



# The United States SPECIALIST

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

WHOLE NUMBER 1152



## \$100, \$500, and \$1000 “Portrait” Revenue Stamps of the Spanish-American War Tax Era

— plus —



**Great  
Americans:  
Variations  
on Domestic  
Letter Rates**

— and —

FDR and the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp,  
The Monthly Random Booklet: BK191 Comedians,  
Government Coil Stamp Supply and Demand, Part III, & more.



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# The United States SPECIALIST

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American Philatelic Society Affiliate No. 150

- 51 Recent Winners of USSS Medals**
- 53 US \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 “Portrait” Revenue Stamps of the Spanish-American War Tax Era, 1898–1902**  
*by Michael Mahler*
- 62 Government Coil Stamp Supply and Demand: BEP Fiscal Years 1908 through 1925 Part III: FY 1916: Low-Demand Coils Transition from Flat-Plate to Rotary Press Printing & FY 1917–1925: Full Rotary Coil Stamp Production**  
*by Nancy Robinson, PhD, and James Robinson*
- 72 Vintage Photo of the Month**  
*by Rodney A. Juell*
- 74 The Monthly Random Booklet: BK191 Comedians**  
*by Dieter R. Kohler, PhD*
- 81 Great Americans Issue Part XXI—Variations on Domestic Letter Rates**  
*by Jay Stotts*
- 86 FDR and the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp**  
*by Paul M. Holland*
- 95 Report of the Executive Secretary**  
*by Robert Rufe*
- 96 Classified Advertising**
- 96 Index of Advertisers**



The Plate Number Report will return soon when there are new issues to report.

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## Recent Winners of USSS Medals

United States Stamp Society medal winners that have been reported from recent shows:

### Statue of Freedom Awards (WSP Shows)

Winner	Show	Exhibit
Vernon Morris Jr.	Minnesota S.E. (MN)	Evolution & Impact of Blood's Local Post 1842 to 1862
Mark Schwartz	GASS (IL)	The New York Postmaster Provisional
Louis Caprario	Balpex (MD)	Pre-Prohibition United States Beer Stamps 1866–1919
Louis Caprario	Nojex (NJ)	Pre-Prohibition United States Beer Stamps 1866–1919
Lester C. Lamphear III	Chicagopex (IL)	U.S. Departmentals, 1873–1884
Daniel Ryterband	Florex (FL)	The U.S. 1847 Issue: America's First Stamps

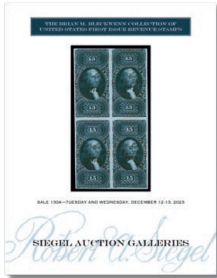
### President's Awards (Local and Regional Shows)

Winner	Show	Exhibit
Chuck Fisher	Scopex (PA)	Barrel of Beer—U.S. Beer Stamps
Robert Thompson	Greater Houston S.S. (TX)	25¢ Honeybee—From Design to Postal Usage
Scott A. Pendleton	Cuy-Lorpex (OH)	Special Delivery & Registry Services During the 2nd Bureau Period
Edward Arias	AAPEX (MI)	Remember the Maine: Revenue Stamps of the Spanish-American War (1898-1902)

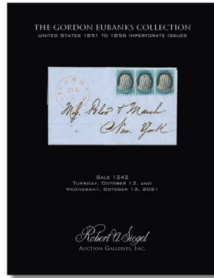
**Show Awards Chairs, please note:** The usss Gold Statue of Freedom Medal is sent automatically to all APS World Series of Philately shows. The usss Silver President's Award medal is available upon request to all local and regional shows.

For more information, to request an award or if you have won a usss award and have not seen it listed in *The United States Specialist*, please write to Denise Stotts, P.O. Box 690042, Houston, TX 77269-0042, or e-mail stottsjd@swbell.net. (Some shows fail to send in the follow up report.)

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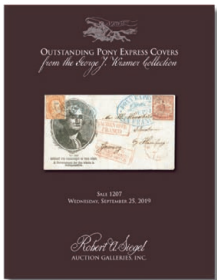
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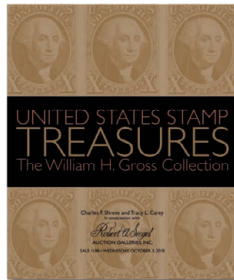
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## US \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 “Portrait” Revenue Stamps of the Spanish-American War Tax Era, 1898–1902

by Michael Mahler  
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Figure 1. The 1899 \$100, \$500 and \$1,000 “Portrait” issues.

This article introduces the high-value stamps of the US Spanish-American War tax era, 1898–1902, the so-called “Portrait” issues:

- The \$100 depicts John Marshall, the fourth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
- The \$500 shows Alexander Hamilton, a Founding Father and the first Secretary of the Treasury.
- The \$1,000 portrays James Madison, the fourth President of the United States.

As a security measure against counterfeiting, they were individually numbered. This certainly would have facilitated record keeping, but to my knowledge, no information has been published about the issued ranges or even the totals sold. The venerable *Boston Revenue Book*, which might have been expected to provide such data, in fact makes no mention of these stamps; it went to press circa January 1899, some six months before they were first delivered.

A close look reveals the inscription “Series of 1898” on each. The Roman numerals C, D (×3), and M, respectively, also appear; I leave it to readers to locate them! As described by Elliott Perry (under the pseudonym Christopher West) in *The Revenue Stamps of the United States* (1918),

These three high values were not issued in sheets, but came imperforate in small books, each page consisting of a vertical strip of four stamps with a ruled stub at the left of each stamp. The stub bore the same serial control number as was over-printed on the panel prepared for this purpose on the stamp to which it was attached, and as each stamp was cut from the book the record of its sale was made on its stub. These stamps therefore can be collected as singles or as vertical pairs, or vertical strips of three or four, but are not obtainable and never have been obtainable in blocks or horizontal pairs or strips. It is stated that each book contained four \$1,000 stamps, (one page), eight \$500 stamps, (two pages), and forty \$100 stamps, (ten pages), making thirteen pages of 52 stamps, face value \$12,000 in all.

Such a book would have been a sight to behold. Interested readers can see surviving strips of four via the Power Search function of the Robert A. Siegel & Co. website. No shrinking violet, Perry included his opinion of the designs:

The oval portrait medallions measure only  $13\frac{1}{2} \times 16\frac{1}{2}$  mm and the portraits are rather small for such large stamps. On the \$100 the medallion is placed too high, on the \$500 it isn't high enough and of the three the \$1,000 is probably the most pleasing and effective. On this denomination the portrait appears larger and is more nearly in the center of the stamp.

I daresay not one in a hundred observers would have thought to make such judgments, let alone commit them to print, but Perry was notoriously sure of himself. For me, it is the \$1,000 that is unbalanced, and the \$100 the most attractive; readers, what say you?

Not yet mentioned is that the stamps were ungummed. Table 1 lists the current catalog values. As usual for revenues, they are considerably lower than for postage items of comparable rarity; with the exception of \$100 used singles, everything listed is rare.

<b>R179 \$100 yellow brown &amp; black</b>	500.00	40.00
Cut cancel		22.50
Vertical strip of 4	—	190.00
Vertical strip of 4, cut cancel		95.00
<b>R180 \$500 carmine lake &amp; black</b>	2,500.00	1,000.00
Cut cancel		350.00
Vertical strip of 4	—	3,500.00
Vertical strip of 4, cut cancel		1,500.00
<b>R181 \$1000 green &amp; black</b>	1,750.00	350.00
Cut cancel		150.00
Vertical strip of 4	—	1,650.00
Vertical strip of 4, cut cancel		600.00

*Table 1. Scott Catalog values.*

### Fiscal History Rarities

Any example of the 1898 Portraits on document is a first-class rarity. Nearly all are found on stock certificates, which thankfully furnish the most attractive settings; the others are on high-value deeds or mortgages. Just three uses of the \$1,000 have been recorded, two on stock certificates; for the \$500, just six, four on stock certificates; and



Figure 2. 1901 stock certificate with \$290.50 tax upon issue, including two \$100 Portraits, and an additional \$116.20 upon transfer.



Figure 3. 1902 stock certificate with \$513.75 tax upon issue, including \$500 Portrait, and an additional \$205.50 upon transfer, including \$100 Portrait pair.



for the \$100, fewer than fifteen, ten on stocks. Presumably, a higher proportion than usual of these beauties was removed from documents by early collectors.

### \$100 Portrait Use

Figure 2 shows a stock certificate of the Detroit and Port Huron Shore Line Railway Co., February 16, 1901, serial number 10 to a trustee for 5,810 shares of \$100 par value. At 5¢ per \$100 or fraction thereof, \$290.50 stamp tax was due, paid by two \$100 Portrait plus \$50, \$10 ( $\times 4$ ), and 50¢. The stamps are canceled by "N.J. REC. & TRUST CO./EAST ORANGE N.J." datestamps and by three-row cut cancels. The reverse records transfer of all shares on September 11, 1901, this was taxed at 2¢ per \$100 or fraction, thus \$116.20, paid by \$50 ( $\times 2$ ), \$10, \$5 and \$1, plus 10¢ pair.

At this point, some terminology is in order. The cents-value stamps are the "Battleships," after the ship they depict, generally believed to commemorate the USS *Maine*, which exploded and sank in the Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. The belief that this was caused by a mine triggered the declaration of war by the U.S. against Spain on April 25, but subsequent investigation proved that an internal fire had led to the explosion of its six-inch shell magazine. The \$1 through \$50 stamps are the "Commerce" issues, after the allegorical figure depicted. To combat washing of cancels and re-use, in 1900, these were reissued in a pale gray acid-soluble ink, with numeral overprints. The \$50 gray is of comparable rarity to the \$1,000 Portrait, cataloging \$575 used, \$140 with cut cancel; the examples here are uncut.

### \$500 Portrait Uses

Figure 3 shows a certificate of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Co., May 6, 1902, for 20,550 shares of \$100 par, with original issue tax of \$513.75 paid on reverse at right by \$500 Portrait, \$10, \$2, \$1 and 25¢ ( $\times 3$ ). The transfer tax of \$205.50 was paid by two \$100 Portraits, \$5, and 50¢. The stamps paying the original issue tax bear a double-ring "C. O. & G. R. R. Co." circular datestamp cancel of May 6, 1902. Note that they had already been struck with "CANCELED" perforated initials before affixing; those stamps would certainly not be reused! To a fiscal historian, this heavy cancellation scarcely detracts. Most importantly, it virtually guaranteed that the stamps would not be removed by collectors. And more fundamentally, fiscal history is the study of stamps *as they were used*, and this is certainly an interesting example of that. The stamps paying the transfer tax appear to also be dated May 6, 1902, hand canceled by "W.(atonga) C.(onstruction) Co." with cut cancels for good measure.

Figure 4 shows a certificate of the Homestake Mining Co., August 18, 1899, for 18,310 shares of \$100, with original issue tax of \$915.50 paid on reverse by \$500 Portrait, \$100 Portrait ( $\times 4$ ), \$10, \$5 and 50¢. They are canceled by "L. & Co. New York." circular datestamps of December 7, 1899, nearly four months after issue. The Portraits are uncut but have faults resulting from folding the certificate.

### \$1,000 Portrait

Figure 5 shows another certificate of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Co., August 1, 1901, for 40,000 shares, with original issue tax of \$1,000 paid on reverse at right by \$1,000 Portrait, uncut, initialed "C. O. & G. R. R. Co." with matching date.





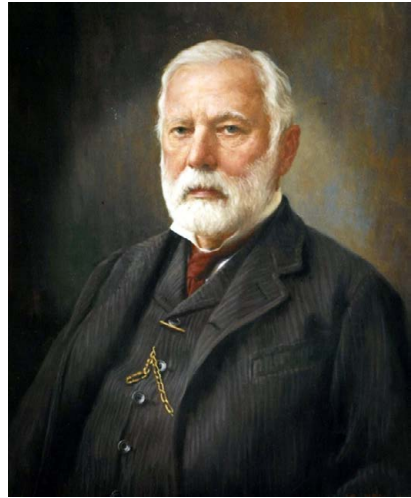
Figure 5. 1901 stock certificate with \$1,000 tax upon issue, paid on reverse by \$1,000 Portrait.

For more certificates bearing the Portrait issues, readers are encouraged to search the excellent website *1898 Revenues* devoted to those issues.

### **A Bonus: J. B. Haggin Signature**

James Ben Ali Haggin (Figure 6), to whom the Homestake Mining Co. certificate shown in Figure 4 was issued and who signed its reverse, was one of the most influential and best-known Americans of his day. Per an extensive online biography,

A letter addressed to J. B. Haggin, America, provided sufficient information to be delivered immediately to his New York office. . . In 1907, it was reported that Haggin was the third richest man in America. His net worth was estimated at between \$300,000,000 and \$1,000,000,000. John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie were ranked first and second. A more conservative estimate made after his death pegged his net worth at \$50,000,000.



*Figure 6. J. B. Haggin circa 1900.*

Haggin's wealth was amassed as a mostly behind-the-scenes collaborator with three other Western titans, Lloyd Tevis, his law partner and brother-in-law, and mining legends George Hearst and Marcus Daly. The closest was Tevis, who famously claimed to "think five times faster than any man in San Francisco," and backed it up with a brilliant hostile takeover of Wells Fargo & Co. in 1872, assuming its presidency and holding it for two decades (for most of which he brought along Haggin as vice president). They maintained a tight partnership for 50 years. With Hearst, they shared in the bounty of the Homestake, the world's most productive gold mine; and with Hearst and Daly, that from the world's richest copper mine, the Anaconda in Butte, Montana.

What makes Haggin's story unique and compelling is that he parlayed this success into a parallel career as "far and away the most successful as well as the most colorful [thoroughbred] breeder and racing man of his day." In 1862 he and Tevis had acquired the Rancho del Paso, a vast Mexican grant of 44,371 acres north of Sacramento, which they developed into one of the larger cattle and sheep ranches in the state. In 1873, bit by the racing bug, Haggin converted it into what would become the world's largest thoroughbred stable and breeding farm. Racing success followed, first impressively in California, then in the East via a stable in New York, with victories in 1885 in the Belmont Stakes and Withers Stakes, and the following year in the Kentucky Derby and St. Louis Derby. In 1892 117 Haggin-bred horses won some 500 races, an astonishing total for the era. In 1898 he purchased the historic Elmendorf thoroughbred farm in his native Kentucky and relocated his flagship operations there:

In 1903, it was reported that Haggin had 562 broodmares and more than 1,000 total horses at Elmendorf. . . The *New York Times* said Haggin “owned three times as many thoroughbreds as any man in the world. In 1904, when about 7,000 broodmares were registered with The Jockey Club, which owns the official stud book, the registrations showed that 1,500 of the 7,000 were owned by James B. Haggin. At that time he owned in addition some 60 stallions, 500 yearlings, and 500 other horses in training at various tracks. He maintained four private racing stables, while his colors flew over every track.” . . . He bred six horses that won races in what would later become known as the Triple Crown series: Preakness Stakes winners Old England (1902), Cairngorm (1905), and Rhine Maiden (1915); Belmont Stakes winners Comanche (1890) and champion Africander (1903); and Kentucky Derby winner Stone Street (1908).

It was this parallel career, rather than the financial acumen that bankrolled it, that made Haggin so well known in his day. Today, he is memorialized by:

- Mount Haggin (elevation 10,607), in the Anaconda Range, Montana
- James B. Haggin Memorial Hospital, Harrodsburg, Kentucky
- The locomotive “J. B. Haggin,” the first used at the Homestake mine, in service 1879–1901, beautifully restored and on permanent display in the Adams Museum, Deadwood, South Dakota.
- The Ben Ali Stakes, an annual race for four-year-olds and up, Keeneland race course, Lexington, Kentucky
- Haggin Museum, Stockton, California, created to house the family’s extensive art collection, named after his son, Louis Terah Haggin.

#### References

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Coil Stamps

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

## Part III: FY 1916: Low-Demand Coils Transition from Flat-Plate to Rotary Press Printing & FY 1917–1925: Full Rotary Coil Stamp Production

by Nancy Robinson, PhD, and James Robinson

USSS # 12386 (James Robinson) | ✉ jsr.new2019@gmail.com

### FY 1916: Completing the Transition to Rotary Press Coil Production

Part II ended with the BEP poised to eliminate the inefficient flat-plate paste-up method of coil production in favor of the modern rotary press solution. FY 1916 (July 1, 1915–June 30, 1916) was the pivotal year in which this transformation was completed. Figure 1 shows the Rotary Coil Press Map for FY 1916.<sup>1</sup> With three Stickney presses running the entire year, the Press Map has many more press runs graphed (51) compared to that in FY 1915 (18, Part II Figure 2). The most frequent printings are 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils (color-coded red and green, respectively). The two high-demand coil denominations also make up the majority of the coil stamps delivered.

The first *new* rotary coil type printed in this fiscal year is the 2¢ end-coil in September 1915. The 1¢ end-coil is added in November, followed by the 3¢ side-coil in January of 1916, the 4¢ side-coil in mid-February, and finally the 5¢ side-coil at the end of February 1916. Note that the *to press* periods are much shorter for the lower-demand stamps as compared to the highest-demand 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils. The 1¢ and 2¢ end-coils are secondary in the overall ranking, in higher demand than the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ side-coils. Table 1 collates the *at press* days (calendar days) and workdays *on press* (*at press* days minus Sundays, minus “waiting for an open-press” days, minus holidays = workdays *on press*). Altogether, the

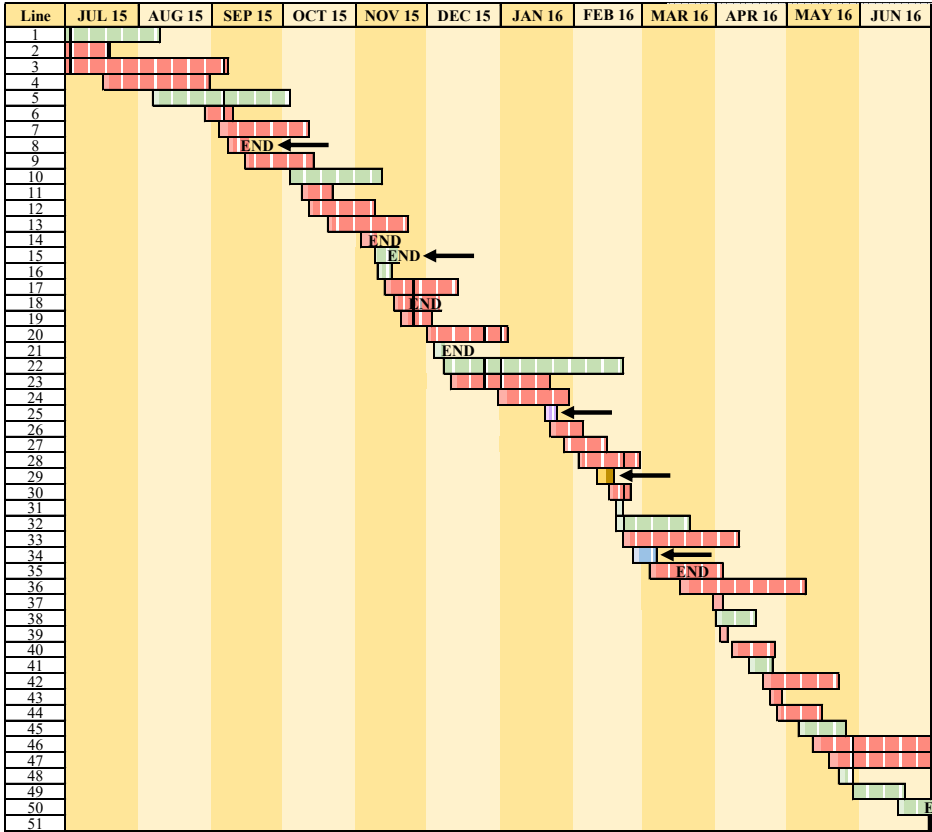


Figure 1. FY 1916 Rotary Coil Press Map. The black arrows point to the introduction of the low-demand coil stamps. The bar color identifies the stamp value: green = 1¢, red = 2¢, purple = 3¢, brownish orange = 4¢, and blue = 5¢. End-coils are so labeled in the figure. Other color codes: lighter shading depicts the wait time for an open press; white indicates Sundays or a workday on which the press was idle; and black indicates holidays.

lower-demand products only accounted for 76 of the total 921 workdays available for the three rotary presses, or 8% of the available printing days in FY 1916 (307 annual workdays; 1916 is a leap year) × three presses = 921). Of the 8% fraction, only 1% was devoted to printing the lowest-demand coil stamps (3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ side-coils).

For the low-demand side-coils, the breakdown of the total stamps delivered in flat-plate material versus rotary-printed material can easily be calculated. The method uses the same equations as presented in Part II for calculating the distribution for the 1¢ and 2¢ rotary side-coils versus flat-plate end- and side-coils. Table 2

Format	Denomination	Days At Press	Workdays On Press
End	1¢	29	20
	2¢	67	45
	3¢	5	2
Side	4¢	7	3
	5¢	10	6

Table 1. Days at press and workdays on press for the low-demand coils in FY 1916.

provides a summary of the calculated results and the corrected reallocated values (actual) for the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ side-coils.

Considering that the first printings of these stamps did not start until January of 1916 (second half of FY 1916) and only extended to the beginning of March, the distribution of flat-plate to rotary printed stamps seems reasonable. The rotary stamps delivered accounted for 51.3%, 48.2%, and 37.5% of the total coil stamps delivered for the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ coils, respectively.

Value	BEP Report Values <sup>2</sup>		Solution	Sheets		Stamps	
	Sheets	Stamps		100-Subject Flat-Plate	170-Subject Rotary Side	Flat-Plate	Rotary Side-Coil
3¢	17,319	2,196,000	Calculated	10,689.0	6,630.0	1,068,900	1,127,100
			<b>Actual</b>	<b>10690.0</b>	<b>6629.4</b>	<b>1,069,000</b>	<b>1,127,000</b>
4¢	38,956	4,860,000	Calculated	25,178.9	13,777.1	2,517,886	2,342,114
			<b>Actual</b>	<b>25180.0</b>	<b>13776.5</b>	<b>2,518,000</b>	<b>2,342,000</b>
5¢	12,572	1,486,500	Calculated	9,296.3	3,275.7	929,629	556,871
			<b>Actual</b>	<b>9,295.0</b>	<b>3,276.5</b>	<b>929,500</b>	<b>557,000</b>

*Table 2. 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1916 printed using flat and rotary plates.*

An exact calculation to determine the number of flat-plate, rotary side-coil, and rotary end-coil stamps for the 1¢ and 2¢ denominations delivered in FY 1916 is not possible. The reason is that the BEP Director's report does not provide enough information. Mathematically, the limitation is defined as two equations trying to solve for three unknowns. The BEP Report numbers are the bulk aggregate of 100-subject flat-plate plus 150-subject rotary end-coil plus 170-subject rotary side-coil sheets and stamps. Additional information would be required to algebraically calculate the sheets and stamps of the three types delivered.

However, it is possible to formulate key assumptions and then estimate, based on those assumptions, the various quantities of flat plate and rotary plate products delivered. The assumptions are:

**Assumption #1.** All of the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils stamps delivered in FY 1916 were printed on the rotary press. That is, no 1¢ or 2¢ flat-plate side-coils were delivered after FY 1915 (June 30, 1915). This assumption is based on the evidence that the transition to the rotary press for the high-demand coil products, the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils, started in FY 1915 on a large scale.

Beginning rotary production of all lower-demand coils in FY 1916 (1¢ and 2¢ end-coils and the 3¢, 4¢, and 5¢ side-coils) only makes sense if the BEP no longer needed to produce flat-plate pasted-up coils for the highest-volume products. Following efficient manufacturing practices, the highest-output and most efficient production methods should have been applied to the highest-demand products. If and when a full transition for the high-demand products was achieved, a transition for lower-demand products could follow.

In fact, the press map illustrates that there were three rotary presses printing the 1¢ and 2¢ side-coils by the end of FY 1915. Three presses were more than required to print the entire 1¢ and 2¢ side-coil demand requirements in FY 1916. With spare capacity, the low-demand transitions began.

**Assumption #2.** The low-demand transition for all formats and denominations was completed during FY 1916, and no flat-plate printed coils were delivered again after FY 1916. Press maps and delivered quantities suggest that annual rotary press production capacity was adequate to allow the complete changeover. Wasting labor using a less effective production method was no longer viable. The cost savings were so large that even if production lagged, working overtime or starting a second shift printing stamps on the rotary press was more cost-effective than producing coils by the old method.

This assumption is further supported by the fact that rotary 1¢ and 2¢ end-coils were issued by December 1915. Afterward, the remaining supply of flat-plate end-coil sheets (intended only for producing paste-up coils) was issued instead as sheet stamps (Scott #424 and 425).<sup>3</sup> In summary, no additional flat-plate end-coils were subsequently supplied, once rotary end-coils were in circulation.

**Assumption #3.** The relative ratio of side-coil to end-coil stamps delivered in FY 1916 is similar to that which can be calculated for FY 1917. By FY 1917, all coil production was from rotary-printed material with distinctly sized sheets (150-subject and 170-subject). Based upon the BEP Director's numbers, the *two equations with two unknowns methodology* allows calculation of the division between end-coil and side-coil stamps to within one coil of 500 stamps. (Note: the calculation for determining rotary end- and side-coil quantities will be fully explained in Part IV of this series)

An 8% upper estimate for the end-coils distributed during FY 1914 through 1915 was established earlier (Part II of this series). A comparison of FY 1916 to the rotary ratio for FY 1917 was used because FY 1917 was the first year that production of coils using flat plate sheets did not occur (Assumption # 2). The result of the FY 1917 calculation was that side-coils represented 94% of the 1¢ and 2¢ coil stamps delivered.

The three assumptions outlined above permit an estimate of the number of rotary side-coil stamps delivered in FY 1916 as follows:

- Starting with the total number of stamps delivered for the 1¢ and 2¢ coils from the BEP annual report, and
- Assuming 94% were rotary side-coils (comparable to FY 1917 fraction) and all of the side-coils produced were rotary printed (Assumption #1), the estimated numbers of side-coil stamps delivered are:
  - 1¢—251,333,910 ( $267,376,500 \times 0.94$ )
  - 2¢—765,687,340 ( $814,561,000 \times 0.94$ )

Although these stamp estimates do not equate exactly to full 500-stamp units, further refinement is not warranted because these are relative *estimates* of the FY 1916 format separations.

The number of side-coil sheets is obtained by dividing the stamp totals by 170. For the 1¢ side-coil the estimate is 1,478,434.8 sheets, and for the 2¢ side-coil it is 4,504,043.2 sheets.

Subtracting the estimated quantities of side-coil stamps and sheets from the aggregate number of stamps and sheets delivered for all 1¢ and 2¢ coils yields the estimated

number of stamps and sheets for the end-coils. Note that in FY 1916, the sheet quantity for end-coils consists of both flat-plate 100-subject sheets and rotary plate 150-subject sheets. Again, using the *two equations with two unknowns methodology*, the results shown in Table 3 were obtained. The rotary end-coils are estimated to represent 41% and 77% of the total end-coils delivered in FY 1916 for the 1¢ and 2¢ values, respectively.

FY	Value	Estimate Values for All End-Coils		Calculated Estimate Sheets		Calculated Estimate Stamps	
		Sheets	Stamps	Flat-Plate	Rotary Plate	Flat-Plate	Rotary Plate
1916	1¢	138,477.2	16,042,590	94,579.9	43,897.3	9,457,991	6,584,599
	2¢	363,733.8	48,873,660	113,728.3	250,005.6	11,372,827	37,500,833

**Table 3. Estimated 1¢ and 2¢ coil stamps delivered in FY 1916 by format type.**

In summary, the results in Table 3 are estimates based on the three assumptions detailed above. The purpose of the calculations is to provide an approximation of FY 1916 coil deliveries, which, with the information currently known, cannot be precisely calculated.

Table 4 collates the coil delivery information for the flat-plate to rotary-press transition years in one convenient location.

FY	Value	Category	Flat-Plate	Rotary Side	Rotary End	Total
1915*	1¢	Stamps	208,162,500	34,582,000	0	242,744,500
		%	85.8	14.2		
	2¢	Stamps	374,664,000	280,764,000	0	655,428,000
		%	57.2	42.8		
	3¢	Stamps	2,946,000	0	Not Applicable	2,946,000
		%	100			
	4¢	Stamps	3,761,500	0	Not Applicable	3,761,500
		%	100			
	5¢	Stamps	1,628,000	0	Not Applicable	1,628,000
		%	100			
1916	1¢	Est Stamps	9,457,991	251,333,910	6,584,599	267,376,500
		Est %	3.5	94	2.5	
	2¢	Est Stamps	11,372,827	765,687,340	37,500,833	814,561,000
		Est %	1.4	94	4.6	
	3¢	Stamps	1,069,000	1,127,000	Not Applicable	2,196,000
		%	48.7	51.3		
	4¢	Stamps	2,518,000	2,342,000	Not Applicable	4,860,000
		%	51.8	48.2		
	5¢	Stamps	929,500	557,000	Not Applicable	1,486,500
		%	62.5	37.5		

\*1¢ and 2¢ Stamp quantities were calculated in Part II of this series; 3¢–5¢ stamp quantities were taken from the BEP Director's annual report for FY 1915.

**Table 4. Collated delivery data: transition from the flat-plate to rotary-press coils.**

### FY 1917–FY 1925: Coil Making Equipment is Added to Keep up with Demand

For the next nine fiscal years, the demand for coils continued to increase. Figure 2 presents the year-over-year increase in coil stamps delivered for the period FY 1911 through 1925. The fiscal years during which major changes were made to the coil stamp production process are annotated in this figure. Parts I and II of this series discussed FY 1910 through FY 1915 and the changes made in the coil-making process. After the transition of all coil stamps to the rotary press in FY 1916, the authors found no record of significant changes in the production process until FY 1920. To increase production of coils, the BEP started to add more equipment.

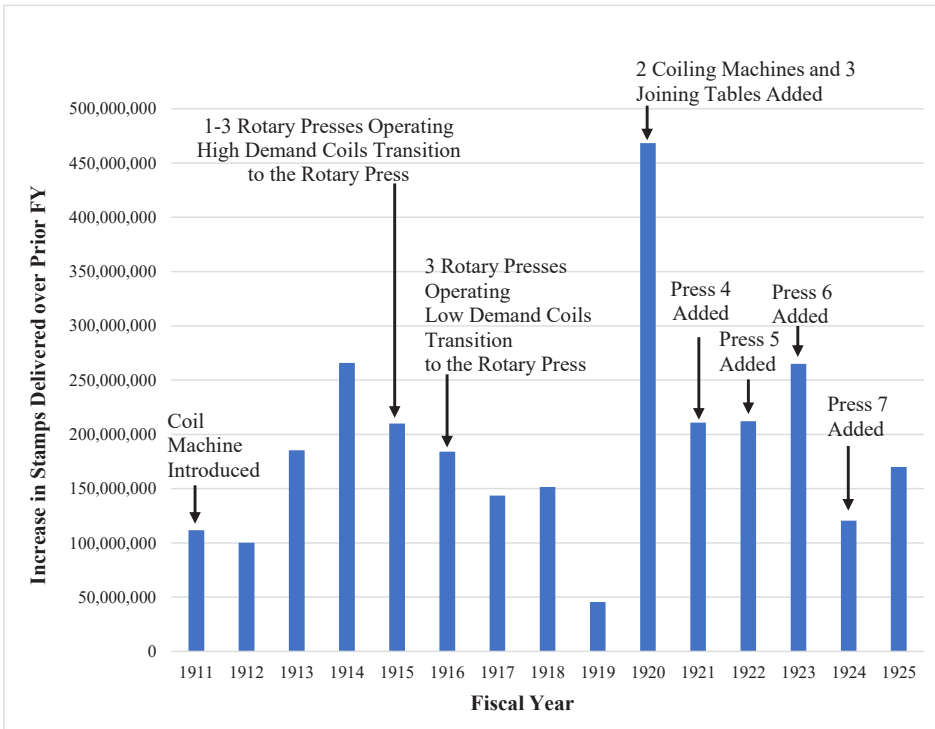


Figure 2. Year-over-year increases in the number of coil stamps delivered to post offices.

In the remaining Part III sections, the addition of coil-making equipment and its impact on supply are explored, starting in FY 1919. During that year, the number of coils produced was less than the number delivered, according to the BEP Director’s annual report.

#### FY 1919: Finished Coils are Delivered from the Stamp Vault

In FY 1919, production of coils merited a mention in the main body of the BEP Director’s annual report,<sup>4</sup> (page 20, emphasis added):

## STAMP BOOK AND COIL DIVISION

This division *made* 30,625,020 postage-stamp books, **2,204,724 postage-stamp coils** and ...”

The next year, in FY 1920 (page 13, emphasis added), he writes:

## STAMP BOOK AND COIL DIVISION

This division *made* 29,635,500 postage-stamp books, **3,352,276 postage-stamp coils** and ...

Two new coiling machines and three joining tables were added to the equipment.

Table 5 presents the quantity of coils delivered to the Post Office Department, the number of coils made according to the BEP Director, and the difference between these two quantities for FY 1919 and 1920. The only way to have delivered the total number of coils stated for FY 1919 was for the difference between the coils produced and those delivered to have been supplied from the stamp vault. Thus, in FY 1919, 12% of the coils delivered were supplied by this means. The next year in FY 1920, production of coils was slightly higher than the number delivered (0.6%), and 21,548 coils were added to the stamp vault by the end of this fiscal year.

FY	BEP Report Values		Difference between Coils Produced and Coils Delivered
	Coils Delivered	Coils Produced	
1919	2,517,474	2,204,724	-312,750
1920	3,330,728	3,352,276	21,548

*Table 5. The difference between the numbers of coils delivered and the numbers produced, FY 1919 and 1920.*

It appears that in the early years of rotary coil production FY 1915–1918, with three presses online by the end of FY 1915, the coil production capacity was somewhat greater than the demand, allowing a supply of material to be maintained in the BEP stamp vault. However, in FY 1919, coil production was outpaced by demand. The obvious question is, “What changed in FY 1920 to allow coil production to not only meet the demand but also to establish a small increase in supply?”

### **Coil Printing and Finishing are Separate Production Phases**

Press mapping<sup>5</sup> demonstrates that from FY 1915 through FY 1920, there were only three rotary coil presses operating. The continued increases in stamps delivered in 1919 and 1920, printed by the same three presses, required periods of overtime or shiftwork by the press crews. Then, in the FY 1920 BEP Director’s report, he mentions that “two new coiling machines and three joining tables” had been added to the Book and Coil Division (page 13, see Figure 2). It is unknown how many coiling machines and joining tables were in place prior to the acquisition. However, the fact that the new coil-making

equipment needed in FY 1920 did not include a new press indicates that the output from the three presses was adjusted to meet the demand.

To restate the idea, even if added man-hours were applied to coil assembly, coil assembly *equipment* was inadequate. The production bottleneck in FY 1920 was in converting the printed rolls into coils. By adding essential equipment, the production of finished coils in the Book and Coil Division increased by 52% in FY 1920 compared to FY 1919 (Table 5).

It is possible that the three rotary coil presses in continuous operation in both FY 1919 and 1920 printed approximately the same amount of material, and the unfinished printed web from FY 1919 was stored, awaiting being finished into coils. Coil printing and subsequent manufacturing operations should be viewed as distinct processes. The addition of coiling machines and joining tables in FY 1920, without the need to add a new press in order to supply additional printed roll material to be finished into coils, supports this concept.

In the FY 1919 annual report, under the ink-making division section (page 21), the Director writes, “The employees, with very little overtime on their part, kept the bureau supplied with ink when *three shifts of printers* were working” (italics added). In the same report, referring to the printing division (page 16), he adds, “There was an earnest cooperation on the part of the printing supervisory force, printers, and assistants, and the presses were kept running, some the entire 24 hours of the day, and the work was turned out on time.” Shiftwork/overtime continued into FY 1920. The BEP Director states in his FY 1920 report that sections of the plant, including the Printing Division, were working three shifts, and increases in the “small” midnight shift would be required without the addition of more building space and equipment (pages 4 and 5).

The BEP is a manufacturing facility, a factory, with a large organization of which only a part was the printing of postage stamps. The non-specific shiftwork comments result in questions. Were three shifts being worked by the rotary presses? Possibly. If three shifts were in operation, then the three rotary coil presses would be performing the work of nine presses compared to an organization that only worked one shift. But even if matching shift work was applied to the assembly of coils, the addition of finishing equipment was still necessary in order to match the press outputs.

The year-over-year increase in coil *stamps* delivered in FY 1920 (as opposed to *coils* delivered) was the largest seen in the studied period (FY 1910–1925, see Figure 2). The jump was nearly 470 million stamps (33%) over the 1.43 billion coil stamps delivered in FY 1919.

### **Coil Press Additions: FY 1921–FY 1924**

For the five fiscal years after FY 1920, the demand for coils continued to increase, and the BEP struggled to meet the demand. The BEP Director’s annual report for FY 1921 (pages 5 and 21) dated October 11, 1921 (Q2 FY 1922), notes that the third shift had been discontinued in April upon completion of the Liberty Bond work. However, it was necessary to continue both day and evening shifts *indefinitely*. By that time, a fourth rotary coil press had been added, allowing an immediate 33% annual increase in material printed.

In a letter dated July 18, 1922 (start of FY 1923) the Third Assistant Postmaster General tells the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury:<sup>6</sup>

The demand for coiled stamps is increasing rapidly from year to year, the records of this office showing an increase from 1,234,196,500 stamps issued in this form in fiscal year 1917, to 2,322,196,500 in the fiscal year 1922, and while the production has increased, at no time has the Bureau had surplus stock available from which to fill emergency requisitions. . . . At the present time the filling of coiled stamp orders is not current with other varieties.

In a letter dated only a few days later (July 20, 1922), the Director of the BEP informed the Secretary of the Treasury that, with the present equipment, it was impossible to meet the demand for coils “without certain branches” of the BEP working overtime.<sup>7</sup> He goes on to state that “the Bureau has been running considerably behind in its deliveries of coil stamps.” In this same letter, the Director requests more rotary coil presses. The point is that, as FY 1923 commenced (July 1, 1922), the BEP was unable to keep up with coil demand, and the Director believed that more rotary coil presses were required.

As noted above, a fourth rotary coil press had already been added at the beginning of FY 1921 (Figure 2). The addition of the press was not mentioned in the BEP director’s report. It was only through press mapping that this addition became apparent.<sup>8</sup> Four presses working two shifts are the equivalent of eight presses working one shift. If the BEP had been printing coil stamps on three shifts the previous fiscal year (= nine-press output), the addition of only one more press combined with the loss of a third shift for three presses (= eight-press output) was an 11% decrease in maximum production capability, but it could reduce labor costs. The number of coil stamps supplied increased again in FY 1921 by a little over 200 million stamps.

A fifth rotary coil press was added at the beginning of FY 1922. The FY 1922 report did not mention how many shifts were being worked. However, less than three weeks after the end of that fiscal year the reader is reminded that the BEP Director wrote the letter mentioned above, dated July 20, 1922 (FY 1923), informing the Secretary of the Treasury that, with the present equipment, it was impossible to meet the demand for coils “without certain branches” of the BEP working overtime.

Not surprisingly, a sixth rotary coil press was added in the first quarter of FY 1923, about two months later. A seventh press was added 16–17 months later in February 1924 (FY 1924). The important takeaway from this installation sequence is that the BEP kept adding presses while the year-over-year annual increase in demand does not seem to warrant the additions (Figure 2). This analysis strongly suggests that the BEP was eliminating shift work/overtime costs by adding more equipment, which, as an added bonus, also required fewer supervisory staff necessary to oversee multiple shifts.

Further communications concerning the BEP’s inability to meet coil stamp demand are not mentioned in later annual reports. The periodic addition of presses apparently solved the supply problem. It is assumed that additional joining tables and coiling machines were acquired to process the increased number of printed stamp rolls as a result of adding presses.

\* \* \*

In the final installment of this series (Part IV), the breakdown in side- versus end-coils delivered from FY 1917–FY 1925 is calculated. Using this information, in conjunction with press mapping and plate print history data, the transition of the 2¢ side-coil from the Washington-Franklin Series to the new Fourth Bureau Issue (Series 1922) is explored.

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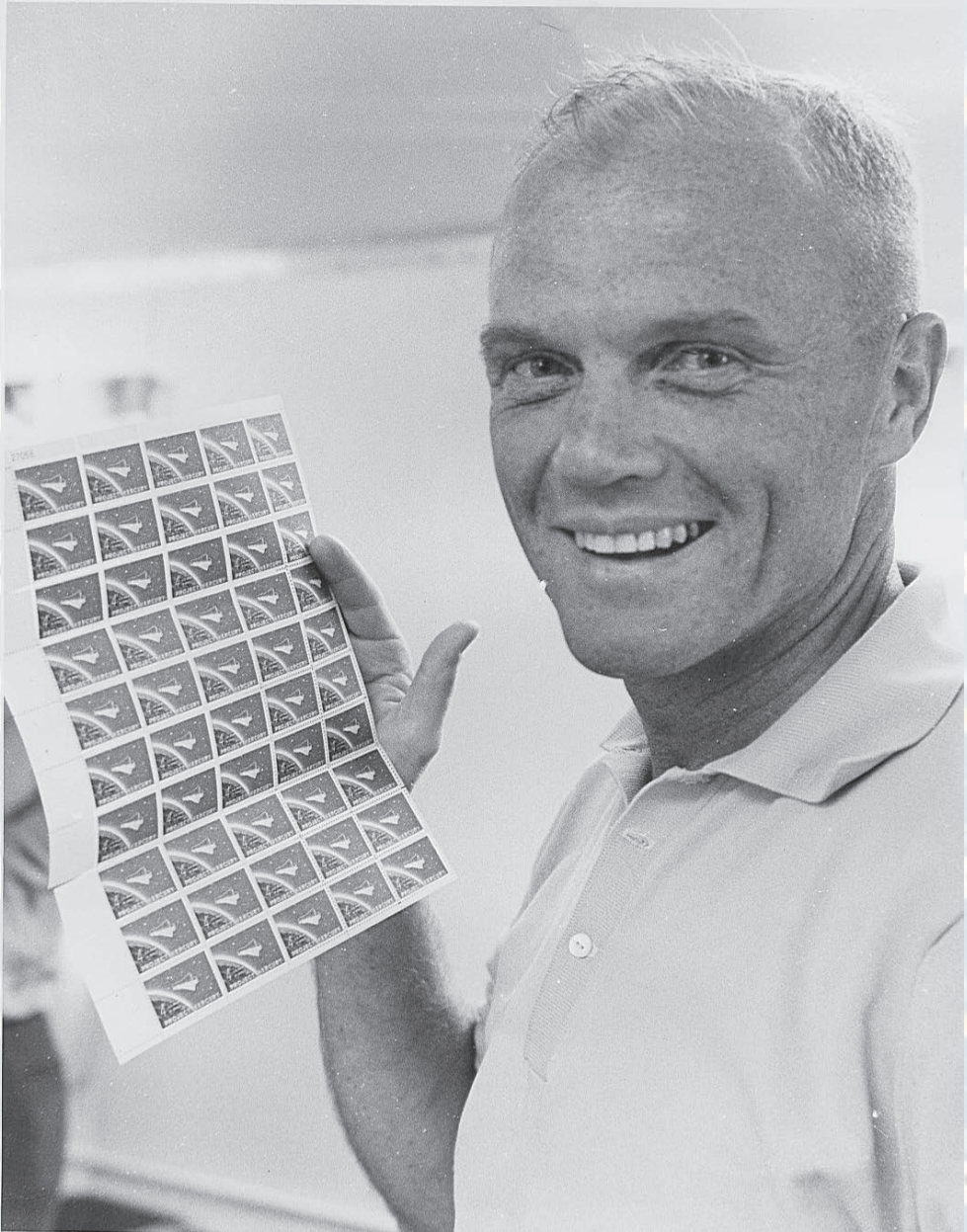
### Vintage Photo of the Month

by **Rodney A. Juell**

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



This month's photo shows NASA astronaut John Glenn holding a pane of the 1962 Project Mercury stamp. The stamp, which celebrated his orbital flight in Friendship 7, was prepared and printed in secret and issued only upon Glenn's safe return to earth. Shown nearby is a first day cover, the time in the postmark set to the time of Glenn's touchdown in the ocean.





From The Booklets and Booklet Panes Committee

# The Monthly Random Booklet: BK191 Comedians

by Dieter R. Kohler, PhD  
USSS #12538

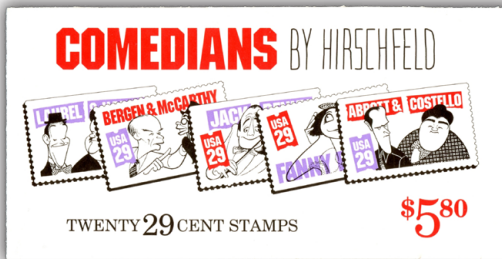


Figure 1. Cover of BK191 and unfolded plate 1 pane.

## Introduction

Sometime in 1981, shortly after he was named stamp design coordinator for the United States Postal Service (USPS), Howard Paine told an interviewer he wanted to do “some adventurous things” with stamps. “I’d like to see some of the great caricaturists design stamps...”<sup>1</sup> In 1987, USPS commissioned Albert Hirschfeld to draw a series of postage stamps commemorating famous American comedians. Al Hirschfeld (1903–2003) was an American caricaturist best known for his black and white portraits of celebrities and Broadway stars. His caricatures usually were drawings of pure line in black ink, for which he used a genuine crow quill. They were a regular feature in the *New York Times* for over 70 years and appeared in many other newspapers and books.

When the booklet with five of his drawings was issued in 1991, several stamp production rules were broken as the USPS allowed him to include his daughter's name, Nina, in his drawings, waiving its own rule forbidding hidden messages in United States stamp designs. Ever since 1945, Hirschfeld had included her name in everything he drew to celebrate her birth. Also, the booklet cover prominently displayed Al Hirschfeld's name. Traditionally, USPS stamp products did not feature the name or signature of the artist.

The reception of the booklet by the public was a mixed bag of reactions. Some wondered who was actually commemorated: was it Al Hirschfeld or the comedians? Also, many considered the comedians' portraits "whimsical" or unflattering for a commemorative stamp issue.

### The Booklet's Peculiarities

Hirschfeld prepared several groups of items as paper sketches and drawings that included Fanny Brice, Fred Allen, Bing Crosby, Jimmy Durante, Bergen & McCarthy, Jack Benny, The Marx Brothers, Laurel & Hardy, Ernie Kovacs, Rosa Ponselé and Mary Pickford.<sup>2</sup> He knew each of the comedians personally.

USPS selected the drawings of Stan Laurel & Oliver Hardy, Edgar Bergen (with Charlie McCarthy), Jack Benny, Fanny Brice and Bud Abbott & Lou Costello to be the five subjects in a booklet pane of 10 (as two strips of 5 designs). The issue was printed on the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's (BEP) "D press," which combined both an intaglio print unit and an offset print unit into a single printer. With intaglio printing (used for the "USA 29¢" value boxes and the plate number on the tab of the pane) which is usually used for fine details, an image is etched or engraved on a metal plate, covered with ink and then pressed into the paper. For offset printing, the image is created on a plate, transferred to a rubber blanket, and then printed onto the paper.

Both cover stock and pane paper do not react to long-wave UV light so they do not contain brighteners.

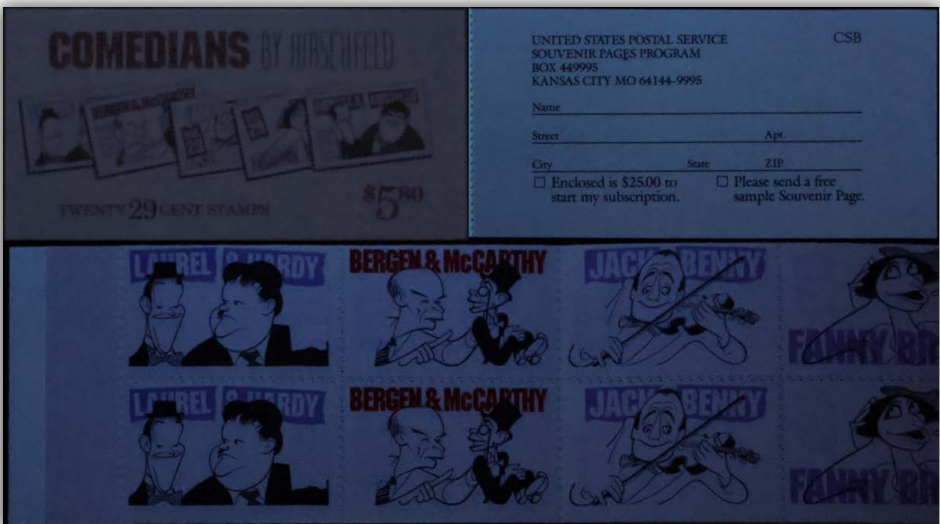


Figure 2. Cover of BK191 and folded plate 1 pane under long-wave UV light.

Figure 2 shows the reaction to long-wave (365nm) UV light. The typical slightly violet/grayish glow of paper and cardboard stock that does not contain any brighteners can be seen (the cover looks the same under short-wave UV). Photographing essentially nothing under UV lighting conditions can be a pain and requires extensive fiddling with camera settings, as will be explained in a future article.

Two plates were used, with unfolded panes made from plate 1. Both panes in a booklet contain the same plate number (no mixed plate numbers in a booklet are known). There are no marks on the tabs apart from a tiny plate number. The panes are folded twice, the same way as the Indian Headdresses booklets.



Figure 3. Locations of the hidden “NINAs”.

### Where’s Waldo—or NINA—when Al Hirschfeld is Involved

Each Comedian stamp design contains the name of Hirschfeld’s daughter Nina, but at least one Nina is rather difficult to detect.

NINA on the Laurel and Hardy stamp is the difficult one; it’s spelled in reverse in Hardy’s hair. Edgar Bergen’s hair spells NINA above the ear. Jack Benny’s violin scroll contains it. Fanny Brice is the easy one, along the “IC” of her name, and Abbott’s vest band shows it reading downwards.

### Varieties—We have them

Printing stamps on a combination press always leads to problems with precisely overlapping the intaglio and the offset parts of the stamps. In the case of the comedians booklets, there often is a small misplacement between the two parts; the engraved parts can be found shifted by a few millimeters at most. The small color shifts show that the offset colors were printed first (with black first), followed by the intaglio colors, and lastly the tagging was applied.

Soon after the booklets appeared on the market, two freaks/errors were found in reasonable quantities. The first freak was ink starvation of the offset violet color, which made the violet comedian’s names almost undetectable. The first error was the total lack of intaglio printing, which led to missing “USA 29¢” boxes on all stamps and no plate number on the tab.

Figure 4 shows, from top to bottom, booklets whose top panes (the bottom pane is normal in all booklets) show:

1. **Ink starved violet offset color.** Ink starvation was gradual, so the amounts of missing ink vary from pane to pane. The offset violet ink may be almost undetectable, but there are no panes recorded with true missing violet ink.



Figure 4. Varieties on booklet panes. The numbered varieties are described in the text.

2. **Missing intaglio printing.** The intaglio section was not engaged, and the web roll passed the section untouched. As the plate number is also printed using the intaglio section, the tab does not contain the number.
3. **A smorgasbord of things that went wrong.** Immediately noticeable is the missing intaglio printing as the example above. Additionally, the pane is misperforated, the horizontal perforation row is too low. The offset print is shifted to the left by 5 mm. At the right edge of the pane we see a full group of vertical electric eye dashes that were used to control horizontal paper position in the printer. This is a very rare error combination which only surfaced recently at auction.<sup>3</sup>
4. **Missing intaglio and offset printing.** Neither section was engaged, and the web roll went through them untouched. However, this pane did go through the printer as it is tagged. There are only a few such panes known; probably around four to five panes exist.

### Reaction Under Short-Wave (254nm) UV Light

Taking photographs using short-wave UV light is not much of a problem. In general, the greenish tagging glow is strong enough for (almost) any camera.



*Figure 5. Two plate 1 panes photographed under short-wave UV light.*

The top of Figure 5 shows an unfolded plate 1 pane which is evenly tagged everywhere. The bottom shows an unprinted plate 1 pane (as the other pane in the booklet is a normal plate 1 pane). The tagging slowly increases from a large untagged area, including the tab and a good part of the first stamps, to full tagging somewhere in the middle of the Laurel & Hardy stamps next to the tab.



*Figure 6. Tab area of the unprinted pane.*

Figure 6 shows the tab area of the blank pane under grazing light. Approximately 30 straight-line impressions, equally spaced, can be detected. This might hint at some kind of gripper mechanism that pulled a new paper web roll into the printer, or at some paper roll alignment mechanism. Together with the print sections not yet engaged and the gradual onset of tagging, this could point to a pane from the start of a new web roll that should obviously have been destroyed as printer's waste.

The top of Figure 7 shows a plate 2 pane with weak offset violet printing. The bottom shows a normal plate 2 pane. On both panes in both booklets, the tab areas are mostly untagged and the tagging edges are rather rugged. Though the onset of tagging is sharp and not gradual as in the unprinted plate 1 pane. Taking into account all the tagging varieties shown, it is feasible that a rubber mat not covering the entire web width was used to transfer the taggant.



Figure 7. Plate 2 panes photographed under short-wave UV light.

All things considered, Table 1 gives us an overview of the possible varieties.

The comedians booklet has never seen any scrutiny in the collector community. This issue has always had an "also ran" label attached to it, maybe influenced by its controversial design choice. Since a comprehensive tally of varieties has yet to be made, there are more empty entries than reported entries in the table. If you happen to own a new variety, the booklet committee would certainly like to hear from you.

Characteristics	Plate 1	Plate 2
Normal booklet pane, untagged tab	reported	reported
Normal booklet pane, fully tagged tab	reported	
Offset violet ink starvation, untagged tab		reported
Offset violet ink starvation, fully tagged tab		
Engraving missing, untagged tab		reported
Engraving missing, fully tagged tab*	reported	
Engraving & Offset missing, untagged tab	reported	
Engraving & Offset missing, fully tagged tab		

\*almost fully tagged (Pane 3 in Figure 4)

**Table 1. Bingo card for BK191 varieties.**

### References

1. *The Washington Post*. April 14, 1994
2. Kelleher LLC sale 663. "Flagship" Series, January 28–30, 2015
3. Kelleher weekly online sale 5301, December 14, 2025

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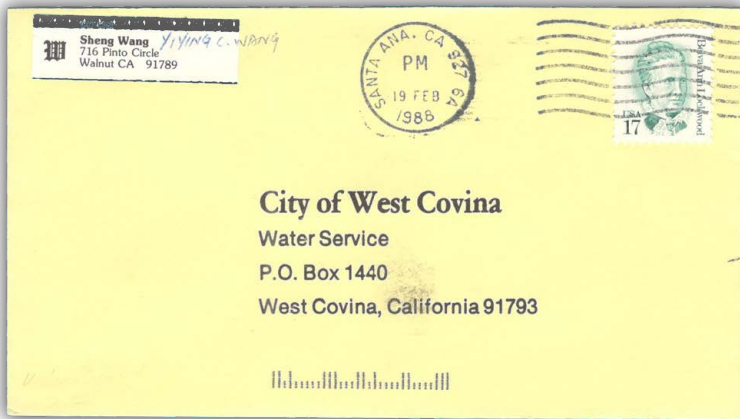


The Great Americans

## Great Americans Issue Part XXI— Variations on Domestic Letter Rates

by Jay Stotts

USSS #10921 | ✉ stottsjd@swbell.net



*Figure 1. A 17¢ Lockwood stamp was used to frank this cover below the prevailing first class rate.*

In the last article in this series, we discussed the US 20-year span of domestic letter rates and the 28 Great Americans Series (GA) stamps that directly paid the domestic letter single, double, triple, and additional ounce weight rates.

Solo uses of these stamps to pay the specific weight rates were a logical place to start, but there are other variations, and that is what we will address in this segment.

### Intentionally Underpaid Letter Rates

Part XI went into detail on the subject of intentionally underpaid domestic letter rates, so we will present a shortened version of that installation here. For a more detailed discussion, readers can revisit Part XI.

A small number of mailers came to realize that placing almost any face value stamp on an envelope was sufficient to get the mailing to the intended addressee. They may not have totally understood how the system worked, but somehow this worked. The answer was that at the inception of the GA Series, all values were tagged with phosphor to activate the cancellers of the United States Postal Service (USPS). The machines searched all eight corners of each envelope, looking for a phosphor-tagged postage stamp. Once

located, that corner with a stamp received a postal cancel, and the mail was sorted and sent on its way. If no human intervened, the letter most likely arrived at its intended destination with whatever postage was originally affixed.

Figure 1 shows an example where a mailer applied a 17¢ Belva Lockwood stamp to pay a utility bill. The mailing was made on February 19, 1988, when the correct letter rate was 22¢. There is no evidence that anyone in the Postal Service attempted to collect any postage due for the short-paid mailing.

The USPS finally acted on January 1, 1991, issuing a policy that all newly printed stamps with face values less than 8¢ would be untagged. This policy didn't completely curtail the practice of underpaying the domestic letter rate, but certainly made it more difficult to use the lowest values in lieu of fully paid postage.

### 2¢ Mary Lyon Postal Scams

From at least 1988 into the mid-1990s, various postal scammers used variations on a similar approach to convince other mailers that the first-class domestic letter rate was “legally” just 2¢. Collectors of GA postal history will occasionally find a cover bearing a single 2¢ Mary Lyon stamp and prominent “First Class Mail” rubber stamp markings during the period.

The fraud stems from a section of a federal law that was eliminated in the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, which converted the United States Post Office Department into the United States Postal Service. An article originally published in the *South Florida Sun Sentinel* in 1988 reported, “The now-defunct regulation said that postage for first-class mail weighing two ounces or less was 2 cents plus the regular rate, which was 6 cents at the time.”

The obsolete regulation was the basis that scammers used to justify mailing first-class letters at 2¢. A scammer would mail several hundred letters to various other high-volume mailers. The contents of the mailing were a letter offering these postal patrons, for a fee typically ranging from \$5 to \$100, the secret of how they too could successfully mail all their letters for just 2¢.

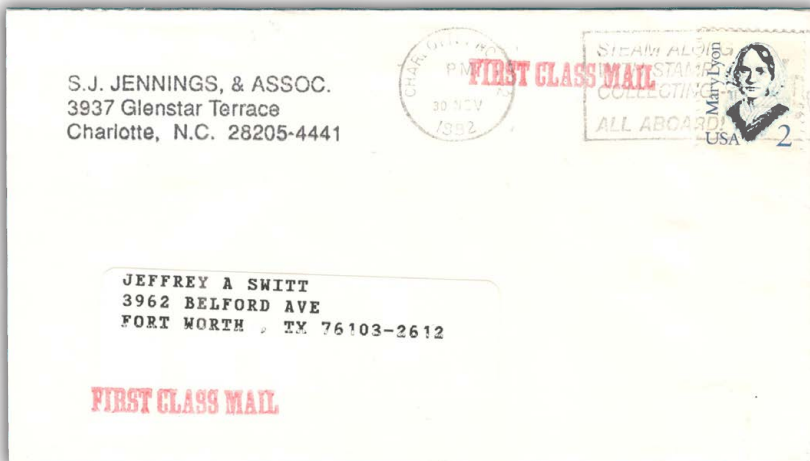


Figure 2. A piece of First Class Mail posted in 1992 using a 2¢ stamp to underpay the first class postage.

Figure 2 illustrates a scam mailing from a “business” in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1992. The enclosed letter offered the addressee the opportunity to purchase “a Special Research Report #101 that explains all the details of how you too can mail all your letters for only 2¢. To receive this report and start your own savings, simply return the order form along with proper payment . . .” They were asking \$19.95 for the report, but just \$14.95 if the order was postmarked by December 7, 1992.

The enclosed letter offered proof of the scheme, as the recipient actually received it, franked with only 2¢. The fraudster was playing a percentage game. Certainly, a percentage of the hundreds of letters he sent would get through unscathed and act as proof that the scam he pitched did work. The 2¢ blue Mary Lyon stamps were chosen because of their color match with the current 25¢ Jack London stamps, hopefully diminishing the chances of a postal employee noticing the face value difference. The mailers added prominent “First Class Mail” markings to the outside of the envelope to further convince the recipients of the truth of the pitch.

I have seen 2¢ mailings from both scammers and recipient businessmen who subsequently adopted the practice of mailing underpaid envelopes using 2¢ Mary Lyon solo frankings.

### Postage Conveniently Available

In the previous article, we focused on specific stamps that exactly paid one of the domestic letter rate fees by weight. But, clearly, any combination of two or more postage stamps could meet any one of these rates, so letters quite often bore any number of Great Americans stamps.

One of the more frequent combinations seen is a multiple of stamps that a mailer had on hand that paid the required rate. Figure 3 shows an example where a



Figure 3. A three ounce mailing with the 56¢ rate was paid by four 14¢ Howe stamps.

block of four 14¢ Julia Ward Howe stamps was used in lieu of a single 56¢ John Harvard stamp.

The most common approach when specific values were not on hand was to make do with whatever was available. This approach accounts for the use of a lot of GA stamps and makes for some interesting combinations on covers. The example shown in Figure 4 couples a 5¢ Pearl Buck stamp and a 17¢ Rachel Carson stamp to pay the 22¢ letter rate.

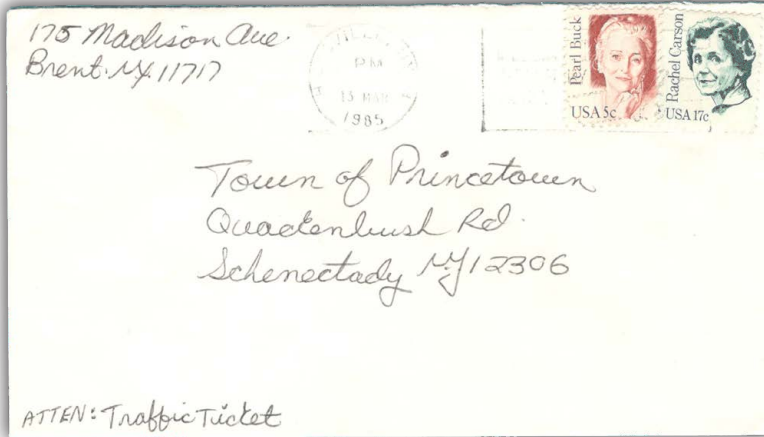


Figure 4. A pair of random stamps combined to pay the 22¢ letter rate.

Occasionally, convenience prompted the overpayment of a rate, and such was the case for the cover shown in Figure 5. Here, a 30¢ Frank Laubach stamp replaced the appropriate 29¢ stamp that would have exactly paid the current letter rate.

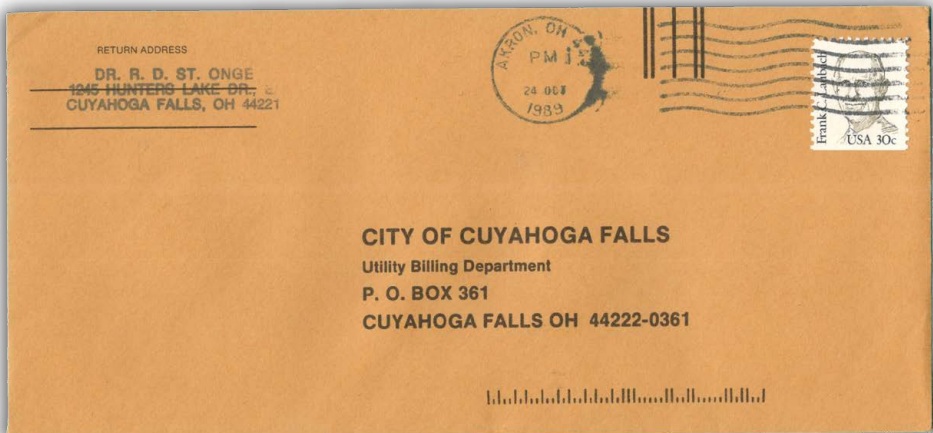


Figure 5. A 30¢ Laubach was apparently used for convenience when the letter rate increased to 29¢.

### Adding Postage to Accommodate a Rate Increase

The lower values, from 1¢ through 4¢, were frequently used in conjunction with existing letter rate postage when the mailer still had the previous rate postage available and desired to supplement it with just enough postage to meet the new letter rate. Figure 6

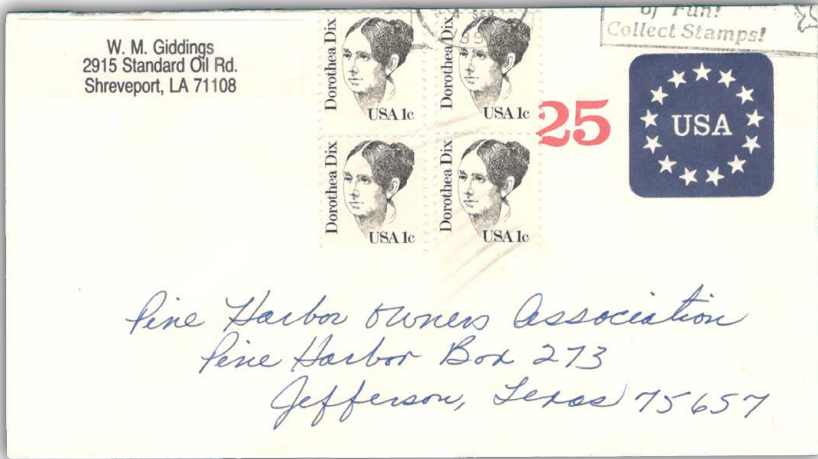


Figure 6. 1¢ Dorothea Dix stamps were added to postal stationery to uprate it to the 29¢ letter rate.

illustrates an example where a 25¢ government stationery envelope was up-franked with four 1¢ Dorothea Dix stamps to meet the 29¢ letter rate.

Figure 7 shows possibly the most common use of the lower value GA stamps, that of supplementing an existing current letter rate stamp, such as a definitive issue or a commemorative stamp, to meet an increasing letter rate.



Figure 7. A 3¢ Dudley White stamp complemented a 22¢ commemorative.

### Domestic Card Rates

In the next installment, we'll look at the 20-year history of domestic card rates and how Great Americans stamps helped fill the need for card rate postage.



From the Farley-Era Committee

## FDR and the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp

by Paul M. Holland

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



“

I am pleased to send you this letter to which is affixed a 3-cent stamp commemorating the tercentenary of the first colony of the Swedes and Finns in America.

The central design of the stamp is a reproduction of a painting by Stanley M. Arthurs, depicting the landing of the first Swedish and Finnish settlers.

This letter is mailed at Wilmington, Delaware, which post office has the first-day sale of the stamp on this date. ”

—From a signed June 27, 1938 letter sent with a Favor First Day Cover for the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp sent to Harold L. Ickes, FDR’s Secretary of the Interior by FDR’s Postmaster General James A. Farley

In the 17th century, Sweden was one of the great European powers and had hoped to establish a tobacco and fur-trading colony in the Americas. The first Swedish expedition to establish such a colony sailed from the port of Gothenburg in late 1637. It landed on the banks of the Delaware River, where Fort Christina (present-day Wilmington, Delaware), named after the Queen of Sweden, was established in 1638 as the capital. Disputes with New Netherland later arose, and in 1655, Peter Stuyvesant, sailing from New Amsterdam (present-day Manhattan Island, New York), captured Fort Christina, and the colony of New Sweden was then incorporated into New Netherland, which was itself conquered by the British in 1664, becoming part of the American Colonies.

Curiously, it was the United States Mint that led the way on commemorating the tercentenary of the first colony of Swedes in America with a 1936-dated Delaware Tercentenary half-dollar coin, designed by Carl L. Schmitz. Although dated 1936, these coins were actually struck at the Philadelphia Mint in March 1937. Shown in Figure 1, the reverse depicts the Swedish ship *Kalmar Nyckel*, which brought these early settlers to Delaware, and displays the dual dates of 1638 and 1938. Interestingly, a two-krona coin was also issued in Sweden to commemorate this same event.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding stamps, the Delaware Tercentenary Commission initially requested that the United States Post Office Department issue a series of commemorative stamps showing Queen Christina, Johann Printz (the first Governor of Delaware), and the *Kalmar Nyckel*. Various Congressional stamp requests were also made, and ultimately, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) was told to prepare a design for a single three-cent stamp. Designs were submitted in March 1938, with the die proof approved by Postmaster General (PMG) James A. Farley on April 6, 1938.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, a set of five corresponding Swedish stamps (Scott 268–272) were issued on April 8, 1938. Examples of these from my representative worldwide stamp collection are shown in Figure 2. These depict Johann Printz with an Indian Chief, the *Kalmar Nyckel* sailing from Gothenburg, Sweden, early settlers of New Sweden, the first church built by the Swedes in America, and Queen Christina of Sweden, respectively. Note that, like many Swedish stamps beginning in the 1920s, these commemoratives were issued as coil stamps.



**Figure 1.** United States commemorative half dollar issued for the Tercentenary.



Figure 2. 1938 set of Swedish stamps issued for the Tercentenary.

The central design for the US stamp was based on a painting, “The Landing of the Swedes” by Stanley M. Arthurs. This depicts the first contact in 1638 between the Swedish settlers and Native Americans, and is shown in Figure 3.

When he was shown the BEP’s essay for the stamp by Third Assistant Postmaster General Eilenberger (Figure 4), FDR objected, insisting that the caption be “...changed to include the Finns, because they were among the first colonists who landed on ‘The Rocks’ at Wilmington, Delaware.”<sup>3</sup> FDR was entirely correct, as Finland was actually a part of Sweden until 1809 and Finns played an important role during the expedition.

That Finns were included among the colonists was not forgotten in Finland and a special commemorative stamp (Scott 214) celebrating the tercentenary of the “colonization of Delaware” was issued on June 1, 1938. An example from my world-wide stamp collection is shown in Figure 5.



Figure 3. “The Landing of the Swedes” by Stanley M. Arthurs.



*Figure 4. Rejected essay for Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp.<sup>2</sup>*



*Figure 5. 1938 Finnish stamp issued for the Tercentenary.*

Following FDR's suggestion, explicit mention of the Finns was included in the design of the US stamp, which was modified by Victor McCloskey at the BEP and submitted for approval on March 24, 1938. Carl T. Arlt engraved the vignette. Unusually, work on the lettering and frame of this stamp die was divided between three different engravers. Edward M. Weeks engraved the word "CENTS," Williams B. Wells "LANDING OF THE SWEDES AND FINNS," with the balance of the engraving by James T. Vail. Final approval of both the design and the die by Postmaster General Farley was on April 6. Flat plate printing of Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps began on May 20, 1938.<sup>2</sup> These were laid out on 192 subject plates with substantial gutters between panes, separated by arrow center lines, as shown by the plate proof in Figure 6.

The first day ceremony for the stamp was held in Wilmington, Delaware on June 27, 1938. Interestingly, attendees at the ceremony included the artist Stanley M. Arthurs who painted "The Landing of the Swedes," Crown Prince Gustav Adolf (later King Gustav VI

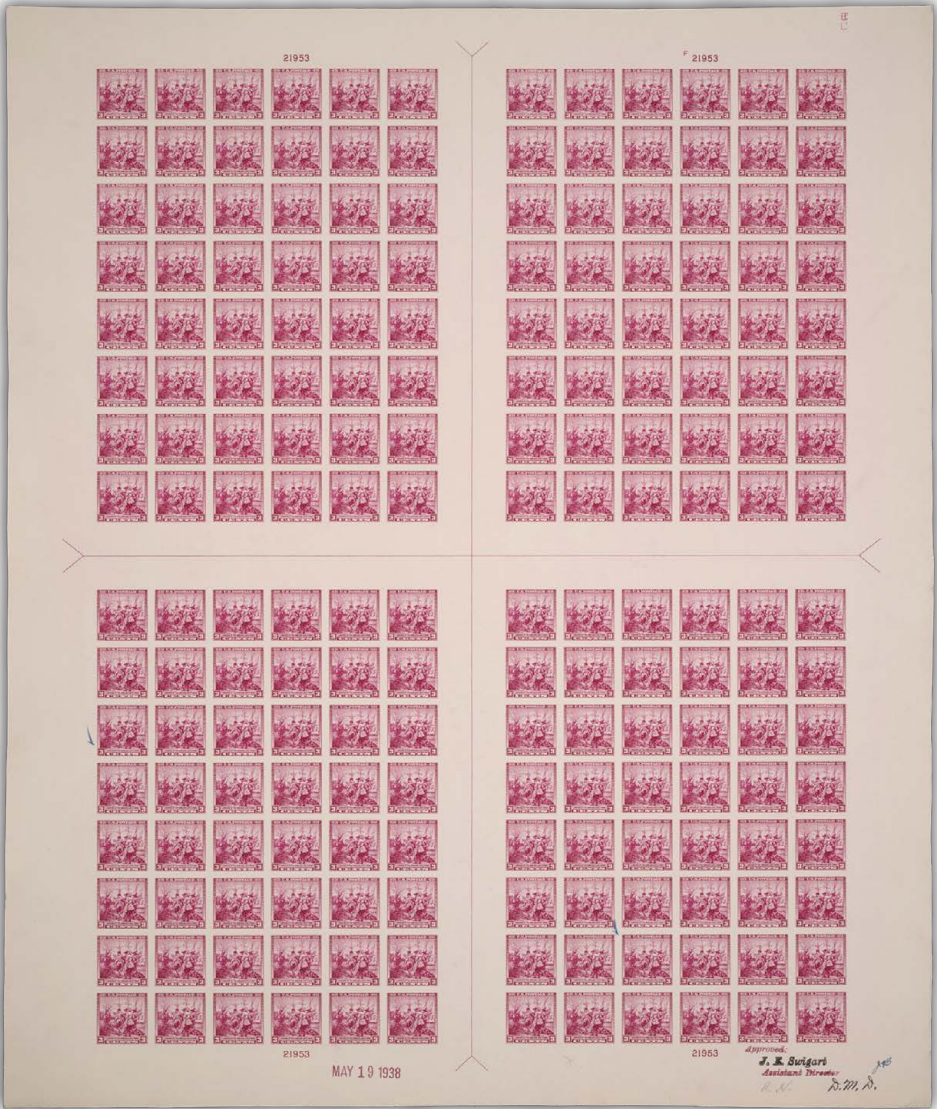


Figure 6. Plate proof for Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).

of Sweden from 1950–1973) and his wife Princess Louise, as well as the Foreign Minister of Finland.<sup>3</sup> I’m fortunate in having the favor FDC with signed letter for the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary Stamp sent to Harold L. Ickes, FDR’s Secretary of the Interior by FDR’s Postmaster General James A. Farley shown in Figure 7. Note how Farley simply signs this letter “Jim” since as a fellow member of FDR’s Cabinet he knew Harold Ickes well.



THE POSTMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON

June 27, 1938.

Hon. Harold L. Ickes,  
Secretary of the Interior:

My dear Harold:

I am pleased to send you this letter to which is affixed a 3-cent stamp commemorating the tercentenary of the first colony of the Swedes and Finns in America.

The central design of the stamp is a reproduction of a painting by Stanley M. Arthurs, depicting the landing of the first Swedish and Finnish settlers.

This letter is mailed at Wilmington, Delaware, which post office has the first-day sale of the stamp on this date.

Very truly yours,

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



Hon. Harold L. Ickes,  
Secretary of the Interior,  
Washington, D. C.

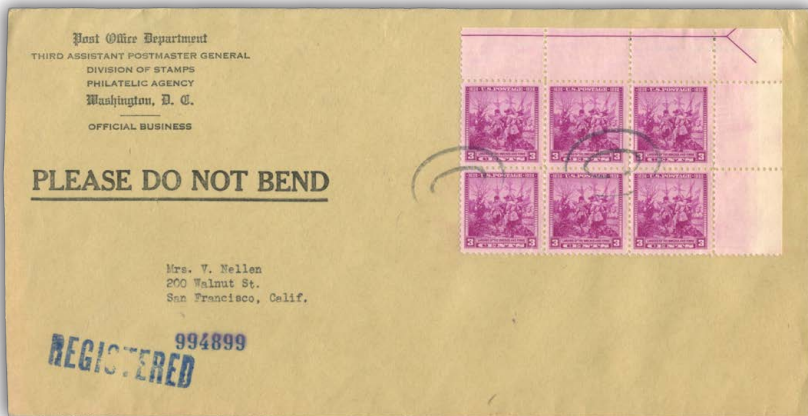
Figure 7. Favor FDC with signed letter for the Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamp sent to Harold Ickes by PMG Farley.

Also shown (Figure 8) is my favor FDC sent by Farley to Thore Wennqvist, Director of Posts in Göteborg, Sweden. Sadly, it is missing the signed letter, which was presumably filed somewhere in Sweden.



**Figure 8. Favor FDC with Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps sent to Sweden by PMG Farley.**

In Figure 9, I show my Philatelic Agency registered mail cover franked with a corner margin block of six Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps. The large stamp block clearly shows the arrow center line from the right side of the printing plate, revealing that this block originated in the lower right pane of 48 stamps (refer to Figure 6). Registration backstamps show this to be a second day cover, mailed on June 28, 1938.



**Figure 9. Philatelic Agency cover with Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps.**

FDR received lots of mail while he was in the White House, including my cover shown in Figure 10. This was mailed to FDR from East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, using a National Air Mail Week (NAMW) envelope with printed cachet on October 24, 1938. Franked with two Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps to pay the 6¢ airmail rate, it was sent more than five months after NAMW was over. There is also a 1¢ Canal Zone stamp (Scott 105). The boldly printed cachet is for “The Stroudsburgs—Gateway to the Poconos” with tiny print labeling the image as showing the “Delaware Water Gap” on the Delaware River, well upriver from Wilmington.



Figure 10. Airmail cover sent to FDR with Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary stamps on October 24, 1938.

There continues to be substantial worldwide interest in Franklin D. Roosevelt, including in Sweden. At the request of the Editor of *Nordisk Filateli* (the top stamp publication in Scandinavia), my October 2020 article on “Franklin D. Roosevelt as a Stamp Collector” from *The American Philatelist* was translated into Swedish.<sup>4</sup> To enhance this special issue highlighting FDR, I contributed an image of my registered mail cover sent to FDR from Stockholm on December 23, 1938. This is shown in Figure 11, and is franked by a coil stamp depicting Gustav V, King of Sweden (Scott #185). Backstamps show that the cover arrived in Washington on January 7, 1939.

Putting the 1938 Swedish-Finnish Tercentenary into context, it should be emphasized that both the Crown Prince (later King) of Sweden and the Foreign Minister of Finland attended the US first day ceremony in Wilmington, Delaware. Furthermore, the Delaware tercentenary was commemorated with stamps issued by Sweden and Finland in 1938.

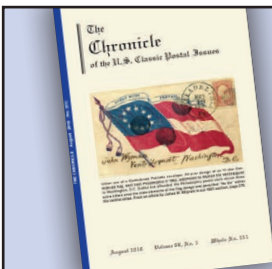
Since President Franklin D. Roosevelt was an avid worldwide stamp collector, he must have been well aware of the Swedish and Finnish commemorative stamps issued for the Delaware tercentenary. Examination of the 1946 H. R. Harmer auction catalog of FDR’s personal stamp collection shows that he would have had examples of these in lots 415 and 303 from the April sale.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 11. Registered mail cover sent to FDR from Stockholm, Sweden, on December 23, 1938.

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1. R. S. Yeoman, *Guide Book of United States Coins 2016*, 69th ed. (Atlanta, GA: Whitman Publishing, 2015), 304.
2. Max G. Johl, *The United States Commemorative Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century*, vol. 2, 1935–1947 (New York: H. L. Lindquist, 1947), 89–91.
3. Lena Shawen, *A President's Hobby* (New York: H. L. Lindquist, 1949), 22.
4. Paul M. Holland, "FDR—Samlaren," *Nordisk Filateli*, July 2021, 18–27. See auxiliary material on page 31.
5. *The President Franklin D. Roosevelt Collection* (New York: H. R. Harmer, 1946), pt. 2, lots 303, 415.



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	<b>NOVEMBER 30, 2025</b>	<b>1303</b>
17644 James Scherrer, Oak Park, IL		
17645 Marvin Klingenberg, San Antonio, TX		
17646 Ronald Vrana, Bridgewater, NJ	<b>ADDITIONS:</b>	
17647 Arthur B. Miller, Kingston, PA	New members	6
17648 Jeffrey Thompson, Vestavia, AL		
17649 Ray Porter, Highlands, TX	<b>Total</b>	<b>+6</b>
17650 Eric Noreen, Seattle, WA		
	<b>SUBTRACTIONS:</b>	
	Deceased	2
	Resigned	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>-6</b>
	<b>NET CHANGE</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</b>	
	<b>DECEMBER 31, 2025</b>	<b>1303</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS PENDING</b>		
17639–17643		
<b>NEW MEMBERS</b>		
17633–17638		
<b>DECEASED</b>		
15379 Gerald L. Davis		
17047 Robert D. Noble		
<b>RESIGNED</b>		
12894 E. R. Ernst		
13391 Michael Lowe		
17443 Jeff Levan		
17617 William Lockridge		

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This update is written on January 1, 2026, but you are reading it in early February! Officially, if we have not received your 2026 dues, we have already begun the “Dropped” membership process. While surely an oversight, we still have many valued members who have not renewed yet—contact me if you’re unsure. I promise a prompt reply. Please consider renewing online if possible—<https://www.usstamps.org/renew/> Prompt payment will be most appreciated! Questions? E-Mail: [execsecretary@usstamps.org](mailto:execsecretary@usstamps.org)

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WANTED: SCOTT 532 ON COVER \*WITHOUT\* Schermack private perforations. Also, any other unusual Washington-Franklin offset-lithographed material (Scott 525-536). Please send description and price to Andrew Kelley, stamps@andrewkelley.net [1152]

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# Index of Advertisers

<b>Armen Hovsepien</b> (www.USatFACE.com).....	80
<b>Mountainside Stamps, Coins and Currency</b> (www.mountainsidestampsandcoins.com) .....	80
<b>Precancel Stamp Society</b> (www.precancels.com).....	71
<b>Richard Friedberg</b> (www.friedbergstamps.com) .....	71
<b>Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries</b> (www.siegelauctions.com) .....	52
<b>Scott A. Shaulis</b> (www.shaulisstamps.com) .....	80
<b>The United States Stamp Society</b> (www.usstamps.org).....	Covers, 61
<b>U.S. Philatelic Classics Society</b> (www.uspcs.org) .....	94



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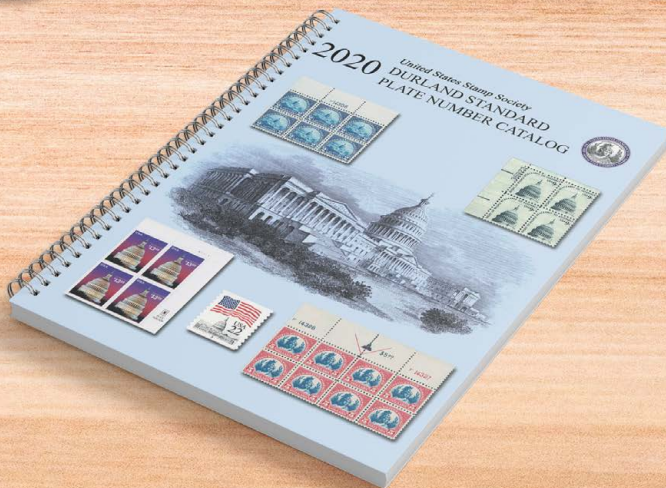
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