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

WHOLE NUMBER 1151

President Harry S. Truman and the Reduced Size Transport Airmail Stamps

plus

The Monthly Random Booklet: BK117 and BK120

and

The Great Americans Domestic Letter Rates,
Government Coil Stamp Supply and Demand, Part II, & more.

VOLUME 97, NUMBER 1 JANUARY 2026

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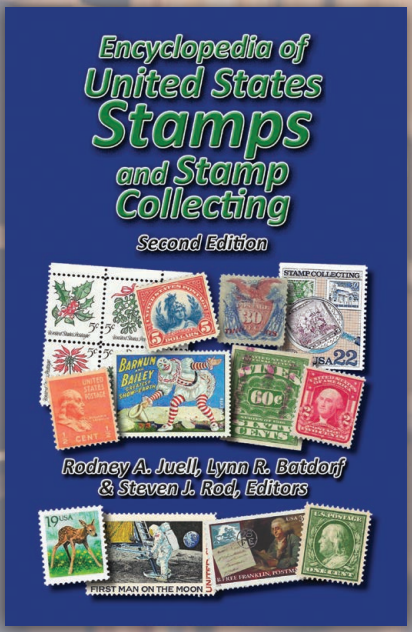

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The Plate Number Report will return soon when there are new issues to report.
The Vintage Photo of the Month will return next month; it was omitted this month due to space constraints.

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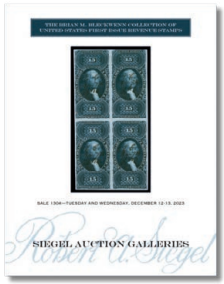

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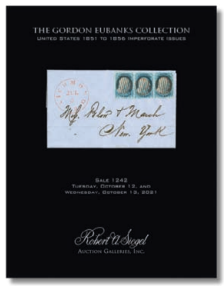

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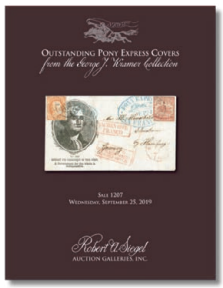

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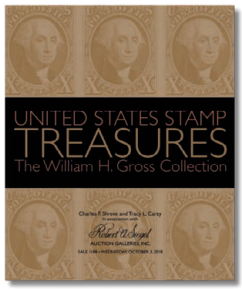

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Letters to the Editor

Signing of the Newburgh Peace Stamp, continued

The letters in the October issue regarding the signing of the Newburgh Peace Stamp while still on the press, reminded me of an incident that happened, I believe in 2001. Several USSS members attending NAPEX were given a tour of the floor of the BEP, which at the time was printing some of its last stamps for the Postal Service.

We watched the printed web racing through the press while a computer monitor told the operator that everything was operating normally. The screen looked something like the printout of a normal EKG. I asked the operator what the screen would look like if something was wrong. He handed me a black magic marker and told me to find out. "Deface the web," he told me.

After twice verifying the permission he had given me, I held the magic marker up to the web. The computer screen instantly indicated the anomaly and an alarm sounded. The press stopped. The operator backed up and the web to the place I had defaced it; he cut out the relevant piece, which he consigned to the waste bin as I looked at it longingly. He then spliced the web back together and restarted the press. I then asked how the splice would be found and removed before the rolls (they were coil stamps) were released to the public. His answer was, "it won't. The rolls will be finished normally and sent to post offices". I asked him to tell me which post office would receive the rolls with the splices, knowing full well, of course, that there would be no answer. He just smiled.

Sincerely,

Rodney Juell (USSS #13852).

More on the $5 Newspaper Stamp Overprinted for Revenue Use

I would like to add some pertinent details to the December 2025 article by Michael Mahler on the 1898 $5 Newspaper stamp overprinted for revenue use (pages 531–540). I am the current caretaker of the plate number strip found on page 532. I purchased the strip in Siegel's sale No. 977 in 2009 as mentioned in the article.

I have scanned the top stamp of the strip at 1200 dpi (Figure 1) so that the very small amount of red ink from the "D" can be seen. This spot of red ink was not evident in Siegel's scan and, since present, would disqualify the stamp as a true "OCUMENTARY" variety. Nonetheless, it is the "best" example of the variety that I have observed as others show the right portion of the "D."

Another reason that I was drawn to the strip was that the other two stamps exhibit the two types of spacing found between the "$" and "5" characters. The middle stamp has "wide" spacing (approximately 0.75mm) between the two characters while the bottom stamp has "narrow" spacing (approximately .020mm) between the two characters. The

Figure 1. Closeup of "OCUMENTARY" variety showing small dots of color where the "D" would have been located (indicated by an arrow).

Figure 2. Narrow and wide spacing between "$" and "5" on R159 (left two stamps) and R160 (right two stamps) (colors adjusted to make the overprint more visible).

spacing varieties, like the nearly "OCUMENTARY" variety, occur on both Scott R159 and R160, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Regards,

Gregg Greenwald (USSS #13309)

The Author Responds:

Thanks for a welcome clarification, a testament to the class of readers of *The United States Specialist*. Just what we hope for in posing such questions in print!

Sincerely,

Michael Mahler

Airmail Stamps

President Harry S. Truman and the Reduced Size Transport Airmail Stamps

by Paul M. Holland
USSS #16849 | ✉pholland.thorleaf@gmail.com

> "For the greater convenience of the patrons of the air mail service, the Post Office Department is placing on sale today a smaller 5-cent air mail stamp, the central subject of which is a reproduction of a modern type four-motor transport plane in flight.
>
> This stamp is being placed on sale at the Washington, D. C., post office, and I am pleased to dispatch this letter to you to supplement your cover collection."
>
> —from a signed March 26, 1947, letter about the new reduced-size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp by Truman's Postmaster General Robert E. Hannegan

Robert E. Hannegan's tenure as Postmaster General (PMG) was relatively short, serving under President Harry S. Truman from July 1, 1945, to December 15, 1947. Nonetheless, he was an important historical figure, since he had played a key role in the selection of Harry Truman as FDR's vice presidential running mate in 1944. This led to Truman becoming President when FDR died in April 1945.

A little over a year after the end of World War II, the airmail rate was decreased from 8¢ to 5¢, and a new airmail stamp depicting a four-engine DC-4 Skymaster transport

airplane was released on September 25, 1946. In the same large format as the Transport Airmail stamps, the design was based on a four-engine airplane in flight, with original design sketch, photo essay and the final engraved stamp shown in Figure 1. The design was by Victor S. McCloskey, Jr. The stamp's vignette was engraved by Charles A. Brooks, with the lettering and numerals by John S. Edmondson.[1]

Figure 1. Development sequence for large 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp.[1]

In PMG Hannegan's signed letter, sent out with a favor first day cover (FDC) on September 25, 1946, he says "The domestic air mail postage rate has been reduced to five cents an ounce effective October 1. It applies to all territory under the United States flag." This letter was shown in one of my previous articles on Transport Airmail stamps.[2]

The original idea for reducing the size of the 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp came from Alvin W. Hall, Director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). Various design options were considered at the BEP for the new reduced size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp, which was to be the same size as ordinary stamps but arranged horizontally. These are shown in Figure 2, and include one with a large (cropped) American eagle in the background, and a cropped image of an airplane on a runway with mail handling equipment in the foreground. Ultimately however, cropped images of a four-engine transport airplane in flight were favored for this stamp, settling on image variants that seem simply to crop the existing stamp design. The accepted final design (with plain border) is credited to Victor S. McCloskey, Jr., and this was approved by PMG Hannegan on January 21, 1947. The vignette was engraved by Charles A. Brooks, and lettering and numerals by A. W. Christiansen. Hannegan's formal approval of the die proof and the announcement of the new stamp by the Post Office Department occurred on February 26, 1947.[1]

Eight 400-subject printing plates were prepared for these reduced size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamps 23580–23583, 23586, 23588 and 23590–23591. These rotary plates were

first put to press on February 28, 1947,[3] with the first day of issue being March 26, 1947. I'm fortunate in having the favor FDC on official stationery with letter signed by PMG Hannegan shown in Figure 3.

Figure 2. Progression of essays for the reduced size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp.[1]

Among Postmasters General, Hannegan is a favorite of mine. Perhaps this is because he is referenced by name in the classic 1947 film *Miracle on 34th Street* in the climactic scene that caps the argument before the judge that Kris Kringle "is the one and only Santa Claus." This is based on the Post Office Department's Christmas Eve delivery of thousands of children's Santa Claus letters from the Dead Letter Office to Kris Kringle at the Courthouse, showing that Kris Kringle must be Santa Claus.

Shown in Figure 4 is my example of usage of a reduced-size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp to upgrade a Congressional free frank cover to airmail service. This was sent to President Harry S. Truman at the White House from Reno, Nevada, on October 10, 1947. The sender was Pat McCarran, United States Senator from Nevada from 1933 to 1954. He was a powerful and influential figure in Nevada politics, and it is said that, in part, McCarran may have provided inspiration for the fictional character of the corrupt United States Senator Pat Geary in the 1974 film *The Godfather Part II*.

I also have a number of first flight covers sent to Truman franked with reduced-size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamps in my collection, including the one shown in Figure 5. This has a Braniff International Airways first flight cachet and was mailed from Houston, Texas, on June 4, 1948.

Another of my covers from Bradford, Pennsylvania, that displays an unusual airmail stationery design is shown in Figure 6. Signed by the postmaster, this was sent to Harry S. Truman during the 1948 presidential campaign on September 10, 1948.

Shown in Figure 7 is my TWA first flight cover mailed to Truman from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, site of the catastrophic 1889 flood in which 2,208 people died. However, the cachet on this cover celebrates the long tradition of steel making in Pennsylvania, dating

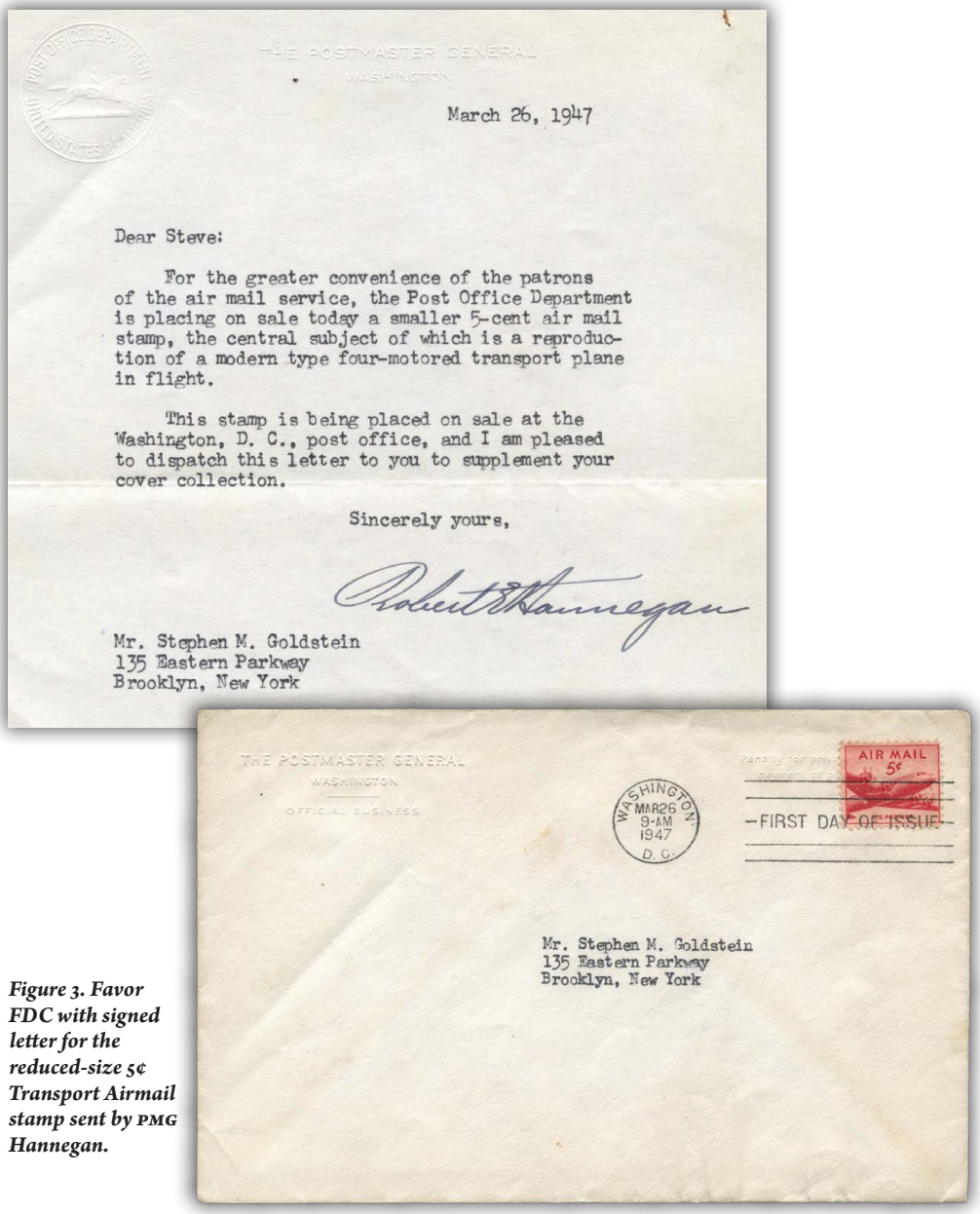

Figure 3. Favor FDC with signed letter for the reduced-size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp sent by PMG Hannegan.

back to the time of the Civil War. Note that the machine cancellation on this cover has a curious gap, seemingly designed to "miss" much of the stamp, but in this case, it was struck too far to the left. Once again, this September 26, 1948, cover was sent to Truman during the 1948 presidential campaign.

The domestic airmail rate increased to 6¢ on January 1, 1949, and I show my example of late usage of the 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp on a postmaster-signed cover sent to President Truman in Figure 8. Sent from La Pointe, Wisconsin, the somewhat primitive

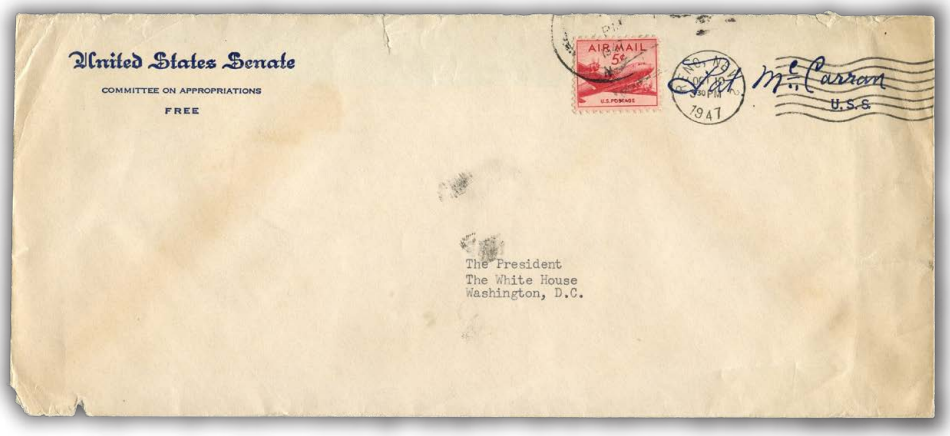

Figure 4. Congressional free frank upgraded with reduced Transport Airmail stamp.

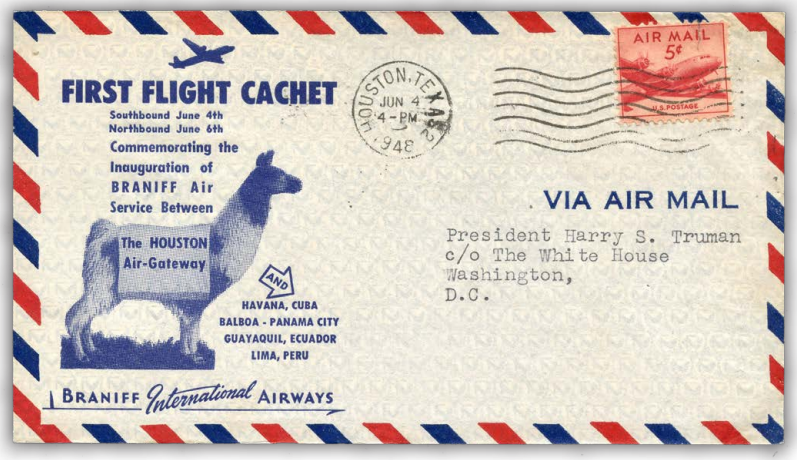

Figure 5. Braniff Airways first flight cover sent to Truman, June 4, 1948.

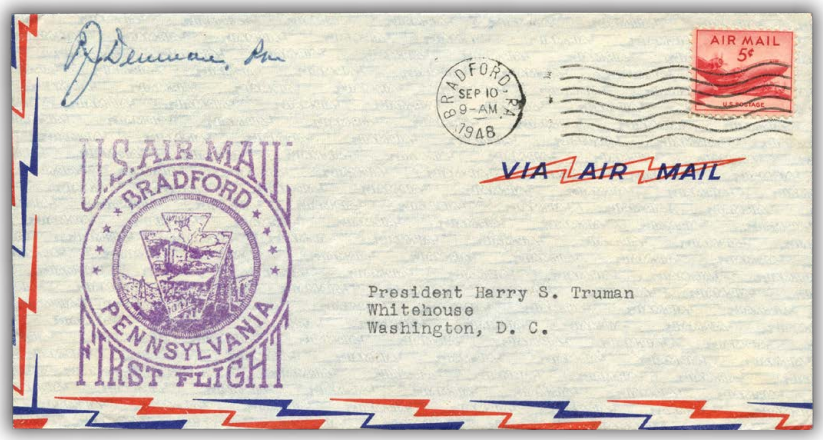

Figure 6. First flight cover from Bradford, Pennsylvania, sent to Truman on September 10, 1948.

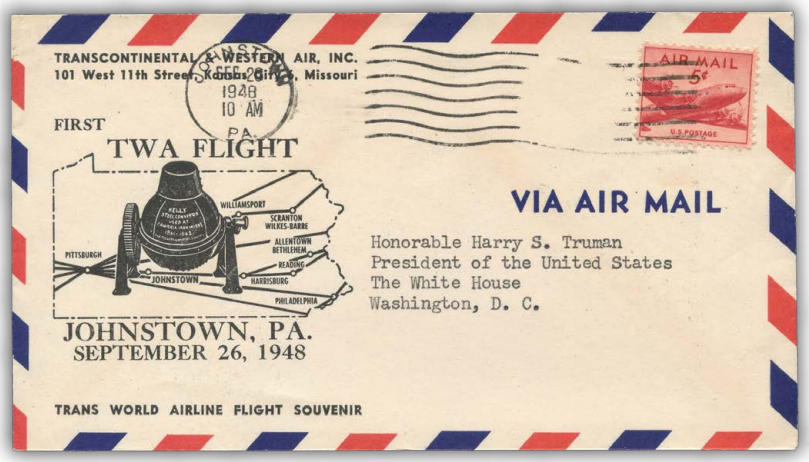

Figure 7. First flight cover from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, sent to Truman on September 26, 1948.

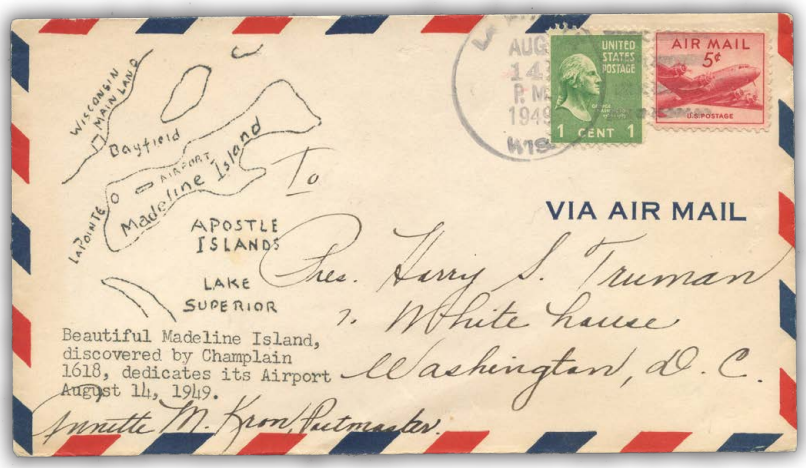

Figure 8. Late usage of reduced-size 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp on postmaster-signed cover sent to Harry Truman, August 14, 1949.

cachet on the cover shows that this commemorated a local airport dedication on August 14, 1949.

The airmail rate change to 6¢ required a new stamp, and so a revised version of the 5¢ Transport Airmail stamp was developed at the BEP. Two designs, similar to the 5¢ stamp, were considered and submitted to the Post Office Department, with the accepted design approved on October 13, 1948. The accepted version was nearly identical to that of the 5¢ stamp except for changing the value to 6¢ as shown in Figure 9. The rejected essay at the left differs only in the positioning of the lettering and value. Not surprisingly the design is once again credited to Victor S. McCloskey, Jr., with the stamp's vignette engraved by Charles A. Brooks, and lettering and numerals by A. W. Christiansen. Postmaster General Jesse M. Donaldson announced that the new reduced-size 6¢ Transport Airmail stamp would be placed on sale January 18, 1949.[1]

Figure 9. Essay and final design for the reduced-size 6¢ Transport Airmail stamp.[1]

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't show an example of usage of this new reduced-size 6¢ Transport Airmail stamp on a cover sent to President Harry S. Truman. So in Figure 10, I show my cover from Beverly, Massachusetts, mailed on August 26, 1951. As revealed by the cachet, this honors both the 325th anniversary of the city of Beverly and National Aviation Day.

With this article, I complete a survey of Transport Airmail stamps from the large format stamps first issued in 1941, through the four-engine Transport Airmail stamp first issued in 1946, to the reduced size stamps introduced in 1947 and 1949.[4] These "workhorse" stamps of World War II and the post-war era of the 1940s and early 1950s have much to offer the collector.

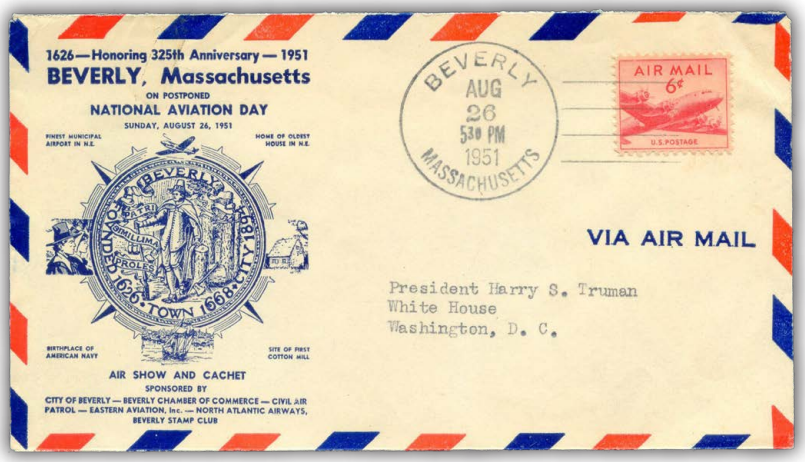

Figure 10. Airmail cover sent to Truman from Beverly, Massachusetts, on August 26, 1951.

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1. Sol Glass, *United States Postage Stamps 1945–1952* (West Somerville, MA: Bureau Issues Association, 1954), 229–235, 248–249.
2. Paul M. Holland, "20¢ Stamp of the 1941 Transport Airmail Series," *The United States Specialist,* August 2022, see Figure 6, page 355.
3. *B.I.A. Plate Number Checklist: Plates 20000–41303*, rev. ed. (United States Stamp Society, 1990).
4. Paul M. Holland, see articles in the November 2025, May, June, August and September 2022 issues of *The United States Specialist*.

From The Booklets and Booklet Panes Committee

The Monthly Random Booklet: BK117 and BK120

by Dieter R. Kohler, Ph.D.
USSS # 12538

Figure 1. The panes used in BK117. Slogan 4: Mail Early Clock, Slogan 5: Use Zip Code.

Introduction

Late 1967 to early 1970 was a good time for booklet collectors as the United States Postal Service (USPS) was issuing hoards of booklets, large and small sized. In late December 1967, USPS issued an innocent-looking booklet for vending machines. It contained four panes, each having five stamps and one of two different labels. The selling price was a round $1, which could be achieved with three panes of five 6¢ stamps and one pane with five 2¢ stamps.

Two years later, the USPS essentially issued the same booklet again, only replacing the 6¢ Roosevelt stamp design with the 6¢ Eisenhower stamp design and changing the cover color from brown to blue. What we discuss here for the first booklet, BK117, is identical to the second booklet BK120 issue so for simplicity, we only illustrate covers and panes for BK117 in this article.

The Scott *Specialized Catalog* notes: "No. BK117 contains panes with slogan 4, slogan 5 or combinations of 4 and 5". This might be understood as booklets having all slogan 4s or 5s, or sometimes a mix of slogans. We will see how this turns out in reality.

For the casual collector of booklets, it takes just two BK117 booklets to fulfill the needs, as there were two different back cover layouts used (BK120 has only one cover layout, as the Zip Code reminder back cover was "getting old" by the end of the 1960s). However, for the booklet specialist, the possibilities to search for collectible varieties are almost endless.

The Panes

Figure 1 shows one of each of the panes contained in BK117. What makes things more complicated is the fact that printing of the booklet fell into the time period when the paper web rolls and cover cardboard stock supplied to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) might have contained optical brighteners. Also, the BEP still experimented with new gum types and various types of gum breaker rollers.

In the time period, the BEP also changed the gum from the regular shiny gum type to a dull gum type, which no longer required interleafs to prevent the panes from sticking together. Fortunately, all the panes inside BK117 and BK120 were made with the old shiny gum only and with interleafs between panes. The panes in the booklets are tagged and show the typical greenish glow under short-wave (254 nm) illumination.

Gum Breaker Ridges

Curling stamp sheets had always been a problem in the flat-plate area of stamp production. When the damp sheets were drying after printing, they tended to curl strongly. This curling problem was even worse with rotary plate sheets, as the web rolls were already curled by design, although the paper was less dampened than with flat plate papers before printing. In order to somewhat remedy the problem, pressmen would take a few flat plate sheets after printing and use a wooden hammer to hit the stack at random places. This caused the gum to break (in irregular patterns). Sometimes the gum side is described as "disturbed gum" in sales pitches, but that was the immediate result of the hammer method.

Switching to rotary plates, perforators were equipped with various types of gum breaker rollers that automatically broke the gum during the production process.

All panes in the BK117 booklets have gum breaker ridges made by gum breaker rollers. Usually, horizontal and vertical gum breaker ridges can easily be seen on the shiny gum, although the strength of the ridges may considerably vary from pane to pane (in different booklets). Curiously, a few panes in the author's collection also show the random marks of the "wood hammer treatment" used for flat plate issues.

Figure 2 schematically shows the orientations of the gum breaker ridges as seen from the back of the pane. Horizontal ridges are drawn in red (and in orange if three horizontal ridges per stamp were used), vertical ridges are drawn in green. The assignments horizontal and vertical correspond to the orientation of the panes on the web, not to the orientation of the stamp images. At right is a scan of the back of an actual oversized pane, which corresponds to the pane at left in Figure 2. It has very faint vertical ridges that do not show in the scan.

While there is no written rule, the description of falling and rising ridges is defined if the pane is looked at from the gum side, with the tab at top.

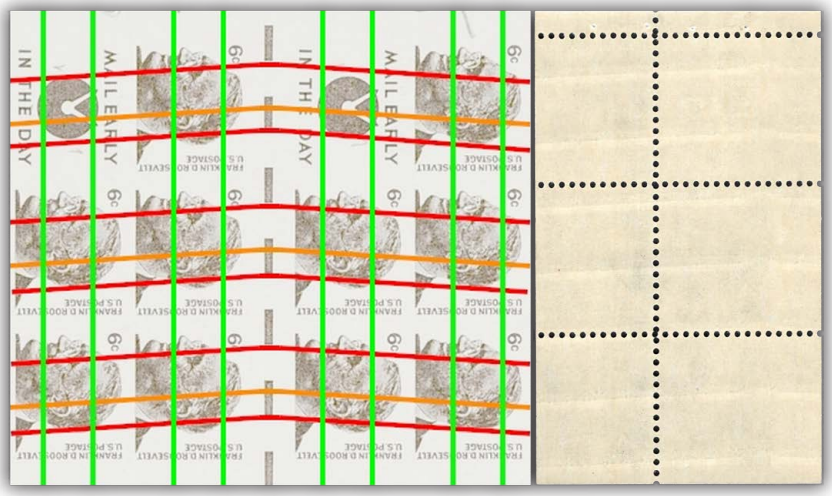


Figure 2. Gum breaker ridges in the central area of the web roll. See text for explanations.

The horizontal ridges form an upside-down "V" shape with flattened tops where the vertical electric eye dashes are located on the web roll. The flattened tops can be seen on oversized panes that still have the vertical dashes in the margin, like the pane in Figure 2.

For the panes in BK117, the vertical distance between the red ridges is about 11 mm. Some panes have dual horizontal ridges, spaced 4 mm and 7 mm apart.

The locations of the vertical ridges can vary significantly, from the right edge to the left edge in the stamp design. They are often weakly imprinted on the gum; sometimes one or both of the vertical ridges cannot be detected at all.

The Covers

BK117 was printed with two different back covers. As with the pane slogans, the back cover could either show a "Use Zip Code" slogan (with ZIP code 00000) or a "Mail moves the country" slogan. BK120 (covers printed in blue instead of brown) only exist in one cover type with the "Mail moves" slogan.

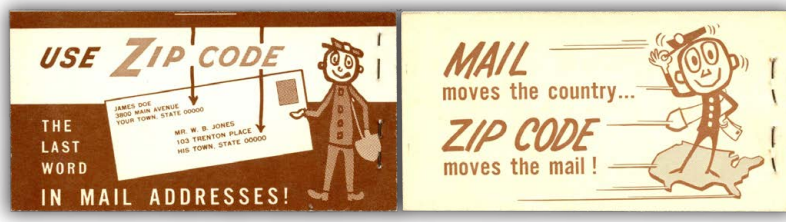


Figure 3. The two different back covers of BK117.

The first back cover in Figure 3 shows a cover cut mark at top, which the knife cut just missed when cutting a 120-subject sheet of covers (60 front and 60 back covers per sheet) in half. Cardboard stock for the covers provided to the BEP came in various degrees of brighteners added, which was of no concern, as glowing cover cardboard

could not irritate automatic mail sorters. Cardboard stock was randomly picked so the front and/or back cover can shine differently under long-wave (365 nm) illumination.

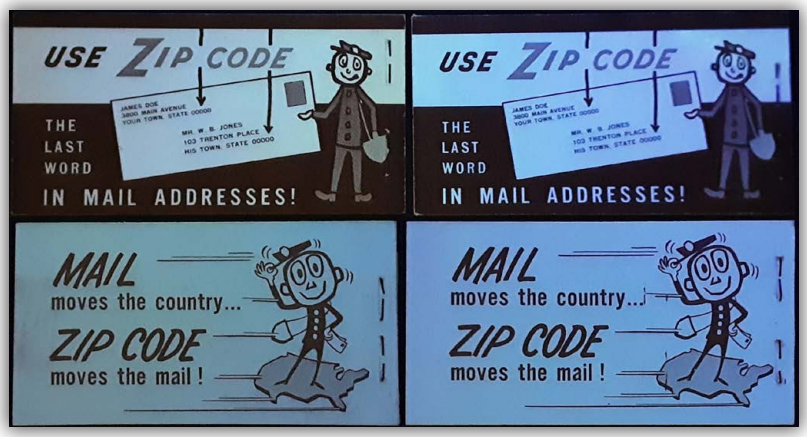


Figure 4. The two different back covers under long-wave UV illumination. At left: Plain cover stock, at right: cover stock with brightener.

The difference in the reaction to UV light is often less distinct on the front covers, as is illustrated in Figure 5:

A faded cover with brightener might not appear to be any different from a pristine cover without brightener.

Figure 5. Front covers illuminated with 365nm light. At left: Plain cover stock, at right: cover stock with brightener.

Printing the Panes

Two sets of two plates were used to print the 1284a Roosevelt panes, and one set of two plates for the 1280a Wright booklet panes. In each of the sets, one plate had slogan 4 labels, the other had slogan 5 labels. Figure 6 shows the standard 360 subject rotary plate layout with electric eye bars along the edges and vertical electric eye dashes through the center of the web roll, and plate numbers in the four corners. Each sheet contains 60 booklet panes, in 6 rows of 10 panes. The web roll runs vertically in the illustration.

The vertical dashes along the center of the web roll were used by the Cottrell press for the horizontal alignment. The horizontal bars along each side were not used by the press as the stamp designs were of a single color. The bars were used in the perforator, however. The Cottrell press also cut away a small strip of web at each side (probably

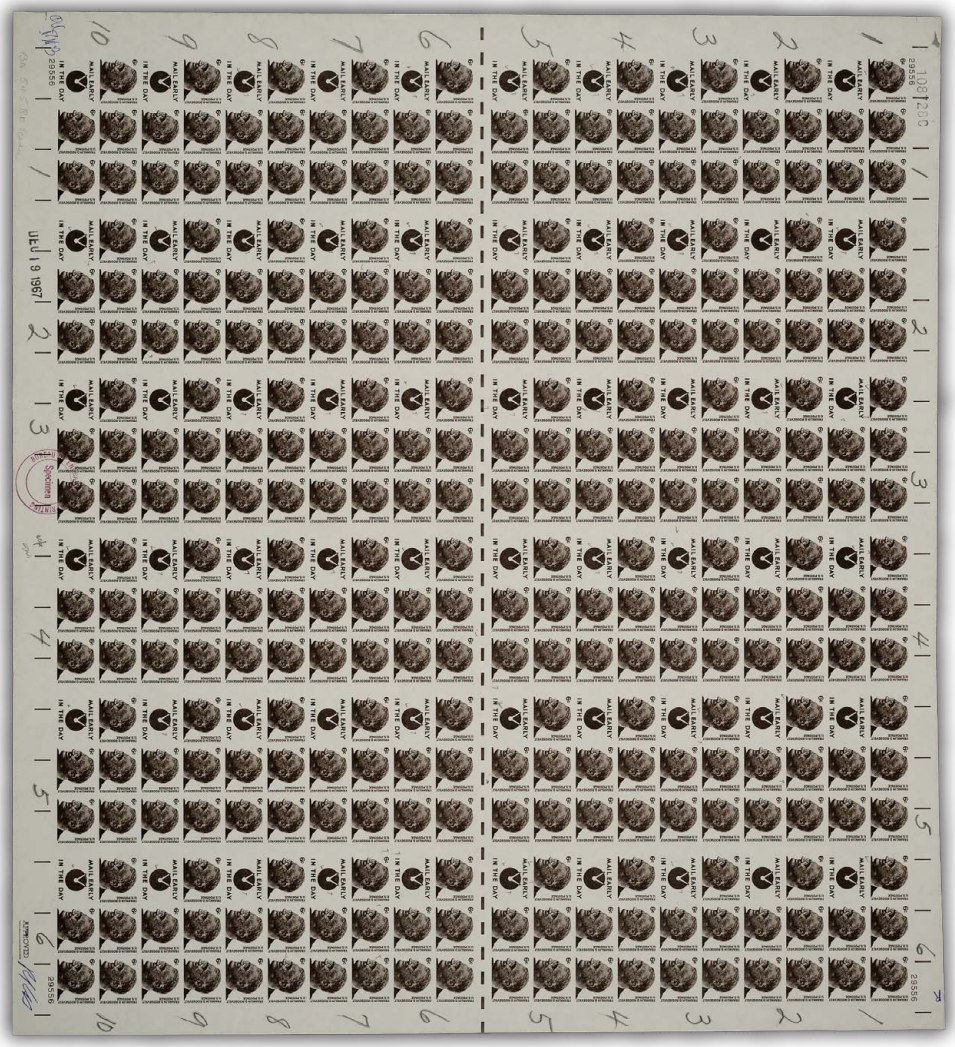


Figure 6. Proof sheet for plate 29556, containing slogan 4 (all plates for both booklets have the same layout).

to ensure that the web width was smaller than any perforator intended for perforating the web roll).

In the next step, the perforator perforated the web roll using the center vertical dashes for horizontal alignment of the web roll and one of the electric eye bars columns for correct horizontal perforation positions and sheet cutting. The bars are on both sides since the sheet orientation was not defined. The web could unroll "head first" or "bottom first" into the perforator, and the electric eye detector was active on one side only. The second detector on the other side was not used unless the first one failed, so perforating the web roll could continue. The perforator also cut away the right margin with the electric eye bars, including the right side plate numbers. This trimming of the right side was final. At the end of the perforation operation, the web roll was cut into individual sheets. The bottom of each sheet and the top (which included enough space

for the tabs of the first row of panes) were cut to be the final trim as far as each sheet was concerned. At the end of the perforating step, we have a pile of sheets (with alternating slogans) with well-defined margins except the left one, which was still oversized. Why this was important, we will see in the booklet forming step.

If everything went as described, we would never see rotary plate booklet panes with right side plate numbers. But we do have a small number of panes that show a plate number at right (usually only a small fraction). Right side plate numbers on panes usually happened at the beginning of the perforating stage when the perforator "had to find the vertical dashes" in the center, which took some time, depending on how far off the center the web roll entered the perforator. Since the perforation pins were engaged right from the start, this could create a few sheets that were trimmed too far to the right, including some of the right side plate number. These panes are also misperforated to the right by the same amount the pane is miscut. The second chance for right side plate numbers was at the end of the web roll when it lost tension (since there was nothing left to hold the roll in place so it could easily slip). Most likely, these misperforated sheets would end up as printer's waste (or more precisely, perforator's waste), but a few apparently escaped detection.

For our purposes in this article, it suffices to note that at the end of the whole printing stage, there were two stacks of stamp sheets. One stack consisted of sheets of Roosevelt stamps with alternating slogans 4 and 5. The other stack consisted of sheets of Wright stamps, also with alternating slogans 4 and 5. All sheets in both stacks had well-defined margins.

Table 1 shows the printing data for the panes. Two batches of Roosevelt panes were

Plate	Paired plate numbers	Certified	First to Press	Impressions
29556	Roosevelt Slogan 4	12-19-1967	12-21-1967	233,139
29557	Roosevelt Slogan 5	12-19-1967	12-21-1967	293,853
29558	Wright Slogan 4	12-21-1967	12-22-1967	422,553
29559	Wright Slogan 5	12-21-1967	12-22-1967	422,553
29566	Roosevelt Slogan 4	2-27-1968	1-24-1969	341,514
29565	Roosevelt Slogan 5	2-27-1968	1-24-1969	341,516
31955*	Eisenhower Slogan 4	6-25-1970	6-29-1970	221,241
31956*	Eisenhower Slogan 5	6-25-1970	6-29-1970	221,243
29562*	Wright Slogan 4	5-27-1969	5-01-1970	56,116
29561*	Wright Slogan 5	5-27-1969	5-01-1970	56,116

Table 1: Printing data for the booklet panes. *These panes were used for BK120.

produced. There is a mismatch for printing quantities of plates 29556 and 29557, which is likely an error in the BEP files. As always with rotary plates, panes could have been miscut and show parts of a plate number. The plate numbers on Wright panes found in BK117 always come from the first printing batch.

As it turned out, far too many Wright panes were produced to fit the 3:1 pane ratio needed. It is not impossible that the surplus Wright panes were saved up for BK120, so there might be booklets out with Eisenhower partial plates and Wright partial plates from leftover first printing panes. However, there are no reports of BK120 with plate numbers 29558 and 29559.

Making Booklets

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) changed the method it used to turn sheets into booklets several times over the decades. None of the early machines survived, so we do not know the exact sequence of steps involved (particularly for the first years of booklet making). It also didn't help that in the old BEP building, the various steps usually happened in different locations, even on different floors, so moving around "work in progress" caused additional problems.

Essentially, there are three main steps involved. The first step is making sheets ready for booklet forming. Unlike post office sheets, which had a lot of leeway as far as outer margins were concerned, sheets for booklet panes had to be correctly trimmed. The second step created strips of ten still connected but stapled booklets. The third step is to cut each strip into ten individual booklets ready for counting and packaging. Printing and perforating evolved rapidly over the years (even to the point of being extensively automated). The bottleneck was the stapling step that took the most time.

Booklet making started with a stitching machine with ten staplers that punched ten staples into a strip of ten connected booklets, which were previously cut from a stack of booklet sandwiches. The very first booklets were made with only one oversized staple

Figure 7. Ten-Head stitching machine, ca. 1910–1920.

centered near the cover edge, but soon the procedure switched to two smaller staples per cover so it required two stapler punches per strip.

In Figure 7, we see that the ladies operated on single strips of ten connected "booklet sandwiches." These sandwiches were cut out of sheet-sized sandwiches that were made with a front cover cardboard, an interleaf (early booklets only), a certain number of stamp sheets each with an interleaf sheet shielding the gum, and a back cover cardboard. Most likely, entire piles of those "sandwiches" were made. A divider cardboard (usually leftover cover stock) was inserted after every tenth sandwich, which facilitated counting booklets at the end of the day. Some of the old booklets still contain gum residue along the staple end of the covers, so some kind of fast-drying gum was applied to this end of the stack. The components of the pile would stay in place while it was transported to another section inside the BEP. A guillotine cutter would cut the sheet-sized sandwiches into piles of individual strips of ten connected "booklet sandwiches". After this phase, only the top row contained the glue holding everything in place, while the other five strips were "unglued". In Figure 7, we can also see an "L"-shaped sheet metal, which likely could be tilted and shaken so that all the components in a booklet strip would again be aligned to the back end. The ladies would then pick an individual strip and staple it with the ten staplers using a foot pedal.

This earliest machine probably resulted in a lot of waste due to the many things that could go wrong. The table at left in Figure 7 is loaded with waste.

From 1954 on, a mechanical collator replaced the hand collating. While it proved faster than hand collating, quality control was a major problem, so in 1959, booklet production moved back to hand collating on a new stitching table, which had all the bells and whistles required. 1974 meant the end for staples as booklet making fully turned to mechanical collating. William Bush had the chance to see the 1974 collator in operation, and his 1976 article describes the machinery in great detail.[1]

The BK117 and BK120 booklets were made around 1967 to 1970, so they used hand collating using the final stitching table model (no photo available, unfortunately). The table was large enough to process sheet-sized booklet sandwiches. Whether it did so or still used strips already cut from sheet-sized sandwiches, as the Ten-Head stitching machine in Figure 7 is unclear. Again, we do not have a description of the workflow from printed sheets to stapled booklet strips. One observation is that a small percentage of BK117 and BK120 have gum residue along the stapled edge, so the operator might have been provided with stacks of sheet-sized booklet sandwiches. Theoretically, 10 out of 60 booklets should have gum, but the observed percentage is much lower. Maybe gum flaked off from covers over time, or gum was only applied on some spots and not along the entire edge of the sheet-sized stacks of sandwiches.

If we go with the sheet-sized sandwiches, the operator picked one booklet sandwich from the stack and placed it onto the table. The stitching tabletop could be mechanically tilted and shaken so that all the components would properly align to the back and right of the table. Again, once the top strip with glue was stapled and cut away, the rest could slip around, so realignment was necessary after the stapled strip was cut away.

Once the sandwich was aligned, a series of ten staplers in the back could be fired by a foot pedal that fastened ten staples along the back edge into the tab area. The stack

was shifted to the side, and another set of ten staples was fired into the stack, resulting in two staples per final booklet.

Then the row of stapled booklets was cut away, resulting in a strip of ten connected stapled booklets and a sandwich missing one booklet row. This process was repeated until the last strip was stapled.

The final stage required no less than eleven precise cuts. This likely is the place where most of the waste in booklet production happened as a lot of things could go wrong. Figure 8 shows the locations of the eleven cuts. The cover cardboard is removed for illustration purposes—which was the inherent problem for the operator as he could not see the panes, only the booklet covers. However, covers had cut marks on many booklet issues (the operators in the booklet department requested the cutting marks to help reduce waste). So while he would not be able to see where the panes were actually cut, he still had a good idea where to cut.

Figure 8. Locations of the final knife cuts on a strip of booklets.

The stacks of uncut booklet strips were always cut from right to left, as the right edge was trimmed to be the anchor point for the panes.

Cuts 1 to 5 cut the right half of a strip of ten into five booklets.

Cut 6 removed the vertical electric eye dashes

Cuts 7 to 11 cut the remaining strip into another five booklets. Cut 11 removed the excess left border area, including the horizontal electric eye bars and the plate number in sheet position 1 or 51 (see Figure 12 for sheet positions).

One error that occasionally happened was that cut 5 was not executed as cuts 5 and 6 are rather close next to one another. This led to oversized booklets containing panes like the one shown in Figure 9.

Less common are oversized booklets where cut 6 was not executed. This led to panes with the vertical electric eye dashes at right.

Figure 9. Oversized pane with vertical electric eye dashes at left due to missed cut 5.

If the knife operator did not correct the missed cuts 5 or 6, subsequent booklet panes from the rows below (cuts 7 to 11) would show miscut panes with one of the stamp rows split into two pieces along the top and bottom edges, as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Miscut pane due to a missed cut 6.

Figure 11. Oversized pane showing a fraction of the plate number due to a misplaced cut 11.

Cut 11 was sometimes executed rather carelessly, which led to oversized panes with either a part of the plate number visible or oversized panes with pieces of the horizontal electric eye bars along the left edge. A few panes are known so badly miscut that they show the full plate number.

As the plate number panes come from sequential sheets in the original sheet stack, the percentage of plate numbers visible is usually almost identical on the Roosevelt panes. The fourth pane showing the Wright stamp may or may not show a partial plate number at all, or show a visibly different percentage, as the Wright sheets were printed on a different Cottrell press, so the Wright and Roosevelt sheets may not exactly overlap in a sandwich described above.

For booklet specialists, miscut panes that show vertical dashes or horizontal bars are plateable as the positions of the marks vary from pane row to pane row, giving three sets of six discernible position pieces.

Figure 12. Template for determining pane positions on a sheet, with a sequence of bars and dashes highlighted in red.

To find the correct pane position, the position of the horizontal bar or vertical dash relative to the stamp design determines the pane's position on the sheet. In Figure 12, the positions are highlighted by the red ladders, taking the bottom bar position for the horizontal bars and the bottom vertical dash position in relation to the top stamp design as reference. How the pane is cut or perforated plays no role.

At the left of Figure 12, horizontal bar positions 1, 11, 21, 31, 41, and 51 are shown. Right side positions 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60 (with bars at right) do not exist.

At the right of Figure 12, vertical dashes positions 5, 15, 25, 35, 45, and 55 are shown. If the vertical dashes show up along the left edge, it is positions 6, 16, 26, 36, 46, and 56.

"No Hole" Panes

USPS had booklet panes made for first day cover providers. These panes lack the staple holes in the tabs, as they were never stapled into booklets. The exact procedure to make these panes has not been described, so we have to guess how it could have been done.

One way is to use the same procedure above (without cover cardboard and interleafs) without the staplers engaged. Another way might have been to bypass the stitching machine entirely and simply cut a stack of sheets into panes using the guillotine cutter.

By mere happenstance, a pane inside a booklet could be a "no hole" pane if the four staple holes fell into four perforation holes (although there would be minute traces to detect under magnification). Very unlikely but not impossible.

Varieties—We Have Them

As described above, booklets were assembled using two stacks of sheets with alternating slogans on the booklet panes. This means that, if everything ran as planned, the slogan combinations listed in Table 2 would result (for both booklets).

Top pane	2nd pane	3rd pane	Bottom (Wright) pane
Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 4
Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 5
Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 4
Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 5

Table 2: Common booklet slogan combinations for regular booklet assemblies.

Sometimes, a single sheet or an odd number of sheets was removed from the pile of Roosevelt sheets prior to the assembly. These might have contained printing or perforation flaws. A sheet was taken out of the pile for inspection, or a stack of sheets ran low and was replenished with new sheets, possibly breaking the alternating slogan order. In such cases, the following combinations would be produced:

Top pane	2nd pane	3rd pane	Bottom (Wright) pane
Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 4
Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 5
Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 4
Slogan 4	Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 5
Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 4
Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 5
Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 4
Slogan 5	Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 5

Table 3: Less common booklet slogan combinations for odd booklet assemblies.

Most of the combinations are in the collection of the author. The last group of possible slogan combinations required a massive fiddling with the stack of Roosevelt sheets (for reasons unknown), which resulted in all three Roosevelt panes having the same slogan.

Top pane	2nd pane	3rd pane	Bottom (Wright) pane
Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 4
Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 4	Slogan 5
Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 4
Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 5	Slogan 5

Table 4: Rare booklet slogan combinations for even odder booklet assemblies.

Few of these rare combinations are in the collection of the author. Some were acquired from dealer Dale Hendricks, who acquired them within the booklet collection of Morton Dean Joyce (MDJ), a well-known booklet (amongst other issues) specialist. Apparently, MDJ tried to assemble complete sets of slogan booklets but didn't succeed. No complete sets have been reported yet.

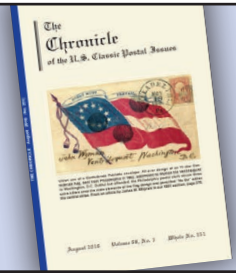
Likely all 16 possible combinations exist for both cover types. Finding them is another matter, though BK117s (and its sister issue BK120) are plentiful on the market and affordable.

Once you have the booklets with all combinations, it would be time to find these in high-bright front and/or back covers as well. Add untagged pane errors, different gum breaker layouts and different plate number positions and combinations to the list, and the possibilities become almost endless!

The booklet-forming procedure at that time also led to unintended varieties, such as booklets with double front or back covers when two cardboard sheets were stuck together. Some booklets are known stapled at the wrong edge, and some booklets were found with rotated back covers as the operator placed the first cardboard in the wrong orientation. Booklets also exist that contain five interleafs when two interleaf sheets stuck together too much.

References:

1. William R. Bush, "Book Postage Stamp Production," *The United States Specialist*, 47, no. 6 (June 1976) (and references therein).



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The Great Americans

Great Americans Issue Part XX—Domestic Letter Rates

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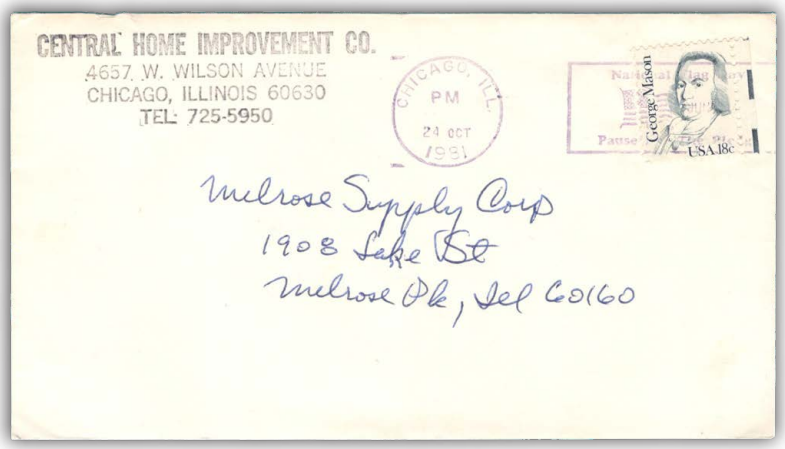

Figure 1. Mason stamp used to pay a single-weight 18¢ domestic first-class rate.

My passion in US philately is the study of the design and production of the country's regular issues of postage stamps of the twentieth century. I share a similar interest in the nineteenth-century issues, but the technological advances that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) employed throughout the twentieth century provide an enthralling story.

Decades ago, when I first entertained the thought of telling the story, through exhibiting, of one of our twentieth-century definitive issues, I did my best to tell the story of the series' design and production. This was at a local stamp show where I got my first judge's critique of my efforts.

Although the judge was complimentary about my knowledge and efforts at communicating the design and production details to the viewer, he was quick to point out that this was only half the story. I had no uses of the stamps on cards or covers, and he made it clear that, once produced, stamps of various different face values had a job to do, and that was to pay postage rates to carry the mail.

Start of Rate Period	First Ounce	Additional Ounces	Two Oz. Letter	Three Oz. Letter
Start of GA Period	15¢	13¢	28¢	41¢
22 Mar. 1981	18¢ George Mason	17¢ Rachel Carson	35¢ Charles R. Drew MD	52¢
1 Nov. 1981	20¢ Ralph Bunche Thomas Gallaudet Harry S. Truman	17¢ Rachel Carson	37¢ Robert Millikan	54¢
17 Feb. 1985	22¢ John J. Audubon	17¢ Rachel Carson Belva Lockwood	39¢ Grenville Clark	56¢ John Harvard
3 Apr. 1988	25¢ Jack London	20¢ Harry S. Truman	45¢ Harvey Cushing MD	65¢ H.H. Hap Arnold
3 Feb. 1991	29¢ Earl Warren Thomas Jefferson	23¢ Mary Cassatt	52¢ Hubert H. Humphrey	75¢ Wendell Willkie
1 Jan. 1995	32¢ Milton S. Hershey Cal Farley Henry R. Luce Lila & Dewitt Wallace	23¢ Mary Cassatt	55¢ Alice Hamilton	78¢ Alice Paul
10 Jan. 1999	33¢	22¢	55¢ Justin S. Morrill	77¢ Mary Breckenridge

Table 1. Great Americans fulfilling domestic letter rates

I admitted that day that I didn't know which face values paid which rates and couldn't even say why any given stamp value existed in that series, let alone explain why other numeric values had no representation in the series.

It was a lightbulb moment for me. To understand a set or series of stamps comprised of different values, a philatelist needs to develop a basic knowledge of the postal rates of the period. It goes beyond just the rate structure, but explains such production-related details as quantities pri nted (to pay high usages such as domestic letter rates). Once we know which values were in highest demand, then this sheds light on key production details such as the number of printing plates produced, the number of trips to the press for plates, the approach to repairing and maintaining plates, and even the introduction of new or revised dies.

With this in mind, my intention now is to provide a series of rate use articles on the Great Americans Series (GA) that will enhance your knowledge about how these stamps were used and subsequently which values were in high demand and subject to continued printings as the production details fluctuated.

Domestic Letter Rates

The GA Series had a long life of about twenty years, as we have previously described, which lasted from 1980 to 2000. During that time period, the basic domestic letter rate more than doubled, from 15¢ for a single-ounce letter to 33¢ for the same item.

At this time, there was no longer a rate distinction between surface and airmail carriage as had been the case in earlier times. Domestic mail that gained an advantage by being carried by air routinely got that service, while local mail transport was completely a surface activity.

Table 1 provides the domestic letter rates for the GA period. During this time, the first ounce was charged more than additional ounces, so a column is provided to show the charge for the first ounce as well as additional ounces. Because some Great Americans stamps were issued to specifically pay for a two-ounce or a three-ounce letter, columns also show the additional two-ounce and three-ounce fees.

Interjected with each entry are the specific Great Americans stamps that were available during a portion of each fee period to pay the listed rate. From reviewing the table, readers can see that twelve GA stamps directly paid the single-weight domestic letter rate at one time or another. Four more paid the additional ounces of incremental weight. These values were handy for adding to a postal stationery envelope when an additional ounce was included in such a mailing.

Seven issues paid the combined postage for a two-ounce letter, and five others paid the combined postage for a three-ounce letter. We can claim that these 28 different GA stamps had a primary function of paying first-class domestic letter fees. All of these values, alone or in combinations, were also used to pay other rates, which we will look at in future articles.

The first stamp to meet a single-weight domestic letter rate was the 18¢ George Mason stamp. The stamp was issued on May 7, 1981, and the 18¢ letter rate was initiated on March 22, 1981. Figure 1 shows a typical use of the Mason stamp to pay the letter rate.

Figure 2. Drew stamp used to pay a double weight 35¢ domestic letter rate.

The 17¢ Rachel Carson stamp was issued to pay each additional letter rate ounce, and the 35¢ Dr. Charles Drew stamp paid the two-ounce letter rate. As indicated earlier, Carson stamps were quite often found added to contemporary 18¢ postal stationery envelopes when up to two ounces of contents were involved. An example of the double-weight fee of 35¢ is shown in Figure 2.

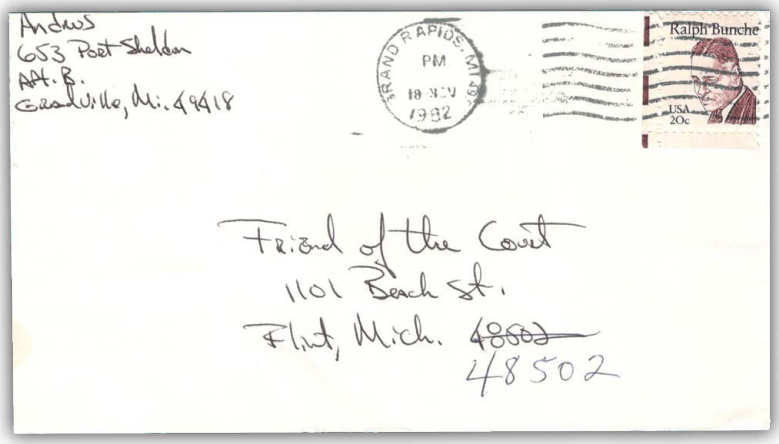

Figure 3. 20¢ Ralph Bunche stamp paid the letter rate in 1982.

We described briefly in Part II how the Ralph Bunche and Thomas Gallaudet stamps came about to pay the letter rate after the increase to 20¢ in November 1981. Figure 3 shows an example. Figure 4 shows the 37¢ Millikan stamp, which paid the two-ounce rate after the basic rate increase to 20¢. The six stamps just discussed were all products of the Cottrell Press discussed in Part II.

The 20¢ Truman stamp, printed on the A Press, debuted on January 25, 1984, during the 20¢ letter rate period. It saw significant use paying domestic letter rates, and an

Figure 4. 37¢ Robert Millikan stamp paid the double weight letter rate.

example is shown in Figure 5. The Rachel Carson stamp continued to be a workhorse issue, paying the additional ounce fee during the 20¢ letter rate.

Figure 5. 20¢ Harry Truman stamp paid the letter rate.

The next rate change saw an increase from 20¢ to 22¢ for the first ounce, effective February 17, 1985. The loss of the Cottrell Press to a BEP fire in their annex in March 1982 meant that a new subject, Belva Lockwood, replaced Rachel Carson on 17¢ stamps. A 22¢ stamp depicting John J. Audubon was released on April 23, 1985, providing easy franking for single-weight letters, and a new 39¢ Grenville Clark stamp, issued on March 20, 1985, provided postage for double-weight letters.

For the first time in the GA Series, a dedicated three-ounce letter stamp was issued. This was the 56¢ John Harvard stamp that was released on September 3, 1986. Figure 6 shows a four-ounce letter during the 22¢ rate period franked by Harvard and Lockwood stamps.

Figure 6. A four-ounce letter posted during the 22¢ letter rate.

The rate was increased to 25¢ for the first ounce and 20¢ for each additional ounce effective on April 3, 1988. A 25¢ stamp featuring Jack London was issued in sheet format much earlier, on January 11, 1986, and was frequently used on various special services fees during the time. In order to meet the need for a single-ounce letter rate stamp, the London stamps reappeared in booklet formats (see Part VIII), so many single-weight letter rate uses are stamps from the booklets.

The Truman stamp was resurrected for use as additional ounce postage. A new stamp was issued for the two-ounce rate, the 45¢ Dr. Harvey Cushing value, released on June 17, 1988. A 65¢ stamp depicting Hap Arnold, issued on November 5, 1988, paid the three-ounce domestic letter rate. Figure 7 shows a use of the Hap Arnold stamp during the 25¢ letter rate period.

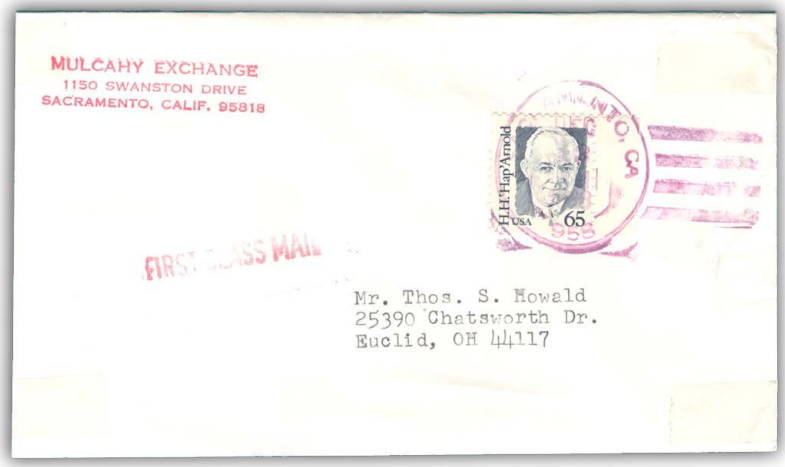

Figure 7. The 65¢ Hap Arnold stamp paid a three-ounce letter rate.

The 29¢ domestic letter rate era began on February 3, 1991, and lasted almost four years. Two GA stamps paid the single-ounce rate. They were the contractor-printed 29¢ values featuring Earl Warren (issued March 3, 1992) and Thomas Jefferson (issued April 13, 1993). This rate period also featured an increase in the additional ounce rate from 20¢ to 23¢. The 23¢ Mary Cassatt stamp, which had been around since November 1988, filled the need.

Again, the Postal Service provided dedicated stamps for the two-ounce and three-ounce letter rates. The 52¢ Hubert Humphrey stamp appeared on June 3, 1991, and the 75¢ Wendell Willkie stamp was issued on February 16, 1992. Figure 8 shows a three-ounce mailing utilizing the Willkie stamp.

The domestic letter rate saw its next increase, to 32¢, effective on January 1, 1995. In Part XVI, we discussed four stamps issued between September 13, 1995, and July 16, 1998, that met the 32¢ single-ounce letter rate. They were stamps honoring Milton Hershey, Cal Farley, Henry Luce, and Lila and Dewitt Wallace. During the period, the additional ounce rate remained at 23¢, so the Mary Cassatt stamp saw workhorse usage.

As with the three previous rate periods, dedicated two-ounce and three-ounce stamps were issued. The 55¢ Alice Hamilton stamp appeared on July 17, 1995, and the

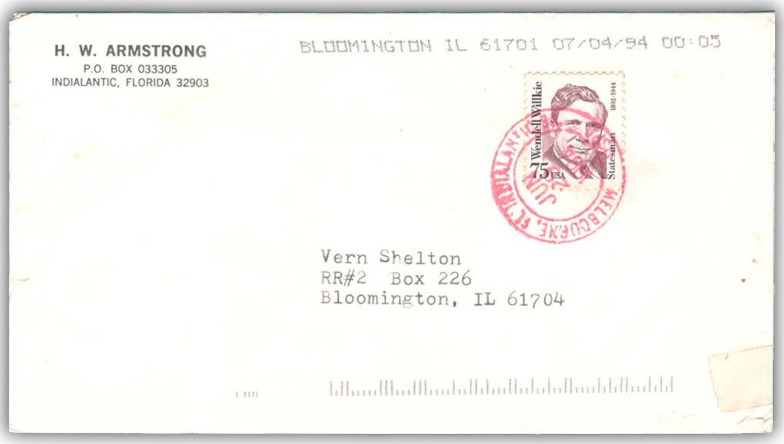

Figure 8. A three-ounce mailing utilizing the 75¢ Willkie stamp.

78¢ Alice Paul stamp appeared later that year on August 18. Figure 9 shows a usage of the Alice Hamilton stamp to pay the double-weight letter fee.

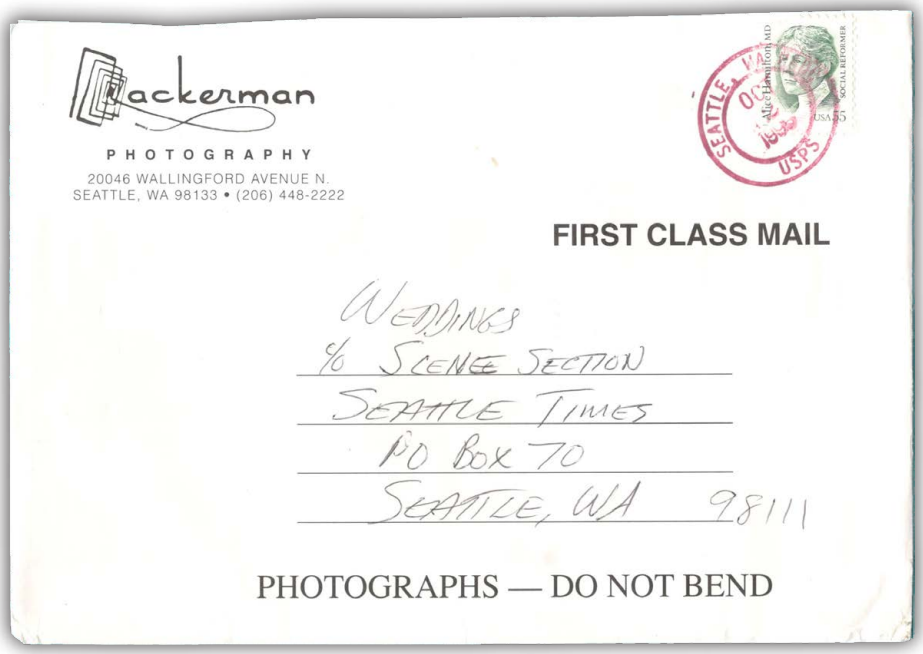

Figure 9. Alice Hamilton stamp used to pay the double-weight letter rate.

Finally, effective January 10, 1999, the letter rate was increased by a penny to 33¢ for the first ounce. For the first time during the GA era, the additional ounce fee was lowered by a penny from 23¢ to 22¢. Consequently, the two-ounce rate remained constant at 55¢.

There was no 33¢ GA value forthcoming, and the 55¢ stamp could have remained as the primary stamp for the two-ounce rate, but the self-adhesive era had arrived (see Part XVII), so it seemed appropriate that new self-adhesive values for the 55¢ two-ounce

and 77¢ three-ounce letter rates were released. On November 9, 1998, the 77¢ Mary Breckenridge stamp appeared, and on July 17, 1999, the 55¢ Justin Morrill stamp was issued. A use of the 55¢ Morrill stamp on a double-weight mailing is shown in Figure 10.

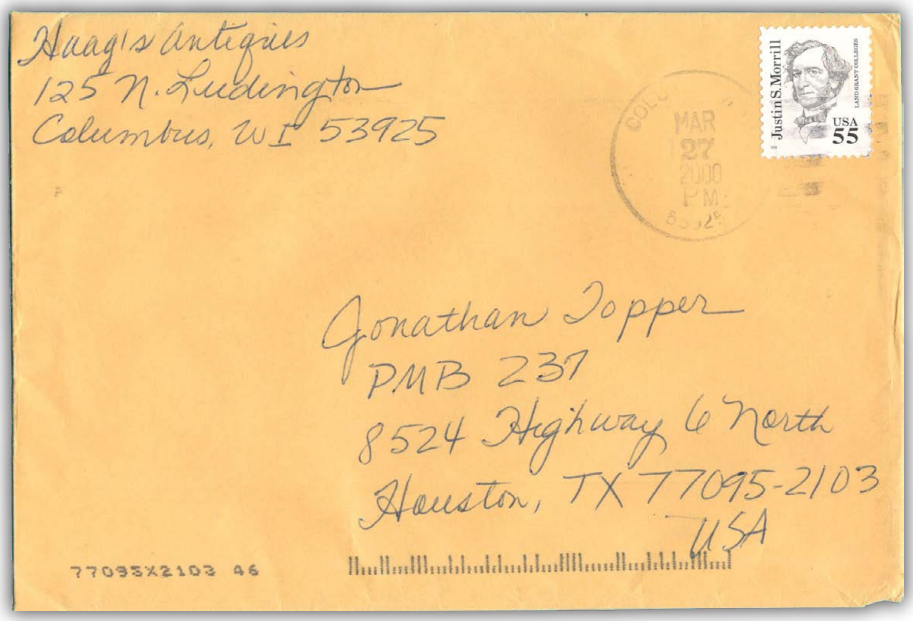

Figure 10. 55¢ Justin Morrill stamp paid the double-weight letter rate.

The next rate increase was made on January 7, 2001, when the single-ounce domestic letter rate went to 34¢. Although GA stamps were still in circulation at this time, the Distinguished Americans Series had debuted in 2000.

Variations on the Domestic Letter Rates

This installment looked at the 28 stamps intended to pay the domestic letter rate single, double, triple, and additional-ounce fees. There are still other variations of GA use to consider when addressing domestic letter rates, so we'll take a look at them in the next installment.

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Coil Stamps

Government Coil Stamp Supply and Demand: BEP Fiscal Years 1908 through 1925

Part II: FY 1915; High Demand Side-Coils Transition from Flat-Plate to Rotary-Press Printing

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Rotary Coil Stamps Were Not Delivered in FY 1914

By the end of FY 1914, there appeared to be no end in sight for increasing demand for coil stamps. Clearly, a new production method was needed and, in fact, was in development: the Stickney rotary coil press. In the FY 1909 Post Office Department (POD) annual report,[1] the following recommendation was given:

> The demand for stamps in coils will increase. Usefulness of the coil is not confined to vending and affixing machines. It would be a great convenience if they could be produced in sufficient quantities to supply post-offices for retail sale at the stamp window. The coils would also be a convenient form for sale of stamps to business houses for general purposes. I recommend that steps be taken looking to a change in the method of printing our postage stamps which will enable the department to provide this improved service.

In his FY 1914 report[2] (p. 8) the BEP Director's "issuance" remarks may be misleading, suggesting that the post office had issued rotary press stamps in that fiscal year:

> A rotary web plate printing press was constructed from plans designed by the mechanical expert of this bureau, and after several years experimenting it is now working satisfactorily. Postage stamps printed in rolls on this press have been made into coils which have for several months been issued to postmasters for sale for use in stamps-vending and stamp-affixing machines. A device for gumming postage stamps

> has been attached to the press. Four more of the presses have been ordered to be used in printing postage and revenue stamps. It is expected that an annual economy of several hundred thousand dollars will be effected when printing of postage stamps and certain revenue stamps has been transferred to these machines.

One year later, in the FY 1915 report (p. 6), the Director continues the story:

> Three rotary web plate printing presses are now in successful operation printing and gumming postage stamps, with resulting great economy, and two others are being erected on which it is proposed to print internal-revenue stamps.

For about two years, the BEP had been working out the production details regarding how to print coils using the rotary press. Compared to the prior method of pasting together cut half-sheets of stamps into long lengths, printing miles-long rolls of stamps that only needed to be perforated, cut to length, and labeled before coiling was a remarkable innovation. It removed time-intensive and costly steps from coil production. The BEP Director proudly included the achievement in his annual FY 1914 report. But the report of issuance raises a question: *Were rotary-produced coil stamps delivered in FY 1914?*

The answer, apparently, is no. Analyzing the stamp delivery numbers in the appendix of this same report, it appears that the BEP director's comment, "Postage stamps printed in rolls on this press have been made into coils which have *for several months* been issued to postmasters for sale for use in stamps-vending and stamp-affixing machines," (italics added) was regarding deliveries that occurred beyond the actual end date of the Fiscal Year: June 30, 1914. This conclusion is based on two facts:

First, in the FY 1914 BEP report's appendix, the quantity of coil stamps delivered divided by the number of sheets delivered is equal to 100 (upper half of Table 1). If some of the delivered coils had been printed on the rotary press, then the delivered sheets of coils would have included a quantity that were 170- or 150-subject sheets (rotary side- and end-coils, respectively). In that case, the number of stamps divided by the number of sheets *would not* have been equal to 100. Recognizing that the BEP Director's FY 1914 report was an annual accounting document sent to the Treasury Department, where "to the stamp" accuracy was required, it is mathematically impossible for the FY 1914 quantities listed to include rotary coil stamps.

In contrast, as an example, the quantities for the 1¢ and 2¢ denominations the next year in FY 1915, (lower half of Table 1) are not perfect multiples of 100, as rotary press printed coil stamps in these two denominations were delivered in FY 1915. The greater-than-100 results in Table 1 for the 1¢ and 2¢ denominations demonstrate that rotary coils were delivered and that further mathematical operations can be applied in order to determine the quantity of rotary versus flat-plate coils actually delivered (see *Determining Quantities of Flat-Plate and Rotary Coils Delivered* below). Note that the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ denominations are divisible by 100 in FY 1915, which confirms that only flat-plate coils in those values were delivered that fiscal year.

Second, the BEP annual report for FY 1914 is dated October 28, 1914, about four months after the end of FY 1914. The Bureau Director included in his report information on the rotary press that would transform the tedious process of making coils, and he

punctuated the exciting accomplishment by adding the fact that coils had recently been delivered "for several months," even though the deliveries did not occur until the beginning of FY 1915.

Fiscal Year	Denomination	Sheets	Stamps	Stamps/Sheets
1914	1¢	1,944,960	194,496,000	100
	2¢	4,961,890	496,189,000	100
	3¢	19,975	1,997,500	100
	4¢	26,175	2,617,500	100
	5¢	12,160	1,216,000	100
1915	1¢	2,285,049	242,744,500	106
	2¢	5,398,193	655,428,000	121
	3¢	29,460	2,946,000	100
	4¢	37,615	3,761,500	100
	5¢	16,280	1,628,000	100

Table 1. Coil stamps delivered divided by coil sheets delivered in FY 1914 and FY 1915.

However, in the FY 1914 POD annual report,[3] the Third Assistant Postmaster General contradicts the accounting math when he states the following:

> This new method prints stamp in continuous, unjoined strips, instead of in flat sheets that must be cut apart and pasted together as under the old method. Unjoined coils of 2-cent stamps, arranged sidewise, were first issued without perforations June 30, 1914; with perforations July 3.

If the dates given in the POD report were correct, the first of the rotary press produced coil stamps were released in FY 1914. It was the last day of FY 1914, but it was FY 1914. However, this statement is not supported by the detailed accounting information contained in the FY 1914 BEP report (reproduced in Table 1). So, who is correct?

While most authorities current and past note June 30, 1914, as the issue date for Scott #459 (the unperforated 2¢ rotary coil stamp),[4,5] contrary evidence is found in Kevin Lowther's

> In reply I beg to state that a careful investigation has been made of this matter, and it is found that the fourteen coils of each of the sizes referred to were forwarded to postmasters, as follows:
>
> 5 coils, 500 stamps each, Washington, D. C., July 1, 1914,
> 1 " " " Sanford, Me., Feb. 17, 1915,
> 8 " " " " Washington, D. C. July 14, 1917,
> 5 " 1000 " " New York, N. Y., July 1, 1914,
> 5 " " " " New York, N. Y., July 20, 1914,
> 4 " " " " Baltimore, Md., Aug. 8, 1914.

Figure 1. Portion of a letter dated September 1, 1917, to Philip H. Ward, Jr., providing the details of shipments for Scott #459. (Image courtesy K. Lowther).

article "Scott No. 459, Part I: 1914 Rotary Press Imperforate Coil's Provenance Finally Documented."[6] Lowther included an illustration of a letter from BEP Director J.E. Ralph dated September 1, 1917, sent in response to Philip H. Ward, Jr's inquiry concerning Scott #459. The portion of the letter describing the quantity and shipment dates is reproduced in Figure 1.

After what Ralph describes as "a careful investigation," he affirms that the first time #459 was shipped was July 1, 1914. Ralph's exact term was "forwarded to postmasters," not shipped, but the two terms have the same meaning. The first shipment would be the issue date. Note that based on his continuing research, Lowther, in the third article of the series, corrected the issue date from June 30, 1914[7] to July 1, 1914.[8]

Establishing the actual shipment date as one day later may seem to be "much ado about nothing;" it is simply a one-day difference. On the other hand, the fact that the date has been cited in articles, exhibits, catalogues, and auction descriptions for over a century indicates its relative significance. Even more importantly, that one calendar day is critical to the correct reconciliation of the accounting of stamps delivered by the BEP in its annual report for FY 1914. Note that the "issue date" for the *perforated* side-coil was two days afterward, on July 3rd. Thus likewise, it was first issued in FY 1915 and became part of the BEP accounting quantity for that year.

Finally, correcting the issue date for Scott #459 also determines a clear starting point (as identified by BEP fiscal years) for the transition from flat-plate sheet production for paste-up coils to rotary press web-printed coil production:

- In FY 1914 all coil stamps *delivered* were manufactured from pasted strips of 20 printed by the flat-plate presses.
- In FY 1915 some of the 1¢ and 2¢ coils delivered were printed via the new rotary coil press, while all of the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ coils were still printed on the flat-plate presses.

Since the 1¢ and 2¢ coils were the high-demand coil denominations, it makes sense that the BEP would release the first rotary-press coil stamps in these two denominations. But were both the side- and end-coil formats delivered in FY 1915? Table 2 presents print and release information for the 1¢ and 2¢ rotary coil stamps in the side- and end-coil formats. To avoid confusion around calendar and fiscal years, the FY for the plate, release, and earliest documented use information is given in Table 2.

For the 1¢ denomination, all the information points to only side-coils being delivered in FY 1915.

- The first 1¢ side-coil plates went to press towards the end of October (1914) in FY 1915. The release date for this coil is mid-November and the Earliest Documented Use (EDU) is November 25th of FY 1915.
- The first plates for printing the 1¢ rotary end-coil stamps did not go to press until about one year later, in November (1915) of FY 1916. Johl lists the release date for this coil as December 12, 1915, and the EDU is December 11, 1915. Obviously, one of the dates is incorrect, but both agree it is in mid-December, 1915, which is during the second quarter of FY 1916.

While it is clear that 2¢ side-coils in both imperforate and perforated gauge-10 formats were released in FY 1915 (see above for discussion of Scott #459 issue date), the evidence associated with the 2¢ end-coil (released in FY 1916) requires more explanation.

Value	Format	Scott #	First Rotary Plates Sent to Press[9]		Released[10]		Earliest Documented Use[11]	
			Date	FY	Date	FY	Date	FY
1¢	Side	452	10/22/1914	1915	11/11/1914†	1915	11/25/1914	1915
	End	448	11/9/1915	1916	12/12/1915	1916	12/11/1915	1916
2¢	Side	453	2/16/1914	1914	7/3/1914	1915	9/26/1914	1915
		459			7/1/1914‡		12/?/1914	1915
	End	449	1/6/1914^	1914	12/5/1915	1916	10/29/1915	1916
			9/8/1915	1916				

†Release date = 11/2/1914 per 3rd Assistant Postmaster General.[12]
‡ Although Johl lists the release date as 6/30/1914, the release date given by Director Ralph's letter (Figure 1) and mathematically confirmed (Table 1) is used.
^Cleland[13] presumed that the 1/6/1914 at press period did not produce the first 2¢ rotary end-coil which was released in December of 1915.

Table 2. Printing, release, and earliest documented use information for the 1¢ and 2¢ rotary coil stamps in side- and end-coil format.

As per Table 2, in early July 1914, both the imperforate and perforated rotary 2¢ side-coils were shipped for the first time after the plates had been at press for four months (with four more months still to go). Even more striking, however, is that 2¢ rotary *end*-coil plates had been the first production rotary set to be sent to press, yet they did not result in issued stamps for over 19 months.

The first production press pairing, 2¢ end-coil plates 6279 and 6280, were sent to press from January 6, 1914, to February 19, 1914 (six weeks).[13] This date range immediately preceded the first *at press* for the 2¢ side-coil plates discussed above. Cleland suggested that this initial *at press* period for the 2¢ end-coil plates was actually the end of the experimental period for the end-coils, and that *production* printing for the end-coils (Scott #449) did not begin until September 1915, during BEP FY 1916 (the second entry for the 2¢ end-coil listed in Table 2).

No mathematical determination can be made to identify whether the early material from the six-week 2¢ end-coil printing was destroyed or stored for eventual distribution. However, a solid case for destruction can be made due to the eight-month press run for the 2¢ side-coils that followed the brief 6-week run of the 2¢ end-coils. Plate print history analysis[14,15] indicates that a rotary print-run of eight months is statistically anomalous. Runs of abnormal length were associated with experimental development work, or failure to log plates back into the plate vault. Therefore, it is suggested that a large fraction of the eight months was spent printing very limited quantities, while still refining the press and its product. If so, poorly printed or otherwise imperfect stamps could be expected, and they would be marked for destruction. Returning to the 2¢ end-coil stamps, which were printed just prior to this 8-month press run for the side-coil, it follows that they would also be poorly printed and destroyed. In either case, in accordance with the issue dates in Table 2, it is generally accepted by collectors and catalogues that no rotary 2¢ end-coils were delivered in FY 1915.

Determining Quantities of Flat-Plate and Rotary Coils Delivered

Step One: Algebraic Calculation

Having established that the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils were the only rotary printed coil stamps delivered in FY 1915, it is possible to calculate the portion of total 1¢ and 2¢ coil stamps that were printed using the rotary press (sheets of 170) versus flat-plates (sheets of 100, both end- and side-coils). The initial calculation uses the same algebraic method as described in Part I when determining the number of 1000-stamp and 500-stamp coils; *Solving two equations with two unknowns.* The equations used are:

$$x(100) + y(170) = \textit{Total Stamps Delivered in the Coil Format}$$

$$x + y = \textit{Total Sheets Delivered}$$

For which: $x =$ the number of sheets; flat-plate printed coils

$y =$ the number of sheets; rotary printed side-coils

The equations above algebraically reduce to:

$$\frac{[\textit{Total Stamps Delivered in the Coil Format} - (170 \times \textit{Total Sheets Delivered})]}{-70} = x$$

$$\textit{Total Sheets Delivered} - x = y$$

Table 3 lists the results from the Step One calculations.

Value	BEP Report Values		Calculated Sheets		Calculated Stamps	
	Sheets	Stamps	100-Subject Flat-Plate	170-Subject Rotary Side	Flat-Plate	Rotary Side-Coil
1¢	2,285,049	242,744,500	2,081,626.1	203,422.9	208,162,614	34,581,886
2¢	5,398,193	655,428,000	3,746,640.1	1,651,552.9	374,664,014	280,763,986

Table 3. Calculated 1¢ and 2¢ flat-plate and rotary coil stamps delivered in FY 1915.

Note that there are minor discrepancies in the Table 3 solutions. For example, the total number of 1¢ flat-plate stamps divided by 500 should be a whole number, because only coils of 500 or 1000 were delivered. But 208,162,614 is not perfectly divisible by 500. Similarly, the total number of 1¢ rotary side-coil stamps (34,581,886) is not perfectly divisible by 500. Investigating the discrepancy revealed the problem: as recorded in the BEP report, the number of 170-subject rotary sheets are rounded to the nearest whole number. That is, the quantity of sheets was calculated by the BEP from the total delivered rotary printed stamps, divided by 170, then rounded to a whole number.

This fact can be proven using the BEP annual report numbers given for the 4¢ and 5¢ coil denominations in FY 1920 and 1921 (Table 4).[16] The 4¢ and 5¢ coils are used because they were only produced as rotary side-coils from 170-subject plates (no 4¢ or 5¢ rotary end-coils were ever printed during the studied era). The total stamps reported in the BEP Director's reports are evenly divisible by 500, but if the stamp quantities are divided by

170 (the number of subjects per sheet printed by rotary side-coil plates) the results are typically not a whole number (Table 4, last column).

However, in all cases, the number of sheets given in the BEP Directors' reports is equal to the calculated number of sheets (i.e., stamps/170), rounded to the nearest whole number (compare column 3 to column 5 of Table 4). Note the interesting data for the 5¢ coil in FY 1921, showing the 1 out of 17 instances when the number of coil stamps delivered equated to a whole number of sheets.

FY	Value	BEP Report Values		Calculated Sheets (Stamps/170)*
		Sheets	Stamps	
1920	4¢	51,015	8,672,500	51,014.706
	5¢	35,871	6,098,000	35,870.588
1921	4¢	77,526	13,179,500	77,526.471
	5¢	36,700	6,239,000	36,700.000

* Number given is rounded to the nearest 1/1000 of a sheet

Table 4. Comparison of BEP-reported side-coil rotary sheets to the number calculated from the total stamps delivered.

Step Two: Reallocation of Stamps

Recognizing the complication created by the BEP rounding their sheet counts, this step provides the means to determine the exact number of 170-subject and 100-subject stamp sheets. The Step One calculations are very close to the correct numbers, and there is an easy method to determine the accurate numbers. The key concept in this step is that the number of stamps for delivered coils must *always* be divisible by 500.

There are only two possible ways to allocate the "excess" stamps so that the flat-plate and rotary side-coil stamps are divisible by 500. Referring to Table 3, the Step One values for the 1¢ stamps are:

Flat-plate = 208,162,614
Rotary = 34,581,886

Focusing on the 1¢ flat-plate, in order to arrive at a number divisible by 500, either 114 stamps are subtracted (thus 208,162,500) or 386 stamps are added (thus 208,163,000). Consulting the calculated 1¢ rotary stamp value, adding 114 "borrowed" stamps yields 34,582,000, while subtracting 386 stamps yields 34,581,500. The adjustments result in the two possible allocation pairs shown in rows 2 and 3 of Table 5, (Allocation Pair 1 and Allocation Pair 2 for the 1¢ coil).

However, only one of the allocation pairs will result in the correct values for both total stamps delivered and total sheets delivered as reported by the BEP. The flat-plate and rotary sheets are obtained by dividing the Allocation Pair stamps by the number of subjects per sheet (100 for flat-plate or 170 for side-coil rotary). Thus:

Pair #1: Flat = 208,162,500/100 or 2,081,625; and
Rotary = 34,582,000/170 or 203,423.5294.

Pair #2: Flat = 208,163,000/100 or 2,081,630; and
Rotary = 34,581,500/170 or 203,420.5882.

Pair #1 total sheets = 2,285,048.529
Pair #2 total sheets = 2,285,050.588

Rounding to the nearest whole number of sheets, as was done by the BEP accountants, gives:

Pair #1 total sheets = 2,285,049
Pair #2 total sheets = 2,285,051

Value	Row	Solution	Stamps		Sheets		
			Flat-Plate	Rotary Side-Coil	Flat-Plate	Rotary Side-Coil	Total Sheets
1¢	1	BEP Report Values	242,744,500 Total		2,285,049 Total		
	2	Allocation Pair 1	208,162,500	34,582,000	2,081,625	203,423.529	2,285,048.529
	3	Allocation Pair 2	208,163,000	34,581,500	2,081,630	203420.588	2,285,050.588
2¢	4	BEP Report Values	655,428,000 Total		5,398,193 Total		
	5	Allocation Pair 1	374,664,000	280,764,000	3,746,640	1,651,552.941	5,398,192.941
	6	Allocation Pair 2	374,664,500	280,763,500	3,746,645	1,651,550.000	5,398,195

Table 5. Determining the correct reallocation pair for the 1¢ and 2¢ flat-plate and rotary side-coils in FY 1915.

Pair number 1 equals the Bureau Director's reported number of sheets. Therefore, the quantities of stamps delivered as defined by Allocation Pair #1 are the correct values for the 1¢ coils (shaded blue in Table 5). The results for the 2¢ coil using this same method are given in rows 5 and 6 of Table 5. The correct values for the 2¢ are given by Allocation Pair 1, which is shaded blue in Table 5.

Flat-Plate versus Rotary Coil Quantities Delivered in FY 1915

With regard to supply, although 2¢ rotary side-coils were delivered from the very start of FY 1915, only 43% of the 2¢ coil stamps delivered during the entire fiscal year were printed using the rotary press. Likewise, the first of the 1¢ rotary side-coil stamps were issued in November of 1914 (FY 1915). But the 1¢ rotary coils only accounted for 14% of the total 1¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1915.

These facts can be interpreted in two possible ways:

1. The majority of the coils delivered in FY 1915 were *end*-coils, not *side*-coils. If mostly end-coils were delivered, the low percentage of the rotary contribution to the coil deliveries makes sense because only side-coils were being printed on the rotary press.
2. Even though some 1¢ and 2¢ rotary coils were delivered at the start of FY 1915, the process was initially not efficient enough to keep up with the demand for the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils. Therefore, either new production of the 1¢ and 2¢ flat-plate side-coil continued in FY 1915 as the rotary production method was being finalized or there were significant vault stocks of the flat-plate coils that were depleted before the rotary coils became the sole source of supply.

Evidence Refuting Interpretation 1

One of the difficulties in making sense of the annual BEP Directors' reports data is that the information for the end- and side-coils is presented as a summation of "coils" for each denomination. No direct information appears in either the POD or the BEP annual reports to determine how many 1¢ and 2¢ coils were end- versus side-coils. However, data available elsewhere allows the arrival at a firm conclusion.

At the end of FY 1913, the BEP produced designated flat-plates that were used solely for printing the 1¢ or 2¢ end-coils. The plate markings included the words "COIL STAMPS." By analyzing the print record for these plates, the maximum number of end-coil stamps that could have been made can be calculated, because the print records included the

Plate #	Impressions	Stamps (Imp. x 400)	First Day at Press	Last Day at Press	Print Span
		1¢ End-Coil Plates			
6581 6582 6585 6589	22,900 each	9,160,000 each	7/9/1913	9/14/15	Q1 FY 1914 to Q1 FY 1916
Total	**91,600**	**36,640,000**			
		2¢ End-Coil Plates			
6566	28,381	11,352,400	6/16/1913	3/2/1915	Q4 FY13 to Q3 FY15
6567	14,431	5,772,400			
6568	29,850	11,940,000			
6569	14,431	5,772,400			
6570	43,800	17,520,000			
6571	43,800	17,520,000			
6572	43,800	17,520,000			
6573	14,431	5,772,400			
Total	**232,924**	**93,169,600**			

Table 6. 1¢ and 2¢ end-coil flat-plate print data.

number of impressions made from each plate.[17] Table 6 presents the plate and printing information.

Starting with the 1¢ end-coil plates, there were only four plates made. They ran together in five separate print runs beginning at the start of FY 1914 and ending in the first quarter of FY 1916. To simplify the analysis, we will compare the total number of stamps that were produced by these plates to the composite number of 1¢ coils stamps delivered in FY 1914 and FY 1915. Note that some of the end-coil stamps were printed at the start of FY 1916, so this initial comparison will overestimate the number of stamps that were end- versus side-coils.

In addition, Cleland reported that some of the impressions from the last printing of the end-coil plates were not used to make end-coils, but rather were released as coil waste sheets.[18] Once again, the comparison will overestimate the number of stamps delivered as end-coils. Per the BEP reports for the two years, the total number of 1¢ coil stamps (end- and side-coils) delivered in FY 1914 and 1915 was 437,240,500. The maximum stamps that could have represented end-coils for these two fiscal years was 36,640,000 stamps (Table 6). So, as a maximum, only 8.4% of the 1¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1914–15 were end-coils.

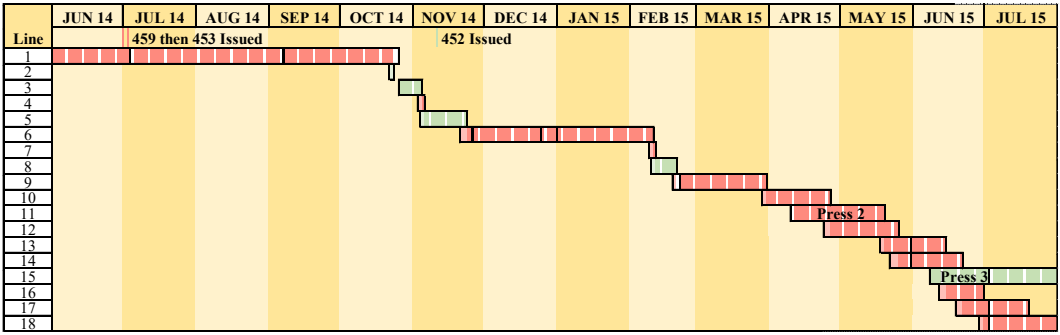
A similar analysis was completed for the 2¢ end-coil "COIL STAMPS" plates. There were eight plates made, which ran together in various combinations of four plates in six separate print periods. The print runs started in the last month of FY 1913 and ended in the third quarter of FY 1915. Comparing the total number of stamps that were produced by these plates (93,169,600) to the composite number of 2¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1914 and FY 1915 (1,151,617,000) demonstrates that, as a maximum, only 8.1% of the 2¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1914–15 were end-coils.

What this analysis reveals first is that the 1¢ and 2¢ end-coils were in much lower demand (~8%) compared with the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils (~92%) in FY 1914–15. Thus interpretation #1, that the majority of flat-plate material delivered in FY 1915 were end-coils, is not supported.

This analysis also explains why the BEP concentrated their efforts on printing the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils on the rotary press. A sufficient side-coil supply was produced first because the side-coils were in much higher demand than were the end-coils. Finally, in FY 1916, press-time began to be diverted to the much lower demand end-coil 1¢ and 2¢ material.

Evidence Supporting Interpretation 2

The rotary coil press map[19] for FY 1915 supports the second proposed scenario: the rotary press printing method still was not fully developed at the time the first rotary 2¢ side-coils were issued (see Figure 2). As FY 1915 began, one set of 2¢ side-coil plates had been on the press for over four months since February 16, 1914, (identified as Line 1 in Figure 2). This set then remained on the BEP's one available press for just short of four additional months until October 23, 1914. The plate pair produced both Scott #459 and #453 (imperforate and perforated side-coils) issued at the start of FY 1915. The first set of 1¢ side-coil plates eventually were sent to press three times in October and November (Lines 2, 3, and 5 of Figure 2). Scott #452 (perforated 1¢ side-coil) was issued November 11, 1914, from these printings.



Line	Value	Scott #	Plate Pair	To Press Period	
1	2¢	453 & 459	6856 &6857	2/16/1914	10/23/1914
2	1¢	452	7170 &7171	10/22/1914	10/23/1914
3	1¢	452	7170 &7171	10/26/1914	11/4/1914
4	2¢	453	6856 &6857	11/3/1914	11/5/1914
5	1¢	452	7170 &7171	11/4/1914	11/23/1914
6	2¢	453	7174 & 7175	11/21/1914	2/10/1915
7	2¢	453	6856 &6857	2/9/1915	2/11/1915
8	1¢	452	7170 &7171	2/10/1915	2/20/1915
9	2¢	453	7270 & 7271	2/19/1915	3/30/1915
10	2¢	453	2730 & 2731	3/29/1915	4/26/1915
11	2¢	453	7408 & 7409	4/10/1915	5/19/1915
12	2¢	453	7417 & 7418	4/24/1915	5/25/1915
13	2¢	453	7422 & 7423	5/18/1915	6/14/1915
14	2¢	454	7425 & 7426	5/22/1915	6/21/1915
15	1¢	452	7170 &7171	6/7/1915	8/9/1915
16	2¢	454	7427 & 7430	6/12/1915	6/30/1915
17	2¢	454	7428 & 7429	6/19/1915	7/19/1915
18	2¢	454	7467 & 7469	6/29/1915	9/7/1915

Figure 2. FY 1915 Press Map, which includes June of FY 1914 and July of FY 1916. The bar color identifies the stamp value: green = 1¢, red = 2¢. Other color codes: lighter red or green depicts the wait time for an open press; white shading indicates Sundays or a workday when the press is idle; and black indicates holidays.

The next set of 2¢ plates (Line 6 in Figure 2) was logged at press for over two months, a period longer than the eventual standard range for a set of plates that are only *at press* once and then cancelled. The extended time indicates that the BEP was still refining rotary coil production methods. The next two sets of 2¢ plates (Lines 9 and 10) were *at press* for about one to one-and-a-half months, the norm in later years for plates sent to press one time and then cancelled. Press mapping of subsequent printing runs shows that the rotary printing process was working pretty well by March/April of 1915. This conclusion fits in with Lowther's statement that, "The transition to the rotary press

was anything but seamless. The Stickney rotary press was far more complicated than printing on a flat-plate."[20]

The supposition is further supported by the fact that a second press was brought on-line (line 11) in April 1915, followed by the third press at the start of June (line 15). Logic dictates that if there were still significant problems with printing on the first press, adding more presses to the factory floor would be pointless. In addition, the fact that the first evidence for the second press shows it immediately making a successful print run is a strong indicator that the process was becoming streamlined. By the end of FY 1915, with three presses up and operating, the supply of 1¢ and 2¢ side-coil stamps was positioned to completely transition from the tedious flat-plate production to the streamlined, efficient, rotary coil press production in FY 1916.

This series will continue in Part III, covering the transition of the low-demand coils to the rotary press in FY 1916, followed by a steadily increasing coil demand through 1919. Ultimately, as demand exceeded BEP production capabilities, more equipment was added to produce the rotary coils in FY 1920–1924.

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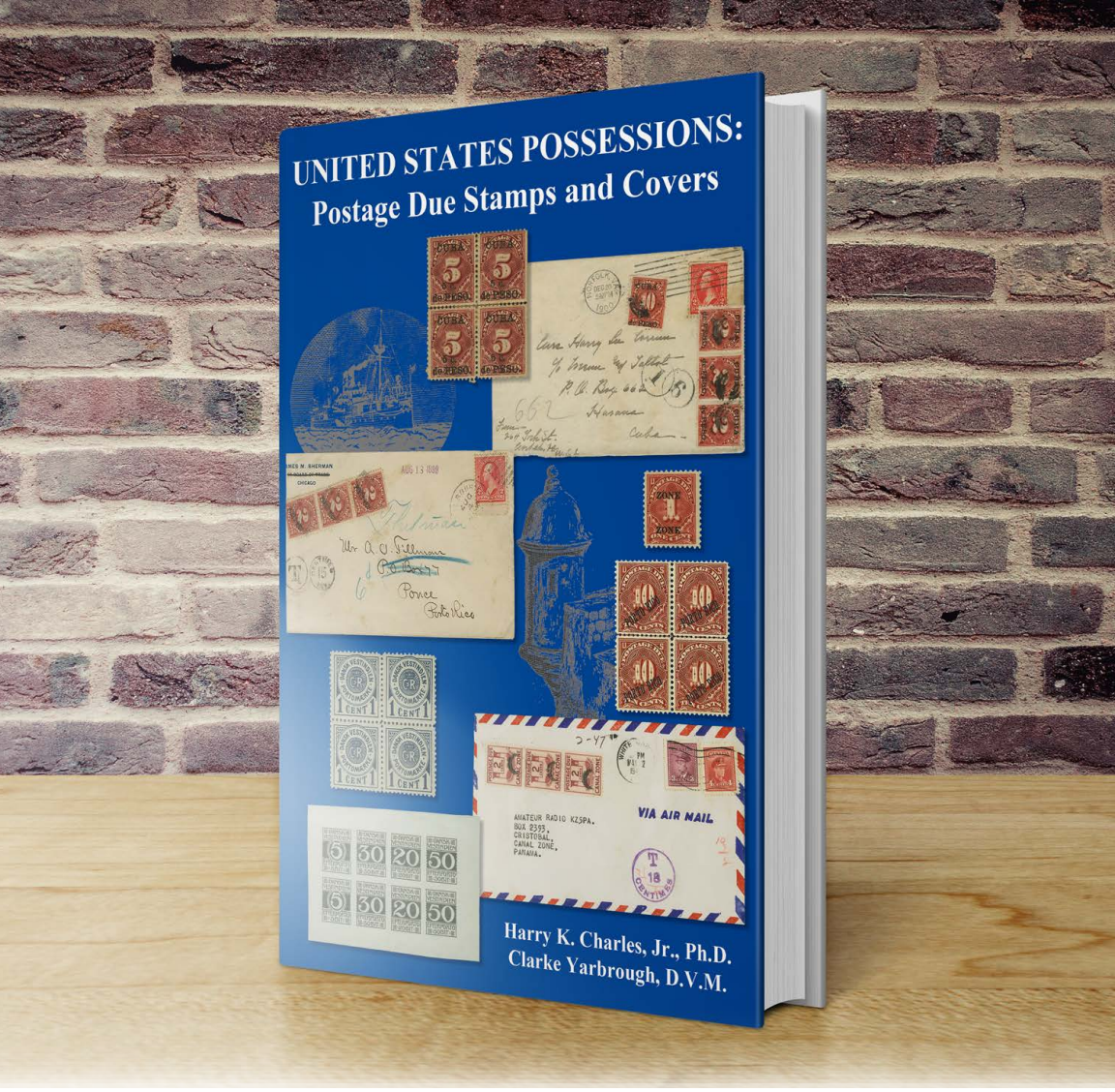

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