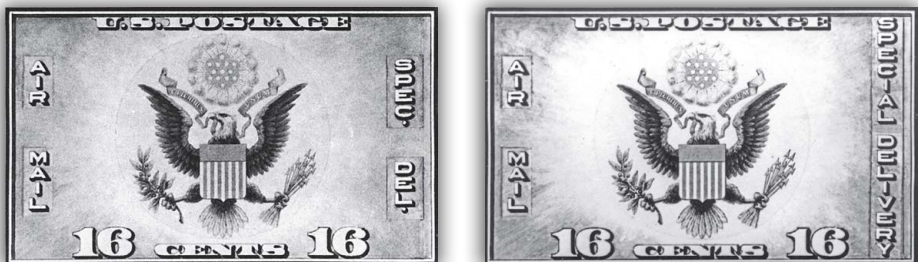


Figure 2. Photo essays for new 16¢ combined airmail special delivery stamp (Smithsonian National Postal Museum).

Originally, the color selected for the stamp to be issued at the end of August 1934 was “steel blue,” a shade which it was hoped would be sufficiently distinctive that postal clerks would be able to “discern instantly that both Air Mail and Special Delivery handling are required.”^{2,3} The plate proof approved on August 20, 1934, is shown in Figure 3. Note the “arrows” showing lines for dividing full press sheets into panes for distribution.

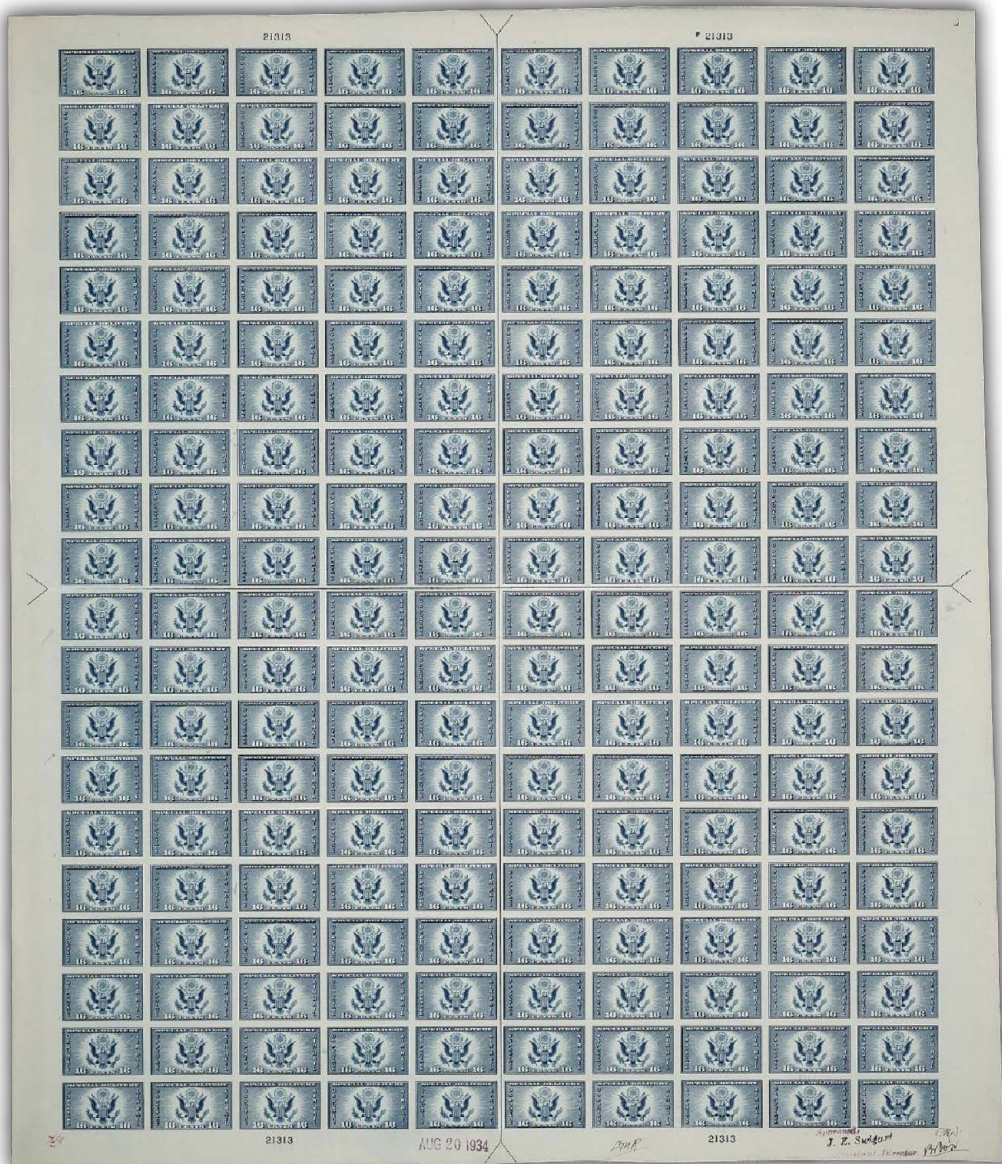


Figure 3. Plate proof of 16¢ Air Mail Special Delivery stamp (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).



48

TUESDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 5th

UNCUT SHEETS OF ORIGINAL PRINTINGS (Continued)

Lot No.

Cat. Value

300 ★ [B] [F]

1934 Air Post Special Delivery 16c blue, imperforate and ungummed, uncut sheet of 4 panes of 50 of the original printing, margin inscribed "This stamp is from my own design, Franklin D. Roosevelt" and "To President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This is the first sheet of the sixteen cent special delivery air mail stamps issued Aug. 23, 1934 James A. Farley, Postmaster General" (var. CE1)

Figure 4. FDR and Farley inscribed block from the first sheet printed with printed description from H. R. Harmer auction catalogue (courtesy British Library Philatelic Collections).

FDR's claim to have personally designed the new airmail special delivery stamp was fortunately memorialized on a full sheet printed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) on August 23, 1934. Shown in Figure 4 together with its H. R. Harmer auction catalogue listing, it is signed by FDR in the sheet margin, "This stamp is from my own design, Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1934." It was also signed in green ink by PMG Farley, "To President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This is the first sheet of the 16¢ special delivery air mail stamps issued Aug. 23, 1934 James A. Farley, Postmaster General."⁴ A marginal block of eight from this sheet, showing part of Farley's inscription, is shown. This is now in the FitzGerald Collection of airmail stamps in the British Library's Philatelic Collections.

The second sheet printed, also signed by FDR and PMG Farley, is shown in Figure 5. Now in the collection of the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, the Farley inscription in green ink says "To Betty, Ann and Jimmy Farley from their Dad. This is the second sheet of the sixteen cent special delivery air mail stamps. James A. Farley, Postmaster General. Special Delivery Air Mail Stamp issued Aug. 23, 1934."

Officially, the airmail special delivery stamp in steel blue was first released on August 30, 1934, in complement to the American Air Mail Society's annual meeting in Chicago, as shown by the special "American Air Mail Society Convention Sta." cancellation on first-day covers (FDC). My example on official postmaster general stationery, signed on the corner card by PMG Farley using his characteristic green ink is shown in Figure 6.

I also have a number of covers mailed to FDR that are franked with 16¢ Air Mail Special Delivery stamps. My example in Figure 7 was sent to FDR on December 28.

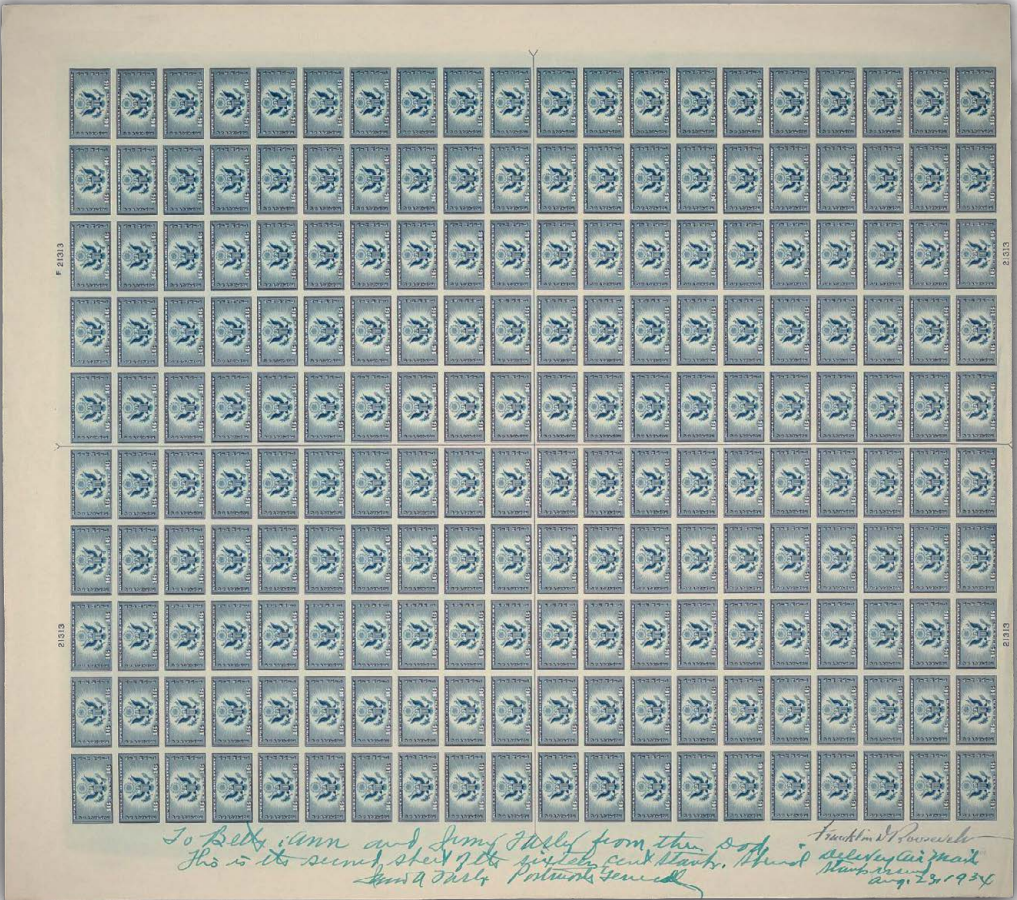


Figure 5. The second full sheet printed, signed by FDR and inscribed by Farley to his children (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).

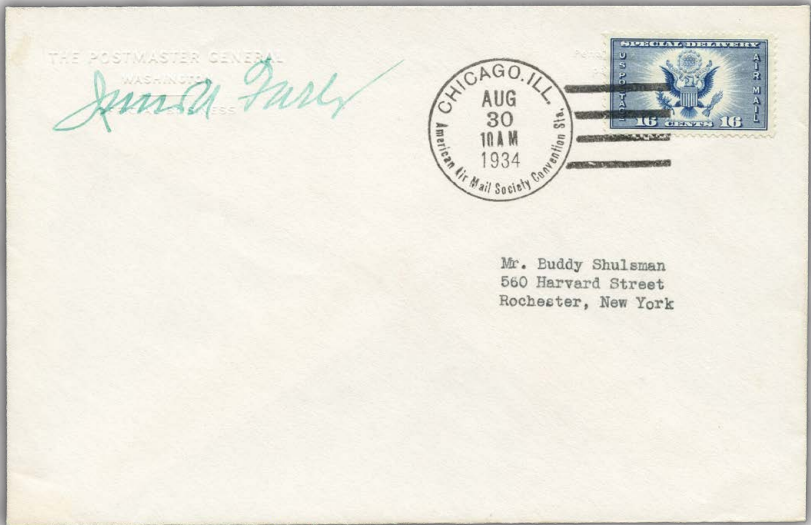


Figure 6. Farley signed favor FDC on official stationery.

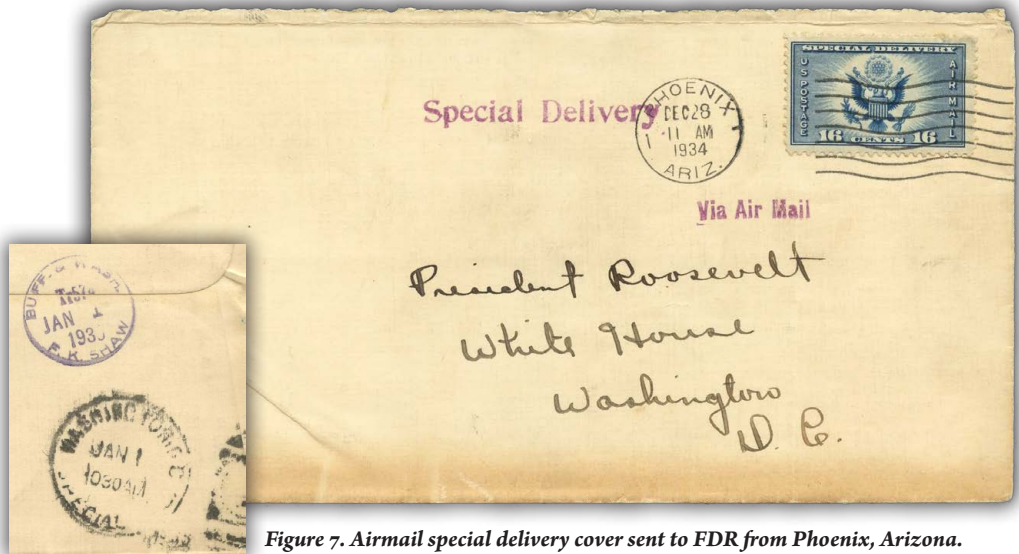


Figure 7. Airmail special delivery cover sent to FDR from Phoenix, Arizona.

Curiously, it has a BUFF. & WASH. railway post office (RPO) backstamp, and did not arrive in Washington, D.C., until January 1, 1935.

These airmail special delivery stamps were also involved in the “Farley’s Follies” brouhaha, and full imperforate sheets of 200 of these were later made available to the general public beginning on March 15, 1935. I’m fortunate in having the FDC shown in Figure 8, franked with a block of four sent to Harold L. Ickes, FDR’s Secretary of the Interior, who, together with FDR, was an ardent stamp collector. Curiously, the cover appears to have been self-addressed by Ickes to his home address at 4880 Glenbrook Road, Washington, D.C. Not widely known, this address is for a house that Ickes leased in 1933 after moving to Washington to become Secretary of the Interior, and is referenced in Harold Ickes’ diary entry of September 5, 1933.⁵ My cover was apparently included in lot 716 of the November 1948 auction of the Harold Ickes stamp collection by Edson Fifield.⁶



Figure 8. Harold Ickes’ FDC with imperforate block of 16c Air Mail Special Delivery stamps.

Besides being imperforate, the 1935 stamps display center lines showing where the full press sheets of 200 were to have been separated into panes of 50. My example arrow block of four from the special printing of March 1935 is shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Imperforate arrow block from special printing of March 1935 showing center line.

It is not likely that you, Mr. President, will ever see this letter
 however thousands of small retail merchant
 hope you will assist them



Figure 10. Airmail special delivery cover sent to FDR from Springfield, Missouri, on May 20, 1935.

Occasionally, airmail special delivery stamps from the 1935 special printing were used in mailing covers to FDR, and I'm fortunate in having the example shown in Figure 10. Franked with a vertical line pair this was sent by a wholesale druggist in Springfield, Missouri, on May 20, 1935. Remarkably, there is a message typed behind the backflap of the envelope reading "It is not likely that you, Mr. President, will ever see this letter—however thousands of small retail merchants hope you will assist them."

While it had been originally hoped that the "steel blue" color selected for the stamp would be sufficiently distinctive that postal clerks would be able to quickly discern that both airmail and special delivery handling were required, this was not the case. As a result a more distinctive bi-color version of the stamp employing a red frame with blue vignette (CE2) was issued on February 10, 1936. For this, the central design was reduced in size somewhat to make the stamp suitable for bi-color printing.

Interestingly, while the engraving of the dies is again formally attributed to John Eissler and Edward Helmuth, on page 15 of his book Sloat reports that BEP records show that the smaller size eagle seal for CE2 was apparently directly taken from a 1905 vignette by Robert Ponickau used in printing railroad passes. The die for the outer frame and border lettering was then prepared by removing the inner seal vignette from a CE1 die.²

Unlike CE1, where press sheets of 200 subjects were employed, the bi-color CE2 stamps were printed in sheets of 100, separated by a 1½ inch gutter, similar to the second layout used for printing 1931 bi-color Yorktown stamps.⁷ To ensure that stamps with inverted printings did not occur, the word TOP was printed in each color, as shown by my example CE2 plate blocks in Figure 11. Marginal registration markings for these stamps also evolved over time. The original Type I configuration shown at the left displays a red arrow and thin color registration lines between the words TOP. The block at the right (Type 4) is without arrow and has thick color registration lines. Other intermediate types and varieties exist, making this a complex topic, and for details, the reader is referred elsewhere.²



Figure 11. Plate number blocks of four for the 16¢ bi-color Airmail Special Delivery stamp.

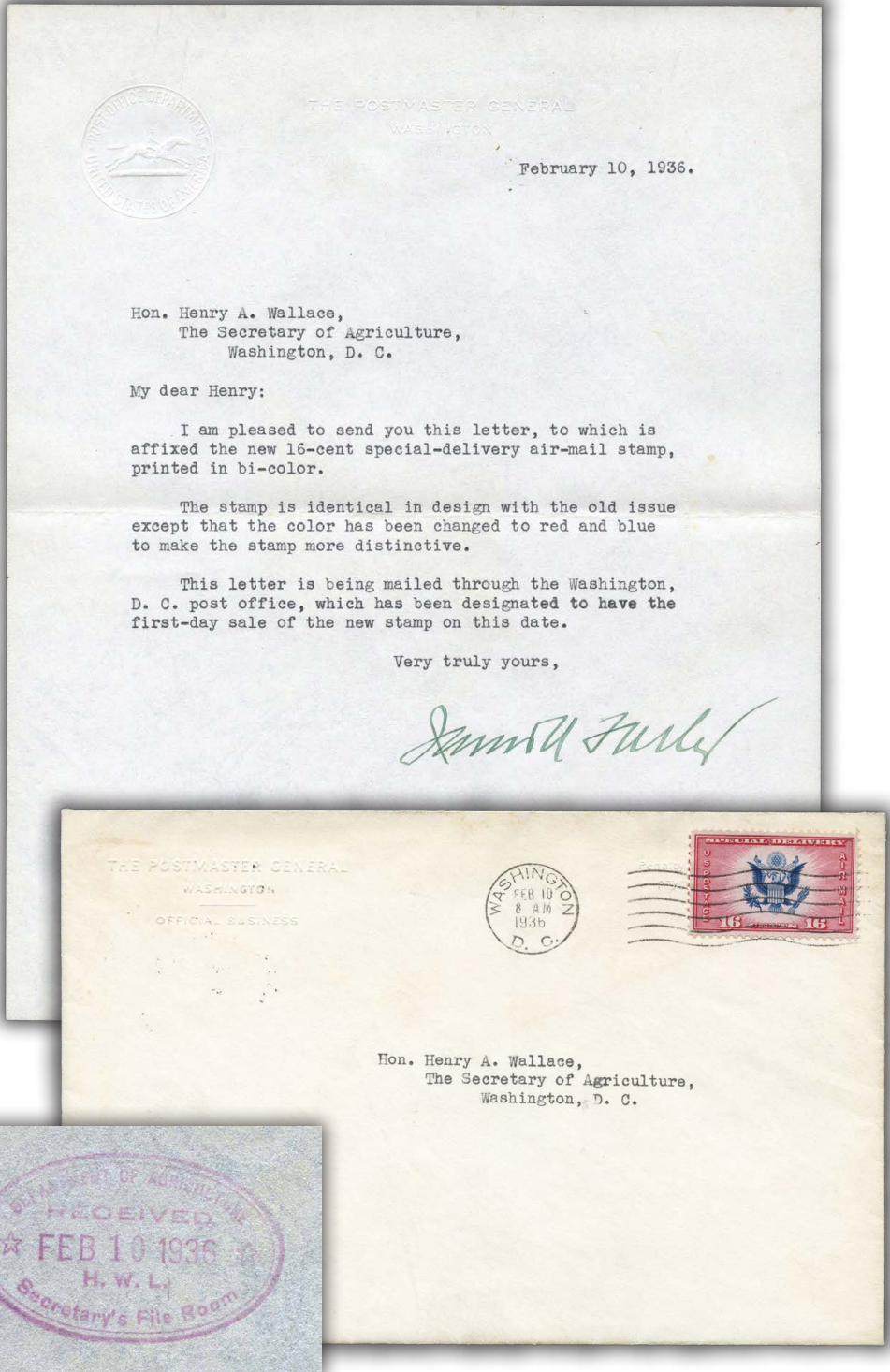


Figure 12. Postmaster general favor FDC for CE2 with signed letter sent to Henry A. Wallace.

I'm fortunate in having the favor FDC for CE2 shown in Figure 12. The cover was sent to Henry A. Wallace, FDR's Secretary of Agriculture (and later Vice-President) by PMG Farley with an official letter signed in green ink. Note the digitally enhanced receiving backstamp on the letter (inset).

I also have an FDC on official White House stationery that shows a hand-stamped "Benjamin Franklin Sta." postmark. Shown in Figure 13, this cover is addressed to Jules Rodier, a white-haired telegraph operator who had begun working as a telegrapher at the White House during the Spanish-American War when William McKinley was president. The cover demonstrates that FDR allowed his White House staff to use official White House stationery for first day covers. FDR must have liked Rodier, since on September 22, 1941, he signed Executive Order 8903 titled "Exemption of Jules A. Rodier From Compulsory Retirement for Age."

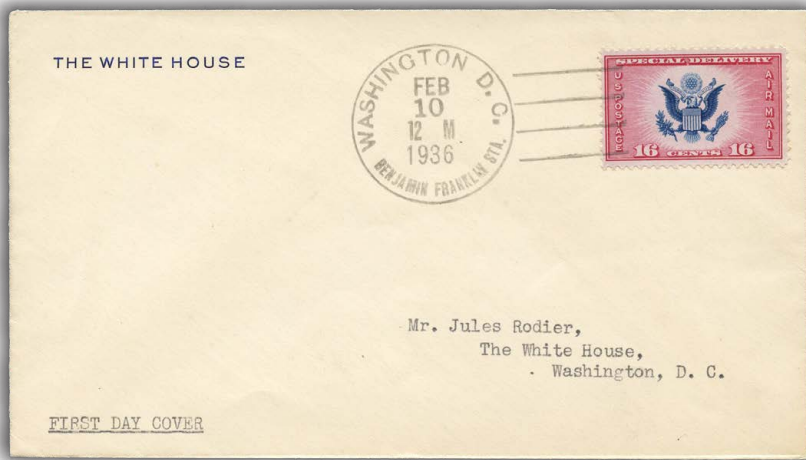


Figure 13. FDC on White House stationery addressed to Jules Rodier.

One of the more unusual FDCs in my collection is the cover on official White House stationery shown in Figure 14. This includes all three Air Mail Special Delivery stamps in horizontal pairs cut out past the perforated margins. It was sent by special delivery registered airmail to a Mr. Thompson of the Federal Farm Credit Administration in Oakland, California. Since blind double-oval registry cancellations are used on the stamps, the dated registered mail backstamps on the back of the cover demonstrate its February 10 first-day usage. Another registered mail backstamp shows arrival in California the following day, with a penciled notation on the front of the cover shows that it was delivered at 7:30 AM on February 12, 1936.

Among my covers sent to FDR with the bi-color airmail special delivery stamp is the one shown in Figure 15. With an advertising cachet and TWA airmail etiquette, it is from the W.D. Orr Studio and Gift Shop in Memphis, Texas, and was mailed during National Air Mail Week (NAMW) on May 19, 1938. The backstamp shows arrival the following day in Washington, D.C.

These bi-color airmail special delivery stamps met needs to speed up the delivery of letters from 1936 to 1944. At the same time, the numerous flat plate bi-color printings



Figure 14. Unusual registered special delivery airmail FDC on official White House stationery.



Figure 15. Airmail special delivery advertising cover sent to FDR during NAMW.

offer philatelists a complex area for collecting, especially when considering marginal registration markings for these stamps. For further details, the reader can refer to Ralph Sloat's book *The Airmail Special Delivery Stamps of the United States*, available as a free PDF download to all members of The United States Stamp Society at our website under Resources.

Acknowledgment

The Author would like to thank Dr. Richard S. Morel, Curator of the British Library Philatelic Collections for providing an image of the FDR signed block shown in Figure 5.

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2. Ralph L. Sloat, *The Airmail Special Delivery Stamps of the United States* (Belleville, IL: Bureau Issues Association, 1977).
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5. Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes: The First Thousand Days 1933–1936* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 86.
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7. Paul M. Holland, "FDR and the 1931 Yorktown Stamp," *The United States Specialist*, February 2025, 74–80 (see fig. 3).

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The Errors are an Error

by Ken Zierer

USSS # 12533 | ✉ kenzierer@yahoo.com

Last month's *Specialist* contained my article, The Unique Error That Never Was, which revealed that an established missing-color error listed in the Scott *Specialized Catalogue* for 34 years was, in reality, just an under-inking freak. This article will address the same Steam Locomotive issue, Scott 2362–66. Incredibly, additional listing mistakes exist for this same issue. Figure 1 shows the booklet pane with its five different designs.

This issue was printed on the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's D Press, which used black ink for the engraved (intaglio) inscriptions and yellow, brown, green, red, blue, and black for the offset printing.¹ However, not every color was used in each stamp. Table 1 summarizes which colors were used for each stamp.

Engraved black, offset black and yellow were used on all five stamps. Offset brown was used on four of the five stamps, green on two, red on one, and blue on one.

A few examples of Brother Jonathan, Scott 2365, were discovered with the offset red omitted in both mint and used condition. The first documented copy was submitted by noted error dealer Jacques Schiff to the Philatelic Foundation, which issued certificate 238008 in 1991 stating: "IT IS GENUINE WITH THE OFFSET RED COLOR GENUINELY OMITTED." Special

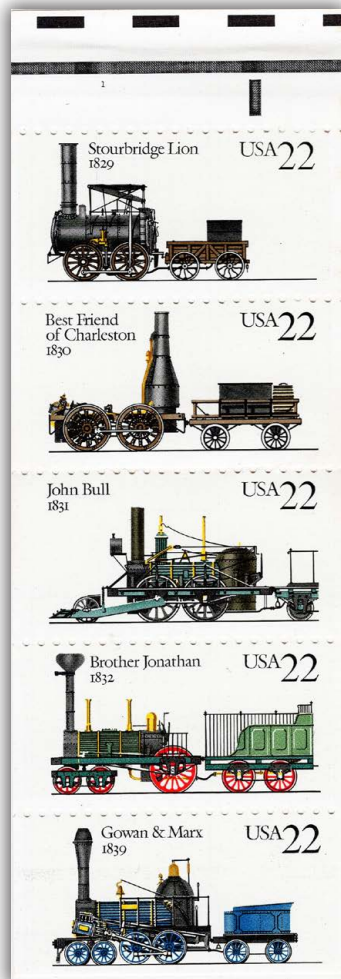


Figure 1. The Steam Locomotive Booklet

Scott	Locomotive	Engr'd Black	Offset Lithography					
			Black	Yellow	Brown	Green	Red	Blue
2362	Stourbridge Lion	X	X	X	X			
2363	Best Friend of Charleston	X	X	X	X			
2364	John Bull	X	X	X		X		
2365	Brother Jonathan	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2366	Gowan & Marx	X	X	X	X			X

Table 1. Inks used on the five Steam Locomotive stamps, Scott 2362–66. Note that only Scott 2365 uses red ink.

caution is warranted when issuing a missing color certification on used stamps due to the possibility of chemical alteration. Nonetheless, the Philatelic Foundation was apparently confident enough in their evaluation to declare it legitimate.



Figure 2. Used Scott 2365 with offset red omitted, courtesy of Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Inc., Sale 1334, lot 125, November 12, 2024.

Based on the certification, this variety was added to the 1992 Scott *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers*, with the unused variety added in the 2006 edition. Figure 3 shows how the Scott *Specialized* listing appeared from 2006 to 2017.

BOOKLET STAMPS		
LITHOGRAPHED & ENGRAVED		
Perf. 10 Horiz. on 1 or 2 Sides		
1987, Oct. 1		Tagged
2362 A1726 22c multicolored		.50 .25
2363 A1727 22c multicolored		.50 .25
2364 A1728 22c multicolored		.50 .25
2365 A1729 22c multicolored		.50 .25
a. Red omitted		1,000. 250.00
2366 A1730 22c multicolored		.50 .25
a. Bklt. pane of 5, #2362-2366		2.50 2.00
b. As No. 2366, black (engr.) omitted (single)		— —
c. As No. 2366, blue omitted (single)		— —

Figure 3. Listing of Steam Locomotive booklet in the 2006-2017 Scott *Specialized Catalogue*.

Although only one of the five stamps has red ink in its design, Scott, inexplicably, in the 2018 edition, added a missing red variety to the first three stamps, Scott 2362a, 2363a, and 2364a. Figure 4.

BOOKLET STAMPS LITHOGRAPHED & ENGRAVED Perf. 10 Horiz. on 1 or 2 Sides			
1987, Oct. 1		Tagged	
2362	A1726 22c multicolored	.50	.25
a.	Red (litho.) omitted	—	—
2363	A1727 22c multicolored	.50	.25
a.	Red (litho.) omitted	—	—
2364	A1728 22c multicolored	.50	.25
a.	Red (litho.) omitted	—	—
2365	A1729 22c multicolored	.50	.25
a.	Red omitted	1,000	250.00
2366	A1730 22c multicolored	.50	.25
a.	Bklt. pane of 5, #2362-2366	2.50	2.00
b.	As No. 2366, black (engr.) omitted (single)	—	—
c.	As No. 2366, blue omitted (single)	—	—

Figure 4. Revised listing of the Steam Locomotive booklet, which first appeared in the 2018 Scott Specialized Catalogue.

These varieties are clearly impossible, since no red ink was used to print these stamps. See Table 1. So, then, did they come to be listed? I checked the Philatelic Foundation and American Philatelic Expertizing Service online archives to see if any stamps had been submitted claiming red omission for these stamps, but I found nothing. The other two prominent American expertizing services, Professional Stamp Experts and Philatelic Stamp Authentication and Grading, do not have online searchable databases.

The sudden appearance of these three new mistaken varieties apparently went unnoticed by catalogue users, as these varieties continued to appear in every *Specialized* edition since then, as well as in the most recent editions of the *Scott Catalogue of Errors on U.S. Postage Stamps*. I only noticed it when I reviewed the listing for my previous article.

I would assume the process of adding new errors to the catalogue involves careful scrutiny by reliable experts to verify the authenticity of any reported error, which makes these listings all the more perplexing.

I reached out to the *Specialized* Editor In Chief, Jay Bigalke, for insight into this mystery. Jay was not part of the editorial team in 2018 when the mistake was made, but perhaps files were available for him to review and possibly shed some light on this puzzle. Unfortunately, he was unable to provide any information about the origin of these errors, however he did confirm they will be delisted in the next editions of the *Scott Specialized* and the *Scott Catalogue of Errors*.

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1. Boughner, Fred. *Linn’s U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1987*. Sidney, Ohio: Amos Press, 1988. 110–11.





Early First Day Cover From The Saint Louis World's Fair

by **Terry Kurzinski**

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Figure 1. Cacheted first day of issue cover from the Saint Louis Worlds Fair.

The cover shown in Figure 1 is an early cacheted first day cover, and the only cacheted first day cover known to me from the 1904 Saint Louis World's Fair. It has a Philatelic Foundation certificate, number 0320819, describing it as a genuine usage.

The cachet bears a legend indicating that it is "No. 29. Copyrighted 1902. Hesse Envelope Company, St. Louis." The Hesse envelope company printed over 45 different covers that I have recorded, in black and white, single color, and multicolor, showing designs and buildings of the St. Louis World's Fair. The illustrated cover shows the Machinery Building at the World's Fair that commemorates the Louisiana Purchase. The stamp, appropriately, depicts President Jefferson, who purchased the Louisiana Territory for \$15 million, or approximately four cents per acre, thereby doubling the size of the United States. It is part of the Louisiana Purchase series, issued April 30, 1904.

Interestingly, while this cover was postmarked on the designated first day of issue, the earliest known use of this stamp is from April 29, 1904, the day before this cover.

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Plate Number Report

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B1

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B1



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Boston 2026 World Stamp Show

B1

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LL

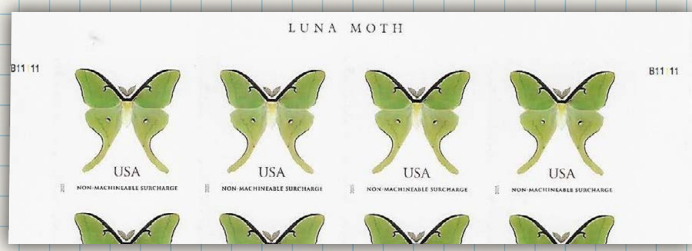
LR

3rx2c

1,2,3,4,5,6*



▲ #???? **SpongeBob Square Pants**
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2rx2c 1,2,3,4*



▲ #???? **\$1.27 Luna Moth**
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B11111 UL UR LL LR
3rx2c 1,2,3,4,5,6*

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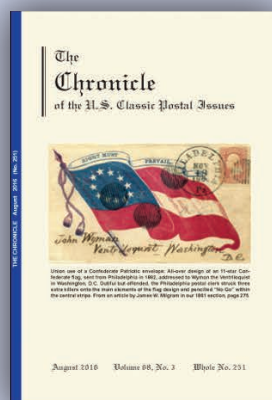
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