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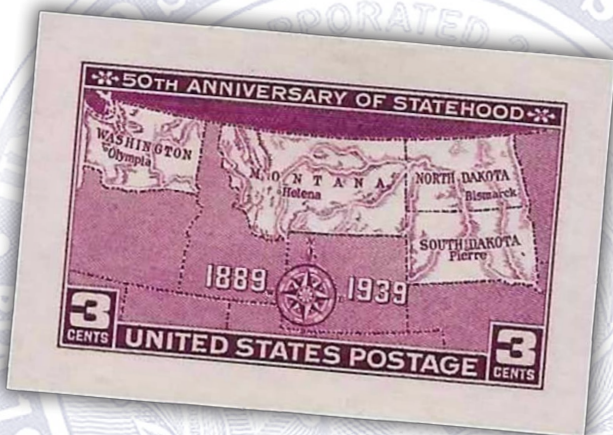
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Revisiting the Kiusalas Gauge

plus

“Clothesline” 50th Anniversary of Statehood Stamp



and

Great Americans Issue Part XXIV—International Card Rates;
the Spring Flowers Booklet, George Grinnell’s Fanciful Covers, & more.



United States Stamp Society Publications

Encyclopedia of United States Stamps and Stamp Collecting

Second Edition



*Rodney A. Juell, Lynn R. Batdorf
& Steven J. Rod, Editors*



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American Philatelic Society Affiliate No. 150

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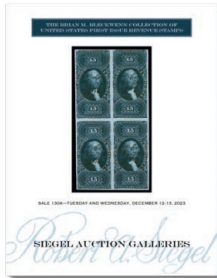
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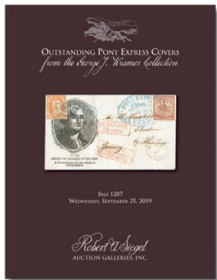
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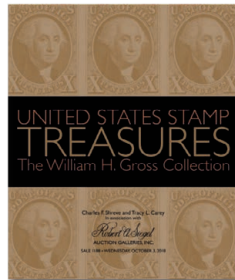
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Society News



BOSTON 2026 WORLD EXPO

We are less than a month from our nation's 250th Birthday and Boston 2026 World Exposition, held once in every ten years in the United States. The show will take place at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center May 23–30, 2026. The show schedule of events and hotel accommodations can be found at Boston2026.org.

The United States Stamp Society (USSS) will be represented in super Booth 111, comfortably shared with the Collectors Club, U.S. Philatelic Classics Society, and the Philatelic Foundation.

During the show the USSS will celebrate its 100th Anniversary having been established as the Philatelic Plate Number Association (PPNA) in 1926. The new 2026 Edition of the Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog will be released at the show.

The Society will hold its Board and General Membership Meetings at the show and will offer several presentations during the week:

United States Stamp Society Events Schedule

- May 23 Saturday**
1:00 PM Presentation: Rod Juell, An Introduction to United States Stamp Collecting
- May 25 Monday**
11:00 AM USSS Board of Governors Meeting
1:00 PM USSS General Membership Meeting
2:00 PM Presentation: Rod Juell, The Men Who Made the Stamps of the 1920s
- May 26 Tuesday**
1:00 PM Roger S. Brody, 1765 Stamp Act—Instructions for Distributors
- May 27 Wednesday**
1:00 PM Gregory Shoults, The Production of Washington and Franklin Flat Plate Coils 1908 to 1915
- May 28 Thursday**
1:00 PM Roger S. Brody, War of 1812—Stamp Taxation

We hope to see you in Boston.

—Nick Lombardi, President

2026 Membership Anniversary Pins

The Society wishes to congratulate the following loyal members who have attained milestone anniversaries during 2026:

50 Years

Robert J. Courdway
 Rev. Stephen A. Knapp
 W. Douglas Drumheller
 Kenneth Trettin
 Stuart Gitlow MD
 Harold Klein
 David Cantor

25 Years

Roger D. Curran
 Rainard M. Beer
 James A. Sorenson
 Mark Ittner
 Vicente M. Medalle Jr. MD
 J. Bruce Miller
 Brian J. Keller
 Werner P. Meyer
 Charles Snee
 Robert G. Rose
 Dave Salamone
 Joseph A. Cristiano
 Scott A. Shaulis
 Kurt W. Alstede
 Lt. Col. W.J. Lundquist USAF (Ret.)
 Jerry L. Schwartz
 Rick Burdsall
 John A. Bizal

15 Years

Larry T. Nix
 Glen Chip Grier
 Frank Biscay
 Manes Merrit
 Thomas J. Ash
 Christopher Burtzloff
 Raymond L. Burich
 Mike Ley
 Michael Robinson
 Brad A. Peterson
 William J. Johnson
 Thomas L. Thorbahn
 Larry D. Barnes
 Timothy G. Wait
 Ted A. Stricklin

If you are a member of one of these anniversary groups, we would like to give you your pin at the Boston 2026 show in May. If you are unable to attend the show, your pin will be mailed to you.

Again, thanks for your loyal support of the United States Stamp Society.

—Nick Lombardi
 President

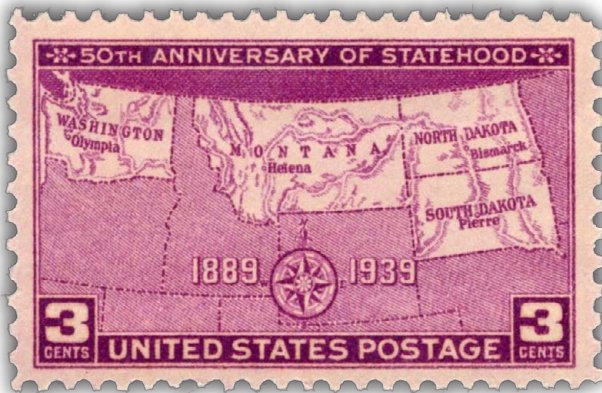


From The Farley Era Committee

“Clothesline” 50th Anniversary of Statehood Stamp Designed by FDR for North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington

by Paul M. Holland

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



“ It is with pleasure that I send you this cover to which is affixed the three-cent postage stamp issued to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Statehood of North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington.

I am having this letter dispatched through the Helena, Montana, post office on the anniversary date of admission of that State to the Union. ”

—From a signed November 8, 1939 letter with a Favor First Day Cover of the 3¢ “Clothesline” Statehood stamp sent to His Eminence, Dennis Cardinal Dougherty by FDR’s Postmaster General James A. Farley

One of my great favorites and among the most curious of the stamps designed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), is the so-called “Clothesline” stamp commemorating the fiftieth anniversaries of Statehood for North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana,

and Washington. This design arose when the four states, each with a 50th anniversary of statehood in November within days of each other, requested a stamp.

The land for these four states came from portions of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, Rupert's Land, which was acquired in 1818 when a boundary dispute between the United States and British North America was settled by using the 49th parallel from Minnesota to the Rocky Mountains as the border, plus additional land in the Northwest that was acquired by the United States in the Oregon Treaty of 1846. The Oregon Treaty settled another long-standing border dispute between the US and Great Britain by simply extending the 49th parallel as the boundary from the Rocky Mountains all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Before statehood, the land for each state had previously been derived from various United States territories.

The Dakota Territory, named after the Dakota branch of the Sioux Indian nation which inhabited the area, was formed successively from various portions of the Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa Territories, plus portions of the Nebraska Territory, itself formed from a large Northern part of the original Louisiana Purchase. After Minnesota became a state in 1858, the Dakota Territory was created in 1861, and this originally included portions of what are now Montana and Idaho. In 1868, this was reduced to its current borders, those of North and South Dakota. For statehood, it was split into North and South Dakota in a political maneuver to increase Republican influence in the Senate. Curiously, when President Benjamin Harrison signed the proclamations formally admitting South Dakota and North Dakota to the Union on November 2, 1889, he deliberately had the papers shuffled to obscure which one he had signed first. Thus, the order in which they became states will remain forever unknown.

The Montana Territory was organized in 1864 from the existing Idaho Territory, including a portion west of the continental divide that had been part of the original Oregon Territory and later the Washington Territory. Again, political maneuvering was involved. The name Montana itself comes from the Spanish word "montaña," meaning "mountain," given broadly by early Spanish explorers to the large mountainous region in the west. After several failed bids for statehood, Montana was finally admitted to the Union on November 8, 1889.

Named after George Washington, the Washington Territory was established in 1853. This was created from the northern portion of the Oregon Territory. Although originally proposed as the "Territory of Columbia," it was named Washington to avoid confusion with the original "Territory of Columbia" name for the location of the nation's capital from 1791 to 1801, now known as the "District of Columbia." Although a state constitution for Washington was passed by voters in 1878, it was never approved by Congress, and so statehood was delayed until November 11, 1889.

The earliest request for a fiftieth anniversary of Statehood stamp was by Representative Francis H. Case of South Dakota in March 1938. North Dakota also requested a stamp, with Rep. Burdick of North Dakota introducing a Congressional resolution for this on February 2, 1939.¹ Charles A. Hauswirth, the mayor of Butte, Montana, directly talked to FDR about issuing a fiftieth anniversary stamp for his state and had advised Postmaster General (PMG) James A. Farley of the president's interest in a letter dated April 13, 1939.² Although the Post Office Department (POD) normally issued stamps only to commemorate centenary celebrations, Farley apparently noted that Montana and Washington

would also mark their fiftieth anniversaries of statehood within a few days of the Dakotas, while he was assembling a list of requests for new stamps for discussion with FDR. Farley and FDR met at the White House on the morning of May 4, 1939.^{2,3}

Since all four states were in proximity to each other and close to the Canadian border, along with having anniversary dates within a few days of each other, FDR decided that a single stamp would have to do. On a piece of official White House stationery, the president sketched out a crude design showing the four states hanging from the Canadian border like clothes on a clothesline. Roosevelt signed the sketch “FDR, fecit, 1939.” For those of us whose Latin is a little rusty, “fecit” translates as “he made it.” Fortunately, Farley saved FDR’s original sketch, dated it, and after the addition of an example of one of the printed stamps, it is now in the collection at the Smithsonian.² This is shown in Figure 1.

Based on FDR’s sketch, and using a portion of a colored Geological relief map from the United States Geological Survey, Alvin R.

Meissner of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) developed an initial design for the stamp. Shown in Figure 2, this rejected photo essay was submitted to the Post Office Department on June 19, 1939.¹

Meissner then revised his design by increasing the size of the state names and capitals on the map, replacing the denomination with value tablets located on each side at the bottom corners of the stamp, along with other minor changes. This was then submitted to PMG Farley on July 7, with final approval coming on July 15, 1939. Matthew D. Fenton engraved the vignette, with William B. Wells doing the frame and lettering. The die proof was officially approved by PMG Farley on September 22.¹ A die proof illustrating these final changes is shown in Figure 3.

Curiously, although the die proof was not officially approved until September 22, 1939, three printing plate numbers (22441–22443) were assigned for FDR’s “Clothesline”

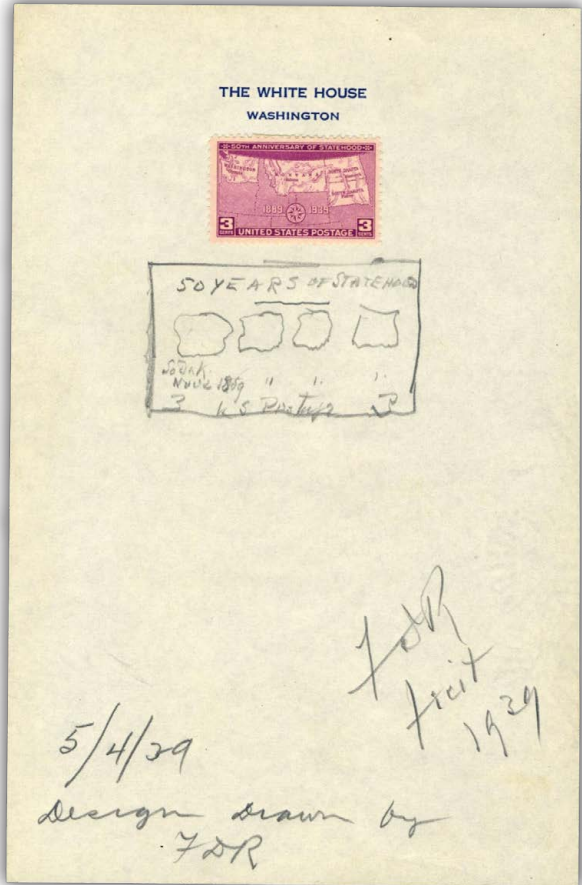


Figure 1. FDR’s original sketch for the “Clothesline” stamp (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).



Figure 2. Rejected photo essay for FDR's "Clothesline" stamp.¹

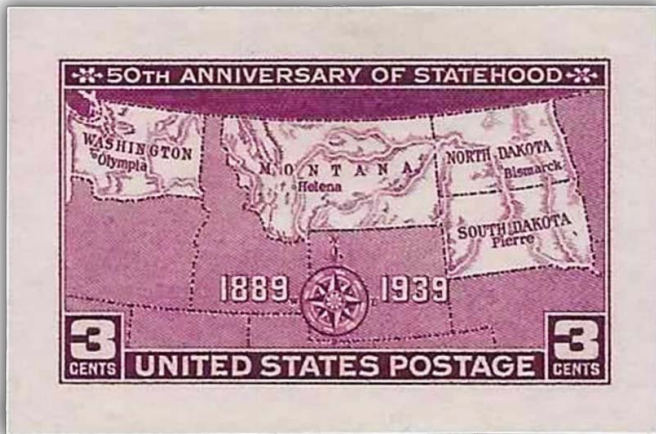


Figure 3. Die proof for FDR's "Clothesline" stamp.¹

stamp in August 1939, but never certified.^{1,4} Likewise, the following month, plate number 22452 was assigned but never used for printing stamps. It should be pointed out that this was the second commemorative stamp to be printed using "Electric Eye Convertible Plates" for use with the newly introduced "Electric Eye Perforators," which may have had something to do with this. I hope to address this topic further in a future article on the preceding "Tercentenary of Printing in America" stamp. Finally, on October 10, plate numbers 42257 and 42258 were certified and put to press on the same day, with plates 42259 and 42260 following a week later. The approved electric eye plate proof for 42257 is shown in Figure 4, and I have plate number 22458 blocks on FDCs sent to FDR.

In order to conform to the various 50th anniversary dates of statehood, the official "first day of issue" for this stamp varied.¹ The scheme utilized was to initially release the stamp for one day only in each of the different state capital "first day" cities celebrating a 50th anniversary, then withdraw it from sale until each of the four states had been allowed their turn. As a result, first day ceremonies were held in Bismarck, North Dakota, and

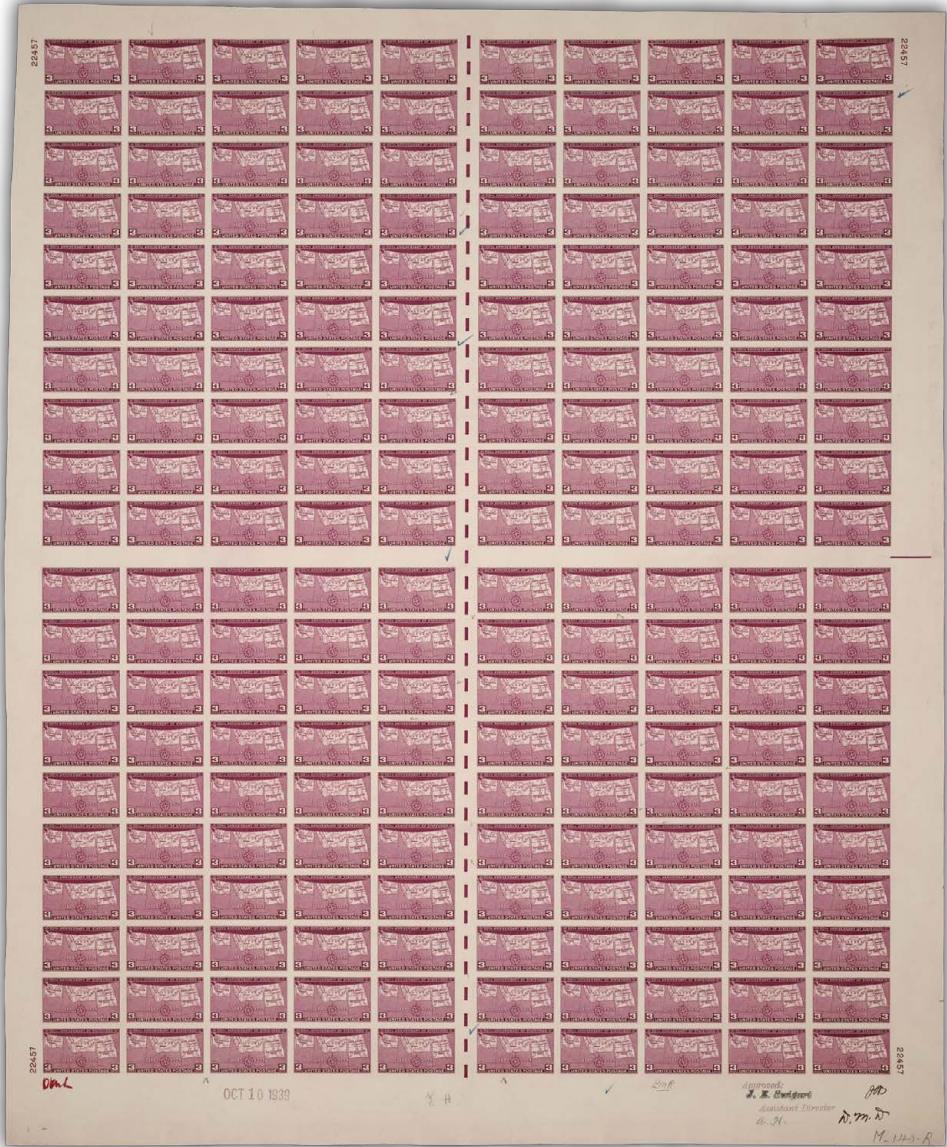


Figure 4. Plate proof for FDR's "Clothesline" stamp (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).

Pierre, South Dakota, on November 2, Helena, Montana, on November 8, and Olympia, Washington, on November 11, 1939. After withdrawing the stamp from sale for one more day, it was finally made available for general sale on November 13, 1939.

Because ordinary "first day of issue" cancellations were not appropriate in this scheme, special cancellations were used that included the name of the state along with the date it was admitted to the Union. This is illustrated in Figure 5, using PMG James A. Farley's own first day cover (FDC) for North Dakota on official PMG stationery, now in the National Postal Museum's collection.

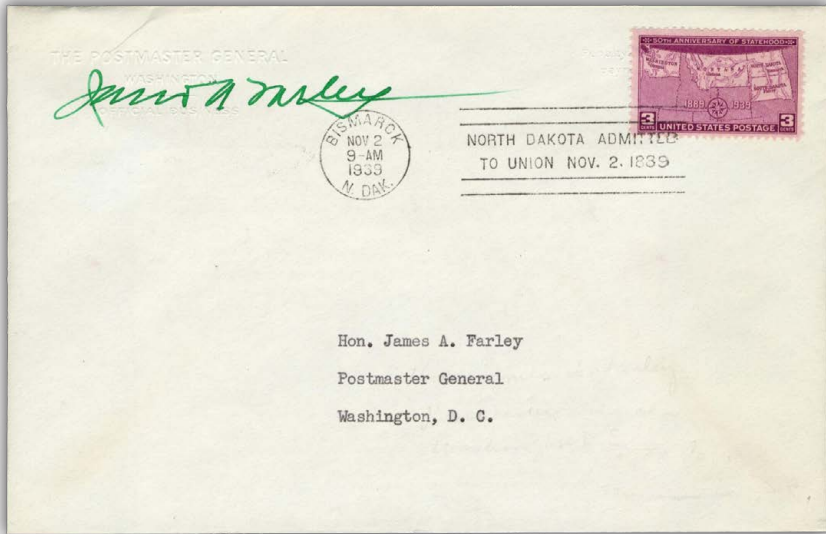


Figure 5. PMG Farley's FDC for North Dakota (Smithsonian, National Postal Museum).

Another example from North Dakota is my House of Farnam cacheted FDC addressed to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Shown in Figure 6, the engraved cachet shows a map of all four states superimposed over a medallion for the fiftieth anniversary of admission to statehood. Note also that the selvage at the left side of the stamp clearly shows “Electric Eye” dashes, with the position of these indicating that the stamp is from a lower right pane of the original sheet (see plate proof in Figure 4).

Besides saving first day covers sent to him by admirers, FDR was an avid stamp collector who arranged to have FDCs sent to himself. For this, he used official White House stationery and these were typically “self-addressed” by printing the address with a fancy engraved copper plate. I’m especially fortunate in having FDR’s own first day cover from



Figure 6. FDC for “Clothesline” stamp sent to FDR from Bismarck, North Dakota.

Montana with the “Clothesline” stamp that he himself designed. Shown in Figure 7, this is franked with a lower right plate number 22458 block of the “Clothesline” stamp.

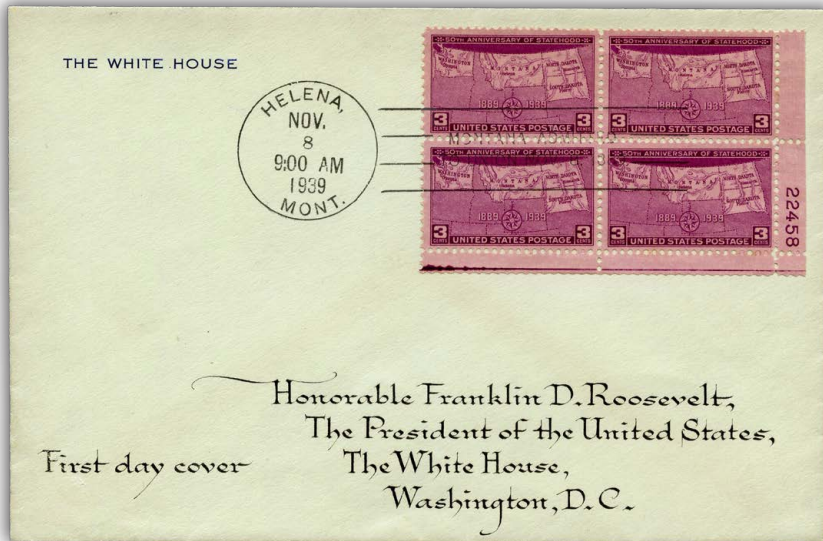


Figure 7. FDR’s FDC for “Clothesline” stamp on official White House stationery from Montana.

Postmaster General James A. Farley also sent out favor FDCs with signed letters for FDR’s “Clothesline” stamp. In Figure 8, I show my example for Montana sent to Dennis Cardinal Dougherty, formerly the Archbishop of Philadelphia, who was made a Cardinal in 1921. Farley was a devout Catholic, so especially note the honorific “Your Eminence” along with the closing “Faithfully Yours” above Farley’s signature in green ink. I also have other favor FDCs with signed letters for the “Clothesline” stamp in my collection, but the text of Farley’s letter is identical, except for the second paragraph that substitutes the name of the city of mailing, e.g., “Olympia, Washington” in place of “Helena, Montana,” so they are not shown separately here.

Finally, in Figure 9, I show my FDC sent to FDR at the White House from Olympia, Washington, on November 11, 1939. This has a bi-color “Washington Golden Jubilee” cachet (Mellone 858–13) showing a pair of medallions above a framed image of the State Capitol building in Olympia. Franked by an upper right plate number 22458 block of the “Clothesline” stamp, it was sent to FDR by the local Postmaster Ben S. Sawyer and bears two signatures on the cover.

Of all the stamps that FDR designed, the “Clothesline” stamp commemorating the fiftieth anniversaries of Statehood for North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington is my personal favorite. FDR’s design cleverly takes advantage of the fact that each of these four states had 50th anniversaries of statehood within a few days of each other in November and were strung out along the 49th parallel, defining the border with Canada. When this stamp was first released, it was ridiculed by some as “looking like laundry hanging on a clothesline,” and FDR’s original pencil sketch certainly seems to support this interpretation. I like it and find stamps with philatelic nicknames to be

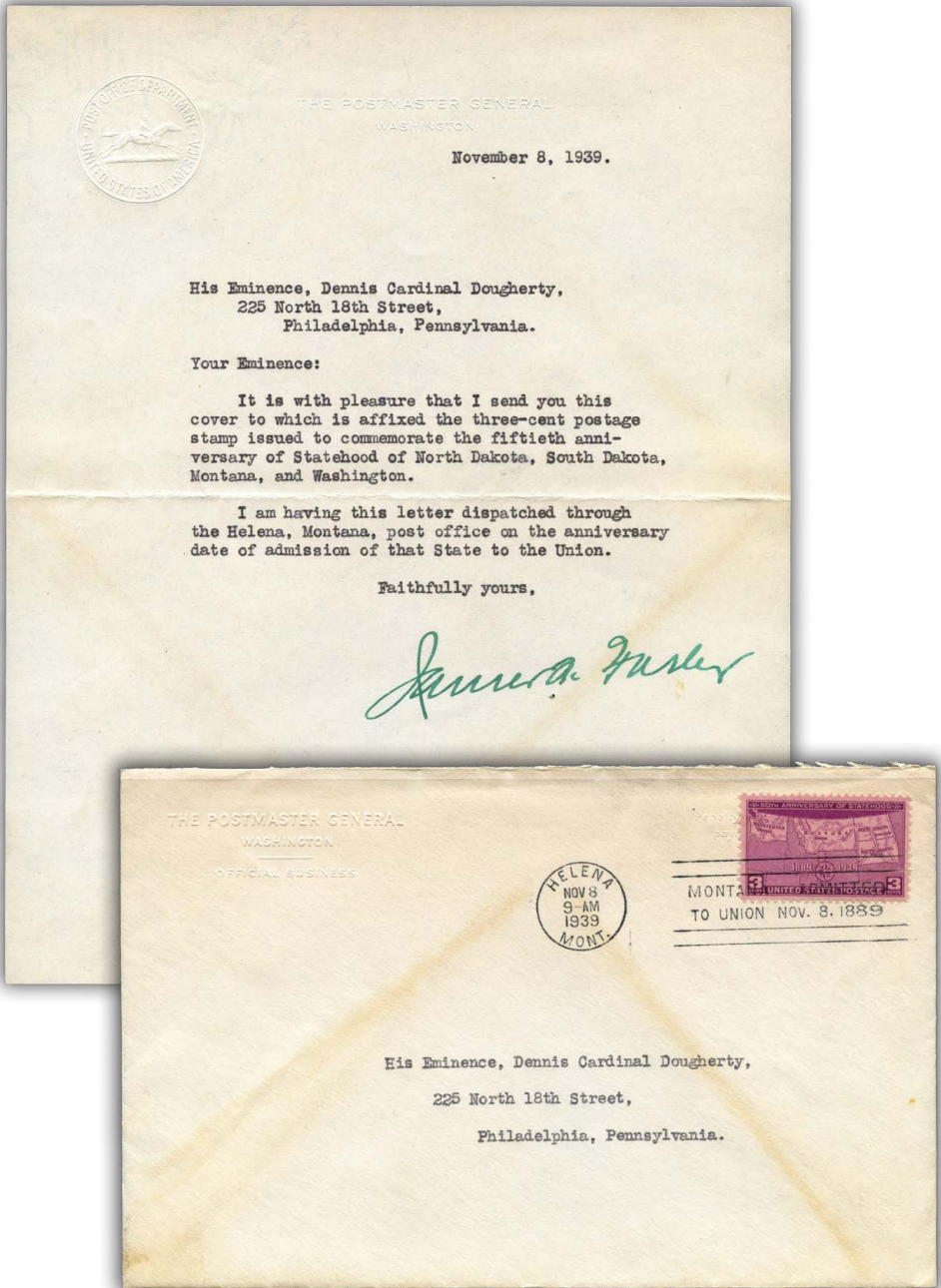


Figure 8. Favor FDC with letter for Montana sent to Cardinal Dougherty by PMG Farley.

especially intriguing. There are many such nicknames that come to mind, dating back to the earliest days of stamp collecting, including the 1840 “Penny Black,” 1843 “Bullseyes” of Brazil, the “Black Jack,” the “Prexies,” and of special relevance here, FDR’s unusual “Clothesline” stamp.



Figure 9. FDC for “Clothesline” stamp sent to FDR from Olympia, Washington.

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The Great Americans

Great Americans Issue Part XXIV— International Card Rates

by Jay Stotts

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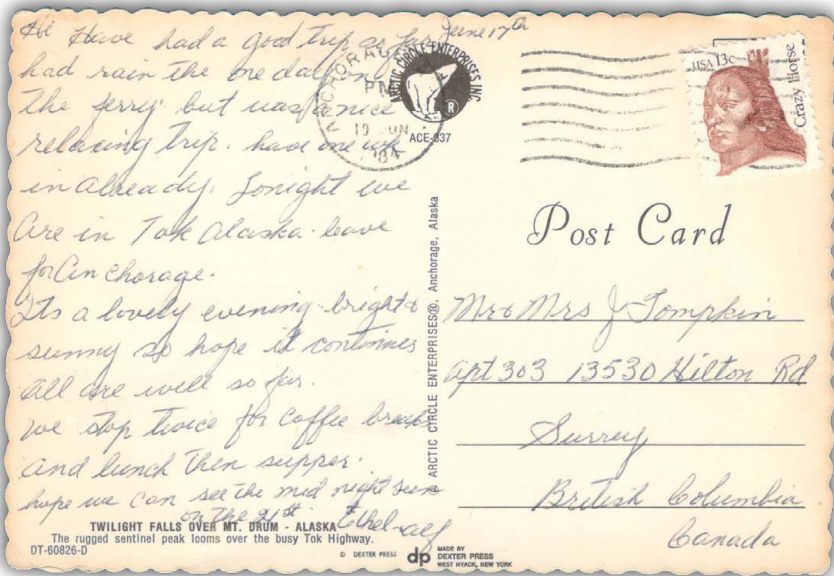


Figure 1. Crazy Horse paying the card rate to Canada.

International cards mailed using Great Americans (GA) stamps can be sorted into four categories: cards mailed to Canada, cards mailed to Mexico, cards mailed by surface means to Universal Postal Union (UPU) member destinations, and cards airmailed to UPU destinations.

Card Rates to Canada

Cards were transported to Canadian destinations by airmail whenever possible, so there were no independent surface carriage rates. The Canadian destination card rates paralleled the US domestic card rates through April 2, 1988. These rates are listed in Table 1.

Start of Rate Period	to Canada	to Mexico
In Effect	10¢	10¢
22 Mar. 1981	12¢	12¢
1 Nov. 1981	13¢ Crazy Horse	13¢ Crazy Horse
17 Feb. 1985	14¢ Sinclair Lewis Julia Ward Howe	14¢ Sinclair Lewis Julia Ward Howe
3 Apr. 1988	21¢ Chester Carlson	21¢ Chester Carlson
3 Feb. 1991	30¢ Frank Laubach	30¢ Frank Laubach
9 July 1991	40¢ Claire Chennault	35¢ Dennis Chavez
30 May 1999	45¢	40¢

Table 1. Great Americans fulfilling card rates to Canada and Mexico.

Figure 1 shows a 13¢ Crazy Horse stamp paying the card rate to a town in British Columbia, Canada, in 1984. This card was mailed during the period when card rates to the US and Canada were the same.

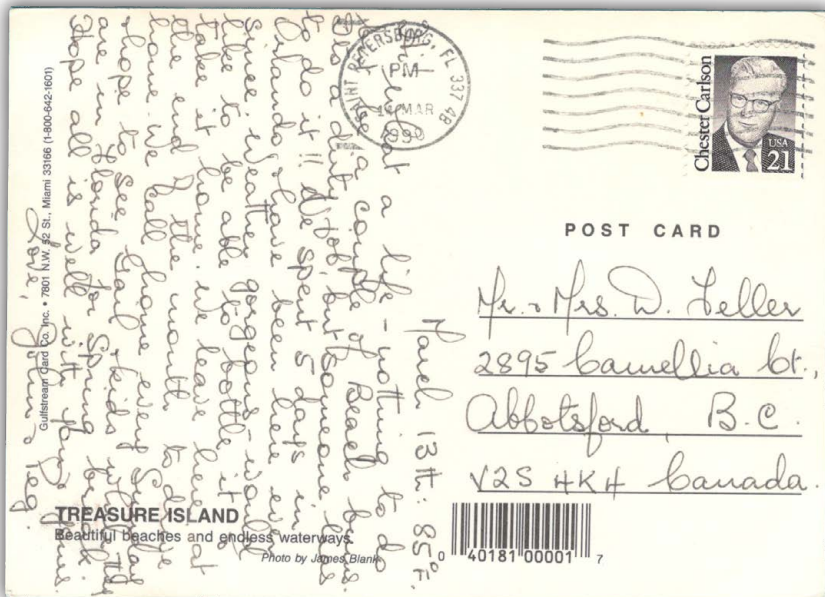


Figure 2. Carlson stamp used to post a card to Canada in 1990.

Effective April 3, 1988, card rates to Canada jumped by 50%. Card rates soared from 14¢ to 21¢, while US domestic card rates increased by only a penny, from 14¢ to 15¢ that same day. A 21¢ GA value, the Chester Carlson stamp, was not available to pay the rate to Canada until it was released on October 21, 1988. Figure 2 shows a Chester Carlson stamp to mail a card to British Columbia in 1990.

Additional card rate increases for Canada to 30¢ on February 3, 1991, and shortly thereafter to 40¢, effective July 9, 1991, provided solo usage opportunities for the GA 30¢ Frank Laubach and 40¢ Claire Chennault stamps. Figure 3 shows the use of the Laubach stamp to pay the 30¢ card rate to Canada.

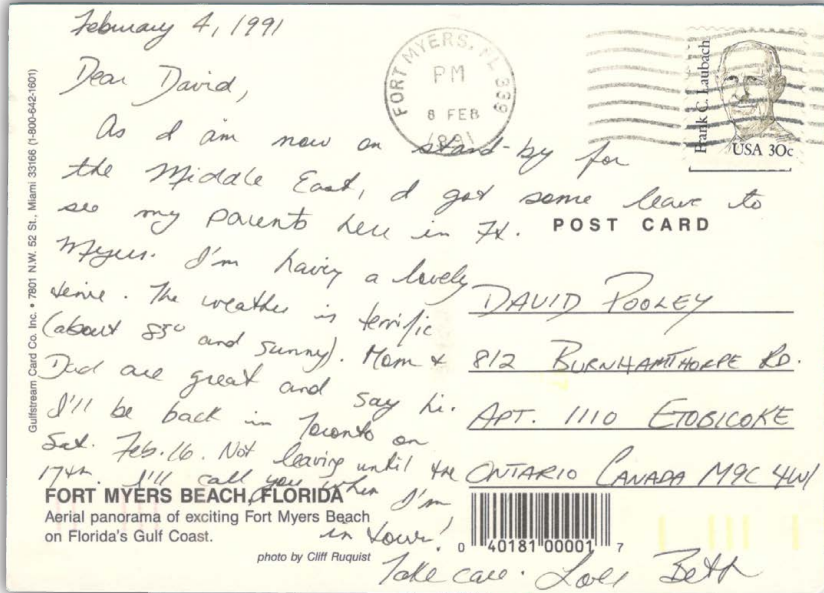


Figure 3. Laubach stamp paid the short-lived 30¢ card rate to Canada.

Card Rates to Mexico

Card rates to Mexico are also listed in Table 1. They were equivalent to US card rates until the rate increase implemented on April 3, 1988. The next two rate increases, to 21¢ and then to 30¢, equaled those to Canada as explained above.

Effective July 9, 1991, when the Canadian destination card rate went to 40¢, the card rate to Mexico only increased to 35¢. It is not clear why the rates to Mexico were lower than those to Canada. From this time forward, during the GA era, sending cards to Mexico was always 5¢ lower than sending cards to Canada.

The 35¢ Dennis Chavez stamp, issued on April 3, 1991, was available to pay the card rate to Mexico because it was originally issued to meet a UPU surface card rate earlier that year. More on that rate later.

Surface Card Rates to World Destinations

Mailers of cards to other foreign countries had two options during the early GA period. They could dispatch cards by surface means or they could request airmail service.

Table 2 lists the card rates to UPU member destinations other than Canada and Mexico, both by surface and by airmail means.

Start of Rate Period	UPU destinations via Surface Carriage	UPU destinations via Airmail
In Effect	14¢	21¢
1 Jan. 1981	19¢ Sequoyah	28¢
17 Feb. 1985	25¢ Jack London	33¢
3 Apr. 1988	28¢ Sitting Bull	36¢
3 Feb. 1991	35¢ Dennis Chavez	40¢ Claire Chennault
9 July 1995	Only airmail carriage available	50¢ Chester Nimitz
30 May 1999		55¢ Justin Morrill

Table 2. Great Americans fulfilling foreign card rates.

The holy grails of GA postal history, if there is such a thing, are cards mailed during the period from January 1, 1981, through February 17, 1985, affixed with a single 19¢ Sequoyah stamp. The stamp was released on December 27, 1980, as the first Great Americans stamp,

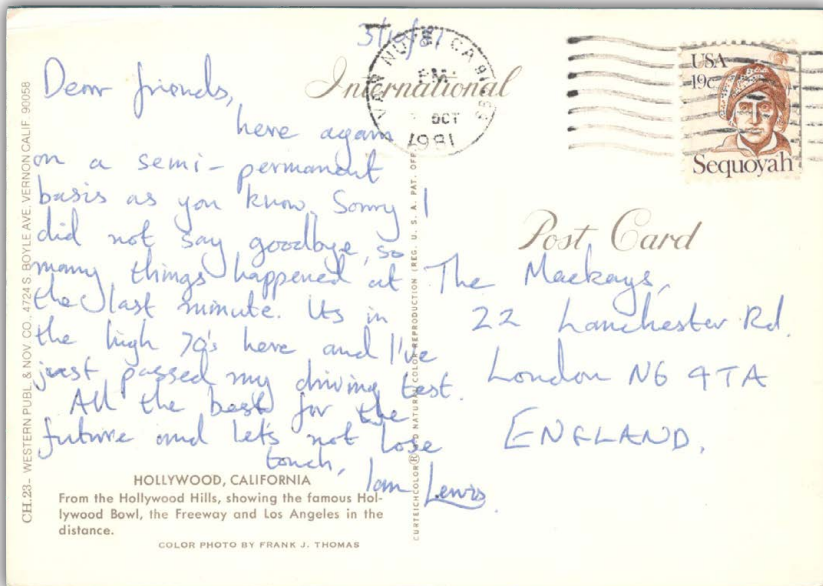


Figure 4. 19¢ Sequoyah stamp paid the 19¢ international surface card rate.

for this very rate. Uses are hard to find because an airmail card rate was also available, and it seems the majority of card mailers at the time were comfortable paying the higher airmail rate.

Figure 4 shows a card mailed in October 1981 to England at the surface card rate and franked with a 19¢ Sequoyah stamp.

Three more international surface card rate increases occurred before the category was eliminated, effective July 9, 1995, in favor of sending internationally bound cards only by airmail. These three rate increases are all listed in Table 2 and were payable by a single GA franking.

Figure 5 shows a card mailed at the international surface card rate of 35¢, effective on February 3, 1991. A 35¢ Dennis Chavez stamp pays the card rate. This was the rate referenced earlier in the section on Mexican card rates.



Figure 5. Chavez stamp paid the 35¢ international surface card rate.

International Airmail Card Rates

International surface and airmail card rate differences were already in effect when the Great Americans Series was introduced with the Sequoyah stamp in December 1980. Mailers paid 28¢ to airmail an internationally destined card effective on January 1, 1981. As Table 2 shows, additional rate increases for this mailing category occurred, but it was not until February 3, 1991, that a rate could be paid by a solo use of a GA stamp.

On that date, the international airmail card rate was set at 40¢, and the Claire Chennault stamp paid the rate. Such a usage is shown in Figure 6. The final rate increase, effective during the GA era, matched the value of the last GA stamp issued. The 55¢ Justin Morrill stamp, issued on July 17, 1999, paid the 55¢ international airmail card rate implemented on May 30 of that same year. Figure 7 shows such a usage of the Morrill stamp.

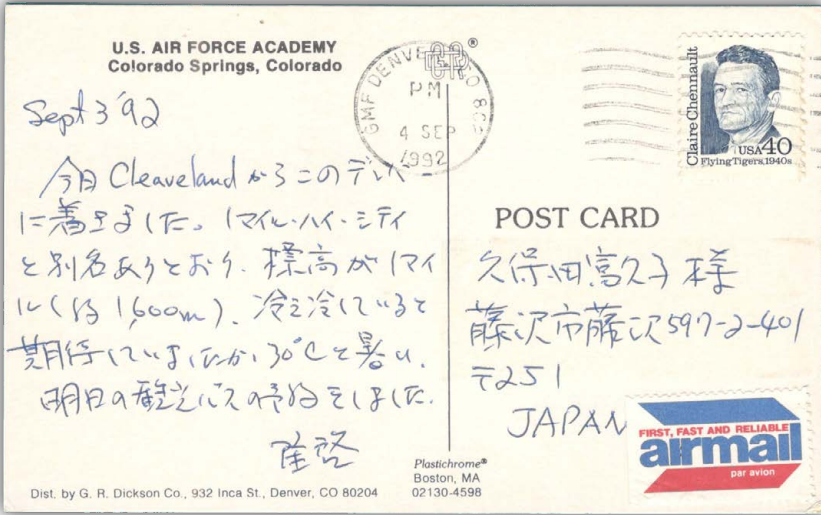


Figure 6. Chennault stamp paid the 40¢ foreign airmail card rate.

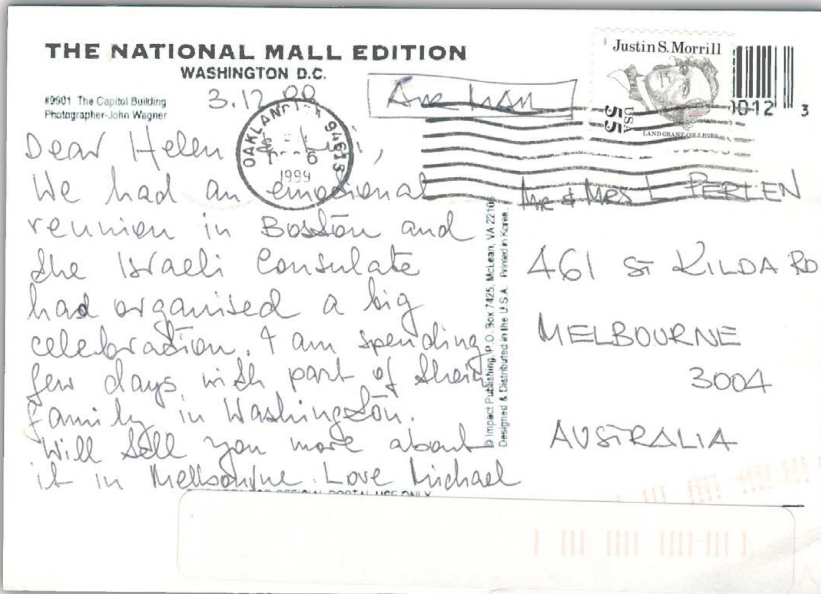


Figure 7. Morrill stamp paid the 55¢ foreign airmail card rate.

Combination Frankings

In addition to all of the solo frankings previously discussed, combination frankings are also an important part of the postal uses of GA stamps. First, a mix of stamps will be considered to pay the total fee. Figure 8 shows a rate for which no specific Great Americans stamp was available. The international airmail card rate of 33¢ was paid by a combination of the 3¢ Henry Clay and 30¢ Frank Laubach stamps.

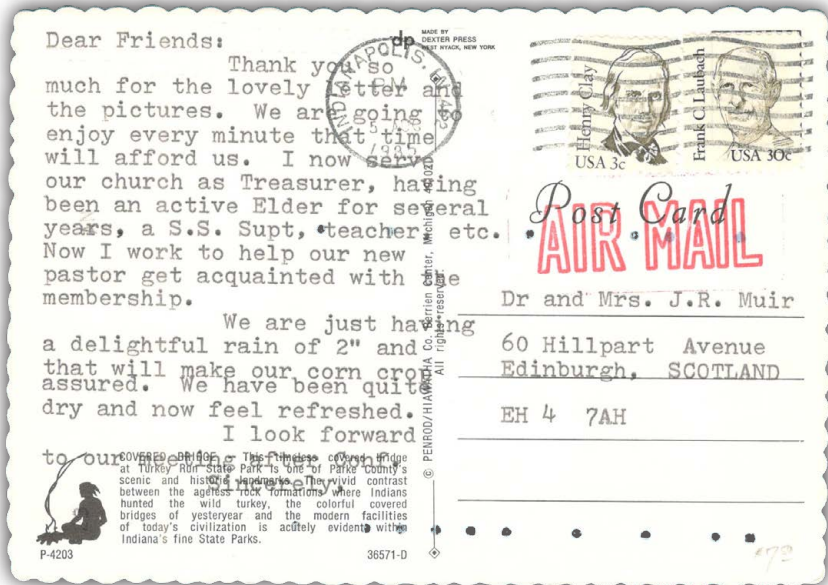


Figure 8. A combination of 3¢ and 30¢ GA stamps paid the 33¢ international airmail card rate.

Up-franking government-issued postal cards is also an important opportunity to utilize GA stamps. Figure 9 shows a domestic 20¢ postal card upfranked to 55¢ to meet the international airmail card rate in 2000.

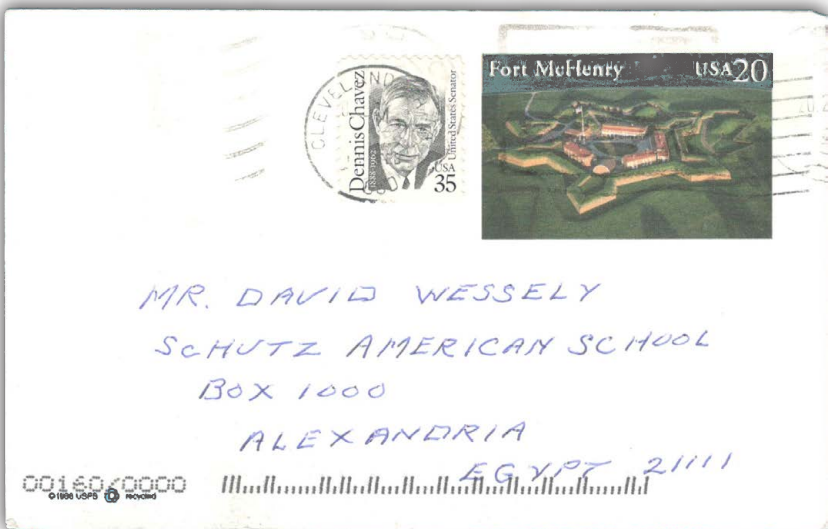


Figure 9. A domestic postal card uprated to pay the 55¢ international airmail card rate.

Next, we'll take a look at the role GA stamps played in shaping airogram rates.



Vintage Photo of the Month

by Rodney A. Juell

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





The Army of the Potomac was the primary fighting unit of the Union in the eastern part of the country during the Civil War. This month's photo shows the tent housing the army's post office; the photo was taken in 1863 near Falmouth, Virginia. Mail was important to boost the morale of the men, a fact the army recognized.

During the Civil War thousands of patriotic covers were produced, with cachets promoting the cause. Perhaps some such covers passed through this post office.



From the Washington–Franklin Head Issues Committee

Revisiting the Kiusalas Gauge

by Kurt Kiesling

usss # 17223 | ✉ kkiesling6@gmail.com

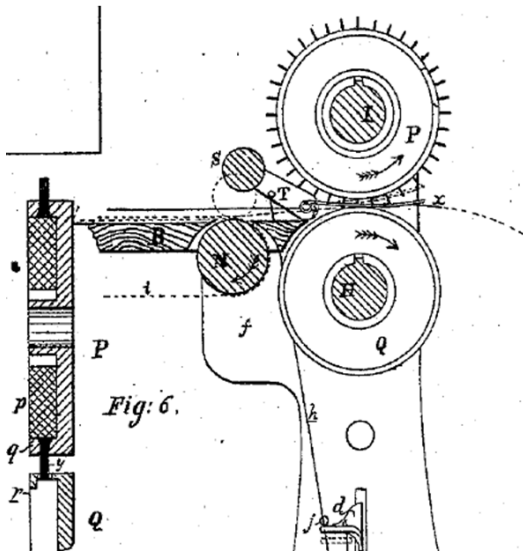


Figure 1. Howard rotary perforator diagram.

Stamp collectors have long relied on perforation gauges to distinguish varieties. This is particularly important for distinguishing Washington–Franklin varieties as the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) introduced four new perforation spacings during this period.

Before proceeding, it is helpful to outline a few basic operating features of the Howard rotary perforator, which the Bureau used for many years. Figure 1 from the 1860 Howard patent shows the essential arrangement: paired wheels—one with die holes and the other with matching pins—mounted on rotating shafts. As the wheels turn, each pin engages its matching die hole and pulls the sheet forward as it pierces the paper. The perforator, therefore, produces holes at the fixed interval dictated by the wheel's circumference and pin count.

Dividing the wheel's circumference by the number of pins gives the nominal hole spacing, which, when converted to holes per 20 mm, yields the familiar perforation gauge. The two-centimeter philatelic system, introduced in the 1860s by Dr. Jacques Amable Legrand, was not used by the BEP when contracting perforating equipment. When making changes in perforating gauge, they simply adjusted the pin count to alter the amount of paper left between holes—whatever they felt would improve separation.

Rotary perforation did not produce absolutely precise gauge readings, even on stamps from the same sheet. Variation in pin spacing during wheel manufacture, wheel slippage, die and pin wear, minor speed variation of the sheet, and even varying moisture content after the gumming operation could result in very slight changes in gauge readings.

The Kiusalas Gauge

In 1966, Richard Kiusalas introduced a new system that seemed to offer greater precision. In his United States “Specialist” Perforation Gauge, Kiusalas combined the familiar whole-number gauge readings with exact hole spacings measured to the thousandth of an inch.¹ For example, he divided “perf 11” into three separate increments: 11-70, 11-72, and 11-73, where the last two digits represent the hole spacing in thousandths of an inch (e.g., 0.073 inches). The “Specialist” Gauge is illustrated in Paul Schmid’s *The Expert’s Book*.²

Use of the Kiusalas gauge for distinguishing varieties of Washington–Franklin stamps rested on a mistaken assumption: that tiny measurement differences represented distinct perforation spacings, rather than normal variation from a single wheel set. In practice, as this study will demonstrate, the small differences he recorded fall within the natural spread of results you would expect when measuring hundreds of stamps. His “extra spacings” on Washington–Franklin stamps are statistical noise, not true varieties.

Mechanical evidence reinforces this point. Perforators of the Washington–Franklin era were built for a single wheel diameter, historically reported as $4 \frac{1}{16}$ inches. In 1918, Joseph Leavy reported that machines for perf 10, 11, and 12 used standard pin counts (160, 176, and 192, respectively), and affirmed, in bold print, that “the perforating machines manufactured in this country contain perforating wheels of a standard circumference”.³ These fixed specifications leave no opportunity for the incremental values proposed by Kiusalas. The reliability of Leavy, curator of the National Philatelic Collection and well known for his scholarship, should have raised a red flag about Kiusalas’s conclusions.

The misuse of Kiusalas’s gauge is not a trivial matter. Without a clear understanding of the natural variance in the Bureau’s perforating equipment, many experts have treated his increments as absolute fact. Even the “Bible” of Washington–Franklin authentication—*The Expert’s Book* by Paul Schmid—often insists that “. . . measurements using . . . the ‘Specialist’ gauge (12-66), and/or direct comparison with known genuine perforations must be precise.”⁴ The result has almost certainly been that some genuine stamps were denied certification because they failed to “precisely” match Kiusalas’s gauging, and even more likely that collectors declined to submit otherwise genuine stamps for authentication for the same reason.

This study reexamines Kiusalas’s gauge using high-resolution measurements of many hundreds of Third Bureau stamps. The results show that a single standard wheel set could produce stamps with his 11-72 and 11-73 readings, as well as his different increments for perf 10 and 12. By combining statistical analysis with mechanical constraints, the

evidence demonstrates why the Kiusalas gauge should not be used for identification and expertizing.

(This study was confined to Third Bureau flat plate issues. Rotary stamps were perforated using different equipment that had different paths for spacing variation. Adding this data would have only added complexity to an already complex analysis. Rotary perforation variation will be reported on in a subsequent article.)

Study Details

The primary focus of this study is to establish a statistically valid measure of the natural variation in Bureau flat plate perforators, demonstrating that Kiusalas's increments do not represent distinct varieties. This measure—known as standard deviation—describes how spread out the individual measurements are around the average.

Over one thousand perf 10, 11, and 12 Washington–Franklin stamps were scanned at 1200 dpi and analyzed with computer software to measure the spacing between perforations. The technique, described in my July 2022 Specialist article on detecting faked stamps,⁴ provides a precision five to ten times greater than the equipment available to Kiusalas in the 1960s. With such a large, randomly selected sample, the results are calculated to be accurate within 0.0001 inch at a 99% confidence level.

Statistical Results

Most collectors are not familiar with statistical calculations, so to begin, a visual presentation of the measurements is most useful. The three normal distribution curves below (Figures 2, 3, and 4) show the spread of measurements for perf 10, perf 11, and perf 12 stamps. Detailed tables of the calculated statistical results are presented later.

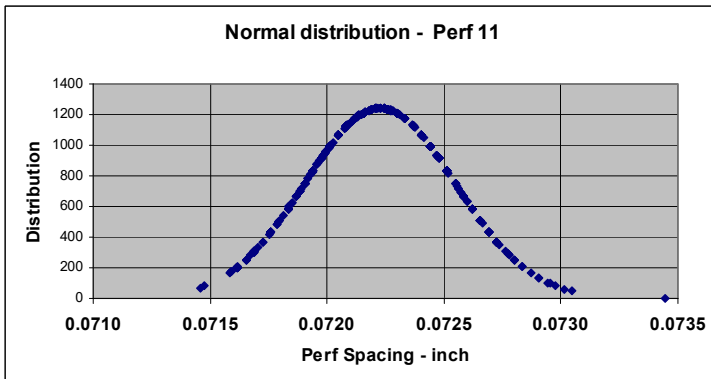


Figure 2.

Perf 11 Curve Description

The distribution curve for perf 11 stamps in Figure 2 shows a single, continuous spread of measurements, nearly identical in shape to the curves below for perf 10 and perf 12. The horizontal axis shows the range of perforation measurements, while the height of the curve is the frequency those values occur. Readings that fall at 11-72 and 11-73 are

simply part of this natural variation, not unique varieties. A genuine perf 11 stamp can fall anywhere within this normal range.

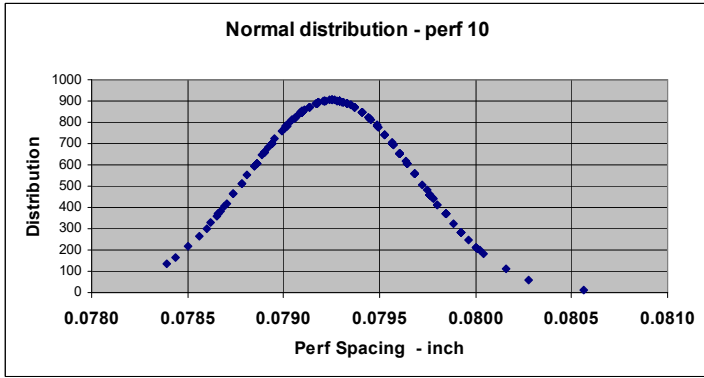


Figure 3.

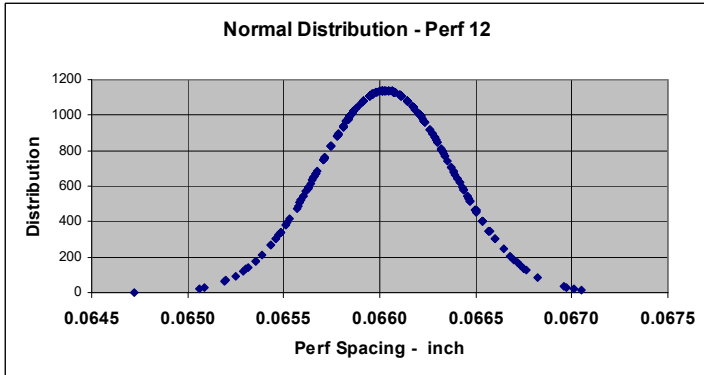


Figure 4.

Perf 10 and 12 curves show the same continuous spread of measurements (the ranges actually being somewhat broader than that of perf 11). This consistency further demonstrates the accuracy of Leavy’s reporting of only one wheel configuration for each integer gauge.

Tabular summary of data and analysis

Perf gauge	Sample count	Average spacing (inch)	Std dev. (inch)	96% range of values (thousandths of an inch)	96% range (standard gauge notation)
10	395	0.0793	0.00044	78.4 to 80.7	9.8 to 10.0
11	391	0.0722	0.00032	71.6 to 72.9	10.8 to 11.0
12	307	0.0660	0.00035	64.7 to 67.1	11.8 to 12.1

Table 1. Data summary. 96th percentile readings represent the average plus and minus two standard deviation units, a range where 96% of readings fall.

Comparing the average spacing distances from the high-resolution measurements, to the spacing expected when dividing the circumference of a 4 $\frac{1}{16}$ inch wheel by Leavy's pin counts, we get total confirmation of his historical reporting.

Wheel diameter (inch)	Pin count	Calculated perf spacing (inch)	Spacing from statistical study
4.06	160	0.0797	0.0793
4.06	176	0.0725	0.0722
4.06	192	0.0664	0.0660

Table 2. Calculated versus observed spacings. Differences of a few ten-thousandths likely reflect rounding the wheel diameter measurement to the nearest $\frac{1}{16}$ inch.

Mechanical Considerations

Skeptics may suggest that the Bureau by accident or choice, obtained a set of wheels of a slightly different diameter (which would change the spacing between holes) or with a different pin count. A different wheel diameter can be dismissed immediately: it would not fit the perforator without redesigning and custom-manufacturing new drive gears. Wheels with a different pin count, if accidentally used to replace worn wheels on any of the thirty Bureau perforators, would wear out prematurely, if not jam and cause damage. With no benefit coming from a very minor change in perforation spacing, the Bureau would reject any such modifications.

Similarly, with no potential improvement arising from such minor changes, no supplier would manufacture and offer non-standard wheel sets. Boring holes in the wheels at a precision of a thousandth of an inch required very specialized and costly jigs and tooling. No new or existing supplier would make such expenditure for a change that offered no benefits or market. Standard sizes exist as they are economical and marketable.

Conclusions

The high-resolution measurement study and the mechanical aspects both point to the same outcome: the Bureau's perforators operated with single, standard wheel configurations.

The statistical analysis of data produced distribution curves and ranges for perfs 10, 11, and 12 spacings that are nearly identical, an outcome only possible if there were only one wheel configuration used for each perforation size. The essentially perfect match of spacings from calculations compared to the high-resolution measurements demonstrates the accuracy of Leavy's reporting. And there is no logical basis for assuming the Bureau accidentally or purposely obtained non-standard wheels.

Together, these lines of evidence confirm that the supposed "sub-varieties" of Washington-Franklin perforations are simply normal variation within one configuration—not evidence of multiple wheel diameters or pin counts.

A visual confirmation of the variance that exists within a single block of stamps is shown below in Figure 5. Figure 6 demonstrates the method to find centers of perforation holes to use for measurements, by drawing a well-fit circle into often misshapen holes.

The two adjoining Scott 332 stamps shown measure 16.93 mm and 16.62 mm between ten perforations. These two measurements convert to 0.0667 and 0.0654 inches, respectively. In other words, these two adjoining stamps would measure 12–67 and 12–65 on a Kiusalas gauge (if rounded to the closest increment). If this sheet of Scott 332s had been sent to produce vertical coils, neither stamp would have met the 12–66 criteria.

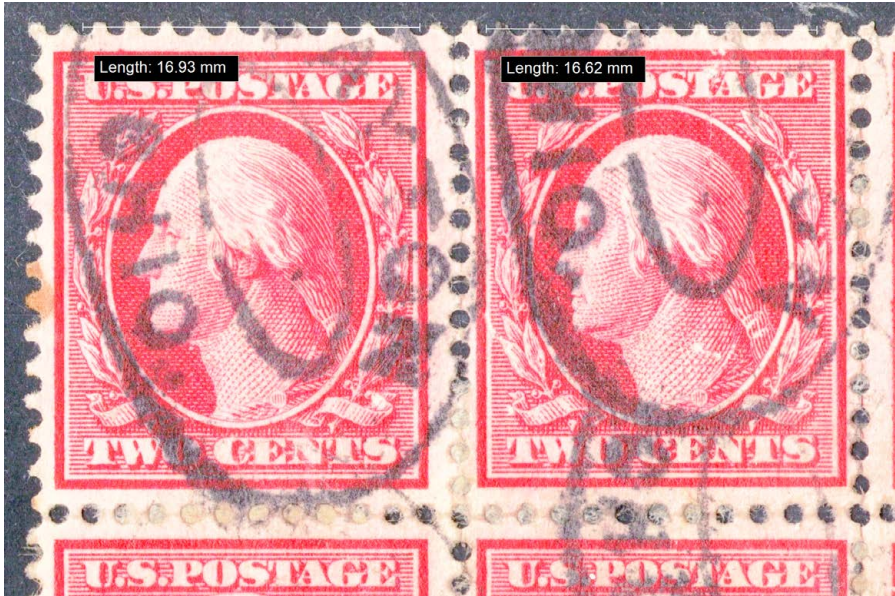


Figure 5. Adjoining Scott 332s with different gauge values.



Figure 6. Close-up of the measurement technique to determine hole centers.

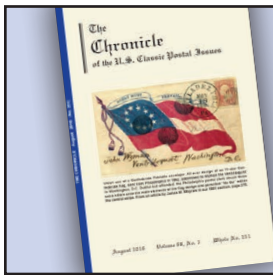
Collectors wishing to verify proper perforation gauge should rely on the standard gauge ranges shown in Table 1, which reflect the true variation produced by Bureau perforators.

Together, these independent lines of evidence—statistical, mechanical, and visual—confirm that the Kiusalas “sub-varieties” do not represent distinct perforation types, and that his gauging should not be used for authentication purposes for Third Bureau stamps.

I would like to acknowledge Dwayne Littauer for his editorial review, and Julian Goldberg for sharing his historical perspective on perforating equipment used in US stamp production.

Endnotes

1. Richard Kiusalas, "Specialized Perforation Gauges," *The United States Specialist* 37, no. 2 (February 1966): 60.
2. Paul W. Schmid, *The Expert's Book: A Practical Guide to the Authentication of United States Stamps; Washington/Franklin Issues 1908-1923* (Huntington, NY: Palm Press, 1990), 187.
3. Joseph Leavy, *The Philatelic Gazette*, May 1918, 154.
4. Kurt Kiesling, "Using High Resolution Scanning to Detect Faked Stamps," *The United States Specialist* 93, no. 7, (July 2022): 318-324.
5. Schmid, *Expert's Book*, 20, 22, 25, 40, 42, 46, 74, 77, 79.



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From The Booklets and Booklet Panes Committee

The Monthly Random Booklet: BK208 Spring Flowers

by Dieter R. Kohler, PhD

USSS # 12538



Figure 1. BK208, Lilac and Blue front covers.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, the United States Postal Service (USPS) had been receiving letters from the public asking for “bright, pretty American stamps.” The USPS asked an artist to produce color sketches of a group of American garden flowers. Instead, the artist produced illustrations of wildflowers. The USPS liked them so much that they decided to create a 50-stamp pane featuring wildflowers found in each state.

The USPS still liked the garden flowers idea and felt it would also meet consumer demand. So it thought that flower booklets might please the public. It ran TV commercials and full-page advertisements in stamp publications announcing “The flowers are in bloom at your post office. Buy them while they last!” and “Pick up a bunch.” The booklet, issued in 1993, featured five spring flowers clustered together in a bouquet. Over the

following three years, the USPS issued booklets of stamps showing flowers that bloom in summer, fall, and winter.

As far as booklet collectors looking for varieties are concerned, the spring, summer, and winter flower issues essentially used identical plate layouts, while the fall booklet used a similar, but modified plate layout, missing some black register lines in the tabs. This article describes the spring flower booklet pane varieties, which are identical to the summer and winter booklets (give or take a few color changes in the plate layout markings) and mostly identical to the fall booklet.

The Cover

Booklet collectors soon noticed that there are two distinctively colored covers; the difference is clearly evident in the color of the foreground Hyacinth, which is either lilac or deep blue. This probably went unnoticed at first, as the collectors simply got the one version on sale at their post office, which could go either way. As catalogs generally don't mention cover varieties, the difference hasn't bothered general collectors (or even many booklet specialists).

The "blue cover" at right in Figure 1 also shows (parts of) colored seam lines along the right cover edge. As with booklet pane joint lines, these lines can appear if some ink has accumulated between the cover plate joints. Though for the garden flower issues, these cover seam lines are scarce and often very faint.

Once the color difference was noted, many booklet collectors were reminded of the 1988 Pheasant booklet panes. During the initial printing of this issue with plate A1111, the sky was a darker reddish blue, made from small dots of blue and red ink. However, the USPS decided they wanted the sky to be lighter, so in later printings with plates A3111 and A3222, American Bank Note Company eliminated the red dots and only printed the blue ones, resulting in a noticeably lighter sky. The same effect could have caused the color change in the flower booklet cover. Figure 2 shows a direct comparison of the two versions, pictures taken with a digital microscope.



Figure 2. "Red" stamp details on the top row, "Red removed" stamp details on the bottom row.

The small red dots on the pheasant panes are difficult to see, even under a microscope. The blue and red dots are not overlapping. On the BK208 cover, the red dots are still present in the “red removed” cover, so there actually is no red removed in the design. The blue and red dots mostly overlap, and in some areas, they overlap precisely.

The cover difference comes from three effects. Firstly, the blue color in the “blue cover” is of a darker hue. Secondly, the blue dots were printed last; they can even be found on top inside the black lettering. Lastly, the blue and red dots mostly overlap, but small shifts of the red and blue plates could have drastically changed the final color of the raster dots. The lilac cover version seems to be the scarce variety, judging from the available sample, which only shows a few lilac cover booklets from plate 1.

The Spring flower booklets were the first ones assembled on a newly acquired Goebel booklet-forming machine that could print covers with up to four colors, greatly improving the look of the booklet covers.

Plate Layout

The stamps were printed on a combination printing press that used four offset plates and one intaglio sleeve. Exact details can be found in Mike Perry’s research paper on folded-style booklets.¹ Figure 3 illustrates a section of the web consisting of 240 stamps (unfolded panes arranged in correct positions were used for the illustration). Each horizontal strip of panes in the four columns forms a booklet (labeled A to L). Three columns have the usual black cross register lines (CRLs), and two have length register marks (LRMs) in the tab area, used to align the web roll. The offset lines do not cover the entire plate height, leaving small gaps at the top and bottom. Column 2 contains various marks in the tab areas.

Booklets were assembled by first separating the web roll into four columns of panes. Next column 2 was glued onto column 1, and column 4 was glued onto column 3. Then column 4/3 was glued onto column 2/1. Lastly, the single strip containing panes from all four columns was glued into the front cover strip. So, in all booklets, the top pane is from the last column on the right, and the bottom pane is from the first column on the left.

To align the images of the four offset plates and the intaglio plate, four small offset crosses and one intaglio registration cross were printed in the left and right vertical margins of the web, located between the sixth and seventh booklet pane rows. While the crosses should have been trimmed away, traces remain when the trimming was slightly off. The lines in the intaglio “+” crosses are larger but much thinner than the offset “+” crosses.

At the left of Figure 4, the lower left corner of a position F booklet is shown that has the corners of the top three panes folded back to show the tips of the five “+” marks in the lower left corner of the position 21 pane. At right is the Lilac stamp of a position 24 pane showing the tip of the intaglio “+” mark near the lower right corner.

The right web margin also contains a copy of the 5 CCI square marks, as seen on the selvage tab of a position 34 pane. No Spring flower booklets are known to show (a part of) those squares, as they are positioned too far away and would require a large trimming failure. That apparently never happened for the Spring issue but pieces of those squares were found on Fall and Winter garden flower issues (see Figure 12 at right).

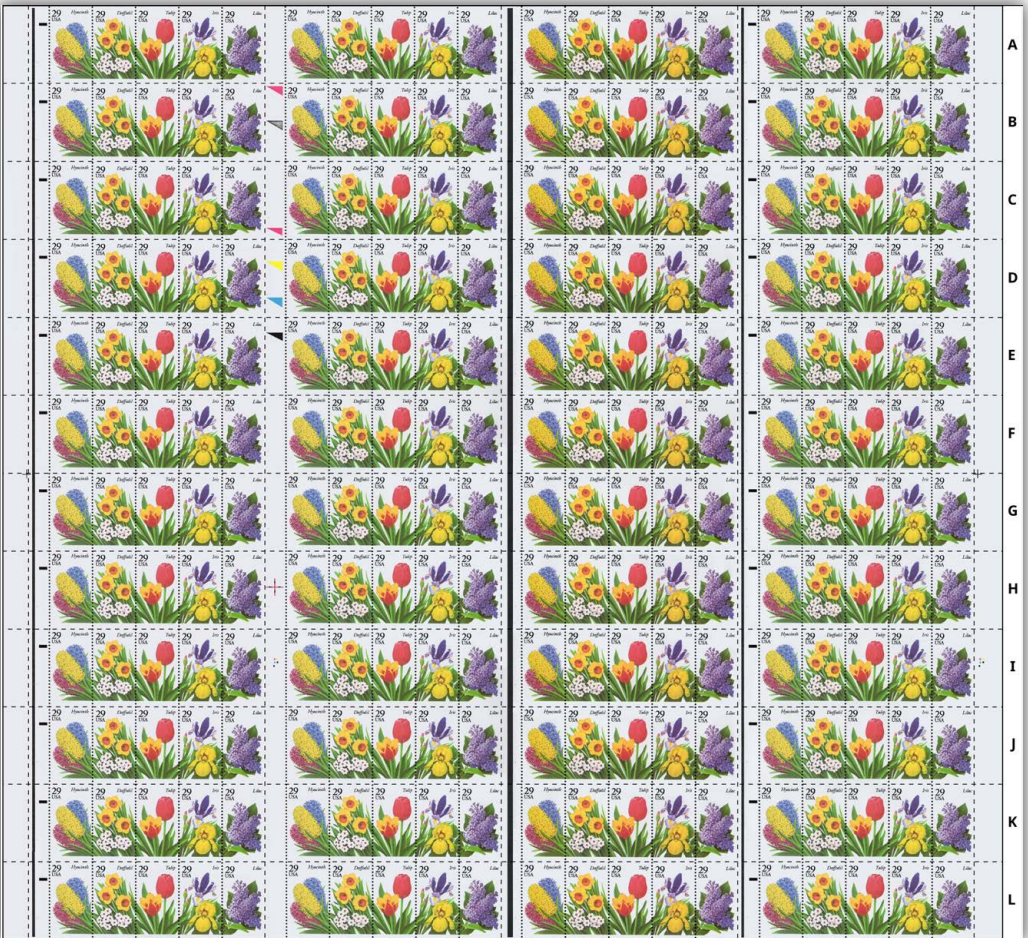


Figure 3. 2764a Spring flower plate layout (with Book-IDs added at right).



Figure 4. Alignment “+” crosses at left on the bottom pane’s tab in a booklet and at right on an unfolded pane.

Of the twelve booklets from each plate segment in Figure 3, only two have the same tab mark combinations, while eleven have different marks. Two plate sets were used, and unfolded panes from the first plate set were produced.

Book	Panes*	Identifying marks	Plate 1	Plate 2
A	4-1	Top CRL gaps on panes 1, 2 and 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	8-5	Black & Red triangles in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	12-9	Red triangle in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	16-13	Blue & Yellow triangles in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	20-17	Black triangle in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	24-21	Tick Mark @ LL corner in tab of 4th pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	28-25	Tick Mark @ UL corner in tab of 4th pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	32-29	"+" register cross in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I	36-33	Five "CC1" squares in tab of third pane	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J, K	44-37	Third pane plain; unbroken CRL on rest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L	48-45	Bottom CRL gaps on panes 1, 2 and 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 1. All the possible regular booklet combinations for BK208.

* Pane positions from a plate are numbered from left to right, top to bottom.

Table 1 lists all the regular booklet varieties as they were planned. However, some irregular booklets were discovered. During booklet assembly, columns 2/1 and 4/3 went “out of sync.” Several booklets are known that contain position A panes from columns 2/1 and position L panes from columns 4/3. The pane order in such a booklet is visualized in Figure 5.



Figure 5. Pane order in the A/L hybrid booklet, from top pane to bottom pane.

The panes in booklet A are cut high so they show the full CRL gaps at top, therefore the position L booklet just ahead in the web roll will not show the CRL gaps at bottom but still have an untagged tab strip at bottom which proves they are from position L. Several position B/A hybrid booklets are also known, and certainly other “out of sync” booklets still exist, waiting to be discovered.

For the booklet specialist, finding booklet positions F and G is extremely difficult, as the tick marks are tiny and only a portion of the “+” intaglio mark usually survives

trimming. All panes are fully glued in the tab area, so it is often impossible to “peek” at the tab without damaging the pane tabs. So, the positions F and G booklets look just like the positions J and K booklets. Some booklet specialists were lucky to procure fresh pads of booklets at their cooperating post offices, so they were able to deduce positions F and G sandwiched between positions E and H in the pads.

Of the 48 panes from each web segment, at least 22 can be positioned by their unique marks. Table 2 lists all possible varieties, excluding those that could have occurred only if the panes resulted from web miscuts that included small bits of marks from a neighboring pane.

Positions	Identifying marks	Plate 1
1	Narrow CRL with gap at top; Untagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Plain tab with tagging gap along top edge	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Wide CRL with gap at the top	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Narrow CRL with gap at top; Tagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
5, 9, 13, 17, 29, 33, 37, 41	Narrow CRL with no gap; Untagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Intaglio Black and offset Red triangles in tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27, 31, 35, 39, 43	Wide CRL with no gap at either end	<input type="checkbox"/>
8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28, 32, 36, 40, 44	Narrow CRL with no gap; Tagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Offset Red triangle in tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Offset Blue and Yellow triangles in tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Offset Black triangle in tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Tip of "+" register mark in LL corner of tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
22, 26, 38, 42	Plain tab without tagging gaps	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Tip of "+" register mark in LR corner of pane	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Tip of "+" register mark in UL corner of tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	Tip of "+" register mark in UR corner of pane	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Offset & intaglio "+" color registration cross	<input type="checkbox"/>
34	Five small solid color "CC1" squares in the tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
45	Narrow CRL with gap at bottom; Untagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>
46	Plain tab with tagging gap at bottom edge	<input type="checkbox"/>
47	Wide CRL with gap at bottom	<input type="checkbox"/>
48	Narrow CRL with gap at bottom; Tagged tab	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 2. All the possible pane marks for unfolded plate 1 panes.

Figure 6 demonstrates the difference between an intaglio printed black triangle (position 6 pane at left) and an offset printed triangle (position 18 pane at right). The triangles are called “Bobst triangles” (named after the company that made that particular quality control device).



Figure 6. Tabs of position 6 and position 18 panes.

Both black triangles should look the same, but the intaglio triangle shows a weaker black. This is a well-known problem with recess printing since the earliest days of stamp production, often called ink scooping. With recess printing, the design is scratched into the plate, and the grooves and holes are filled with ink. The ink is transferred to the paper when it is pressed into the plate depressions after the plate is cleaned of surplus ink. When the surplus ink was wiped off the plate with a cloth, it often happened that the cloth would also suck out some ink from grooves and holes, particularly if these structures were large. The triangles are of such large designs that the chances of not enough ink left for a full black triangle were a given.

Reactions to UV Light

Booklet covers contain brighteners and are coated on the outside. The coating absorbs long-wave and most of the short-wave UV light, and the booklets appear dull violet. The covers are printed with red ink that reacts to short-wave UV with a bright glow.

The web was overall tagged, but the tagging mats did not cover the entire web area, so there are untagged strips at the left edge (including most of the tab area of the first pane column) and at the top and bottom edges. At right, the tagging mats covered just the right edge of the last pane column, so some top panes in a booklet might show a small untagged area along the right edge. This also applies to the summer and winter flower issue, but not to the fall issue, which was fully tagged and has no tagging gaps. Some tagging mats show significant degradation from excessive use.

Quite often, the tagging mats were slightly misaligned with the printing plates. Panes from the top row (positions 1–4) might not have a tagging gap along the top, as the entire gap is found on panes 45–48 of the previous plate. In that case position 2 panes are indistinguishable from positions 22, 26, 38, or 42. Also, quite often, the panes were not cut in the middle of the CRL gaps; the entire gap shows on panes from the top or bottom row in Figure 3.



Figure 7. Position 3 at left and position 48 at right.

So in some cases, for definitely determining positions 1 to 4 or 45 to 48, both the register lines and the tagging gap might have to be inspected.

The pane at left in Figure 7 is a position 3 pane as it has the top CRL gap with a fully tagged tab, but does not have the tagging gap at the top. The pane at right is the reverse situation. It has a tagged tab and the full tagging gap at the bottom, which makes it a position 48 pane, although it does not have the bottom CRL gap. Without looking under short-wave UV light, the pane at right might be mistaken for an “ordinary” position 8 pane.



Figure 8. Position 47 at left and a position 1 pane with degraded tagging mat at right.

The pane at the left in Figure 8 is a position 47 pane with a wide CRL without a bottom gap but with a full tagging gap at the bottom. The two tagging gap examples shown in Figures 7 and 8 show straight, clean gaps. However, the tagging mats were used beyond their useful lifetimes, as is shown by the pane at right in Figure 8. In this case, the tagging gap has turned into a mess that is essentially no longer recognizable as a thick line.

The tagging gap can be detected without using a UV source. The surface tagging layer adds a glossy look to the surface, and untagged areas will appear dull when looked at from a grazing angle.

The Freak Show

As with most issues using combination printers, errors and freaks are known where the intaglio section was not engaged or misaligned. In the first case, all panes miss the black lettering, plate number, and on position 6 panes, the intaglio black triangle mark.

Figure 9 shows the top pane in an intaglio missing printing.



Figure 9. BK208 missing intaglio black.

Freak booklets have the intaglio printing shifted to the left, creating a “misperforated look” (see Figure 10). These panes are almost always described as misperforated, but they are misaligned intaglio printings. The positions of the perforations are perfectly normal.



Figure 10. BK208 misaligned intaglio black.

Misaligned intaglio printing can lead to interesting marks appearing on the Lilac stamp near the right edge.



Figure 11. Plate number on Lilac stamp and intaglio register cross on misaligned printings.

On the left of Figure 11, a position 1 pane shows the plate number 1 shifted into the Lilac stamp. At the right of Figure 11, a position 24 pane shows the entire top half of the intaglio cross register mark at the lower right corner.



Figure 12. Fall flower booklets with marks on intaglio misaligned panes.

On the left of Figure 12, a position 25 pane from the Fall Flowers issue shows the upper left intaglio cross mark. At right of Figure 12, the full black intaglio CC1 square inside the right side of the center Rudbeckia flower can be seen.

A few booklets were found (from both plates) with missing perforations on the panes. Most booklets were exploded for individual panes, which usually show the traces

of the (sometimes crude) pane removal process in the tabs. No unfolded imperforate panes are known.



Figure 13. Imperforate top pane from a booklet.²

Due to their colorful covers and panes, the Garden Flower booklets were well received by the public and are considered some of the finest issues among the booklet specialists.

Acknowledgment

Valuable input and additional images from Michael O. Perry are greatly appreciated by the author.

References

1. Michael O. Perry, *Folded-Style and Pressure Sensitive Booklet Checklist*, Research Paper no. 2 (United States Stamp Society), <https://www.usstamps.org/download/research-paper-2-folded-style-booklet-checklist/>.
2. Robert A. Siegel Auction Galleries, Sale 1297 (October 1993), lot 851.



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George H. Grinnell's Fanciful Covers Show He Regarded Philately as Fun

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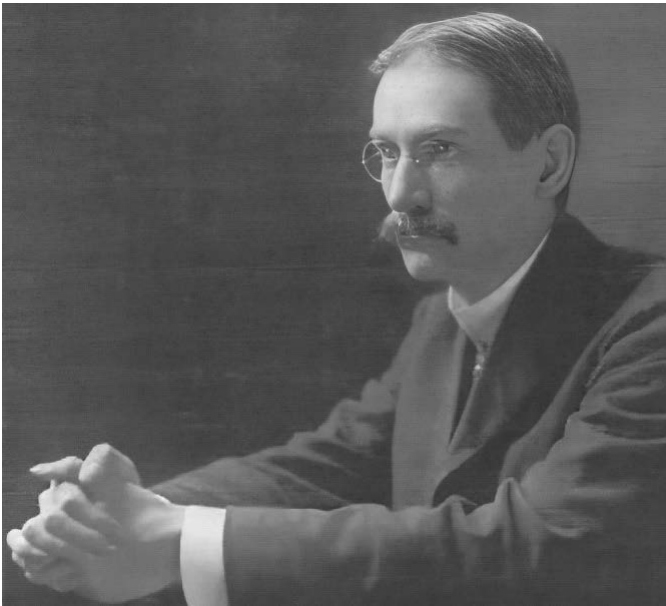


Figure 1. George H. Grinnell (1875–1949) was a stamp collector, schoolteacher, and a Mason originally from the Boston area. He has been known for the past century for the Hawaiian stamps he claimed to have received from an elderly man in Los Angeles. A judge ruled in 1922 that the stamps are forgeries. The author is not alone in believing that the stamps are genuine.

George H. Grinnell (Figure 1) is well known for the controversial early Hawaiian stamps he sold in 1919 to New York dealer John Klemann. When Klemann subsequently concluded that the stamps were forgeries, he sued Grinnell. A Los Angeles judge ruled in 1922 that the stamps were fakes and ordered Grinnell to reimburse Klemann for the purchase price—today about the equivalent of \$1 million.



Figure 2. Seemingly as a gag, George H. Grinnell mailed a registered letter in June 1913 to his wife. He applied a diagonally bisected corner 2¢ stamp (Scott 409), a Registry fee stamp (Scott F1) and an upside-down 1¢ stamp (Scott 408).

I have argued, in an article published in *Kelleher's Stamp Collector's Quarterly*¹ that the "Grinnell's" are genuine. Grinnell spent the rest of his life trying to convince the philatelic world that his Hawaiians were real. Opinions among respected philatelists remain divided and inconclusive.

There may be another facet to Grinnell's legacy which readers of this article are in a position to document. I was drawn to Grinnell's story by the envelope in Figure 2. It is a Registered cover he sent to his wife in 1913. Note the bisected margin imperf 2¢ stamp



Figure 3. George H. Grinnell sent this cover in 1918 to J. Segelken, probably a stamp collector, in Brooklyn, New York. He used a strip of three imperf flat plate coil stamps (Scott 408H) in lieu of a normal 3¢ stamp to meet the wartime letter rate.

(Scott 409) affixed between the 10¢ Registry fee stamp (Scott F1) and an upside-down margin 1¢ imperf stamp (Scott 408).

Grinnell clearly enjoyed concocting this oddball cover, which I had assumed was a one-off. However, I recently acquired another Grinnell cover (Figure 3) franked with a strip of three flat plate coil stamps (Scott 408H). It was posted in 1918 at the 3¢ wartime letter rate.

Did Grinnell habitually frank his covers in philatelically fanciful ways? The two covers shown here are suggestive, but additional examples would confirm that Grinnell created unusual covers, perhaps as a favor to fellow collectors. Was this the work of a forger or of someone who regarded philately as fun?

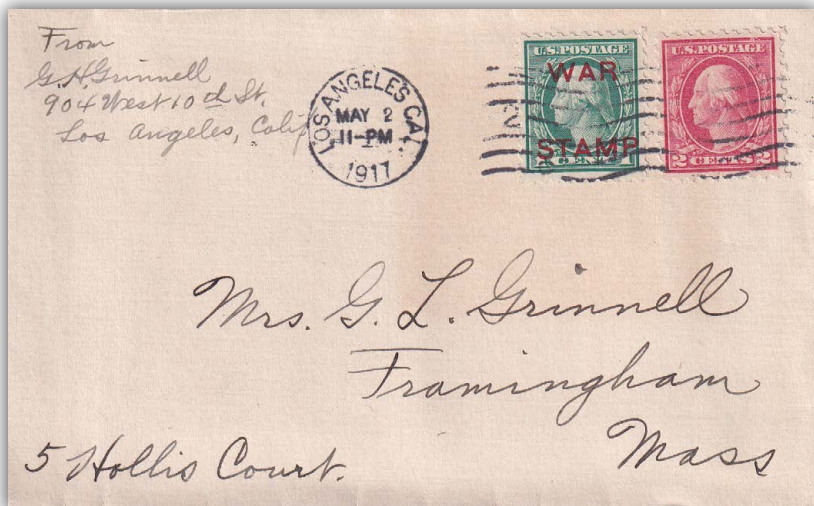
Watch for Grinnell covers that exhibit his apparent penchant for uncommon usages.

References

1. Kevin Lowther, "Among George Grinnell's Papers Are Evidence That His Hawaiian Missionaries Are Genuine," *Kelleher's Stamp Collector's Quarterly*, 1st Quarter 2023, 51–63.

Editor's Note

Below is another "creative" Grinnell cover, from my collection. It is franked with a one-cent stamp bearing a "War Tax" overprint, privately applied in 1917 by Charles S. Thompson, a stamp dealer in Los Angeles. Evidently, Thompson (and, presumably, Grinnell) advocated to increase the letter rate by a penny to fund World War I. They got their wish later in November 1917. This is another example of Grinnell's penchant for the unusual.



1917 cover from Grinnell to a relative, franked with a 1¢ stamp featuring a private "War Stamp" overprint. Courtesy of Andrew S. Kelley.



Report of the Executive Secretary

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 17661 Stephen Harsy, Verona, WI
 17662 David Street, Middlesex, UK
 17663 Robert Glenn, San Diego, CA
 17664 Kris Haggblom, Deland, FL
 17665 Brian Reef, Trevese, PA

APPLICATIONS PENDING

17654–17659

NEW MEMBERS

17651–17653

REINSTATED

7951 Scott Pelcyger
 12131 Gregory Lachowicz
 15926 Martin D. Green
 16450 Jacob Klerman
 17483 Larry Hanson
 17506 Michael Cortese

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February 28, 2026

1206

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 Reinstated 6

Total +9

SUBTRACTIONS:

Total 0

NET CHANGE +9

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

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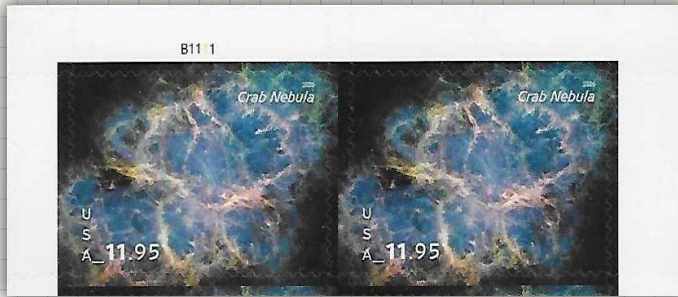
Plate Number Report

compiled by Kim D. Johnson

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#???? 4¢ Angel's Trumpets
B11111 UL UR LL LR
2r x 4c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8*
(illustrated last month)

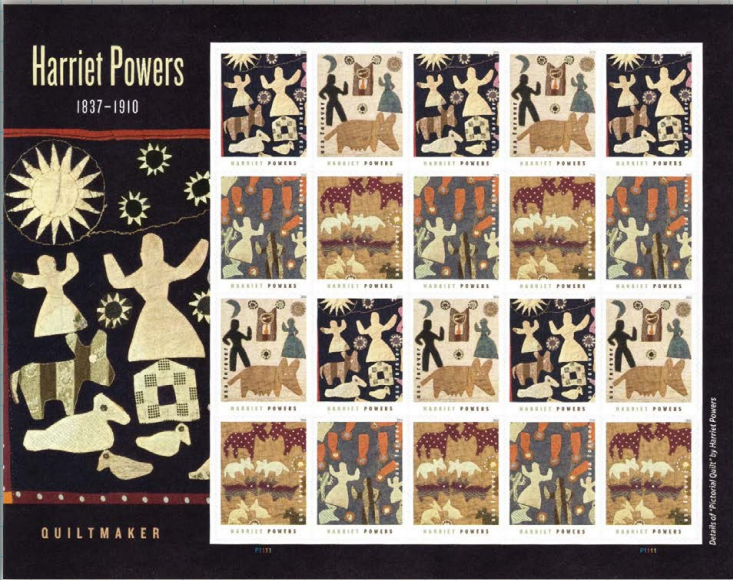
#???? 4¢ Angel's Trumpets Coil ▶
B11111



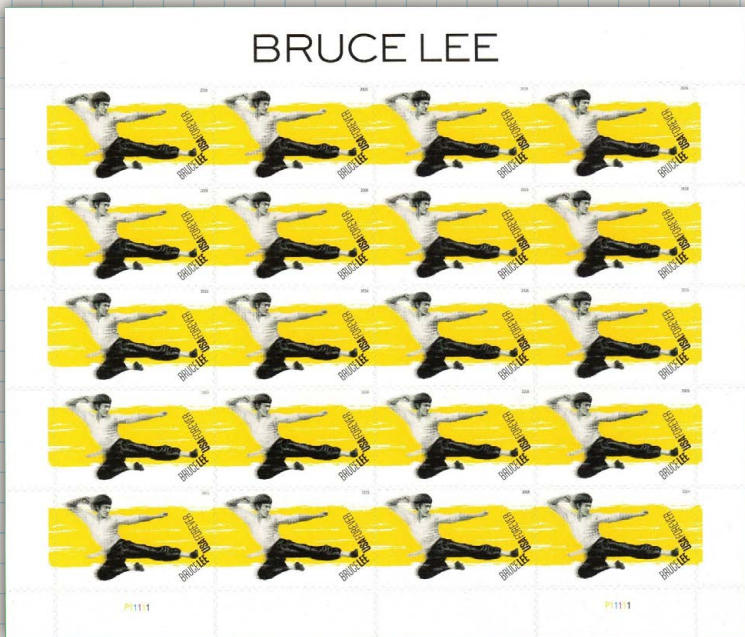
▶ #???? \$11.95 Crab Nebula
B1111 UL † † LR
2r x 5c 1,2,3,5,7,8,10



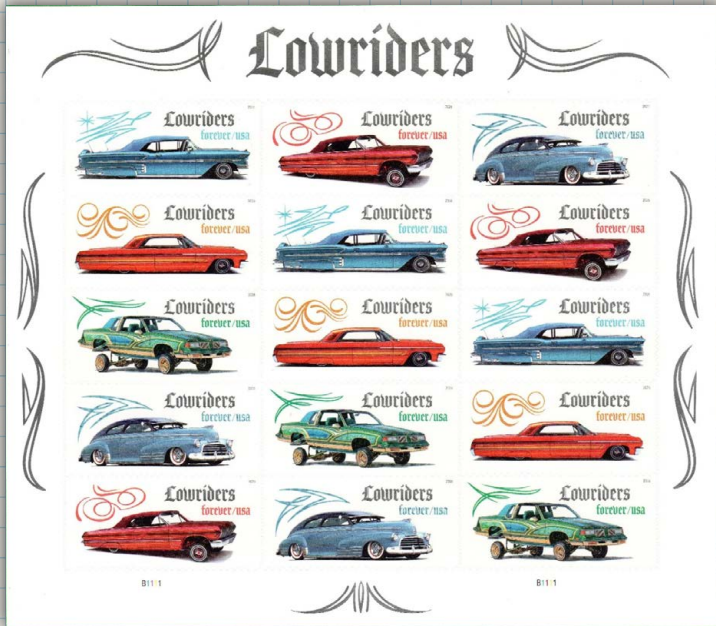
▶ #???? \$33.25 Galaxy Pair
B1111 UL † † LR
2r x 5c 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10



▲ #???? Harriet Powers
 P1111 † † LL LR
 3r x 2c 1,2,3,4,5,6*



▲ #???? Bruce Lee
 P1111 † † LL LR
 2r x 3c 1,2,3,4,5,6*



▲ #???? Lowriders
 B1111 ‡ ‡ LL LR
 3r x 2c 1,2,3,4,5,6*



▲ #???? Sunflower Booklet
 B1111

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