THE COLLECTORS CLUB

PHILATELIST

Volume 35, No. 2
March 1956

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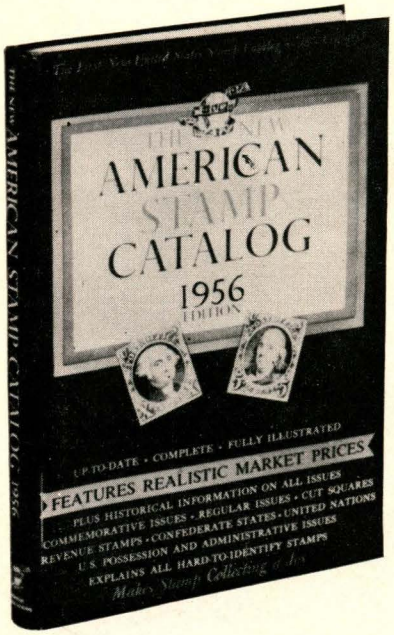
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THE COLLECTORS CLUB

PHILATELIST

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The Collectors Club Philatelist is published six times a year by The Collectors Club, Inc., 22 East 35th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Entered as second-class matter July 5, 1927, at the Post Office at Federalsburg, Maryland, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

This Anniversary Number

This number is dedicated to three occasions of great significance to philately in the United States. It celebrates *the sixtieth* anniversary of the Collectors Club, *the thirty-fifth birthday of* THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST, and *the fifth* international philatelic exhibition held in the country, the first having taken place in 1913.

The reader will see for himself what has been accomplished with this number. Its size marks it as one of the biggest of THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST ever issued. Its contents show the two main matters upon which the editors concentrated. The articles are diversified so as to generally represent specialties from every part of the world. The authors are all internationally well-known philatelists.

Examining the contents further, one will find three articles on United States—two on the 19th century and one about the most famous 20th century stamp; three on Europe —19th century Austria and France, and a 20th century rarity from Belgium; one each on Latin America, Africa and Asia; plus two general articles on stamp collecting and collectors.

As for the authors, all five members of THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST Editorial Board have contributed philatelic studies. The foreign authors represent two from the British Commonwealth and one each from South America, Belgium and Norway.

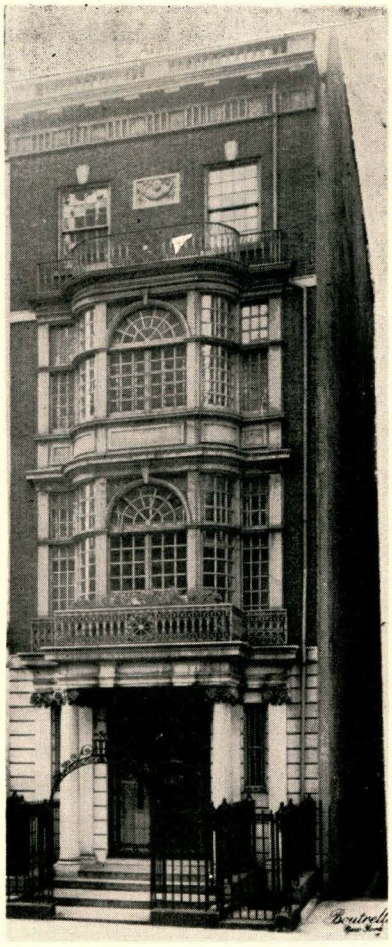


Fig. 1. The Collectors Club, 22 East 35th Street, New York City.



Fig. 2. The Main Library and Reading Room.

Our new cover is the creation of *Mr. Louis Stich,* who devoted many hours of thought, artistic ability and work to produce a cover suitable for this journal.

And finally it does not seem out-of-place to mention that all the work has been done in the true spirit of stamp lovers. Every bit represents voluntary efforts with the added sacrifice of an individual's expenditure of funds for the necessary research, illustrative work and preparation of the manuscripts. When one regards this admirable, conscientious spirit, that made this special number possible, along with the work of many volunteers staging the 5th International Philatelic Exhibition (FIPEX), one sees tangible evidence of the reason why philately holds the paramount position it does in the large field of hobbies.

The Collectors Club

As members of the Collectors Club are to be found in every state of the Union and in almost every country of the world, and as many of them have never had the good fortune to visit the Club, it may be useful—and we hope interesting—to record some facts about the Club and its home, along with some pictures of our clubhouse.

At 22 East 35th Street, in mid-town New York, is an attractive five story building (Fig. 1) which contains several unique material facilities, and some very important intangible features. Among the first is the outstanding philatelic library in America, containing some 10,000 volumes of inestimable value to the student and practitioner of philately. In the library, (Fig. 2) which occupies more than half the second floor of the building, are the current issues of some seventy-five philatelic periodicals, with complete files of bound volumes of many of them. An unusual feature of our library is the fact that properly introduced members of the public may enjoy the facilities it offers.

On the third floor rear is the Joseph S. Rich Memorial Room where complete files of the major general and specialized stamp catalogues of the world are kept up-to-date.



Fig. 3. The Joseph S. Rich Memorial Room.

These fill the bookcases on one entire wall. On other shelves in this room are U. S. Postal Guides, almanacs and other publications of interest to postal historians. There is also a valuable collection of stamp dealers' auction catalogues, many bound with prices. Also it is here that the editor of this magazine has his offices. (Fig. 3)

The third floor front has the Governor's Room with a large table, desk and many chairs for executive meetings of the Club, or where a smaller Study Group may gather. Covering almost every inch of the wall space are photographs of most of the Collectors Club's officers and governors, who have served us over this 60-year span. These photographs, especially the older ones, have proved a great attraction to visiting members and guests because they can see for the first time the true likeness of famous philatelists of the past known to most of them by name only.

The second floor front has a spacious lounge for the member's purposes, which temporarily is occupied by *the Association for Stamp Exhibitions, Inc.* in connection with the staging of FIPEX.

On the ground floor is the exhibition hall where twice a month the Club holds regular meetings, with authoritative talks, illustrated by many frames of stamps and covers, on a variety of subjects. (Fig. 4) Our membership is fortunate in having authorities on a wide range of philatelic interests, so that these meetings and exhibitions provide a unique source of valuable information to the members present. The hospitality of the Club is also extended to numerous special philatelic groups for their meetings; many use the exhibition hall for their specialty displays.

The fourth floor rear is leased by the PHILATELIC FOUNDATION, an organization separate from the Collectors Club, for its office and headquarters. The LUFF MEMORIAL room is in the front, devoted to philatelic research. (Fig. 5) It is dedicated to the memory of John N. Luff, one of America's distinguished philatelists and most of the room's furnishings are from Mr. Luff's personal effects. The top floor is for the residence of the Club's permanent staff, The Executive Secretary and Librarian.

The Collectors Club performs many services for philately. To mention but a few, it



Fig. 4. The Exhibition Hall.

annually bestows two of the most important American medals for philatelic achievement. The *Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award* for devoted service to philately has since its inaugural in 1952 already become to be ranked as one of the world's leading philatelic honors. (Fig. 6) The past winners of this Award are:

1952—Theodore E. Steinway, New York City

1953—Dr. Clarence W. Hennan Chicago, Ill.

1954—Dr. Carroll Chase Milford, N. H.

1955—August Dietz, Sr. Richmond, Va.

1956—Sir John Wilson London, England

THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST Medal (Fig. 7) is awarded to the author of the best article published each year in this magazine. In addition, *Certificates of Merit* are given to the authors of three other articles that the Awards Committee ranks next to the one outstanding. The authors and subjects selected since this medal was started are:

1948—Costa Rica, The First Issue by R. J. Mechin, and Alex A. Cohen

1949—China, R. A. Villard and The Stamps of China by L. F. Livingston

1950—Venezuela, The First Escuelas Stamps by C. W. Wickersham

1951—Colombia, The First Issues by Frederico G. Larsen

1952—China, The First Issue by Dr. Robert C. H. Lee

1952—(Special Award) Cumulative Index, COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST by Roland King-Farlow

1953—French Morocco, The 1943 Tour Hassan Issues by Charles Neidorf

1954—Travancore-Cochin, Its Stamps and Postal History by Frank M. Cowen and J. Devasya

The Club does more than offer its hospitality to individuals and organizations. It sends collections of philatelic material to exhibitions all over the world—exhibitions that are usually presented in Courts of Honor. Seldom do its members fail to support philatelic exhibitions in this and other countries.



Fig. 5. The John N. Luff Memorial Room

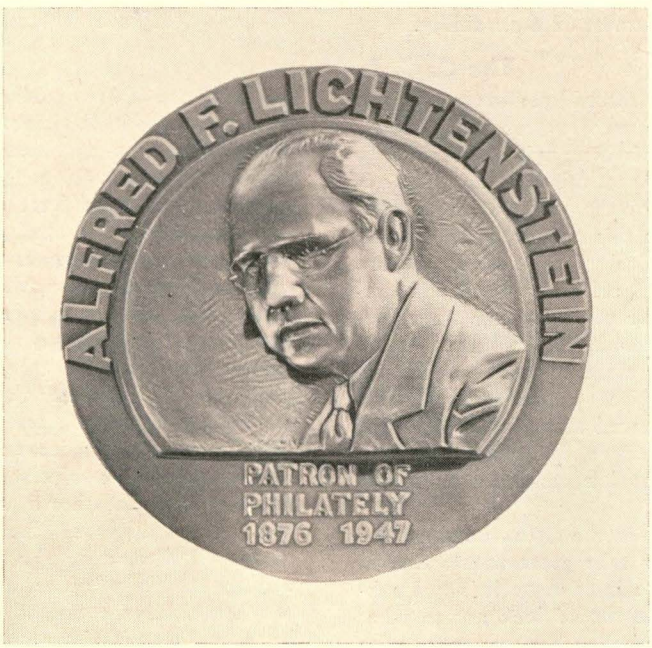


Fig. 6. The Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award.



Fig. 7. The Collectors Club Philatelist Medal.

As the recognized leader in American philately, the Collectors Club and its members always try to meet their responsibilities and opportunities to forward the best interests of the hobby to the utmost of their ability.

The C. C. P.

A "magazine of record" performs a unique service. It is dedicated to preserving knowledge, which often is done with a sacrifice to popularity. The finest minds in any field requires a medium for the preservation of their knowledge. Often this may be on an obscure and perhaps relatively less popular subject. Our circulation, therefore, is relatively limited; but, unlike the more popular stamp papers, our publication is retained much more widely for future reference and use. This is an essential service, appreciated perhaps mostly by the informed stamp collector. Yet this service, we believe, is needed. And so the Collectors Club has continued to supply it.

Looking back over the 35 volumes so far produced, one may take great satisfaction in the wide range of countries, periods and subjects covered. One should look not to what has been published, but rather attempt to note what has been omitted. We would venture the opinion that in the long history of the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST very few specialties have not appeared in this magazine.

Over the century or more of stamp collecting, there have been at least five hundred stamp papers in the English language alone. The list in other tongues certainly at least doubles this number. Yet, of them all, the number that have continued for more than a few years on a regular schedule is really very small. *Indeed, less than seven now extant can record continuous regular appearance for a quarter-century.* Only two that we know of, in our own country, outdo THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST in seniority.

Thirty-five years of continuous publication of this magazine will have been completed when 1956 ends. The first twenty-nine annual volumes were composed of four quarterly numbers each; from 1950 on we have had six numbers each year.

We hope that this issue of the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST adequately honors the three anniversaries now being celebrated. And we trust that it will bring our members all over the world into closer contact with their Club. We should like to have the "C. C. P." judged by this special edition, to which famous philatelists in various countries of the world have generously contributed.

F. I. P. E. X.

Fipex, the abbreviated name of the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition held in the United States, is a philatelic activity which is limited in time. It endures as a memory only, once the doors have closed, the exhibits are demounted, the stamps and the awards have gone to their owners. Such an exhibition, of short duration, though the result of some years devoted to planning and work, is nevertheless of lasting effect. Experience has shown that philately takes an upturn as a consequence of each such occasion.

Philately is, of course, given great favorable publicity. An increase in the number of collectors is an almost sure result. The finest of material shown, and the manner in which it is displayed, has definitely started many a collector into a new development, adding to his pleasure and knowledge, at previous similar occasions. So will it surely be when Fipex is history.

(Continued on Page 152)

UNITED STATES

Robert H. Morris' Letter Book of 1847-1848

By WINTHROP S. BOGGS

Among the many important, rare books relating to philately and postal history in The Collectors Club Library, and perhaps the most interesting from the point of view of the philatelic postal historian is a letter book of *Robert H. Morris,* Postmaster of New York City from 1845 to 1849. This book contains copies of all the letters he wrote from June 1847 to February 1848 in the conduct of his office. The period covered by these letters is one fraught with great significance to all students of United States postal affairs because it was during this period that the first general issue of adhesive stamps had been placed in use. Many of the letters refer to the new "stamps", as well as to other pertinent matters such as rates, routes, and the handling of the mails.

This letter book was found in the estate of the late Percy M. Doane, one of America's most beloved and reputable stamp dealers. It was through the courtesy of Mr. Hugh C. Barr and Mr. Gordon N. Usticke that it was acquired by the Collectors Club in 1950 for a rather modest price, thus placing it where it will be permanently available to interested philatelists. This book could have been sold to an individual for a far greater sum. But instead a great service was done by seeing that it was placed in America's foremost philatelic library.

This book is a board bound volume, 8½" x 11½". The leaves are of thin tissue paper, typical of the copying books used so extensively before the typewriter came into general use. There are altogether 979 letters in this volume, ranging from a few lines to several pages in length.

Having acquired this valuable piece of Americana, the Publications Committee of the Collectors Club determined that its contents should be made more readily available, and consequently embarked on the project of editing and publishing these letters in book form. The first step was to read carefully all the 979 letters with the view of selecting those of the greatest significance historically and philatelically. This was a tedious and difficult task, as they were written by several people (Mr. Morris employing two or three persons as secretaries to write for him), and abound in obsolete phrases and spellings. Further, many letters had become so faded that it was necessary to read them under the ultra-violet light, while others were so defective that the best methods of textual criticism were applied in determining their contents.

However, eventually this portion of the work was done. From these 979 letters, 279 were selected as important enough to warrant publication. These selected letters were then turned over to a professional transcriber, who typed them on standard letter size sheets. This work alone took over two years time.

These typed transcriptions were then compared with the letters to be sure that they were correct. The next step was to edit them—or rather to add a commentary giving such data as was necessary to provide the proper background and thus enlighten the present day student.

Further, suitable illustrations to enhance the interest and value of the proposed book have been selected so that the final result, we are confident, will be a book of great importance in the literature of American philately.

At the end of this article, we are publishing a few selected Morris letters as samples of the type of information generally contained. From these brief extracts it can be readily seen that a flood of light is thrown upon the affairs of the United States Post Office at this important juncture in its history.

In the near future, the complete details about this new publication will be announced. We consider that it will be one of the most important philatelic publications relating to philately of the United States, and that it will rank among the very top in the fine series of handbooks published by this Club.

Here are the few sample letters heretofore mentioned; together with our commentary upon their philatelic significance.

★

From these few examples we are confident that our previous statement, that the coming book will be one of the most important philatelic publications relating to the philately of the United States, is not an exaggeration.

★

"Post Office
City of New York
June 29th 1847.

"L. D. Brown Esqr
P. M. Lee, Berkshire Co.
Mass.

Dear Sir

Yours of the 11th in relation to prepaid stamps was duly received by me and should have been answered ere this had I known what to write.

Today an agent from the Post Office Department arrived in this city in relation to the stamps—

To obtain stamps you must write to the Post Master General for the amount you desire and he will enclose them to you. No stamps will be found before the 1st of July.

Truly yours,

(Signed) Robt. H. Morris—P. M."

The catalogues tell us that the 1847 stamps were issued July 1st of that year. The earliest use known is a 5c on an entire letter dated New York, July 9, 1847, now in the collection of Mr. C. C. Hart of Kansas City, Mo. The letter quoted herewith, however, makes it practically certain that July 1st is the date of issue.

"July 7th 1847.

"P. M.
Canandaigua

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 5th is rec'd. The prepaid stamps now used are issued and sold by the Department. The post bills with the column "Paid by Stamps" are furnished by the department, and I am directed to make the entry as has been in my post bill of the 3rd of July. The stamps are the evidence that the letter is paid, and no stamp "paid" is necessary. It would be wrong to place upon the letter the ordinary stamp "paid—" for this reason such letters would then in the accounts be confused with the letters I had rec'd money upon & would be likely to get entered in that column, by which I would be charged for Postage I had never received.

Truly yours

(signed) Robt. H. Morris—P. M."

Here is another letter which shows that stamps were in use July 3rd, because Mr. Morris explains a post bill of that date which had some letters noted as "Paid by stamps".

Post Office
City of New York
July 19th 1847

To the Postmaster
Ithaca, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I have a letter to-day from Johnson & Schuyler of your place stating that you exacted payment of postage upon a letter to them which had a government postage stamp upon it. If this was the case then you have acted under a misapprehension.

By the 11th Section of the act of Congress entitled "to establish certain post routes and for other purposes" approved March 3d 1847 it is enacted "That to facilitate the transportation of letters in the mail the Postmaster General be authorised to prepare postage stamps, WHICH WHEN ATTACHED TO ANY LETTER OR PACKET SHALL BE EVIDENCE OF THE PAYMENT OF POSTAGE CHARGEABLE ON SUCH LETTERS ETC." In accordance with this law the Postmaster General has caused Stamps to be prepared which in his new Rules Chapter 68 Section 497 he speaks of as follows. "Postage Stamps, one printed in black, representing the head of Washington of the Denomination of Ten cents, and the other printed in brown, representing the head of Franklin, of the Denomination of five cents, will be transmitted to any Postmaster at important points, upon their application in writing addressed to the third assistant Postmaster General."

The Post Office Stamp alluded to by Messrs Johnson & Schuyler must have been one of these stamps and of itself was evidence that the postage was paid. The red marks across it were made by a stamp the larger offices have to deface the postage stamps so that they cannot be taken off and used a second time. If any of them should come to your office without being defaced, then you must deface them with a pen—thus X.

Respectfully Yours

Robt H. Morris
PM

NB Please return the postage to Messrs Johnson & Schuyler.

The new method of paying postage by adhesive stamps was not understood by many postmasters. In this letter Mr. Morris explains to the postmaster of Ithaca, N. Y. (J. M. McCormack) both the purpose and the method to deface the recently introduced "postage stamps".

Post Office
City of New York
July 21, 1847

Postmaster
Philadelphia
Pa.

Dear Sir:

Yours of yesterday is received. The French Steamer UNION will leave this port on the 24th July; her mail closes at this office at 3 o'clock PM of the day of sailing.

The postage chargeable on matter to be forwarded by the Union, is the prepayment of ONE CENT, in addition to the regular inland U. S. Postage, on each letter, package or parcel.

As the Southern Mail seldom reaches this office before 3½ o'clock PM you had better send all matter intended to go by this steamer in the mail which leaves your office on the afternoon of the 23rd.

Yours truly

M. Monson Jr.
Asst PM

Many of the letters refer to various rates. In this one the Postmaster of Philadelphia, (George H. Lehman) is given information about a French steamer. The "prepayment of *one cent* in addition to the regular inland U. S. Postage", would, of course, be made in cash.

Post office
City of New York
August 10th 1847

A. G. Penn Esq
PM New Orleans

My Dear Sir:

The enclosed part of envelope to the Editor of the Delta New Orleans, with two five cent post office prepaid stamps upon it was handed into my office by the correspondent in this city of the Delta with the statement that you deeming these stamps counterfeit had exacted from the Delta payment of the postage upon the letter.

The stamps are genuine—the marks upon them were made by the Stamp which we use to kill these stamps.

Will you please refund the ten cents to the Editor of the Delta.

Very Truly Yours

Robt H. Morris
PM

This letter shows that the Postmaster of so large an office as New Orleans, (Alexander G. Penn) did not understand what the cancellation was. In addition we have the origin of the term "killer" for a defacing device. As a matter of fact on July 29, 1947 there was despatched from Washington, D. C., 9000 five cent and 6000 ten cent stamps to New Orleans.

Post Office
City of New York
August 17. 1847

J. H. H. Park Esq
Postmaster
Binghampton N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Your order, enclosing Twenty Dollars, for stamps is received.

Herein I forward to you Fifteen Dollars worth of 5 cent stamps and Five Dollars worth of 10 cent stamps.

Respy Yours

Robt H. Morris PM
per H. Reed Cor. Clk.

Students of early United States stamps sometimes have been puzzled by the use of stamps from an office prior to any official record of said office receiving a supply. In this letter we have one explanation of this occurrence. No doubt the Postmaster of Binghampton wanted to try the new method of prepayment before ordering directly from Washington. The result must have been satisfactory for in December 1847, Binghampton was sent 1,900 five cent and 100 ten cent stamps by the Post Office Department.

Post Office
City of New York
August 17. 1847

James M. Buchanan Esq
Postmaster
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Sir:

Yours of yesterday is received. The postage on letters from your office, to go by the French Steamer from this port, is the regular U. S. Inland postage.

Letters by the "Sarah Sand" MUST pay 25 cents for every half ounce, in addition to the U. S. Inland postage.

Letters by the "Packets" SHOULD pay 12½ cents for every half ounce, in addition the U. S. inland postage.

When letters arrive at this office with the Packet postage (12½ cents) unpaid we get them forwarded by transient vessels, who carry them without demanding freight.

Respy Yours

Robt H. Morris PM
per H. Reed Cor. Clk.

Here is another letter discussing foreign rates. The regular vessels charged 12½c or 25c per half ounce as "freight", while transient vessels (tramps) were willing to take letters without charge.

Post Office
City of New York
August 28th 1847

To The PostMaster
at Montreal

Dear Sir:

The enclosed letter envelope addressed to "Mr. Web Woodcock Care of Marshas & Shepherd, Montreal Canada" with two Five cent prepaid government stamps upon them has been returned to me with the statement that you required 10 cents to be paid to you upon it, for the United States Postage. If this is so then I presume you have not been aware that those stamps are those of the government, for which the government has rec'd the money & that they are the evidence that the United States Postage is paid. The Government has a stamp—The head of Washington on black, of the denomination of Ten Cents. Will you please answer this and inform me if this statement is correct that the postage may be refunded by me.

Truly yours

Robt H. Morris
PM

The postal arrangements between the United States and Canada have engaged the attention of a number of postal history students. The Postmaster of Montreal (James Porteous) also was the United States mail agent for correspondence to and from the United States and Canada.

The use of stamps from offices, which never received any from the Department, has generally been ascribed to a "traveller". However, the two following letters throw light on this situation.

Post Office
City of New York
Sept 11. 1847

Postmaster
Poughkeepsie

Dear Sir:

Yours of yesterday enclosing $10 for that amount of 10 ct stamps is rec'd. Herein I send you 100 ten cent stamps.

Resptfy Yours

Robt H. Morris
PM

Post Office
City of New York
February 4. 1848

J. M. King Esq
Morristown
N. J.

Sir:

Yours of the 3thd inst enclosing one Dollar for that amount of U. S. postage stamps. I enclose you twenty, FIVE cent postage stamps.

Respy Yours

Robt H. Morris
PM

In the first, the Postmaster of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Mr. Egbert B. Kelley, had a hundred 10 cent stamps sent up to him. These were either for sale at the post office, which is unlikely as he probably would have also ordered some 5 cent stamps, or at the request of a patron who had extensive correspondence with someone more than 300 miles away. The latter seems more likely.

Poughkeepsie, N. Y. never received any 1847 stamps directly from the Department.

In the second of these letters we have an enterprising citizen who wanted some stamps, and accordingly bought twenty 5-cent ones. Morristown, N. J. like Poughkeepsie, N. Y., never received any 1847 stamps directly from the Department.

Post Office
City of New York
Oct 12. 1847

Postmaster
Trumansburg
Tompkins Co. N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 7th inst is rec'd enclosing to me a letter addressed to "P. S. Vandeveer" of your place by his son "Cornelius Vandeveer" of this city also asking me to inform you whether the postage on the letter was prepaid. I sent for Mr. Cornelius Vandeveer. He called upon me and stated that he deposited the letter in the box of a private dispatch post in this city, which has no connection with the Government office, and paid the postage, 5 cts, to a boy who calls at the box to take the letter to the Post Office. This boy has either forgotten to pay the postage on the letter or has designedly withheld the money, as the postage has not been paid at this office. As appears from the want of the Stamp PAID on the letter. When letters at this office reach yours marked "via Owego" and rated 10 CENTS you should deliver the letter for 5 CENTS, making an overcharge of the balance. My clerks do sometimes in the great hurry of business send letters by the quickest route which are directed by the way of Owego. Mr. Vandeveer promised me he would write to his father explaining the circumstances and appeared to regret that the Department was blamed for what appeared to him to be his own fault.

I enclose to you Mr. V's letter which you will please deliver for 5 cts and make an overcharge as above suggested.

Trusting that this letter will make things satisfactory with the elder Mr. Vandeveer.

I am yours

Resp'y

Robt H. Morris
PM

Trumanburg is 317 miles from New York City, near Ithaca, N. Y. and Cornell University. The P. M. was Lyman Strobridge. It would be interesting to know to which of the local posts Mr. Vandeveer was referring. There were quite a number operating in New York City at that time, but Boyd's was by far the largest and most active.

UNITED STATES

The Grill and Other Patents of Charles F. Steel relating to Postage Stamp Production, 1867-1875

By H. D. S. HAVERBECK

Introduction

As philately progresses through the years, the further we become removed from the facts affording us knowledge of the earlier methods of stamp production. Our current knowledge will remain static, depending entirely upon the writings of the earlier philatelists. In turn, their knowledge not always had been acquired directly from the official records or other documentation. Much of it was empirical. Many things now accepted as fact about early stamps were arrived at by the method of deductive reasoning from the evidence presented by the study of the stamps themselves. Consequently, when new evidence turns up, contradictions appear of the statements that have long been accepted as factual.

Recently Mr. John J. Britt, a former president of this Club, had the opportunity of acquiring some old documents concerning the period of years from 1867 to 1875. Among these were both a letter file and patent papers relating to the production of United States stamps during these years. He brought the papers to the attention of some, who were currently engaged in the study of the stamps issued during this time. These papers *are most important, because they provide documentary evidence from the years when grills were applied to our postage stamps.* Since John N. Luff * had published his monumental work on United States stamps, no further factual evidence seems to have been recorded about these particular stamps.

These patent papers and letters are deemed so important that their contents must become a part of the philatelic record. Therefore, the Publications Committee of the Collectors Club called upon the writer to study and prepare these documents for this publication.

My policy in this work is to act as a recorder first, and, secondly, as an interpreter. If disclosure of these records refutes, amends or substantiates past beliefs, which have been accepted as fact, this was of lesser concern. *The essential task is recording the evidence.*

In the course of this work, some papers were found that referred to the contract for printing stamps by the Continental Bank Note Co. after the one with the National Bank Note Co. had expired. Therein are found clues that shed light upon the matter of the identifying marks, which United States philatelists call *"The Secret Marks"*. Therefore, at the end of this work we have added those portions of the documents relating to "The Secret Marks".

Security against Re-use

When printing obligations like securities, currency or stamps, governments always wish to guard against the possibility of counterfeiting and misuse. Government obligations, especially postage stamps, offer a further problem, that of re-use. Shortly after postage stamps were introduced in the United States, our Government decided to take steps to guard against the loss of postal revenue through the removal of cancellations and their consequent re-use.

* "Postage Stamps of the United States", by John N. Luff, Scott Stamp & Coin Co., New York, 1897.

During the thirteen years between 1864 and 1877 there seems to have been a wholesale craze for this form of fraud upon the government's revenues in the United States. This is most clearly presented in a letter dated December 13, 1865 from A. N. Zevely, Third Assistant Postmaster General, to Charles F. Steel, No. 1 Wall St., New York, N. Y. This letter reads:

"Dear Sir: Yours of 11 inst. is received. This Department wants a postage stamp from which it will be impossible to remove canceling marks without destroying it. If you establish your claim to such an invention, it might be introduced thro' the National Bank Note Co. As to compensation the Postmaster General would consult Congress. Or he might negotiate subject to the approval of Congress. It will be necessary to continue the manufacture in present hands, and your better plan might be to arrange with the contractors. If then your stamps and price suited the Postmaster General he might ask the necessary legislation". (Refer to Fig. 2).

Let us digress here to examine what manner of man this Charles F. Steel was, to whom this letter was addressed. This will be done only from the point of view of the student of philately. It is known that Mr. Steel was "a postage stamp man". He did not graduate into postage stamp production from other work. He was a producer of postage stamps from first to last. From the study of the documents available, it is clear that he was, what would today be called, a sub-contractor. He took the finished prints from the engravers and printers, converting them into postage stamps by gumming and perforating. There is a resumé of his business career extracted from his letter to the Hon. John Wanamaker, dated in Philadelphia, July 22, 1889:

"I entered into the employ of Messrs. Toppan, Carpenter and Co. of Philadelphia, in the manufacture of U. S. Postage Stamps in 1855. In 1861 that firm was underbid for this contract by the National Bank Note Co. of New York, and I went to New York and fitted up their establishment to do the work, and was their Superintendent for twelve years, until 1873. In 1873 the Continental Bank Note Co. underbid the National Bank Note Co. for the contract, and I fitted up their establishment and was their Superintendent and sub-contractor for four years. 17 years I was Superintendent and I was connected with it 21 years.

"In 1877 I organized the Franklin Eng. and Printing Co. of N. Y. (now the Franklin Bank Note Co.) and was its president three years until 1880. . . . "

The period which interests us the most is that of Steel's connection with the National Bank Note Co. and the Continental Bank Note Co. The documents which are in the possession of the Collectors Club of New York point up some of the practices and problems associated with postage stamp production during the early 1860's. We quote from pertinent portions of them as follows:

1. From the National Bank Note Company, No. 1 Wall Street, New York, Sept. 12th, 1861.

"U. S. Postage Stamp Department. Chas. F. Steel, Manager. Sir. You are directed to put in force the following arrangement:

"Daily task for expert perforators 7,500 sheets per day—for which will be paid $5.00 per week.

"Overwork will be paid at the rate of 12½ cents per 1000 sheets, unless the amount perforated beyond the daily task shall reach 2500 sheets, in which case 20 cts. per 1000 sheets will be paid.

"Daily task for expert gummers 1000 sheets per day—for which will be paid $4.00 per week.

"Overwork will be paid at the rate of 12½ cts. per 100 sheets.

"All capable of performing the daily task shall be considered "Expert" and paid accordingly.

J. Macdonough, Secretary"

(Refer to Fig. 1).

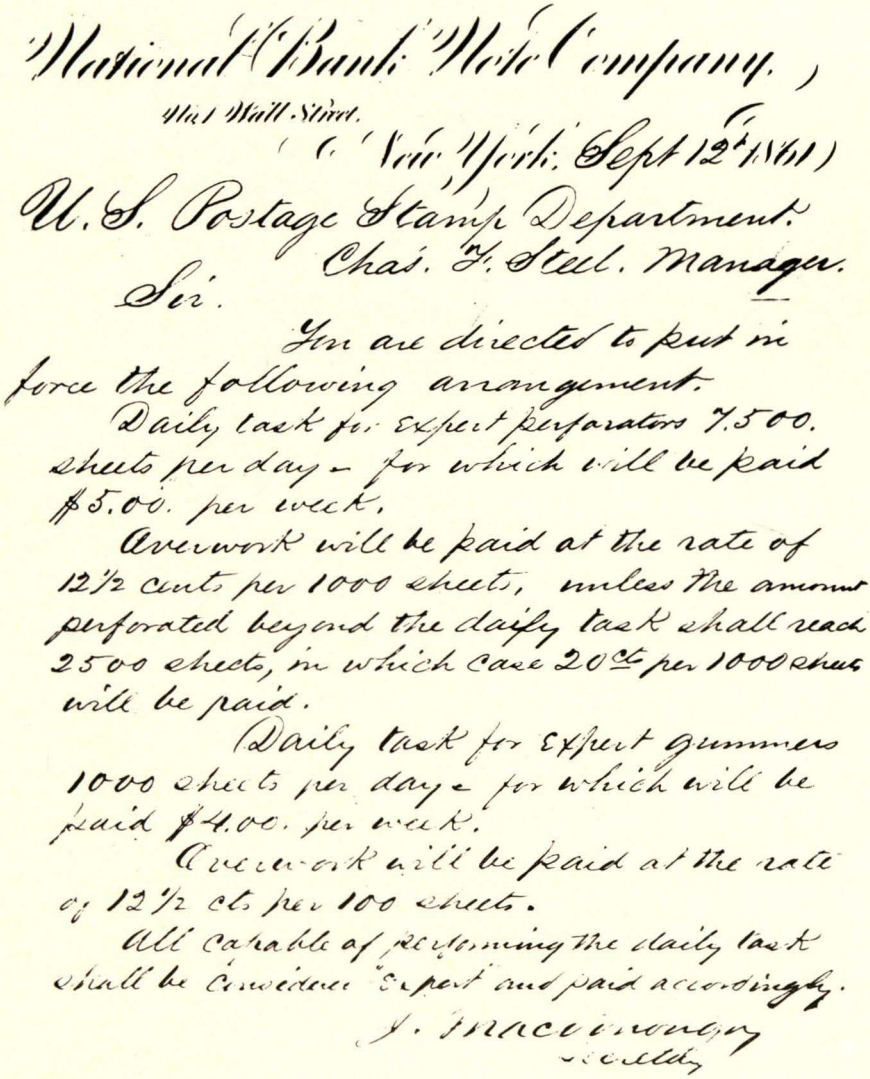
On June 1, 1864, Mr. Steel signed a three year contract with the National Bank Note Co. at a salary of $2500.00 per year. Now we can return to the development of the patents covering the grill.

Let us refer to a letter from A. N. Zevely, Third Assistant Postmaster General, dated December 20th., 1865, addressed to Charles F. Steel.

"Sir: Acknowledging the receipt of the samples of stamps, submitted by you with which I am favorably impressed, I have to state that no definite judgment can be formed

of their actual merits until they shall have been passed through certain practical tests. The best of tests would be this: that you make arrangements with the National Bank Note Co. to manufacture a certain number of these stamps, to be sent out, sold and used, as the present stamps. If they prove to be what is wanted this fact would soon become apparent and the Department would be prepared, after such a successful trial, to enter into arrangements for their adoption".

It does not seem that this plan had been followed immediately. There is a hiatus in the documentation until 1867. On November 22 of that year, patent No. 70,147 was granted to Charles F. Steel of Brooklyn, N. Y. We quote here from the original



National Bank Note Company,
Nos 142 Wall Street.
New York, Sept 12th 1861

U. S. Postage Stamp Department.
Chas. F. Steel. Manager.

Sir.

You are directed to put in force the following arrangement.

Daily task for expert perforators 7.500. sheets per day — for which will be paid $5.00. per week.

Overwork will be paid at the rate of 12½ cents per 1000 sheets, unless the amount perforated beyond the daily task shall reach 2500 sheets, in which case 20 cts per 1000 sheets will be paid.

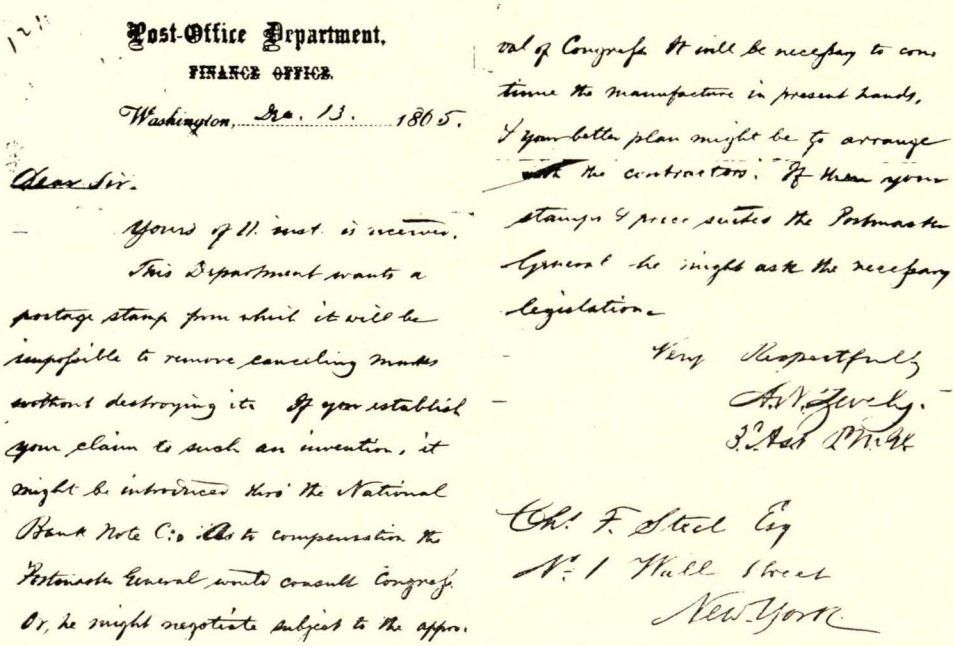
Daily task for expert gummers 1000 sheets per day — for which will be paid $4.00. per week.

Overwork will be paid at the rate of 12½ cts per 100 sheets.

All capable of performing the daily task shall be considered "expert" and paid accordingly.

J. Macfarlane
Secretary

Figure 1. Original letter of instruction to Chas. F. Steel by the National Bank Note Co. dealing with wages to be paid to gummers and perforators and setting forth the minimum daily task for each type of worker.



Post-Office Department,
FINANCE OFFICE.

Washington, Dec. 13. 1865.

Dear Sir.

Yours of 11. inst. is received. This Department wants a postage stamp from which it will be impossible to remove canceling marks without destroying it. If your claim to such an invention, it might be introduced thro' the National Bank Note Co. Also to compensation the Postmaster General could consult Congress. Or, he might negotiate subject to the approval of Congress. It will be necessary to continue the manufacture in present hands, I your better plan might be to arrange with the contractors. If them your stamps & press suits the Postmaster General he might ask the necessary legislation.

Very Respectfully
A. N. Zevely.
3d Asst P.M.G.

Chs. F. Steel Esq
No. 1 Hull Street
New York

Figure 2. Original letter from A. N. Zevely, Third Ass't Postmaster General to Chas. F. Steel dated Dec. 13, 1865. This is the earliest statement that the Government desired a postage stamp "from which it will be impossible to remove cancelling marks without destroying it".

sample file as deposited with the United States Patent Office.* (See Figures 4 and 5) This document is now in the possession of Mr. John J. Britt, former President of the Collectors Club of New York.

"UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
"Charles F. Steel, of Brooklyn, New York
"Letters Patent No. 70,147, dated October 22, 1867.
"IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANUFACTURE OF POSTAGE STAMPS.
"The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"Be it known that I, Charles F. Steel, of the City of Brooklyn, in the county of Kings, and State of New York, have invented new and useful Improvements in the Manufacture of Postage Stamps, applicable, also, to other stamps, druggist's labels, etc.; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof.

"The object of my invention is to produce a stamp which shall stick better than usual, and which it shall be impossible to fraudulently remove and use again. Many efforts have been before made in this direction, but the difference in the dryness between the recently-applied cancelling-ink and the long-before-applied ink of the printing so greatly facilitates the removal of the former that it is frequently easy to wash off cancelling-ink with so simple chemicals as common soap and water, even when the cancelling-ink is of the same kind and quality as the ink with which the stamp is printed.

"A part of my invention is embossing or partially breaking the paper, so as to open the texture of the paper along certain lines, without removing any part thereof. This causes the stamp, label, etc., to stick better and allows the oil of the cancelling-ink, when such is used, to strike in very deeply.

"Another portion of my invention consists in applying the gum to such stamps prior to

* This patent had been published previously in "The United Stamp Co. Herald", United Stamp Co., Chicago, Ill. October, 1912.

Post-Office Department,

Oct. 8. 1867.

Dear Sir

Yours of yesterday with enclosures is received.

I wrote on yesterday to the Bank Note Co. to send me samples, according to your plan & said I would experiment with them. My purpose is to send out a million or more as soon as possible. You know I have long been in favor of the invention. The P. M. Gl is pleased with it. Your patent is ordered & will issue in a week or so.

Yours truly

Chs F. Steel Esq
Nyack

A. N. Zevely

Figure 3. Original letter from A. N. Zevely to Chas. F. Steel dealing with the proposal to distribute "a million or more" experimentally grilled postage stamps. This letter is dated October 8, 1867. This is the earliest reference to the distribution of experimentally grilled stamps. Careful reading of this document indicates that distribution is proposed. From this it is hard to reconcile the fact that the experimentally "grilled all over" stamps are reported used earlier than this date.

the breaking operation. This avoids its too much filling such broken places, and impairing its appearance on the front side.

"Another portion of my invention consists in smoothing the paper again after the embossing or breaking, and prior to the printing. This allows it to be printed better, and to present a more finished appearance.

"And another portion of my invention consists in leaving certain parts of the stamp, so broken, in a clean or unprinted condition. This allows such part to absorb the cancelling-ink still more perfectly, when such is used.

"My improved stamp may be more cheaply produced than any stamps adapted to effect this purpose which are known to me.

"I will first describe what I consider the best means of carrying out my invention, and will afterwards designate the points therein which I believe to be new. The accompanying drawings (Fig. 5) form a part of this specification.

"Figure 1 is a face view of my stamp complete.

"Figure 2 represents a cross-section of the stamp on line *s s*, when made according to a portion of my invention.

"Figure 3 is a cross-section when made according to the preferable plan.

"Figure 4 is a greatly magnified cross-section, showing the paper in its original condition.

"Figure 5 represents the same gummed, the gum being represented in red.

"Figure 6 represents the same embossed.

"Figure 7 represents the same after having been again flattened, ready for use.

"Figure 8 represents the same after printing. The printing ink is shown in blue.

"Figure 9 represents the same after the cancelling-ink is applied, and

"Figure 10 represents the same after the cancelling-ink is washed off from the surface, showing its retention in the body of the paper.

"Similar letters of reference indicate like parts in the several figures where they occur.

"I select suitable paper, and, applying the gum on one face, let it dry. I then press the entire sheet between embossed plates, or pass it through between embossing rollers. I then flatten a portion of the whole of the paper, so as to nearly remove all indications of the embossing, except that the fibre of the paper remains disturbed, and partially broken. After this I print on the surface thus prepared.

"I esteem it greatly preferable to leave a portion of each stamp unprinted, and untouched either by the printing device or the flattening device, but some of the advantages of my invention may be attained without thus proceeding.

"I do not deem it necessary to describe the devices for embossing, flattening, printing, etc., as they may be of any convenient character known to mechanics; but I prefer surface printing, as it is more easy by that style of printing to leave a portion of each stamp untoucned and unaffected.

"The ordinary surface of a stamp which is printed by a plate is more compressed than usual. When paper is intensely compressed by the severe contact of the polished plate therewith it becomes more dense and impervious; and when upon the surface of paper so compressed is laid, as usual, nearly a continuous coating of thick ink—that used in printing the stamp proper—and the same is allowed time to become thoroughly dried, it is difficult for the cancelling-ink to strike into the material of the paper. But in my stamp, made in the manner which I most prefer, the paper is not compressed by the plate, and is not covered with well-dried ink at the points referred to, but, on the contrary, it is strained open, and formed into cavities sufficiently large to offer free access to the oil, and to the coloring matter of the cancelling-ink. . . . "

There follows here a further elaboration of the points already made with reference to the drawings illustrated. We note the arguments brought forth here for the use of typography in place of line engraving in the production of stamps. (See Figure 6). This was not adopted in the finished product; nor was the recommended design followed. (See Fig. 4). From the language of the patent, it may be inferred that at the time the patent application was filed, it was intended that the embossing should precede the printing of the stamps. Evidently experience soon showed that this order of manufacture was not practical. The routine used by the National Bank Note Co. was as follows:—

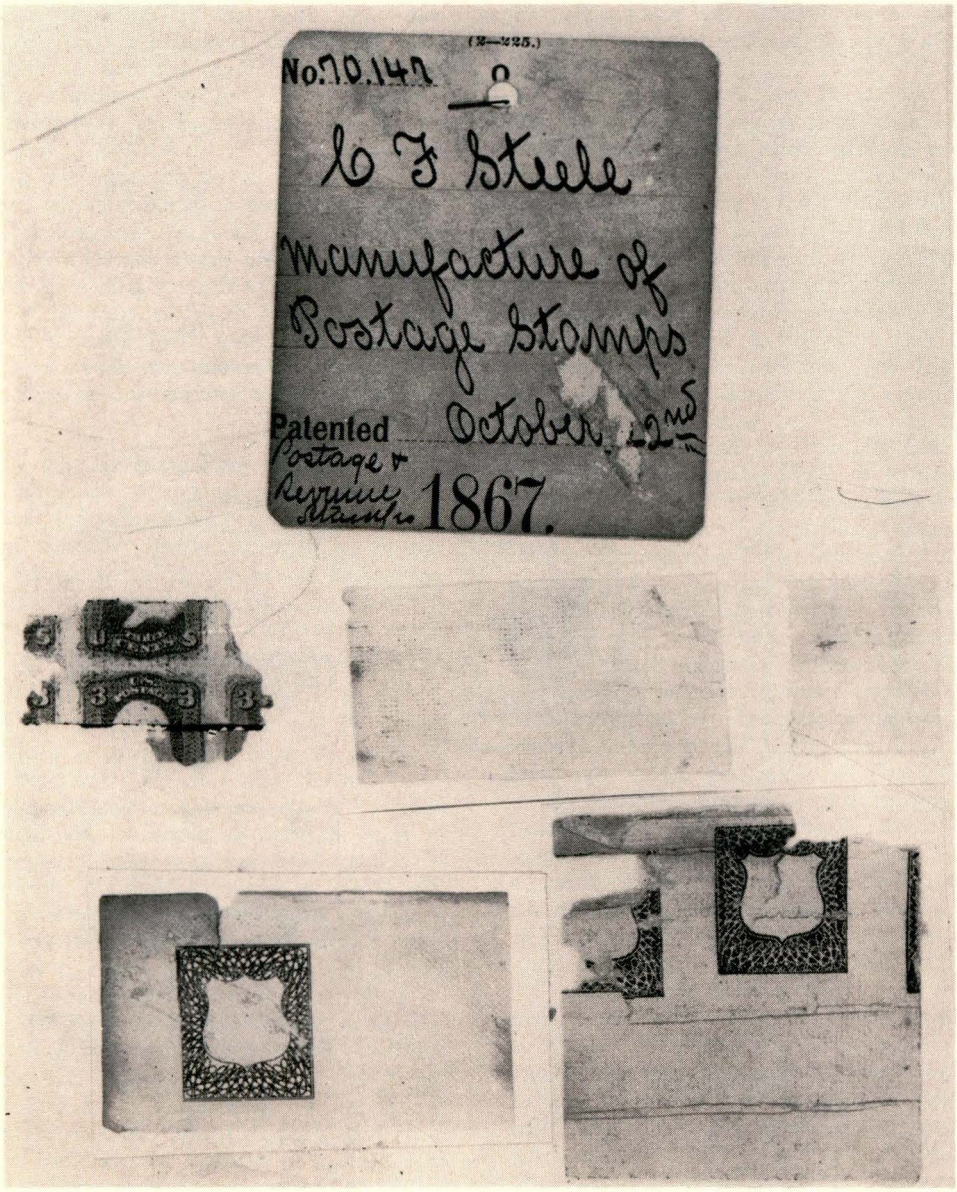


Figure 4. Original sample deposited with the United States Patent Office in support of Patent No. 70,147 granted to Chas. F. Steel on October 22, 1867. The samples show the proposed stamp designs of Mr. Steel as well as the patent applied to the 3 cent, 1861. Original samples of the grill. Photo by Boutrelle.

printing, gumming, pressing, embossing, perforating, and, finally, pressing again with five hundred tons pressure. This was so great as to reduce the embossed portion nearly to the level of the stamp. But the breaks in the paper were not thus closed up fully.

In the actual practice, the grill was produced by a roller and not by a plate as mentioned in the patent. To make this roller, a cylinder of soft steel was placed in a turning lathe and a knurl pressed firmly against it. (A knurl is a small steel wheel that has its rim covered with small, pyramidal bosses.) As the cylinder rotated in the lathe, the bosses on the knurl produced indentations in it. The entire surface of the finished roller is covered with small pyramids which form a continuous spiral around it. This was the form of roller first used. It produced the "Grilled all over" varieties. Since the production of the grill rollers and their results have been fully discussed by many previous students, particularly Stevenson, Wiley and Perry * it would seem unnecessary to repeat the descriptions herein.

Now we return to the chronological study of the documents themselves. John N. Luff in his monumental, "Postage Stamps of the United States", on page 100 states as follows:

"The date at which the grilled stamps came into use is unsettled. The *American Journal of Philately* for June, 1871 (page 67) gives the date as August 8, 1867. Tiffany's *History of the Postage Stamps of the United States* says, 'adopted May 8, 1867'—There is in the Collection of Mr. H. E. Deats a pair of the 3 cents grilled all over, on the original cover and cancelled 'Savannah, Ga. Aug. 23, 1867'. All things considered, August 8, 1867, seems a very probable date".

Since Mr. Luff wrote the above, two earlier uses have been discovered. There is a cover from Racine, Wis. mailed "August 14, 1867" † Also P. M. Wolsieffer handled a cover mailed from "Beaver Dam, Wis. August 17, 1867". Both of these bear the 3-cent stamp grilled all over.

As the records disclose the patent was granted on October 22, 1867. The date, when this application was filed, is not known. But we believe that it should have been about six months prior to the granting of the patent. We have seen in the correspondence that Mr. Zevely suggested a trial period of usage prior to final approval as early as October, 1865. Further, the report of the Postmaster General, dated November 26, 1867, says:

"Experiments are in progress with a postage stamp printed on embossed paper, which seems to afford good security against fraud. The fibres of the paper being broken, cancelling marks almost necessarily penetrate, so that they cannot easily be removed without destroying the stamp. The adhesive properties are also promoted and other advantages secured which commend the invention to favorable notice".

With all this information in mind it is reasonable to assume that the cover reported by Luff as in the Deats collection and the two other covers mentioned, represent an experimental use of the grill during the trial period prior to its official adoption. This is borne out in a letter from Mr. Zevely to Mr. Steel dated October 8, 1867.

"Yours of yesterday with enclosures is received. I wrote one yesterday to the Bank Note Co. to send me samples, according to your plan and said I would experiment with them. My purpose is to send out a million or more as soon as possible. You know I have long been in favor of the invention. The PMG is pleased with it. Your Patent is ordered and will issue in a week or so."

Furthermore on October 23, 1867, Mr. Zevely again writes to Mr. Steel as follows:

"I have your letter and specimens and you may be assured of my confidence in your invention. I told Mr. Mann that I thought the P. M. G. favorably disposed and that he should try the combination of McDonough's ideas with yours. I also told him that surface printing is wanted, and he gave me to understand that it was contemplated by McD. I think your Co. will finally do you justice; tho' seeming very slow about it. Mr. Boyd today reports the preparation of stamps under a recent order and they shall be fairly tested, with any others you offer." (Fig. 3).

* "Mekeel's", 1/19/28. — "Stamps", 10/17/33, 12/16/33.—"Pat Paragraphs", Oct.-Nov., 1937.

† Illustrated in "The Nineteenth Century Postage Stamps of the United States", by Lester Brookman, Vol. I, p. 297.

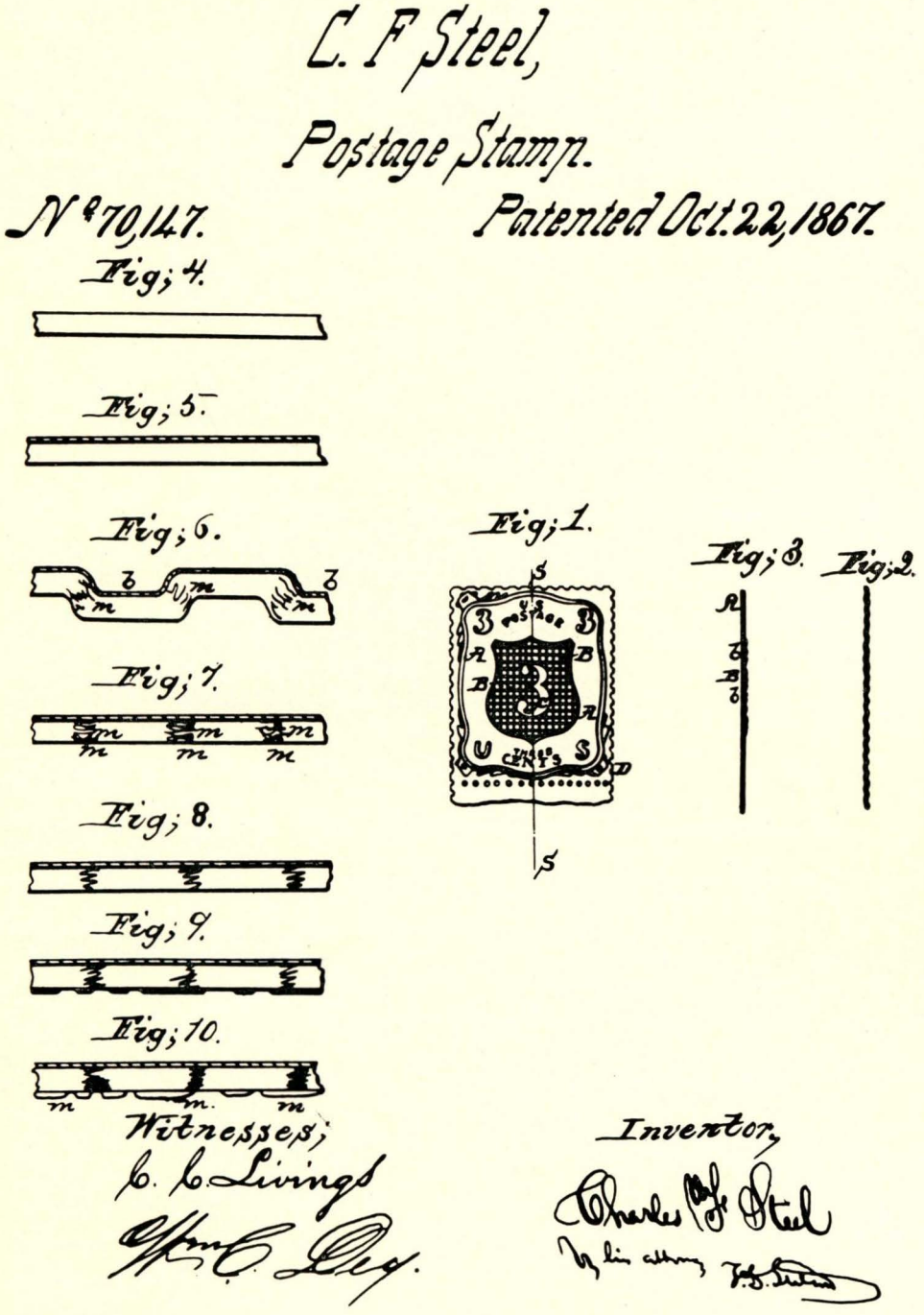


Figure 5. Original drawing sheet accompanying the Letters Patent of the Grill. See Fig. 4.



New York Nov 15th 1867

C. F. Steel Esq.

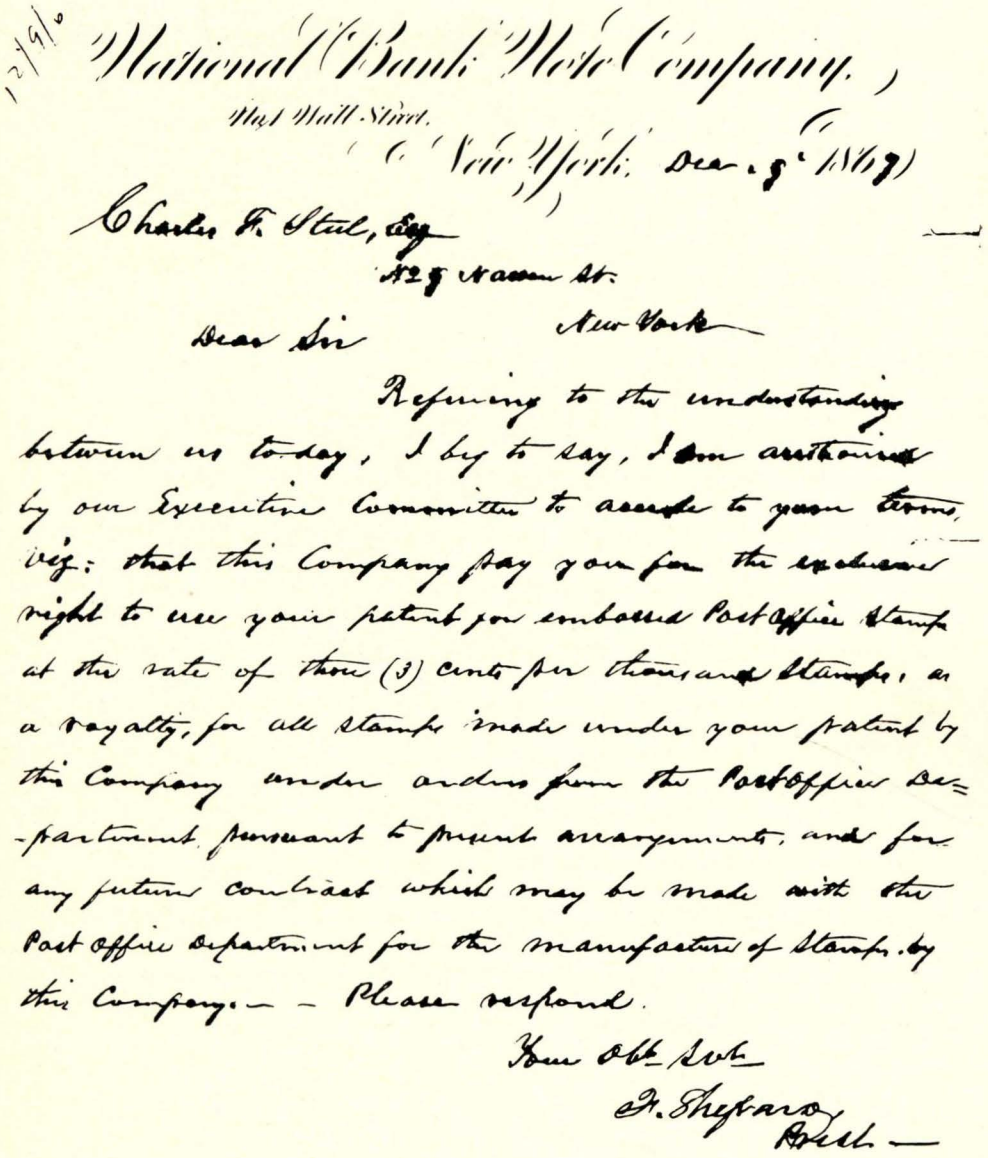
Dear Sir:

I send you the first impression of the die made under your instructions and that I may make a report to the Board I wish you would answer in writing stating whether or no it is in accordance with your wishes. The die must be deepened around the figure "3" so that it will print clear and it will be ready to electrotype by tomorrow noon.

Very truly Yours

J. MacDonough

Figure 6. Original letter to Mr. Steel from J. MacDonough of the National Bank Note Co. referring to the die for Steel's proposed stamp design.



National Bank Note Company.
Nos. Wall Street.
New York, Dec. 8th 1869

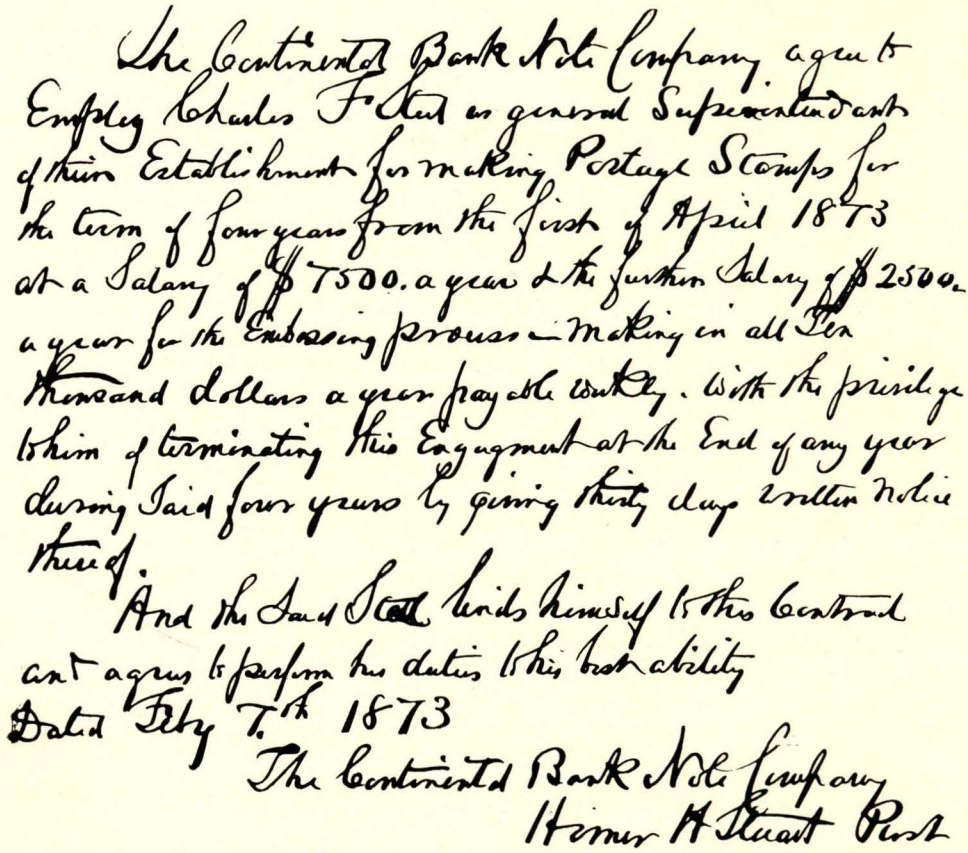
Charles F. Steel, Esq
No 8 Nassau St.
New York

Dear Sir

Referring to the understanding between us today, I beg to say, I am authorized by our Executive Committee to accede to your terms, viz: that this Company pay you for the exclusive right to use your patent for embossed Post Office Stamps at the rate of three (3) cents per thousand Stamps, as a royalty, for all stamps made under your patent by this Company under orders from the Post Office Department pursuant to present arrangements, and for any future contract which may be made with the Post Office department for the manufacture of Stamps by this Company. — Please respond.

Your Obt. Svt.
J. Shepard
Pres.

Figure 7. Original letter from J. Shepard, President of the National Bank Note Co. to Chas. F. Steel setting forth the terms for the exclusive use of the grill patent by the National Bank Note Co. It is interesting to note that as this document constituted a contract, the necessary internal revenue stamps are affixed to it.



The Continental Bank Note Company agree to Employ Charles F. Steel as general Superintendent of their Establishment for making Postage Stamps for the term of four years from the first of April 1873 at a Salary of $7500. a year & the further Salary of $2500. a year for the Embossing process—Making in all Ten Thousand Dollars a year payable Quarterly. With the privilege to him of terminating this Engagement at the End of any year during said four years by giving thirty days written Notice thereof.

And the said Steel binds himself to this Contract and agrees to perform his duties to his best ability

Dated Feby 7th 1873

The Continental Bank Note Company
Homer H Stuart Pres

Figure 8. Original contract between Chas. F. Steel and the Continental Bank Note Co. setting forth the terms of employment of Mr. Steel as General Superintendent of their establishment for making postage stamps, dated February 7, 1873.

From these two letters it is evident that any grilled stamp used before late October, 1867, must have been from the trial copies prepared sometime earlier.

The grilled stamps are first chronicled in the *Stamp Mercury* for April, 1868, that reported that the first stamps issued were the 2, 3 and 12 cents denomination. The *American Journal of Philately* for May, 1868 (page 23) says:

"All the values under twelve cents are now submitted to this process as also will the higher denominations be when the present stock on hand is consumed."

The same journal in December of that year says:

"The 24 and 30 cents of the present issue have at length been issued with the rectangular embossment on the backs and we learn from official quarters that the 90 cent will be subjected to the same treatment this month."

But it was not until February of the following year (1869) that this denomination was chronicled.

Luff (op. cit. page 104) records these plate numbers for the experimental grilled all-over stamps: 3 cts. rose, plates 11 and 17; 5 cts. brown, plate 17; and 30 cts. Orange, plate 7. Luff also mentions the existence of the 1 cent stamp with this grill, but that he had not seen it used. The other denominations are reported in used condition.

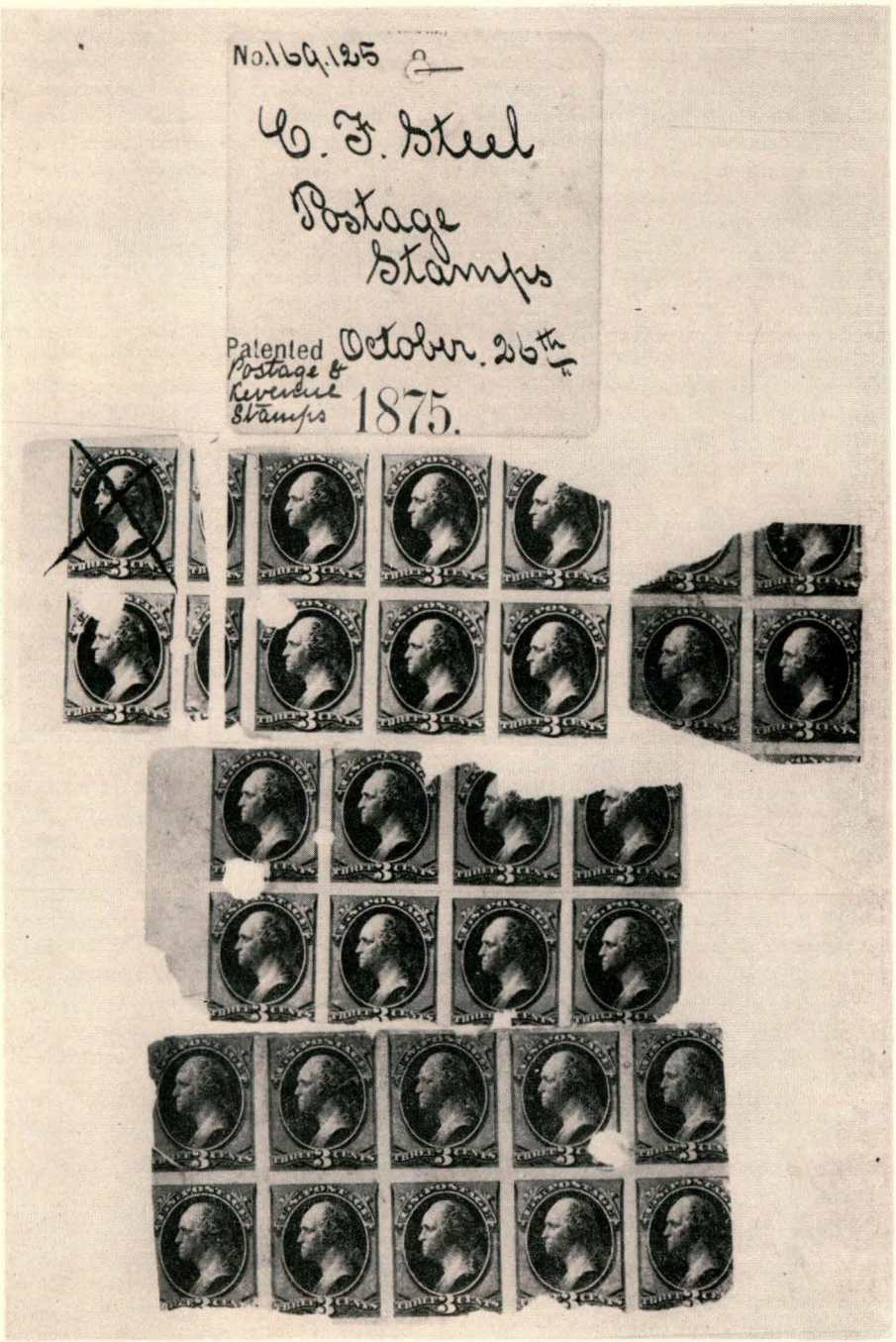


Figure 9. Original sample deposited with the United States Patent Office in support of Patent No. 169,125 granted to C. F. Steel on October 26, 1875. This is the final patent for the "Double Paper".

Here we can sum up our conclusions regarding the appearance of the grilled stamps and their usage. It is highly probable that the grilled all-over stamps were at the best experimental, used only on a trial basis with government sanction, but without governmental authorization. And the regularly authorized grilled stamps were not supplied to the post offices until the early part of 1868.

Let us now pick up the trail of Mr. Steel again in his relation to the National Bank Note Company. The patent for the grill and its acceptance by the Post Office Department greatly increased his stature with the officials of the Company, who were not at all slow in recognizing what they had. We quote a letter from F. Shepard, President of the National Bank Note Co. to Mr. Steel, dated October 29, 1867:

"It would seem from your note of this date that you misunderstood my suggestion that you should name as compensation in full for your interest and services in the manufacture of postage stamps, should we obtain a future contract, the *minimum share of the net profits* on the same, to be ascertained in a way satisfactory to both parties, whether we do or do not employ any mode or invention of which you may claim to be the proprietor.—Please submit a proposition in consonance with the idea suggested in the above."

Mr. Steel clearly did present such a proposition, as the following note from J. MacDonough dated November 6, 1867, shows:

"Resolved, that the Board entertains favorably the proposition from Mr. Steel above alluded to, and that the subject be referred to Mr. MacDonough to obtain by personal interview with Mr. Steel all further information requisite for final action. Seconded and approved."

"Friend Steel. Above you have copy of resolution which explains itself, whenever you can find time to come over and see me please do so, bringing your ideas, (and designs if you have any) for the stamp you desire to have made, with you, and we will see what can best be done."

That this was promptly done can be seen from the following letter dated November 15, 1867 from J. McDonough to C. F. Steel (Fig. 6):

"I send you the first impression of the die made under your instructions and that I may make a report to the Board I wish you would answer in writing stating whether or no it is in accordance with your wishes. The die must be defined around the figure '3' so that it will print clear and it will be ready to electrotype by tomorrow noon." [1]

This clearly indicates that the Company was going ahead with the suggested idea of Mr. Steel both as to design and as to method of printing. We know, of course, that this essay was never adopted. But it does indicate the extent to which the Company was prepared to go in support of the invention.

That the Company was prepared to go even further financially is shown by the following: (Fig. 7).

"NATIONAL BANK NOTE COMPANY,
No. 1 Wall St.,

New York, December 9, 1867.

Charles F. Steel, Esq.
No. 9 Nassau St., New York

Dear Sir

Referring to the understanding between us today, I beg to say, I am authorised by our Executive Committee to accede to your terms, viz: that this Company pay you for the exclusive right to use your patent for embossed Post Office stamps at the rate of three (3) cents per thousand stamps, as a royalty, for all stamps made under your patent by this Company under orders from the Post Office Department, pursuant to present arrangements, and for any future contract which may be made with the Post Office Department for the manufacture of stamps by this Company.—Please respond.

Your Obt. Svt.
F. Shepard, Prest."

The Post Office Department adopted Mr. Steel's invention with certain changes. It is needless to discuss these at length because most all of us are familiar with the stamps as finally issued. The contract was granted to the National Bank Note Company for the preparation of postage stamps, specifying the use of the grill patent. The following letter from Third Assistant Postmaster General Zevely, to Mr. Steel, dated December 31, 1867, states:

1 "Essays For U. S. Adhesive Postage Stamps" by C. W. Brazer, 1941, pp. 54, 55, 58, 59.

"Enclosed herewith I send you a copy of a letter addressed this day to the National Bank Note Company on the subject of preparing stamps. Be pleased to see that the stamps desired are prepared, as carefully as possible after the manner indicated by me."

The National Bank Note Company received the exclusive right to the use of the patented grill. This is evidenced in the following letter:

"New York, Aug. 11, 1868.

Sirs:

At the instance of the National Bank Note Co. of this city, I beg to advise you that I have granted to that company the sole and exclusive right to manufacture embossed postage stamps under my patent for embossed stamps.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully yours,

Chas. F. Steel.

Hon. Alex. W. Randall,
Postmaster General,
Washington, D. C."

That the Government now required that the Steel patent be used to emboss its postage stamps was, no doubt, the governing factor in its decision to grant to the National Bank Note Co. a four year contract for the manufacture of postage stamps beginning October 3rd., 1868.

From this time on, there is a gap in the Steel records. We know that upon the expiration of the contract with the National Bank Note Co., bids were called for on the manufacture of postage stamps. We know that the low bid was made by the Continental Bank Note Company, and that the contract was awarded to them to supply postage stamps beginning from May 1, 1873. The Government specified that the designs of the 1870 issue, prepared by the National Bank Note Co. be continued in use. In this connection the following document is highly significant: (Fig. 8.)

"The Continental Bank Note Company agents Employ Charles F. Steel as general Superintendent of their Establishment for making Postage Stamps for the term of four years from the first of April 1873 at a salary of $7500. a year and the further salary of $2500. a year for the Embossing process—Making in all Ten Thousand dollars a year payable wkly. With the privilege to him of terminating this engagement at the end of any year during said four years by giving thirty days written notice thereof."

"And the said Steel binds himself to this contract and agrees to perform his duties to his best ability.

"Dated Feby 7th. 1873

The Continental Bank Note Company
Homer H. Stuart Prest."

From this document we see that the embossing process was to be part of Steel's contribution to the contract. In fact the Continental Bank Note Company did produce some grilled stamps.

Other Patents Against Re-use

That the process of embossing the grill on the stamps did not provide a very satisfactory solution to the problem of cleaning and re-using of the postage stamps was soon apparent. This was evident to the inventor. He was trying to find a more suitable process. This is shown by the following letter from Mr. Zevely to Mr. Steel, dated Nov. 2, 1868:

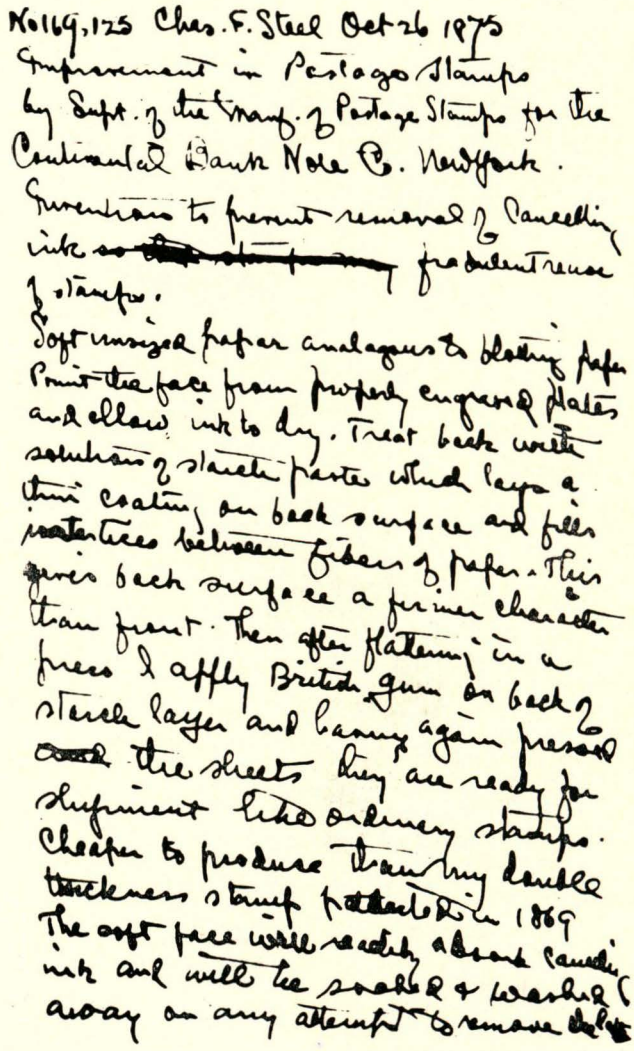
"Yours of 24th ult. was duly received. It seems hardly worth while to talk with you alone about a new kind of stamp, just at the moment that a contract is ordered with the N. B. N. Co.—Yet I am free to say that your ideas seem very good and I advise you to suggest to your Co. some experiments. If the plan can be made to work, as you think it can, let the Co. propose it in place of embossing."

From this idea grew Letters Patent No. 86,952, dated February 16, 1869, granted to Charles F. Steel of New York, N. Y. headed

"IMPROVEMENT IN REVENUE AND POSTAGE STAMPS.

"To all whom it may concern:

"Be it known that I, Charles F. Steel, of the City and County of New York, and the State of New York, in the employ of the



No 169,125 Chas. F. Steel Oct 26 1875
Improvement in Postage Stamps
by Supt. of the Manf. of Postage Stamps for the
Continental Bank Note Co. New York.
Invention to prevent removal of Cancelling
ink so ~~[illegible]~~ fraudulent reuse
of stamps.
Soft unsized paper analagous to blotting paper
Print the face from properly engraved plates
and allow ink to dry. Treat back with
solution of starch paste which lays a
thin coating on back surface and fills
interstices between fibers of paper. This
gives back surface a firmer character
than front. Then after flattening in a
press & apply British gum on back of
starch layer and having again pressed
~~and~~ the sheets they are ready for
shipment like ordinary stamps.
Cheaper to produce than by double
thickness stamp patented in 1869
The soft face will readily absorb cancelling
ink and will be spoiled & washed
away on any attempt to remove [illegible]

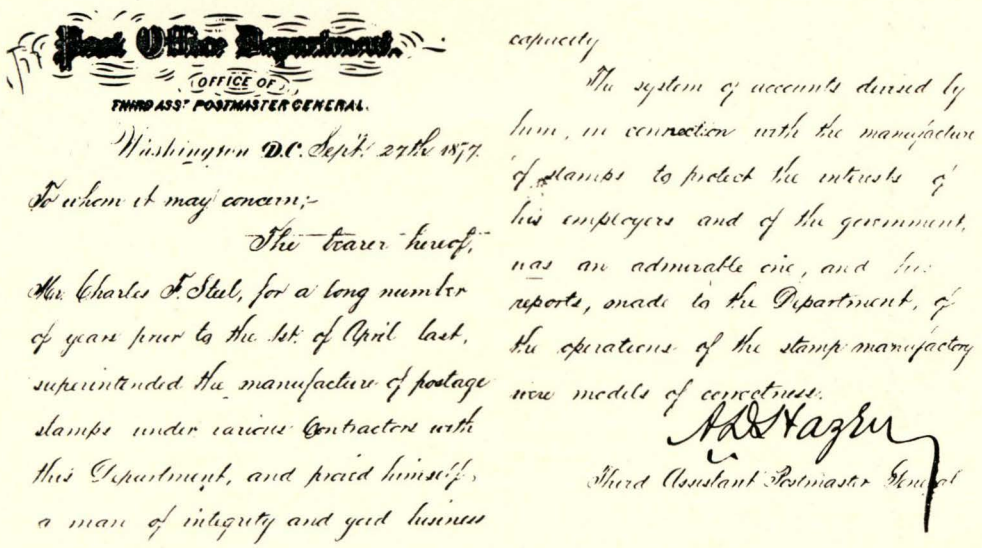
Figure 10. A brief description of the "double paper" patent in the handwriting of Chas. F. Steel. This was stapled to back of the sample shown in Figure 9.

National Bank-Note Company, as Superintendent of the manufacture of Postage-stamps, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Stamps for Postage, Revenue, and analogous purposes, and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof.

"I make my stamp, with the face of the paper of an entirely different character from the back. The face is blotting paper, while the back is hard and well-sized paper. The back prevents the gum from striking through, while the character of the face allows the cancelling-ink to penetrate through it, and causes the whole to be rapidly defaced when any friction is applied to wash off the cancelling material.

"I will proceed to describe what I consider the best means of carrying out my invention.—

"I take sheets of hard, well-sized paper, a little thinner than the postage-stamp



Post Office Department.
OFFICE OF
THIRD ASS'T POSTMASTER GENERAL.

Washington D.C. Sept. 27th 1877.

To whom it may concern:-

The bearer hereof, Mr. Charles F. Steel, for a long number of years prior to the 1st of April last, superintended the manufacture of postage stamps under various Contracts with this Department, and proved himself a man of integrity and good business capacity.

The system of accounts devised by him, in connection with the manufacture of stamps to protect the interests of his employers and of the government, was an admirable one, and his reports, made to the Department, of the operations of the stamp manufactory were models of correctness.

A. D. Hazen
Third Assistant Postmaster General

Figure 11. Original letter of reference dated Sept. 27th., 1877, signed by A. D. Hazen, Third Assistant Postmaster General. This letter was given to Mr. Steel after he had terminated his contract of employment with the Continental Bank Note Co. It shows the high regard which the Post Office Department had for Mr. Steel.

or the other stamp is intended to be, and having applied a thin and uniform coating of wheat-paste or other suitable cementing-material, over the face, by the aid of a brush, roller, or other suitable device, I lay upon it a corresponding sheet of tissue paper, and press the whole together by passing the compound sheet between rollers, or by other suitable means. The rollers thus employed may, if preferred, be covered with rubber.

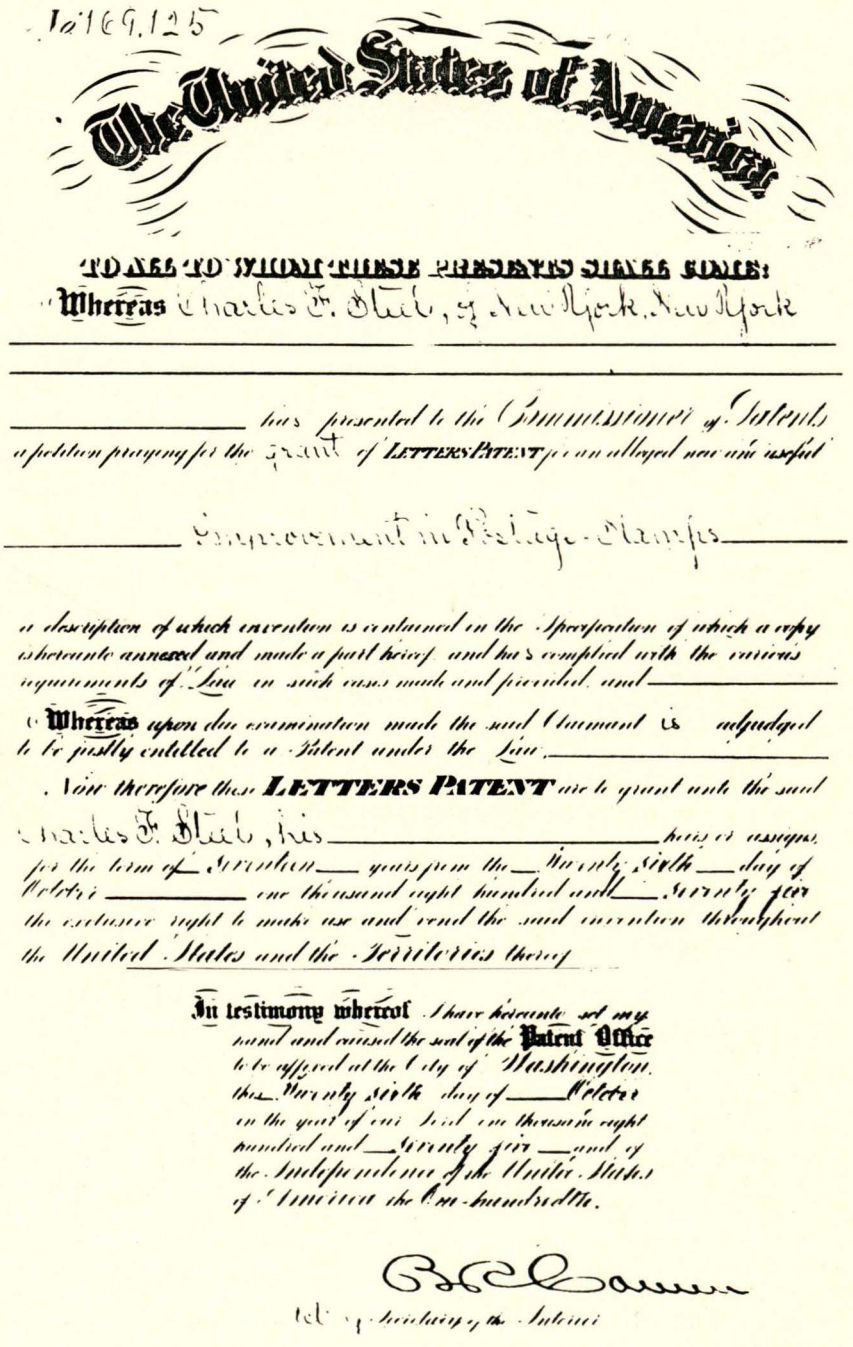
"The compound paper thus produced may be afterwards treated in all respects as ordinary paper, care being taken to print on the tissue paper, and to apply the gum to the sized paper.

"The ink received from the plate in the act of printing, penetrates somewhat more deeply into the blotting-paper than it would in the ordinary hard, sized paper. But this is of little moment. The cancelling-ink, by thus penetrating, becomes very deeply set, instead of lying, as usual, upon the surface. And even if the cancelling-ink lies as usual upon the surface, it cannot be removed by any ordinary means, because water is employed with friction in all such means, and the moment water is applied on my stamp, the front layer of paper is softened, and becomes easily entirely or partially removed. It is impossible to remove the cancelling-ink by washing and rubbing, without either removing the face-paper, or so disturbing it that the fraud may be readily detected. . . . "

There was some experimental work done by the National Bank Note Co. on this process. The 30 cent, 1869; the 6 cent and 24 cent, 1870, have been found on the double paper. The greater part of the experimental work was carried out by the Continental Bank Note Co. Considerable printings, reported by Luff, (op. Cit. page 134) to have been in the amount of 20,000,000 were made. The 2c and 3c on this paper are comparatively common.

After joining the Continental Bank Note Co., Mr. Steel continued working upon the idea of double paper. This resulted in the granting of Patent No. 169,125, dated October 26, 1875, upon application filed March 15, 1875. This patent was a further refinement of the double paper idea incorporating the use of starch on the back rather than sized paper to take the gum. (See Figures 9, 10 and 11.)

Luff states (op. cit. page 135) that the stamps printed on this paper have not been found in used condition, and that those few



No. 169,125

The United States of America

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Whereas Charles F. Steel, of New York, New York

has presented to the Commissioner of Patents a petition praying for the grant of LETTERS PATENT for an alleged new and useful

Improvement in Postage-Stamps

a description of which invention is contained in the specification of which a copy is hereunto annexed and made a part hereof, and has complied with the various requirements of law in such cases made and provided, and

Whereas upon due examination made the said Claimant is adjudged to be justly entitled to a Patent under the law;

Now therefore these LETTERS PATENT are to grant unto the said Charles F. Steel, his heirs or assigns, for the term of seventeen years from the twenty-sixth day of October one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, the exclusive right to make use and vend the said invention throughout the United States and the Territories thereof.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Patent Office to be affixed at the City of Washington, this twenty-sixth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the One-hundredth.

Countersigned

Acting Secretary of the Interior

Figure 12. The original Letters Patent granted to Chas. F. Steel No. 169,125.

copies known must be presumed to be essays.

After leaving the Continental Bank Note Co., on April 1, 1877, (See Fig. 12), Mr. Steel formed the Franklin Bank Note Co. That firm was sold in 1880 to George Stayner and William M. Smillie, founders of the American Bank Note Co. Mr. Steel in the deed and agreement of sale agreed to retire from the Bank Note business for five years absolutely and ten years conditionally.

While Mr. Steel does not again appear upon the stage in connection with United States philately directly, he continued to have an effect upon the policies of the Government stamp producing agencies. In 1889 he had submitted a bid for the production of postage stamps for the Government. His bid was the lowest submitted. Through an interpretation of the wording of the call for bids, however, the contract was not awarded to him. He took his case to the Courts. The resultant controversy was one of the direct causes for the Government to remove the production of its postage stamps from private contractors and place its stamp printing in the hands of The Bureau of Printing and Engraving of the Treasury Department. From 1894 on, with one exception during World War II, all of our postage stamps have been produced at the Bureau in Washington, D. C.

Secret Marks

Had we presented the records as given to us in chronological order, it would have been necessary to break the continuity of this article at the point where the Continental Bank Note Co. took over the printing of United States stamps from the National Bank Note Co. But for the philatelist, these papers touched upon *two different matters—grills or other protective means against reuse,* and the *secret marks.*

The Continental Bank Note Co. made new plates for all the denominations of this issue except the 24c., 30c. and 90c. The secret marks were added to the dies so that the product of the Continental plates could readily be distinguished. But since no new plates were made for the three high values, the secret mark never appears on the issued stamps.

In this connection some pertinent sections are cited from Mis. Doc. No. 43 of the House of Representatives, 43rd Congress, 2nd Session,

"The dies, rolls and plates from which postage stamps are now printed, *being the property of the United States,* will be placed in the keeping and custody of the contractor on the 1st day of April, 1873, the same to be held subject to the order and control of the Department, as hereinafter provided, and the contractor will be required from said dies, rolls, and plates, and from such rolls and plates as may be necessary to be reproduced from the original dies, to have on hand, ready for issue, on the day the contract term commences, a sufficient stock of stamps, of the several denominations required, to fill the current daily requisitions from the Department, without hindrance or delay.

"The contractor will be further required to keep in repair all dies, rolls, and plates from which stamps may be printed, and to renew the same whenever required; and should new designs be required at any time, to take the place of the present series of stamps, or of any of them, or for denominations of stamps not now in use, the same shall be furnished and engraved, subject to the approval of the Postmaster General, upon his request, within a reasonable time, all which shall be done and executed in the best style of steel engraving by the contractor, and at his own expense. All dies, rolls, and plates made or used at any time in filling the contract shall be the absolute property of the United States, and shall be delivered, in good working order, to the Postmaster General, or his authorized agent, whenever demanded."

The above is part of the agreement with the Continental Bank Note Co., made at the time they received the contract to supply stamps for the Government. From this it is evident that they had to have a supply of stamps immediately ready; that this supply must necessarily have been printed from the same plates as those used by the National Bank Note Co. There was no time available to prepare new plates before the start of the contract. Hence the plates with the *"Secret marks"* must have been made at a

(Continued on Page 148.)

LEST WE FORGET

By J. W. R. PURVES

As we grow older our sense of values alters. Things of importance years ago now seem less so. Sometimes, in fact, they seem so trivial that we ponder why they ever bothered us. On the other hand, things we considered of little import, when we were young, loom rather larger now. The writer does not regret his youth—far from it—, but he believes that the best results are obtained by constantly combining youth with experience. All this leads up to the thought that the subject matter of this article may not seem to younger readers to possess the importance it holds for me. If, however, it awakens some sympathy from older collectors, it will have achieved its object.

Philately, in the general scheme of things, is a small field. But we like to think that it possesses enduring qualities, further that most of us who read and contribute to this journal have done our bit to assist philately to endure. Younger people in our brave (? sic) new world are, at least for a time, fully prepared to act as if they were the first of their kind, and there was nothing behind them. Older people, on the other hand, are firm in their belief that there is no factor so encouraging and helpful to a present generation as the inspiration that springs from a fine tradition. The failure to create and maintain such a tradition, they believe, ultimately quenches the inspiration and with it the enthusiasm of today or tomorrow.

In philately, over the years, many persons have dedicated an appreciable proportion of a lifetime to unselfish service in its cause. Many of them have been students, often of modest means, who year after year have studied their stamps, published the results of their studies, assisted catalogue editors and generally helped their fellow collectors, by indicating hitherto unappreciated possibilities, to maintain their interest. It is only sheer enthusiasm that keeps such wheels moving. A great deal of expenditure, not only in stamps but in time, photography, correspondence, and writing is involved. There are not too many real students; but where, oh where would philately be without them?

As far as philately is concerned, there is a second and equally important class to the first. Like the first, it too is small in numbers. These people, equally enthusiastic, love our hobby just as much as the student. But, either because their time or their equipment do not permit it, realise that original research is not their metier. However, they do equally valuable work, in their shirt sleeves and with their money in other directions. They make up those willing-hands usually sadly restricted in numbers, to be found in stamp club organizations, on exhibition committees and the like. Without their assistance, propaganda for philately would literally come to a standstill and would die on its feet.

Both these kinds of people—and very seldom you find them combined in the same individual—share certain things in common. They are genuine enthusiasts and such services as they give are not provided with the idea of seeing their names—much less their smiling countenances—in print. They *are* promoting philately; they are *not* promoting themselves.

What is organized philately doing, when such people pass on, to see that their careers in philately are—adequately and appropriately—placed before a younger generation by way of example and inspiration? Years ago, when there were fewer machines and people were rather more industrious, it was the fashion, in philatelic magazines, to devote a whole page or more to obituary notices of prominent philatelists of the classes mentioned. In most cases, this afforded both a substantial recognition of service and, at the same time, an encouragement to the living to

(Continued on Page 126.)

UNITED STATES

One of the Most Famous Stamps

The 24c Inverted Center of 1918

By HENRY M. GOODKIND



Fact, Fantasy or Fiction?

Almost every conscientious American parent seems to have to face the "comic book problem". As the father of a young boy, the writer recently came upon a pile of comic books in his son's room. Being curious about the nature of this current literature that so engrossed a youngster's almost constant attention, we picked a few copies from the pile for sampling and our own edification. Leafing through the pages of these books, we were surprised to see that the contents were mostly anything but comic. But before we knew it, our eyes lit upon a full-page advertisement on the back cover of one of these comic books. As a philatelist, we immediately saw it was offering stamps for collectors by reading the following big, bold headline:

"F R E E ! U. S. Stamps Plus
a Wonderful Book".

Down through the finer print, this was what we read:

"Rush your order today, while the supply lasts. We shall send you the greatest offer ever made to collectors of the world's most popular hobby, stamps. Just think!! you'll receive ALL FREE a fine collection of scarce and beautiful United States stamps. Every one guaranteed genuine, all different. You'll be surprised how their value will increase every year.

"And in addition to this grand FREE offer, we'll include AT NO COST to you a copy of a booklet on 'the U. S. Airmail Stamp' that was originally bought at the post office for 24 cents and is now worth $5000.

"Other valuable offers will also be sent you. So RUSH THE ATTACHED COUPON. Don't delay because this exceptional offer will be withdrawn soon".

—Slobbovia Stamp Co.(*)
Flint Mills, Maine

* A fictitious name and address has been substituted.

We shall not comment at length upon some of the exaggerations printed in that advertisement except to point out that the $5000 price tag was at least $1500 too high. But knowing a little something about this stamp, we wanted to read this booklet. Since it was offered free, we reasoned that we could receive a slight dividend upon our heavy investment in comic books, our son having spent a good part of his weekly allowance on them. So we requested him to fill out the attached coupon and mail it.

While awaiting the return mail, which incidentally arrived in the fast time of three days, our thoughts turned to a subject which had been brought to our attention many times. As editor of this magazine, which is tailored for the more mature collector, we were told that too often our studies on stamps were concerned mostly with the rare and expensive ones, which only a few could afford. This could be refuted by a check of our contents. But let us assume, for the sake of illustration, that this criticism were justified.

Then we could ask this question. Why does a 10-cent comic book published for America's youth, of which very few, if any, ever could hope to own a copy of this famous U. S. air mail stamp, offer this booklet rather than one on stamps that the youth of America can afford to own? The simple answer is that the story about this upside-down air mail stamp is fascinating, reading like an exciting adventure story, which is only true about a very few of the hundreds of thousands of stamps that we collect.

Upon receipt of the shipment, we paid no attention to the mass of contents enclosed. The penny approval sheets had stamps of which we had duplicates galore. All the leaflets and other printed matter was of no interest to us. Where was that free booklet on the famous air mail stamp? We came upon it quickly. We must admit it was written in a dramatic style to excite any youngster. It almost made us rush out to the post office to see if we could buy a sheet of stamps for a few dollars that would net us a profit of thousands! To put it mildly, accuracy was sacrificed in the tale we read in this booklet! It is not too important that the price was exaggerated. Actually the story about this 1918 find without embellishment is thrilling. No extras need to be injected in order to sensationalize it more. For almost 40 years since this famous stamp was discovered, so much fiction has been added to fact that the popular version today is far from the truth.

Of all the untrue matters added, probably the most widely accepted, because of its constant repetition in print, concerns the fable that when the late Mr. W. T. Robey stepped up to the post office window in Washington on that day back in May, 1918, he **bought** the sheet with the centers inverted after someone in line ahead of him had rejected it because there was something wrong with the stamps. This is nothing but a figment of some publicity man's imagination! It is not known when this was added to the story, but one can find it printed in newspapers and magazines back in the 1920's. Of course, its cropping up every year in such widely distributed booklets as the one sent out free merely teaches a new generation the wrong version of this story.

But why criticize sources such as this comic book advertiser, when a no lesser authority than the United States Post Office Department on August 12, 1954, sent out a general Press Release repeating the very same inaccuracy about a person in line ahead of the purchaser of the sheet with the inverts refusing to buy this item that was worth thousands of dollars. We quote the first portion of this U. S. Post Office Press Release:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT INFORMATION SERVICE

For Release Thursday, August 12, 1954

Release No. 3126

"The Post Office Department today observes the 36th anniversary of the founding by the United States on August 12, 1918 of the first permanent civilian air mail service in the world.

"The date is also important as marking the beginnings of commercial aviation in the United States, Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield noted in an anniversary statement.

"Early in 1918, Mr. Summerfield explained, Postmaster General Albert Burleson confer-

red with Secretary of War Newton Baker and others, and as a result, set up an experimental airmail service between Washington, D. C., and New York, New York, with an intermediate stop at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"The first flights both ways were made on May 15, 1918.

"The United States Army furnished planes and pilots and conducted flying and maintenance, and the Post Office Department handled the mail and all operations connected with it. It also printed the first 24-cent carmine rose and blue air mail stamp, with the picture of the early flying machine, the 'Jenny'.

"Incidentally, one sheet of these first airmail stamps with the Jenny printed upside down escaped the Post Office in Washington and gave philately one of its most dramatic moments. A fortunate mint-sheet buyer so the legend goes, went to the Washington Post Office the day the stamp was first issued in 1918. A man ahead of him ordered a sheet of the stamps and then indignantly handed it back to the clerk because the airplanes were upside down. The next man in line was given this sheet. Today, a single stamp from this sheet, the only one of its kind ever released by the Post Office Department out of billions of sheets of stamps issued since July 1, 1847, is valued at $3500."

In addition to the above Post Office Department's Press Release repeating the apocryphal story about the man in line ahead of Mr. Robey rejecting the sheet with the inverted centers, a philatelist also detects another glaring mistake—, namely, that this 1918 sheet was the only one with inverted centers ever released by the Post Office Department since it started issuing stamps in 1847. Obviously, the three errors of the 1901 Pan-American Issue were overlooked. The 1c, 2c and 4c of this series are known with inverted centers. Also the 1869 issue had three inverted centers on the 15c, 24c and 30c. Of course, this 19th century series was printed by a private concern under government contract. Nevertheless, when the Department had placed these stamps on sale, the inverted centers were not discovered. Therefore from 1847 to the present, there have been *seven* U. S. postage stamps with inverted centers.

We have no idea of how many newspapers or other sources of information printed or broadcast this August, 1954 Press Release of the Post Office Department. But it would seem likely that enough people heard it or read it to have them believe this apocryphal story.

Conscientious stamp paper editors for some years have futilely tried to correct this. Even W. T. Robey himself tried to dispel this untrue version of the events leading to his purchase when in 1938 he wrote his own account of everything he remembered about this famous purchase.[1] We quote Robey's own remarks about someone in line ahead of him rejecting his sheet:

"In conclusion, I would like to set at rest some of the many rumors that exist about these stamps.

"The first, that a man in line ahead of me turned the stamps back to the clerk at the window because they were not perfect. This is absolutely false, for at the time that I made my purchase there was no line and no one was ahead of me at the window. Can you imagine the post office trying to resell a sheet of stamps that had been once refused for being imperfect by having the airplane upside down?"

One, who has followed the history of this famous stamp as we have, could add more apocryphal stories to the ones Robey heard in 1938. Through the urging and encouragement of many philatelic friends, we have decided to try to record an authoritative article based upon the actual facts and events concerning this famous stamp.

The Problem

Most philatelists believe that the greatest gaps in our knowledge about the stamps we collect concern the earliest issues from the 19th century, when philately was beginning, and very few had the foresight to record their knowledge because in those early days few could visualize the extent to which philately would grow. By the beginning of the 20th century, many stamp publications had appeared with more than a few good writers as well as some excellent handbooks by great

1 "Weekly Philatelic Gossip" Feb. 19, 1938.

philatelic authorities. So by 1918, philately had many periodicals and writers. But as far as the 24c invert is concerned, it is surprising that none of the knowledgeable stamp collectors and dealers, who had a hand in the sale of Robey's sheet, ever bothered to record their knowledge of a stamp that they certainly should have known would turn out to be one of philately's brightest stars. Some did write of a rather unimportant incident, or the sale of a particular copy or piece. But many of the matters unclear to present-day collectors, could have been made known if those, who had first-hand knowledge of this stamp when it was issued, had recorded what happened. Therefore, there are only one or two written sources of information available. One is the 1938 reminiscences of the purchaser, W. T. Robey[1], written twenty years after his find. Later on we shall show how his memory sometimes betrayed him. But in the main, his account is very important because it offers much first-hand information and gives the student other important clues.

Much that has been put in this article, therefore, has been the result of years of work. First of all, we began saving clippings of stories about this stamp some years ago. Then older philatelists, who had saved similar material of earlier years, were kind enough to give us their files because of our interest in air mail stamps. And finally, in gatherings of philatelists like here at the Collectors Club, we would meet a dealer or collector, who was an actual participant as early as 1918 in some of the events or dealings that took place in connection with this famous stamp. Often we made notes of what was said. Then as copies of the stamp changed hands, usually through auction sales of stamp dealers, we contacted them for any information. One of the most helpful things, done in 1918, was the numbering of each of the copies in the sheet of 100 on the gum side before the sheet was broken up. This work is attributed to the foresight of Eugene Klein, the Philadelphia dealer who bought the full sheet from Robey. With every copy having a number*, one can keep much better track of both the whole and the parts of the 24c invert. sheet.

* This numbering was done lightly in pencil, so that by now some copies that have had much handling no longer show their position number.

Ours was a slow, tedious task done with the hope that some day all the data accumulated could be assembled into a reasonably comprehensive and informative story for publication. The acknowledgments at the end of this article give the reader an indication of the scope of this work.

Background—Before May 1, 1918

Sir Winston Churchill in the preface of his massive works on World War II wrote that no story is complete without proper knowledge of the background. Following these words of wisdom, let us set the scene leading up to the day in 1918 when a comparatively unknown and inexperienced stamp collector bought the famous sheet of 100 with the inverted centers.

The United States with its allies, Great Britain and France, was making an all-out effort to win victory in World War I. The airplane no longer served as a contraption for the stunt flyer. By now it had become an important weapon in war. It is interesting to note how often a similar pattern repeats itself. For instance, World War II saw the introduction of atomic power with the unbelievably destructive bomb. But some were even then thinking of turning this power to peacetime uses. A similar situation existed back in 1918, when some people began to think of the airplane not as a weapon of war and destruction, but of service to mankind in peacetime.

So early in 1918 in the midst of our country's strenuous efforts to gain victory, a bill was introduced in Congress to inaugurate the first civilian regularly scheduled air mail service. One would have been wise to predict that Congress would not be sidetracked from important war legislation to pass a bill calling for civilian air mail, but postpone it until after the war was over.

This bill mentioned that the first route would be from New York, N. Y. to Washington, D. C., via Philadelphia, Pa. Reports were circulated, shortly after the introduction of this bill, that the Post Office Department had begun work on a new stamp for this service. Also there were intimations of a special 24-cent mail rate for letters weighing up to 1 oz. that would cover the first-class fee *plus a 10-cent special delivery*

fee. Later events proved these reports substantially correct.

Then we find no reports of any further action. The bill lay dormant. In fact, one of the most authoritative philatelic writers on U. S. stamps of this time, Mr. Joseph B. Leavy of Washington, D. C., mocked the whole idea when he wrote in April, 1918 the following[2]:

"Aeroplane Post. Considerable has recently been written in the daily press, and some little in the philatelic press about the establishment of an Aerial Post between Washington and New York, and the issuance of a special 24c denomination . . .

"So far the Post Office Department *has not even issued instructions* for the manufacture of a stamp of the 24c denomination . . . and if the Aerial Post *is* inaugurated on *April 15,* and the charge for postage *should be 24c,* letters will have to be prepaid by a combination of regular postage stamps. . . . We trust that the dealer who advertises to supply these stamps at 35c each, as soon as issued, will not keep his customers waiting too long. At present writing, we are inclined to believe he best advertise the stamps as a premium to be given with each package of 'sparklets' bought for children to celebrate the Fourth of July".

This April, 1918 account was both right and wrong, as following events showed. Some enterprising people both in government and civilian life kept on working for the passage of this bill. Finally on May 6, 1918, the U. S. Congress passed the necessary legislation for this first "aerial post" and set the 24c rate[3].

On May 9, 1918, the Post Office Department in Washington, D. C. issued the following announcement[3] from which the first portion is quoted:

Special Stamp for Aeroplane Mail Service
Office of Third Ass't P. M. Gen.

Washington, May 9, 1918

"1. Postmasters and other officers and employees of the Postal Service are notified that the Department is preparing to issue a new postage stamp of 24-cent denomination. It is intended primarily for the new aeroplane mail service, but will be valid for all purposes for which postage stamps of the regular issue are used.

"2. A description follows:

The stamp is rectangular in shape, about 7/8 inch long and 3/4 inch high. The central design is a mail aeroplane in flight. Above, in a curved line of Roman capital letters, are the words 'U. S. Postage'. Triangular ornaments appear in the two upper corners. Below the aeroplane, in a straight line of Roman capital letters, is the word 'Cents', with the numerals '24' within circles in the two lower corners. The border design is red and the aeroplane is blue."

From the above one can deduce that the production and printing of this special air mail stamp had begun, certainly before May 9th. On May 11, 1918 President Woodrow Wilson signed the bill making it a law. On this same day, the U. S. Post Office Department issued this second announcement[3], which is reprinted in full:

"Aeroplane Mail Service,

Washington, D. C., May 11th, 1918.

"Aeroplane Mail Service will be established May 15th, 1918, between Washington, Philadelphia and New York, one round trip daily except Sundays. Letters and sealed parcels, the latter not exceeding 30 inches in length and girth combined may be mailed at Washington, Philadelphia and New York for any city in the United States, or its possessions or postal agencies.

"The rate of postage will be 24 cents per ounce or fraction thereof, which includes special delivery service. Postage may be paid by affixing either the distinct aeroplane stamps or its equivalent in other postage stamps. When the latter are used, the mail should be endorsed, 'By Aeroplane.' Mail by aeroplane may be registered by prepayment of 10 cent registry fee in addition to postage.

"Until further notice the aeroplanes will leave Belmont Park, N. Y., and Washington, D. C., at 11.30 A. M. Postmasters shall in-

2 "The Philatelic Gazette", April, 1918 p. 118.

3 COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST, July, 1935 pp. 167-68. Some past writings on this first air mail stamp have given a wrong date for the passage of this bill.

form the public of the closing of the mails and the points from which aeroplane mail may be dispatched. Letters for the aerial service mailed too late for Aeroplane dispatch will be given the most expeditious dispatch by other means, including special delivery."

Otto Praeger,
2nd Asst. Postmaster General.

According to the record, the stamp was placed on sale in Washington, D. C. on May 13, 1918. Oddly enough there are no covers, known to this writer, with this first day, May 13th, cancellation. The stamps also were put on sale the next day, May 14th, in New York, N. Y. and Philadelphia, Pa. On the following day, May 15, 1918, the first flights with the mail started from each of the three cities, Washington, Philadelphia and New York. So the first flight covers are cancelled May 15, 1918 with a special "First Trip" cancellation. There are a very few covers known dated May 14th. One was illustrated and described in this magazine[4]. It seems to be the only one so far made known to philately. Others may exist. All this information is not irrelevant, because the sheet with the inverted centers was bought on May 14, 1918.

To our knowledge, since the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing commenced postage stamp printing in 1894, no stamp ever was prepared and printed as quickly as this 1918 24c red and blue air mail. The time elapsing between the first announcement of the stamp and the first day of sale was less than a week. This has an important bearing upon the printing of one sheet with the inverted centers. Mr. Robey himself recalls this in his 1938 account, when he wrote as follows:

" . . . It had been announced that the new stamp would be in two colors and the possibility of an invert was the cause of much widespread discussion. Just a short time previous to this the famous five-cent error * had been discovered and the possibility of an invert slipping past the watchful eyes of the inspectors in both the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Post Office led us collectors to feel such a possibility was greater than ever. This country at that time was in the World War and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was working twenty-four hours a day printing Liberty Bonds and new currency, besides stamps."

It is important to take this into consideration. Mr. Robey admits that he had heard previous discussions in stamp collecting circles that an error very possibly could occur. So he and many others may have been on the lookout. Another factor that probably contributed to the sheet having been printed in error was not mentioned by Mr. Robey. According to related accounts, the War had made serious inroads upon the personnel in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Some of its most skilled workers were serving in the Armed Forces or in war plants, being replaced by temporary, less experienced help. This could account for both the likelihood of mistakes and less efficiency in inspection.

So to sum up, there are three important background factors to take into consideration. First of all, there was the growth of aviation by 1918. In the second place, this stamp was issued on such short notice. And finally, wartime conditions had its effects upon the operating efficiency of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Post Office Department.

Preparation and Printing (May 6-13, 1918)

Nothing could be found by us to document the exact time when the preparation of this stamp commenced. It is our guess that the engravers began work sometime in April, 1918, but that the actual printing from the plates began around May 9th, if not the day before.

The names of some of those who produced the first air mail stamps are known.[6] The vignette (the central portion with the airplane) was engraved by Marcus W. Baldwin, while Edward M. Weeks engraved the outside frame and the lettering.

The lower lefthand corner of the margin of the sheet shows the following initials (Fig. 9):—S. De B. These are those of the siderographer, *Samuel DeBinder.*

4 COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST, 1951, p. 206.

* The 5c errors are Scott 463b (Mar. 7, 1917), Scott 482a (March 1917) and Scott 499h (March 23, 1917). The dates are those given in "the Scott U. S. Stamp Catalogue Specialized".

6 "Essay-Proof Journal" July, 1955 pp. 123-4.

For those who are unfamiliar with the line engraving printing process, the siderographer is the skilled operator who makes the complete printing plate from the transfer roller. For a number of years it had been a practice of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to have each of those who prepared the printing plate engrave their initials on the plates. Later, this was amended to have only the siderographer include his initials. It is our belief that this was important in 1918 because the 1917 5-cent error was made as a result of a wrong transfer.

Certainly the printing must have begun before the U. S. Post Office Department's Notice of May 9th, describing the stamp, was released. Mr. J. B. Leavy, the stamp writer in Washington previously quoted, seems to have been the on-the-spot reporter. He knew much that was taking place in the Bureau. He wrote:[5]

" . . . While a bill for the establishing of aeroplane mail . . . was pending in Congress, no action had been taken up to May 8th."

We are now going into considerable detail about the printing of the first air mail stamp for a very important reason. We know that many a collector dislikes his reading about stamps to be full of technical matters to dull his interest, and have no desire to inject "fly speck" philately into this article. But printing knowledge often is of the greatest importance in judging the value of the stamps we collect. For example, there is no doubt in our mind that if Mr. Robey had known the method of printing the stamps in the sheet he had bought, he would have been able to bargain better for its sale. (See Fig. 1)

The printing was done in this manner according to J. B. Leavy:[7]

"The new 24c postage stamps described last month, were first placed on sale at 3.30 P. M. May 13, at the General Post Office in Washington, D. C., going on sale at the Washington branch offices and the New York and Philadelphia offices on May 14. The stamps are printed from one hundred subject plates, ten rows of ten subjects each. The border or frame plate, numbered 8492 over the seventh subject in the top row only, is divided into panes of twenty-five by arrows and guide lines, with a registering T at top and bottom center outside the arrows. The center or medallion plate, numbered 8493 over the fourth subject in the top row only, has no arrows or guide lines but has a registering T at top and bottom center. The finished sheets of stamps therefore have carmine guide lines running through the horizontal and vertical center of the sheet intersecting in the center, and carmine arrows at top, bottom, right, and left center, blue plate number 8493 over the fourth stamp in the top row, and carmine plate number 8492 over the seventh stamp in the top row, carmine and blue registering T's at top and bottom center outside the arrows.

"The sheets of paper on which the stamps were printed were too large to fit the packages for the sheets of one hundred ordinary postage stamps as delivered to the post office by the Bureau and had to be trimmed down. As everything was rushed to the limit in preparing the stamps and the smallest possible saving of time was a great factor, the last inside perforating wheel, both horizontal and vertical, was not set up, the cutting knife taking the place. The margin of paper in the printed sheets was considerably greater at top and right than at bottom and left, consequently the top was placed against the knife when perforating horizontally and the right when perforating vertically, so that plate numbers, top and right arrows, and top registering T's were cut away, and the sheets had a straight edge at top and right. It is more than likely that in perforating future printings the inside wheels will be added and the knives moved so as to cut just outside the plate number when perforating horizontally and cut sufficiently beyond the stamps at right when perforating vertically to show a fair portion of the right arrow.

"Bi-colored stamps are printed on the hand presses used for printing the bank notes. The border or frame is printed first, the sheets then examined and counted and delivered to the presses to have the center or medallion printed; any defective sheets having been thrown out, the sheets are dampened the same as if they were blank and are ready to be fed to the press. In printing from a hand

5 "The Philatelic Gazette". May, 1918 pp. 153-4.

7 "The Philatelic Gazette" June, 1918 pp. 191-2.

press the plate is removed after one impression, placed on a heated block, re-inked, wiped, and then returned to the press for the next impression; this is all done by the plate printer. The plate printer's assistant feeds and removes each sheet to and from the press, her hands being clean; in feeding, the sheet is taken between the thumb and forefinger with the thumb just below the registering T and placed on the plate with the thumb just below the registering T on the plate; this is the only method yet devised for correct registering of the medallions and naturally causes many variations.

Now let us return to Mr. Robey's inexperience and show how he faltered in regard to the printing. His account contains the following remarks when he is describing the events that followed on the day he bought his sheet. Speaking about going to the office of a well-known stamp dealer in Washington, D. C.:

"Present at that time were Mrs. Manning, Mr. Leavy, besides other collectors. All examined the sheet but no one would place a possible value upon it. Mr. Leavy stated that as the stamps were printed in sheets of 400 subjects, it was apparent that there were at least three other similar sheets. History tells us that three more sheets of these stamps were found in the Bureau and promptly destroyed."

One can see that Mr. Robey was mistaken, but not misinformed. It is not likely that a competent philatelic student like J. B. Leavy would convey incorrect information to Mr. Robey. Mr. Leavy certainly knew that the sheets came from 100-subject plates, and not 400-subject plates—a misconception still held by Robey in 1938.* Obviously if the stamps were printed on 400-subject plates, there must have been three other sheets with inverted centers besides Robey's. So his bargaining power for the sale of his *unique* sheet was hindered by his lack of philatelic knowledge.

* Even at this present time, many philatelists have this mistaken notion. Recently two of the largest New York stamp dealers were surprised to learn from the writer that the 1918 air mail was printed on 100-subject plates.

How The Error Occurred

If the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing ever released any information explaining how the sheet with the inverted centers was printed, this knowledge is not on any record we consulted. For some years the Bureau has been most co-operative with philatelic writers and students of U. S. stamps. Mr. J. B. Leavy was only one of many philatelists interested in the U. S. Bureau issues, who was supplied with authoritative information by those in charge of the printing and production of our stamps. Mr. Leavy is one of the few writers who ever discussed the occurrence of the error. We quote him:[7]

"The inverts could have occurred by the assistant feeding the border sheets to the press in an inverted manner, but as the sheets are all sorted and arranged in a normal manner it would require an awkward, unnatural movement to invert the sheet in feeding; it is therefore not probable that the assistant was responsible for the errors, but more likely that the plate printer reversed his plate in returning it to the press after inking and wiping, very easily done in the rush under which the printing was conducted and requiring no awkward nor unnatural movement to accomplish. Of course the examiner was directly responsible for the inverts being delivered, but whether normal or inverted the aeroplane is at the same angle in the frame, and to one possibly not conversant with the construction of an aeroplane the matter of the landing wheels being at top would not be an important point. Those fortunate enough to have seen the inverts realize how easily they could have been passed in hurried examination. The inverted sheet of course has not the blue plate number 8493 over the fourth stamp in the top row but has it inverted beneath the seventh stamp in the bottom row".

One has good reason to suspect that Mr. Leavy's explanation is based upon his own conjectures rather than any authoritative word from an official in the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. We call attention to Mr. Leavy's opening sentence where he wrote "the inverts *could* have occurred . . . "

Years later this writer heard another version which directly refutes Mr. Leavy. This

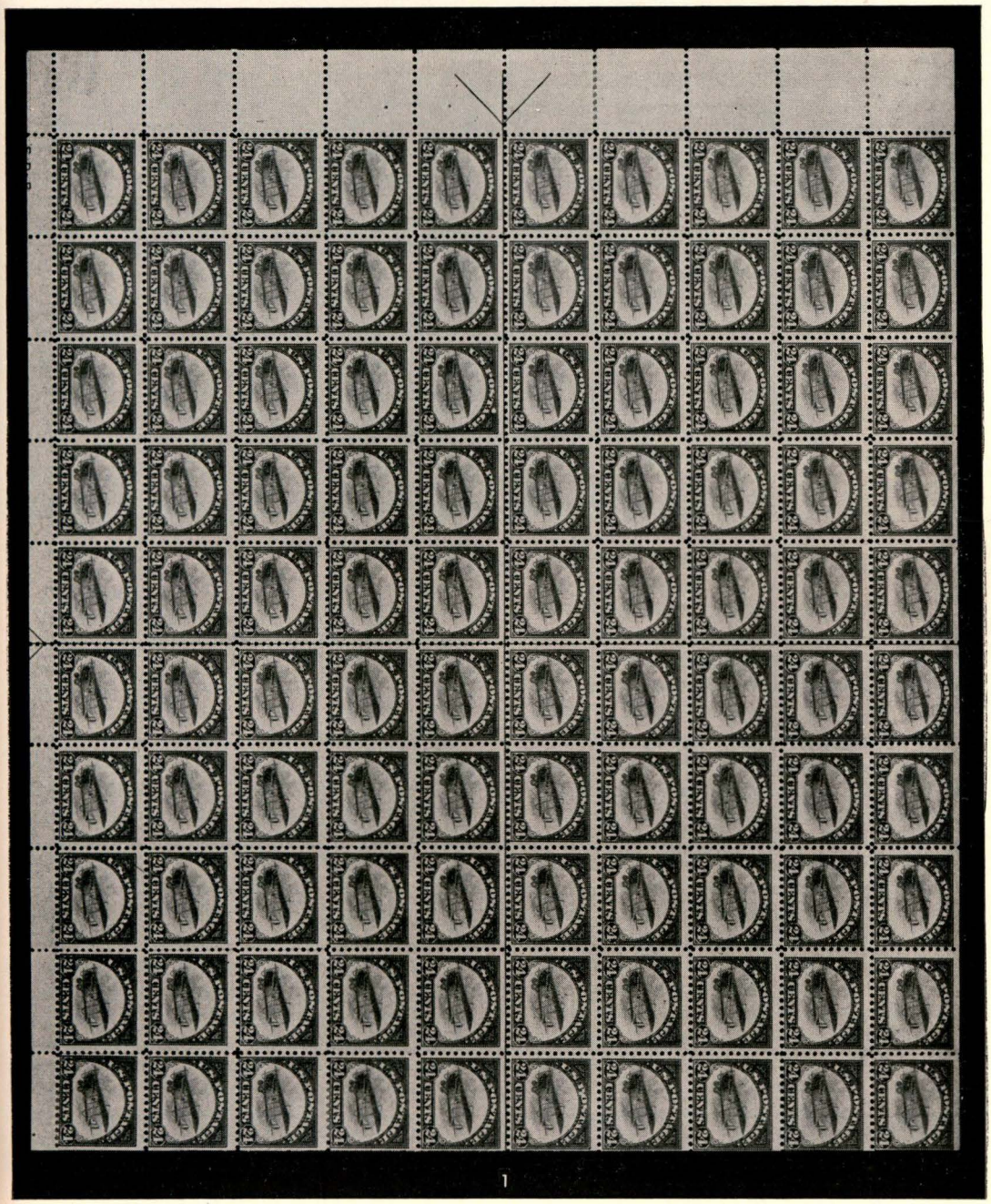


Fig. 1. The complete sheet of the 24c. air mail as sold on the first day. The TOP and RIGHT sheet margins had been cut off to fit the post office folders, thus leaving the sheet without any plate numbers. Illustration courtesy of S. Serebrakian.

attributes the occurrence of the error to the printer's assistant rather than to the printer.

Some readers, who attended the 1947 International Philatelic Exhibition (CIPEX) held at the Grand Central Palace in New York City, may recall the exhibit of the U. S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing there. During the Exhibition, at regular intervals daily, presses were printing the CIPEX Souvenir Sheets for the public's education. These Sheets commemorated the 100 years of the first U. S. postage stamp. Reproductions of our first 5c and 10c stamps were printed on each Souvenir Sheet bi-colored, both in red and blue. The printing was done with flat plates.

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing had several operators of the press, who after demonstrating the printing, patiently answered questions put to them. One operator, an elderly gentleman, was a veteran Bureau printer by the name of James N. Thompson.[8]

This writer was privileged to attend a special demonstration for invited philatelists. After Mr. Thompson had finished and was prepared for questions, we, more or less in jest, asked him if he had printed any errors with the red and blue stamps on the 1947 Souvenir Sheets inverted like the 1918 air mail.

Mr. Thompson replied that he especially would be ever so careful not to have anything like this occur because he was one of the Bureau's printers of the famed 24c red and blue air mail back in 1918. He then proceeded to offer his version of what had happened. He remarked that due to wartime conditions many of the helpers were novices at this work, having been hired as substitutes for the regular workers who had gone either into the Armed Forces or war work. He continued by explaining that as each sheet was fed on to the flat plate press for the printing of the frame in red ink, the assistant would take each sheet printed from the press and place them in stacks *face down*. After the red frame was printed, the operator proceeded with the second printing of the vignette in blue. The assistant would take one sheet at a time off the stack and hand it to the printer. Now the assistant, either because of inexperience, carelessness or some other reason, took one sheet off the stack and inadvertently turned the sheet around. Mr. Thompson maintained that this can occur easily. The assistant's work is routine and tedious, so that an occasional slip is not unusual. We all must remember that the printing is done with the printed side face down. One can prove for himself the ease with which such a mistake can happen. Place a pile of paper of several hundred sheets on a table and proceed to restack them. After a while, one will find that, if he is not concentrating, he may reverse the paper in restacking.

One further matter was pointed out to us. To guard against mistakes in stamps before distribution to the post offices, sheets always are carefully inspected. Therefore the government examiners should have detected the sheet with the airplane upside down. But all the emergency wartime factors previously mentioned could have influenced the efficiency of those examining the Bureau's printings for errors.

Thus we have two different versions of how the error happened. Both Mr. Leavy's and Mr. Thompson's version are plausible. Lacking any documentary proof, were we asked to choose, we are inclined to accept Mr. Thompson's.

At this point there is one matter concerning the printing that should be stressed. As the sheets of 100 stamps came off the press after the final printing, each sheet had four margins all around. On the top margin was the plate No. 8492 in red ink and 8493 in blue. *But only one sheet, that with the centers inverted, had the plate No. 8492 in red on the top margin and the plate No. 8493 in blue on the bottom margin.* As mentioned before, to fit into the post office folders, the sheets were cut on the top and right. Cutting off the top margin removed both plate numbers (Fig. 1 shows this), except for the one sheet with the inverted centers. Only the red plate No. 8492 was removed. The plate number at the bottom remained on the sheet with the errors. (Fig. 2 shows this)

This fact could have played right into Mr. Robey's hands and made him luckier than he ever realized. We hold a theory that Mr. Robey was seeking to buy plate number blocks or sheets. We have read that his par-

8 "Bureau Specialist", July, 1947.



Fig. 2. The plate No. 8493 shown reversed on the block of eight that was sold in the Col. Green auction in 1944.

ticular specialty was new issues of the United States with plate numbers. Although there obviously could be no record of his conversation with the post office clerk, and his 1938 account made no mention of his seeking sheets with plate numbers, we feel that there was a distinct possibility that he had asked for plate numbers on the first day of sale in Washington, D. C. *The only sheet having a plate number was the one with the inverted centers.* In response to Mr. Robey's inquiry, the post office clerk went through his stock and selected the sheet with No. 8493 in blue, the one with the centers inverted.

THE Day, May 14, 1918

The U. S. Post Office Department's records show that the 24c air mail stamp was issued on May 13th. It was placed on sale May 14th in Washington, Philadelphia and New York. The stamp was used for the first time on May 15th in flights between these three cities.

As to what transpired on the first day of sale, May 14th, our best source of information is Mr. W. T. Robey. Even though he recorded the events from memory twenty years later, they seem substantially correct. There are a few mistakes, but none of sufficient importance. After reprinting the portion of Mr. Robey's 1938 account relating solely to his activities on May 14th, we shall attempt to correct the few mistakes made by Robey. He wrote:[1]

"Early on the morning of May 14, I went to the branch post office nearest my employment to purchase some of the new twenty-four cent airmail stamps to be used to send covers to my friends in New York and Philadelphia. This office was located at 1317 New York Avenue, N. W., and was known as the New York Avenue Branch. Upon referring to the official notice of the placing of these stamps on sale we read in part: 'The stamps for mail service will be on sale at the main office and the New York Avenue, F Street, Eleventh Street and the Pennsylvania Avenue stations.'

"Upon asking for these stamps, the clerk on duty told me that he only had a very few of them but was expecting another consignment about noon of that day. I examined the stamps that he had on hand but due to the poor centering decided to wait until noon before making my purchase. Promptly at noon, I returned to the post office with $30.00, which I had previously withdrawn

from bank. The same clerk was on duty at the stamp window and upon inquiring as to whether he had received any additional copies of the Air Mail stamps, he reached down under the counter and brought forth a full sheet and my heart stood still. It was the sheet of inverts. It was what you might call a 'Thrill that comes once in a lifetime.' Without any comment, I paid for the sheet and then asked the clerk if he had any more sheets. He again reached under the counter and brought up three additional sheets which he said were all he had. An examination showed these sheets to be normal. Had they been otherwise, I wonder how I would have paid for them with only $6.00 in my pocket? I handed these three sheets back to the clerk and then showed him the sheet that I had purchased and drew his attention to the fact that the airplane was upside down. Without any comment he left the window and ran for a telephone. Needless to say, I left that office in a hurry with my sheet of inverts tucked safely under my arm.

"The thought then struck me that possibly there might be more of these stamps in some other branch office and I hurried to the Eleventh Street branch, about six blocks away. An examination was made of all of the stock on hand, but failed to reveal any inverts.

"Feeling highly elated, I returned to my office to show my fellow worker and collector what I had discovered. He immediately left to make a search of the other branch offices. Then telegrams were sent to friends in both New York and Philadelphia apprising them of my find and giving them the plate number of the sheet. Next I called the office of Mr. Colman on the phone. He was not in, so I told Mrs. Manning what I had discovered, but for some unknown reason she would not believe me.

"In all of the conversation had with the clerks in the different offices, I never gave my name, yet, within one hour after my return to work, two postal inspectors called to see me. Upon investigation, I found that my fellow worker had given my name and address during his visits to the different branch offices."

Of course, Robey's biggest mistake, which was discussed before at length, was his misconception of the stamps being printed in sheets of 400-subjects. Another so-called slip in his memory is not of any great significance. But it bears telling because it is interesting. It is said that Robey's office worker, who accompanied him to the New York Avenue Branch Post Office in Washington, D. C., was the one who innocently caused Robey all the trouble with the postal inspectors. After Mr. Robey had purchased his famous sheet with the inverted centers, he did ask to see more. And the clerk did produce other sheets for his inspection, all being normal ones. Then it is alleged that in his excitement Robey's companion said:

"No, one like this", while pointing to the sheet in Robey's hand.

Bang! went the post office window, so the story goes.

Mr. Robey omitted to mention one significant event, which has been attested to by the accounts of many New York and Philadelphia collectors and dealers. When people in these two cities went to their respective post offices to buy the stamps on May 14th, they were told that there were none for sale. It is reliably reported that later that day word was telephoned to New York about the purchase of a sheet with the centers inverted. Those who had heard this rushed to their post offices, only to be told that *these stamps were not on sale.* Later on, it was discovered exactly what had transpired. As soon as the U. S. Post Office Department in Washington, D. C. had received word of Robey's find, they immediately instructed the New York and Philadelphia post offices, that had received stocks of this stamp, not to sell them but return all stocks to Washington. New York, Philadelphia and Washington were the only three places where the new air mail stamps were placed on sale May 14th.

The following is what Mr. Leavy wrote about this:[7]

"At present writing one complete sheet is known to have reached the public, having been sold at the New York Avenue branch post office in Washington, D. C. on the morning of May 14. Naturally the Post Office Department heard of the find shortly after it occurred and issued instructions to have the small remaining Washington stock carefully examined and telegraphed to New York and

Philadelphia to examine stock for inverted sheets and return for redemption any found. But the one sheet sold is known to have been found in supplies delivered to the Washington post office, and none have been returned for redemption from New York or Philadelphia. As none of the initial supply to New York was sold directly to the public, the stamps being affixed to the letters by post office employees, and as the stamps in Philadelphia were withdrawn from sale for an hour or so until they could be examined, it is fairly safe to say that no inverts were delivered to New York or Philadelphia. In the small stock of the first printing which remained in the vaults at the Bureau three sheets of inverts were found, each stamp of which was heavily blue penciled before being consigned to the macerator."

As for the final statement by Mr. Leavy in the above quotation, this has never been confirmed to our knowledge. Lacking any official word or documentation, a matter like this must remain one of conjecture. Later on we shall set forth proof why there is only one sheet with the inverted centers, despite recurring rumors that more exist, or ever did exist.

May 15 to May 21, 1918

Trying to follow the history of this famous sheet with the inverted centers in chronological order, this period of one week is now discussed. It covers the time from when Mr. Robey had purchased his sheet until he had sold it to a Philadelphia stamp dealer, Eugene Klein, for $15,000 netting the buyer a profit of $14,976 on his $24 investment.

We are only concerned with the normal stamps except in so far as they have a direct bearing upon the inverts. A brief mention may be made that after May 14th the Bureau, to prevent any more errors with inverted centers, ordered the word "Top" to be engraved on the plate. Upon further reflection, the Bureau did not think one "Top" was a sufficient precaution, and so ordered a new engraving with the word "Top" twice for both printing operations.

As for the use of the 24c air mail of 1918, the first flights commenced on May 15th as scheduled. There was a mishap with the mail on the Washington-New York leg, causing a day's delay in the delivery. Many covers were prepared for these flights and survive for collectors. But all the stamps are the normal varieties. None with inverted centers were used on this mail.

Mr. W. T. Robey recalls his experiences with his sheet as follows:

"At that time, the late Percy Mann, of Philadelphia, was conducting the new issue column of *Mekeel's Weekly*. A telegram was sent him about the find, requesting him to give proper notice of same in his column.

"The next day, a reply was received from Mr. Mann, in which he stated that he was coming to Washington that day and would call on me that evening. After making an examination of the sheet, Mr. Mann stated that he was prepared to offer me $10,000.00 for same and would I accept that sum? I told him that I had made up my mind to go to New York and see what I might possibly get for the sheet there. He then requested that if, in the event his offer was equalled, or bettered, by anyone in New York, that I inform him of such either by phone or telegraph and give him the opportunity to make a further bid for the sheet. This I promised to do. During the course of my conversation with Mr. Mann, I learned that the sale of these stamps was stopped in both New York and Philadelphia for over two hours on the previous day and that collectors and dealers were at a loss to understand why. After the receipt of my telegram he said that he readily understood why the sale had been temporarily stopped.

"The next day was Friday, and as previously arranged I left for New York that afternoon, arriving about 9 P. M. Awaiting me at my hotel were Percy Doane, the well known dealer, and Elliott Perry, "Himself". My fame had preceded me and naturally they wished to see the sheet. I was asked by them if any offer had been made for the sheet, and I informed them that I had refused $10,000.00.

"Bright and early the next morning, I started out to try my luck in disposing of the sheet. My first stop was at the office of the ultimate buyer, Col. E. H. R. Green at 111 Broadway, where I was informed that he was out of the city. Next, I went to the office of Stanley Gibbons, which was at that time managed by Mr. Eustace B. Power, who

has frequently condemned all Twentieth Century issues of stamps. At that time Mr. Power was a great humorist. Imagine him offering $250.00 for $24.00 face value of "Twentieth Century trash." He also stated that he knew of three other sheets of these stamps and was negotiatiing for the purchase of same at that time. Wonder why he never bought them? Later, I went to the office of the Scott Stamp & Coin Co., who only wanted to dispose of the sheet on a commission basis, refusing to make a cash offer.

"Feeling rather low and disgusted with my failure to secure a decent offer for the sheet, I returned to my hotel and found waiting for me, Mr. John J. Klemann, who after examining the sheet offered me $2,500.00 for it. When I told him that I had already refused $10,000.00 for it, he stated that I was crazy and anyone offering such a price was also crazy.

"That evening I phoned Mr. Mann in Philadelphia and told him that I was returning to Washington the next day, that while his price had not been equalled in New York, I had decided not sell the sheet at that time. He asked me if, on my return to Washington, I would mind stopping off at Philadelphia and have a further talk with him. This I agreed to do.

"Upon my arrival in Philadelphia, I was met at the station by Mr. Mann and was immediately taken to the home of Mr. Eugene Klein. Mr. Klein, after looking at the sheet, asked me to set a price on it and I told him I would not accept less than $15,000.00 for it. After a consultation with Mr. Mann, Mr. Klein requested me to give him an option on it at $15,000.00 until 3 P. M. Monday, which was the next day. To this I agreed and then left for home.

"Bright and early the next morning, I received a phone call from Mr. Colman, who asked me if I would accept $18,000.00 for the sheet. I told him that I had given Mr. Klein an option on it until 3 P. M. and if he did not exercise same by that time I would get in touch with him. Shortly before the expiration of the option, I received a phone call from Mr. Klein agreeing to purchase the sheet at the agreed price, namely $15,000.00. He asked me to deliver it to his office as soon as possible.

"Promptly at noon the next day, Tuesday, the sheet was delivered to Mr. Klein at his office in Philadelphia, receiving a certified check in payment. Thus, within one week, stamps that originally cost $24.00 were sold for a profit of $14,976.00."

Most of the dealers mentioned by Mr. Robey are now dead. The writer has attempted to interview those who have survived to learn their version of their dealings with Robey. The impression this writer received from such talks was that Robey did not realize some of the then existing influences in the philatelic market that worked against his possible sale of the sheet.

For example, Mr. Elliott Perry often relates his memories of these May 1918 events. Mr. Perry maintains that he still has some of the original correspondence, but unfortunately has mislaid it, not being able to make it available for our purposes. Perry describes Robey as a highly nervous man due to a number of causes. First of all, not long before May 14th, a shortage of funds had been discovered in the office of W. B. Hibbs & Co., the stock brokers in Washington where Robey was employed. Although completely innocent, this shortage was found in the department where Robey worked. As a consequence, he was being subjected to an investigation, an unnerving experience. In the second place, the Postal Inspectors had been persistent with Robey in their attempts to persuade him to return the sheet to them. They were anxious to get the sheet back and were exerting their best efforts to accomplish this. And finally, Robey had a deferment from the draft because of family dependency. He feared that if news accounts were published mentioning enormous profits, he would be reclassified and drafted into the Army. As a consequence of all these, Robey was described to us as one in a hurry to dispose of his sheet and get back to his job in Washington, D. C.

Previous mention had been made of the 5-cents errors found first in 1917. Perhaps some, after reading Robey's account of his experiences in trying to sell his sheet, received the impression that the stamp dealers were not too generous with their offers to Robey. This is understandable.

If one consults the stamp papers back in 1917, after the 5-cents errors were discovered, he would find the first advertisements offering one copy for sale at a price of several hundred dollars. Then later advertisements appear at progressively reduced prices along with accounts of the discoveries of more 5-cents errors. Thus by March, 1918 the price for a copy of this 5-cents error had tumbled to a few dollars. In fact, several stamp dealers recalling this period, insist that this 5-cents error had become "a drug upon the market", with few interested in buying at any price.

In May, 1918 along came Mr. Robey with his sheet of the new air mails with the inverted centers. One can picture the reception he received from the dealers he approached. Not only from their disastrous experiences with the recent 5-cents error, but also believing that possibly three more sheets must have been printed, the stamp dealers were none too receptive.

All sorts of rumors were being spread. These also exerted influence upon the sale of the Robey sheet, whether or not they all later proved to be false. Some of them are so interesting that they warrant retelling.

One rumor soon spread was that the Post Office Department upon many requests from collectors had ordered sufficient additional printings for philatelists to buy the 24c air mails with the inverted centers at the post offices at face value.

Another rumor seems to have been the commonest. Daily word would be spread among stamp collectors and dealers that another sheet or further copies had been found in some other part of the country. For instance, we have often heard it said that it was a regular occurrence during this 1918 period to see someone rush into a New York stamp dealer's office and excitedly report:

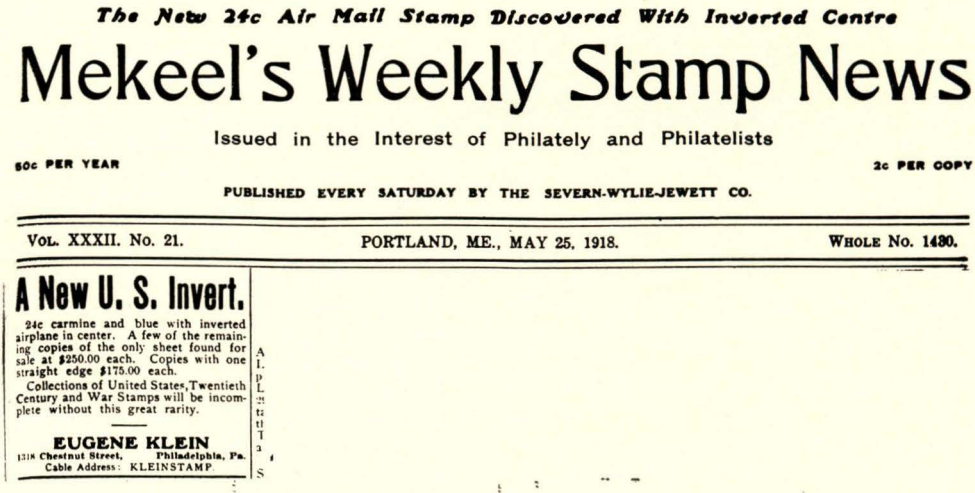
"Did you hear that another sheet with the airplane upside down has been found in a post office out west? It was bought for $500! It's true. I just heard it from someone who was in Scott's office."

Now even if one doubted this rumor, just hearing such reports repeated would engender a certain caution and conservatism in the mind of anyone approached to buy Robey's sheet. There was no reliable way of determining the sheet's uniqueness. The Government literally had shut up tight as to what it knew. So if there were just a few more sheets out like Robey's, his asking price was exorbitant.

Despite all this, Robey was able to sell his sheet to Eugene Klein of Philadelphia, Pa. for $15,000. Mr. Klein, after this, continued actively in stamps both as a stamp dealer and philatelist until his death in 1944. Although he frequently wrote articles on stamps, he never wrote about his 1918 purchase. This writer often wondered if in Mr. Klein's effects, which passed to his family, there were any correspondence or other data that might add to our knowledge of this famous stamp. We contacted Mr. Klein's daughter, Mrs. A. J. Hertz of New York, N. Y., who was most coöperative. She informed us that there are many boxes with records and correspondence of her late father, in her possession, which she and her husband are slowly inspecting for retention or disposal. The work is very tedious and slow. As yet nothing has been found about the 24c invert. Mrs. Hertz assured the writer that if anything is found in the Klein correspondence, she will happily make it available for the record.

During the course of our visit to Mrs. Hertz, she related one anecdote, which she said her father often told when remembering his famous 1918 purchase. We agreed with her that it was a fascinating tale, and if true, would afford us a further insight into Robey's character. Mrs. Hertz consented to our retelling it.

Robey came into Klein's office carrying a briefcase that contained his sheet. After Klein had agreed to purchase the sheet and was preparing to make payment, Robey took his sheet out of the briefcase. But Mr. Klein, careful to keep this valuable sheet from damage and not having anything before him for this purpose, asked Robey to return the sheet to his briefcase and turn over the whole thing to him. Robey balked. He asked for extra payment for his briefcase, which was described as neither new nor in good condition. Robey asked Klein for $20 or $30 extra for his briefcase. Mrs. Hertz recalls her father later often laughing about this episode, when he thought back to this $15,000 transaction in 1918 with the seller demanding a few dollars more for his second-hand briefcase.



The New 24c Air Mail Stamp Discovered With Inverted Centre

Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News

Issued in the Interest of Philately and Philatelists

50c PER YEAR — 2c PER COPY

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY THE SEVERN-WYLIE-JEWETT CO.

VOL. XXXII. No. 21. — PORTLAND, ME., MAY 25, 1918. — WHOLE No. 1480.

A New U. S. Invert.

24c carmine and blue with inverted airplane in center. A few of the remaining copies of the only sheet found for sale at $250.00 each. Copies with one straight edge $175.00 each.

Collections of United States, Twentieth Century and War Stamps will be incomplete without this great rarity.

EUGENE KLEIN
1318 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
Cable Address: KLEINSTAMP

Fig. 3. "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News" of May 25, 1919 showing that portion of the front page with the headline and Eugene Klein's advertisement.

May 21 to June 1, 1918

This short period of time, not much more than a week, is now examined, because we have found that most of the things that happened after Mr. Klein had purchased the sheet have been incorrectly related or recorded. Most think that Mr. Klein bought the sheet as Col. E. H. R. Green's agent and quickly turned it over to him. For instance, although Robey had nothing further to do with the sheet and knew little about what happened after he had sold it, he included this version in his 1938 account:

"Later, the entire sheet was sold to Col. E. H. R. Green, the first party I tried to contact in New York, for $20,000.00, who at the request of Mr. Klein decided to have compassion on his fellow stamp collectors and give them an opportunity to also obtain some of these stamps. He realized that by keeping the entire sheet it probably would never be worth much more than he had paid for it. He further realized that breaking the sheet would enhance the value of the stamps and that he would be able to get his money out of it in time."

In trying to find out what transpired at that time, we came upon something quite elucidating. One of the most popular stamp weeklies at that time was "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News". The error was bought on May 14th. The first edition of this weekly that could have carried news about this stamp would be "Mekeel's" of May 25, 1918. Sure enough, the headline in the May 25th number announced the find. (See Fig. 3). But of more interest is the advertisement of Eugene Klein found in the upper left column on the front page. This reads:

A NEW U. S. INVERT.

24c carmine and blue with inverted airplane in center. A few of the remaining copies of the only sheet found for sale at $250.00 each. Copies with one straight edge $175.00 each.

Collections of United States, Twentieth Century and War Savings will be incomplete without this great rarity.

EUGENE KLEIN
1318 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

The location of this 1918 advertisement sets to rest a number of reports. Dealers and collectors have told of being offered or buying a copy from the original sheet for anywhere from $100 to $300 per copy. *The printed record shows the price at $250 per copy,* $175 for copies with one straight edge.

The June 1, 1918 "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News" carries a second Eugene Klein advertisement in the same place. This read:



A New U. S. Invert.

After writing last week's advertisement, I sold the entire sheet of one hundred 24c with inverted airplane to a philatelist. Consequently, I am obliged to cancel the prices quoted. The purchaser incorporated a portion of the sheet with his collection and authorized me to sell the balance, thereby giving collectors an opportunity to secure an otherwise unobtainable stamp. Price on application.

Collections of United States, Twentieth Century and War Stamps will be incomplete without this great rarity.

EUGENE KLEIN

1318 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

Cable Address: KLEINSTAMP.

Fig. 4. Eugene Klein's second advertisement in "Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News" of June 1, 1918.

A NEW U. S. INVERT.

After writing last week's advertisement, I sold the entire sheet of one hundred 24c with inverted airplane to a philatelist. Consequently, I am obliged to cancel the prices quoted. The purchaser incorporated a portion of the sheet with his collection and authorized me to sell the balance, thereby giving collectors an opportunity to secure an otherwise unobtainable stamp. Price on application.

Collections of United States, Twentieth Century and War Stamps will be incomplete without this great rarity.

EUGENE KLEIN
1318 Chestnut Street Philadelphia, Pa.

This June 1, 1918 advertisement of Eugene Klein (Fig. 4) shows that he probably did not buy the sheet as Col. Green's agent. He may have bought it with him in mind, because Col. Green was well-known at this time for his fabulous investments in stamps. But the sheet was sold to Hetty Green's son between May 25th and June 1st. Another anecdote related about the sale to Col. Green is amusing, even if it is not true. Some dealers, who had done business with Col. Green, told the writer that this collector was under the impression that he was buying a sheet of the 1901 Pan American issue (the 2c denomination) with inverted centers.

Another anecdote told to the writer by those familiar with events at that time report that Col. Green at first wanted to retain the entire sheet. He owned full sheets with the 5-cents errors, especially the imperforates (Scott 482a) and wished to keep the one with the 24c inverts. After much persuasion he decided to break up the sheet, a very wise act as subsequent events proved.

June, 1918 to 1942

The 24c air mail error mounted steadily in fame after Col. Green bought the sheet. Copies began to exchange hands every year at steadily increasing prices. The story of the find was told and retold with almost each teller adding something new. In the 1930's it had become so garbled that Robey was prevailed upon to record the actual events as they transpired, according to his best recollection.

It was known that Col. Green did not sell the entire sheet, but retained a part of it for his collections. It was reported that he kept this or that. Robey said this:

"Col. Green kept a block of eight showing the plate number at the bottom. This is the largest block in existence. He also kept the center line block, and the two arrow blocks, twenty stamps in all".

One knowing the make-up of the sheet realizes that there were only TWO arrows on the sheet. One was at the bottom next to the plate number included in the block of eight. The other was the left arrow block of four from the center of the left sheet margin. (See Fig. 5) Until after Col. Green died and when his collections were sold at auction, no one knew exactly how many copies he had retained from the original sheet of 100. The Green auction sales started in September, 1942 and continued until March, 1945. A recheck of the 29 auction catalogs shows that Col. Green had owned:

8—the block of eight with the bottom arrow and plate number (Fig. 2)
4—the center line block of four (Fig. 6)
4—the left arrow block of four (Fig. 5)
4—the bottom left block of four with siderographer's initials (Fig. 9)
5—perforated copies
13—straight edge copies
A total of 38 copies.



Fig. 5. Left arrow block (Pos. 41, 42, 51, 52). Notice the separation of the horizontal perforations. Photo by L. W. Giles.

Here we notice something interesting about the straight edge copies. *They did not sell.* The original sheet had 19 copies; nine from the top row all straight edge on top, the position 10 copy straight edge on the top and at right, and nine from the right all straight edge at right. *The total number of straight edge copies in the Col. Green sales were 13.*

Simple arithmetic would show that if Col. Green owned a total of 38 copies, then 62 copies must have been sold to other collectors. But no one ever has bothered to ascertain if all of the 100 copies of this famous stamp still exist.

Now there were many kinds of rumors about some copies being lost by Col. Green, while in his possession, in all sorts of manners. One report stated that he had a few copies on his desk and a strong breeze coming into his office blew them away, never to be found. Another story, current in the years under discussion, told of the sinking of his luxury yacht and several copies on board being lost. Someone once said that Col. Green had a watchfob made with one of his copies. And finally it was related that either his wife or secretary seeking a stamp to mail a letter used some of his 24c inverts for this purpose. Who knows if any or all of these were true?

But this much is known. *No one has tried to account for all of the 100 copies after the original sheet was broken up in 1918.* Through the courtesy of Mrs. Ethel McCoy, who had purchased a block of four about 20 years ago, this writer has been loaned a list of all the owners known in 1938. It was sent to her by P. H. Ward Jr., a well-known Philadelphia stamp dealer, who not only knew much about the disposition of many copies in the original sheet of 100, but who also had sold some of the choice items of this stamp. This list * follows below. It accounts for *37 copies.*

February 26, 1938

1 ..... Mr. West, Phila., Pa.
1 ..... Mrs. Heathcote, St. Petersburg, Fla.
1 ..... Mr. Ewing
1 ..... Mr. Honeyman
1 ..... Dr. Cole
4 ..... Mrs. E. B. Stewart

* This list must be regarded for what it is, a compilation by one individual presumably taken from memory. Since it is not documented, no one can vouchsafe for its accuracy. For example, several misspellings of names are noted. "Clatt" should have been "Clapp", while Sir Everaad, England refers to the late "Sir Lindsay Everard", famous British air mail collector, whose collections were sold at auction a few years ago. Nevertheless, the existence of such a list is a very helpful guide.



Fig. 6. Center line block (Pos. 45, 46, 55, 56). Photo courtesy of Irwin Heiman.

1 Dr. D.
1 Mrs. McCleverty, England
1 Mrs. FitzGerald, England
1 Sir Everaad, England
1 Mr. Hudson
1 Mr. O.
1 Mr. James Helm
1 Mr. Hayden
1 Mr. P. B. Frelinghuysen
1 Dr. D.
1 Mr. C.
1 Mr. Wilson
4 Mr. Sinkler
1 Mr. Sinkler
1 Mr. Clatt
1 Mr. L.
1 Mr. C. Smith
1 Mr. S. Brown
1 Mr. Breuchig
1 Mr. B.
4 Mr. B.
1 F. R. Vernon-Williams

37



Fig. 7. Block with horizontal guide line (Pos. 43, 44, 53, 54). Photo courtesy of John A. Fox.



Fig. 8. Block with left sheet margin trimmed, not shown by the photograph (Pos. 61, 62, 71, 72). Photo courtesy of Princeton University Library.

Col. Green's holdings, after the 1942-45 auctions were completed, showed that he had a total of 38 copies, *making a grand total of 75 copies known out of the sheet of 100.*

Since the receipt of this list sometime ago, we have tried to check its completeness. Our extensive inquiries and investigations have so far disclosed a few copies omitted. Willis F. Cheney, a New York dealer familiar with many past sales of this error when he was associated with the late Spencer Anderson, recalls a "Mr. F." owning a copy. Mr. Cheney also thought that a copy was in "the Miller Collection", property of the New York Public Library, New York, N. Y. This collection is exhibited permanently on the main floor in the Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street building, and upon inspection, a single copy of the invert was seen by us.

Thus out of the original sheet of 100, we have been able to account for *81* copies, which can be tabulated as follows:

7 blocks of four	28
3 pairs	6
47 singles	47
Total	81

There seems to be little question that some owners have preferred to remain anonymous, not wishing to disclose that they have a copy of this valuable stamp. For instance, the following information has come to us through Mr. Louis W. Charlat of New York City, a long-time stamp dealer. He recalls selling a pair of the inverts in 1918 to a midwest industrialist. Mr. Charlat was commissioned to purchase a pair with the finest possible centering, and upon his client's instructions paid a premium price for a selected pair. Mr. Charlat has good reason to believe that this pair still is in the possession of the original buyer. But the 1938 list does not indicate a pair being owned.

Also it is entirely possible that some copies are in foreign collections and have been for many years. Some veteran dealers think that several copies may be in European collections.

Therefore all these recent investigations indicate the strong possibility that not all of the original 100 copies have survived. But just how many copies have been lost cannot be stated with even a reasonable degree of accuracy.

Publication of an article like this often "smokes out" unknown copies. It is hoped



Fig. 9. Lower left corner block with siderographer's initials. (Pos. 81, 82, 91, 92). Photo by L. W. Giles.

that anyone owning a 24c airmail with the inverted center will communicate with this author. We shall not disclose the name of any owner without permission. *The record of the stamp is the important matter.* Possibly a short addendum to this article might be published later on, if new copies come to light.

This complete knowledge is essential because if there are actually less than 100 now existing, such factual data will have a strong bearing upon the value of the surviving copies.

1946 to The Present

The 24c air mail invert met its acid test with the liquidation of the Col. E. H. R. Green's holdings that ended in 1945. It is well to be reminded that these auction sales were conducted during World War II when interest in stamp collecting could have been adversely affected by the all-out war effort. But this series of sales showed clearly that the 24c invert was firmly established in "the philatelic hall of fame."

Since then at least a single copy of this valuable error seems to come on the philatelic market every year. Later on we shall offer some remarks upon prices. But one short observation can be made here. The price per copy shows a very steady demand.

By now there is no multiple piece surviving larger than a block of four. There are seven such blocks. From the original sheet, there were only 5 position blocks that one could collect. These are:

1. The left arrow block. (Pos. 41, 42, 51, 52) (Fig. 5)
2. The center line block. (Pos. 45, 46, 55, 56) (Fig. 6)
3. The lower left corner block. (Pos. 81, 82, 91, 92) (Fig. 9)
4. The bottom arrow block. (Pos. 85, 86, 95, 96)
5. The plate number block. (Pos. 87, 88, 97, 98) (Fig. 10)

Col. Green retained for his collection all of these position blocks, keeping the last two on the above list as a single unit in a block of eight. But when this block was sold at auction in November, 1944, the upper left stamp (Position No. 85) had become severed. (Fig. 2) It is alleged that one of those han-



Fig. 10. Plate No. Block (Pos. 87, 88, 97, 98). Photo courtesy of Harmer, Rooke & Co.

dling the Green material after his death was responsible for this accident. However, without trying to place the blame upon someone, the essential factor to remember is that this severance ended the possibility of owning the bottom arrow block forever.

This former block of eight with Position No. 85 already detached was bought in the Green auction of 1944 for $27,000 by a New York stamp dealer, Y. Souren. Nothing more was authoritatively known about it until 1951. Dealer Souren had died in 1949, and his stamp stock was sold in auction sales commencing in 1951.

A previous article of ours had shown[9] that dealer Souren had broken the block of eight into four parts as follows:

1. Single copy Pos. 85
2. Single copy Pos. 86
3. Bottom arrow pair Pos. 95-96
4. Plate number block of four Pos. 87, 88, 97, 98

These four parts were sold at auction by the Souren Estate. For instance, the arrow pair brought $3,300 in 1951. It was sold again by a new owner in 1955 (H. R. Harmer Inc. September 20, 1955) for $6100. (Fig. 11). The single copies were sold individually in 1951 by H. R. Harmer Inc. auctions. The plate number block of four was sold in 1954 for $18,250 (Harmer, Rooke & Co., May 18, 1954). The total of these prices is $28,150 compared to the 1944 price of $27,000.

It is also interesting to note that of the other position blocks owned by Col. Green, all but the center line block of four have been sold again to new owners.

The following information can be supplied about *the seven surviving blocks of four.*

[9] COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST Vol. XXXI, No. 2, p. 97 et seq.

Description and Pos. Nos.

1. Left arrow block.
   Nos. 41, 42, 51, 52

Latest record of ownership

Sold on Mar. 25, 1946 Col. Green auction Part 26. (This block has been partly severed horizontally, as can be seen from the illustration.) (Fig. 5)
Bought by Raymond H. Weill Co., New Orleans, La., in October, 1949 from a New York industrialist. Sold to a collector in 1950 and still in his possession.



Fig. 11. Bottom arrow pair (Pos. 95-96). Illustration courtesy of H. R. Harmer, Inc.

2. Vertical guide line block.
   Nos. 43, 44, 53, 54

   Advertised for sale in April, 1955 by John A. Fox, New York. (Fig. 7)

3. Center line block *
   Nos. 45, 46, 55, 56

   Bought by dealer Souren in the Col. Green Part 24 auction of January 8, 1946. Now in the collection of a New Yorker. (Fig. 6)

4. Left sheet margin block
   Nos. 61, 62, 71, 72

   In the Palmer Collection of the Princeton University Library, Princeton, N. J. Each copy is signed "Economist Stamp Co." The sheet margin has been trimmed, but this is not seen on the illustration. (Fig. 8)

* In connection with blocks of four, it is interesting to study how the stamp catalogs treat them. "Scott's U. S. Stamp Catalogue Specialized, 1956 edition", lists the blocks as follows:

C3a block of four	$20,000.00
a. same, center line block	25,000.00
a. same, margin block of 4 blue P#	25,000.00

At present there are *four* position blocks of 4 known to exist. However, for some unexplained reason the Scott catalog lists and prices only *two*. For instance, the block with the plate number, priced at $25,000 in italics, was sold for $18,250 in 1954. But the unlisted bottom left corner block sold for $22,000 in 1952,—$3,750 more than the listed plate No. block.

This is one of those many stamp catalog inconsistencies that often baffle philatelic students. Why should only two out of the four position blocks be listed? And, upon what data are prices based?

And the newer catalog, "the American Stamp Catalog, 1955" (Minkus Publications) happens to be inferior to Scott in regard to the listing of blocks of four. This new catalog lists and prices only a regular block of four and the center line block, which it prices at $27,500, a better valuation than Scott in view of the last recorded auction sale price of this piece.



Fig. 12. Pos. 21 with sheet margin. Notice the centering is not as good as with the copies found in the lower part of the sheet. Illustration courtesy of J. & H. Stolow.

5. Horizontal line block Nos. 65, 66, 75, 76	Stolen from Mrs. McCoy September 23, 1955 at the APS Convention in Norfolk, Va. Possibly has since been severed into singles to prevent identification, when and if offered for sale. (Fig. 13)
6. Bottom lower left corner block. Nos. 81, 82, 91, 92	Bought by Ezra D. Cole on June 25, 1952 at E. Costales auction (Close Collection) as agent for a Western collector. (Fig. 9)
7. Plate No. block Nos. 85, 86, 95, 96	Bought by Raymond H. Weill Co., New Orleans, La., on May 18, 1954 at a Harmer, Rooke & Co. auction. (Fig. 10)

Some of the Col. Green single copies have had several owners since his estate was sold. For example, the Position 10 copy was first sold in the Green auction Part X of October 25, 1943 as a vertical pair with Position 20. (Fig. 15) But because the stamps offered singly brought more than the price for a pair, Positions 10 and 20 were sold as single copies. Our records show that this Position 10 (Fig. 16) was sold again at auction on December 1, 1947. It was bought in 1949 by a new collector, who commissioned its sale at auction in June, 1955. The latest reported buyer was a stamp dealer, so that he possibly may have bought it for resale.

Rumors Continue

Recent years have not seen any recession in the rumors related nor the incorrect versions written about this famous error. As time passes, the story of what actually transpired has become so distorted that the true version has become almost completely forgotten.

Many instances of garbled versions could be cited from our country's most widely-read publications. One could quote passages from "the Saturday Evening Post", "Collier's", "Life" and other popular magazines. Also printed misinformation could be taken from many newspapers. Instead only a few examples will be extracted from our leading daily papers.

"The New York Times" of September 24, 1955 included the following unclear and wrong information when reporting the theft of a block of four at Norfolk, Va.:

" . . . There were only 100 of the prints in existence at one time. The stamps originally were purchased in 1924 by W. T. Robey".

"The Chicago Tribune" ran a short account of the sale of one copy, including the following:

" . . . originally bought in 1918 by a collector from a disgruntled purchaser for $24, they later sold for $10,000 . . . "

But we would give the prize for exaggeration to "the New York Herald-Tribune" of November 2, 1955 for this:

"TV's first snap at philately occurs Sunday (5:45 p. m.) in a weekly fifteen-minute show on WATV headed by Jack Taub, a stamp collecting expert. Premiere of 'The Stampazine Show' will exhibit the famed 'Inverted Air Mail,' a U. S. stamp with an upside down plane, valued at $400,000 . . . "

A rumor heard most frequently is that another sheet has been stored away in private hands. We take absolutely no stock in such a tale. It is inconceivable that with the value of this error such common public knowledge, anyone, even if he were exceedingly wealthy, would choose to sit with an unknown sheet instead of trying to realize upon its phenomenal value. They tell us that the days of miracles are not over; perhaps sometime in the future another sheet from private hands may come on the philatelic market. We hope to live that long.

Previously both W. T. Robey and J. B. Leavy had been quoted about three more with inverted centers being found in the government's possession and destroyed after Robey's purchase. We have pointed out the lack of any documentary evidence to substantiate this. Furthermore rumors have been current for years that other sheets with this famous error are in the vaults of some



Fig. 13. The "Ethel McCoy" block (Pos. 65, 66, 75, 76) that was stolen from her exhibit at the American Philatelic Society convention in Norfolk, Va. on September 23, 1955. Photo by Boutrelle.

government agency or national institution, and that such a sheet was found after Robey's and heavily marked with crayon to prevent it from coming into philatelic hands for resale. We have strong doubts about this for the following reasons.

Over the years since 1918, the Post Office Department and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing have been most cooperative with students of United States stamps. Upon request, no information that is available about stamps has been withheld to our knowledge. In view of this record, it is difficult to believe that the existence of heavily crayoned sheet with the inverted centers would have remained such a well-kept secret. One may properly ask: "What has the Government to fear by disclosing such information?" Furthermore, the exhibit of such a fabulous showpiece at one of our great international philatelic exhibitions would literally "steal the show". The Post Office Department's exhibits frequently put on public display at stamp shows include many stamps and sheets of great value. We can conceive of no logical reason for not including a marked sheet of the 1918 air mail stamp with the inverted centers, if it exists.

The writer has directed personal inquiries about the existence of more sheets to officials he knows in the Post Office Department, Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Smithsonian Institution, all in Washington, D. C. He is pleased to have received permission to reprint the contents of the following letter, that in our opinion clinches our contention that *only one sheet of the 24c air mail with inverted centers is known to exist.*

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT
ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington, D. C.

April 12, 1940

"My dear Sir:

"Your letter of April 4, making inquiry concerning the printing of 24c air mail stamps

of the issue of 1918 with inverted centers, is received.

"The Department's records on this subject are very limited. Practically all we know is that one sheet of these stamps escaped attention at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and was placed on sale to the public through the Washington, D. C., post office.

"The other details requested in your letter are not a matter of official record."

Very truly yours,

Third Assistant Postmaster General

The Death of W. T. Robey

In the discussion of the more recent events related to this famous stamp, mention must be made of the death of the purchaser of the sheet, Mr. W. T. Robey, who passed away in 1949. It was surprising to note that philately had made so little notice of his death. "Stamps", a popular weekly read mostly for its coverage of stamp events and people, noted Robey's death with this obscure obituary:

W. T. ROBEY DIES

"William T. Robey, 57, of Washington, D. C., passed away at George Washington University Hospital on February 5, 1949.

"Mr. Robey is well known in philatelic circles for his discovery of the sheet of 24c 1918 U. S. airmail stamps with center inverted.

"Mr. Robey has been in the employ of the Government since 1935. He was a regent of Washington Chapter, Royal Arcanum and a member of the Pentagon Philatelic Society.

"He is survived by his daughter Mrs. Louise A. Birch, and a granddaughter, Carolyn A. Birch, both of Washington".

As a matter of fact, Robey seemed to have faded almost entirely out of the philatelic picture after his 1938 article. One finds very little mention of him or his stamp activities up to the time of his death. It has been alleged in stories told to collectors that Robey's life was not too fortunate after he had sold his $24 sheet for a net profit of $14,976. This caused him and his family to expand their mode of living so that the money was soon spent. In time, he had little to show except the fame of his purchase in 1918. It is known that since his death in 1949, no stamp collection belonging to Robey has been advertised for sale or offered at auction. So possibly at the time of his death, he was no longer a stamp collector or perhaps his stamp collections were of nominal value.*

Also it is known that Robey never retained a copy for his own collection. He proves this when in 1938 he wrote the following:

"From the time I sold the sheet until this past summer, I had never seen one of these stamps. . . . The Collectors Club, of which I am a member . . . "

A Tragic Loss

The writing of this article was taking place during the summer and fall of 1955. No one had been of greater assistance or more encouraging to this writer than Mrs. Ethel McCoy of New York City, who had owned for many years one of the 7 blocks of four of this famous stamp. Philately likes her for her gracious cooperation. Innumerable requests came to her to exhibit her rare piece around this country. Most often she acquiesced giving hosts of people an opportunity to view a philatelic item seldom seen. The late W. T. Robey included the following in his 1938 account:

"From the time I sold the sheet until this past summer, I had never seen one of these stamps. Then, Mrs. Ethel B. Stewart, a widely known collector from Newton, New Jersey, who owns a block of four, was in Washington and I had the pleasure of meeting her. Mrs. Stewart had her stamps with her, and once again I had in my hands part of the original sheet that I had purchased for $24.00.

"The Collectors Club, of which I am a member, was having a meeting that evening and I invited Mrs. Stewart to accompany me to the meeting. She accepted my invitation and took her stamps with her. Mrs. Stewart very graciously exhibited these stamps and there were many present that evening who had never seen any of the stamps before".

* Mr. Sol Glass of Baltimore, Md., well-known student of 20th Century U. S. stamps, informs us that Mr. Robey's widow resides in his city, and that he knows she has her late husband's collection.

The aforementioned Mrs. Ethel Stewart later became Mrs. Ethel McCoy.

We were about to conclude with the chronological part of the story of this stamp, having written about everything that was considered of interest, when on September 23, 1955 we received a telephone call from Mrs. McCoy. This was not unusual because Mrs. McCoy had often phoned or written us, while we were doing this work, to impart some useful information about a 24c invert that she had either heard or read about. We cannot describe adequately our sense of shock when on this date Mrs. McCoy told us of the theft that very morning of her block of four at the American Philatelic Society Convention in Norfolk, Va. This news was heard with disbelief. And the more we thought about it after Mrs. McCoy hung up, the greater grew our consternation. Why would anyone wish to steal this?

Knowing well the outstanding individualities inherent in this showpiece, one could not account for the motive behind such a theft. Objects are stolen usually for the monetary gain through resale. Therefore, this robbery remains inexplicable to most informed stamp collectors and dealers. Even if the block were separated into single copies, the individual stamps remain identifiable. As for the lady owner, all who knew her felt that this misdeed was more like a kidnapping than the theft of a valuable object because her block of four of the 24c invert was such a prized posssession, not only for Mrs. McCoy, but for all philately that so often was accorded the opportunity to view this rarity. We illustrate Mrs. McCoy's block of four through her courtesy. (Fig. 13)

And so we end the chronological portion of our article on this sad note.

What Is It Worth?

This famous air mail error is known to stamp collectors and non-collectors all over the world. It is not an uncommon experience for a stamp collector to be asked the following question by a non-philatelic friend:

"I hear that you collect stamps. Do you have a copy of the stamp with the airplane upside down?"

Obviously of the great number of stamp collectors throughout the world, only a very few can own a copy of the air mail invert.



Fig. 14. A copy reperforated at the top. Photo courtesy of the Philatelic Foundation, New York, N. Y.

Another common question asked by non-collectors is:

"What is this stamp with the airplane upside down worth?"

If the answer were $3500 or even $4000, this figure would not be accurate because the condition of all the copies varies so greatly that there does not seem to be a typical or average price. When one speaks of a price of $3500 for a copy, reference is to one of the copies in better condition as regards the centering, with undisturbed original gum, free from all defects and perforated all around. The $4000 price presently applies to a few of the finest copies in regard to the centering and without the slightest defect. The highest recorded price for a single copy is $4100 at public auction.

Many copies since 1918 are known to have been carelessly handled so that new defects have appeared that were not on copies when they were in the original sheet of 100.

Then there were the 19 straight edge copies, which from the very beginning were priced for less because collectors always prefer perforated copies. Furthermore some of these straight edge copies lost their original gum sometime after 1918, and this lowers their philatelic value. For instance, Position No. 1 copy (Fig. 17), a very desirable position piece, was described in the Part IV, Col. E. H. R. Green auction of October 20, 1942 as "with no gum". Original gum or "o. g.", as the stamp trade calls it, is an essential factor in determining the philatelic value of an unused stamp. A straight edge copy without gum sells for far less than a perforated o. g. stamp.

Referring to defects, one finds mention of many copies in the Col. Green sales such as "no gum", "gum creases", "small thin spot", "thin spot" or "perf short". These are in addition to descriptions of the centering which never changes except as an individual gauges this. Thus one may deduce from reading the descriptions of the copies owned by Col. Green that his stamps were not too carefully handled. How else to account for so many copies, for instance, being without gum? This in turn leads us to a second theory. It gives us some indication that very possibly Col. Green did lose some of his copies because he did not exercise the proper care that most philatelists give to their more valuable philatelic material.

Centering of The Copies

Over the years, most all of the 24c air mail inverts have been sold through stamp auctions. This has been fortunate for study purposes because when a copy is sold at auction, a catalog is issued with a full description. And after U. S. stamps were permitted to be illustrated in black and white, all copies sold after 1933 were illustrated in the auction catalogs. One, who has managed to assemble a number of some auction records from past sales, comes to the following conclusion.

The best centered copies of the invert were in the lower half of the sheet of 100. Examine the illustration Fig. 18. Also compare the centering of the copies in the blocks that came from the bottom part of the sheet with that of the stamps from the top row, the straight edge copies. The centering on Positions 1 to 30 is much less desirable than on the copies from Positions 51 through 100.

This explains why all of the seven blocks came from the lower half of the sheet.

It may be of general interest to note that this article includes the illustrations of 40 copies.

Is This An Air Mail Stamp?

Since this 1918 24c stamp, the United States has issued about 50 air mail stamps. Our postal regulations require that air mail be prepaid with the proper rate. This may be done by either the distinctive air post stamps or with the ordinary postage stamps. But the special stamps for air mail may not be used for surface mail prepayment. Consequently, all the U. S. air stamps carry the inscription:—"Air Mail." However, these two words are not to be found on the three denominations of the 1918 series, only the inscription "U. S. Postage". But some contend that the omission of the words "Air Mail" on the 24c stamp is not significant, because the airplane in the central design indicates the type of special mail service for which the stamp was intended.

However, others have a contrary viewpoint, arguing that from a technical angle the 1918 stamps are not air mails because to qualify for this "it had to be a regular postage stamp, available for the payment of regular postage in the amount of its denomination. It would require an Act of Congress for the Postmaster General to have authority to issue an air mail stamp and this was not granted until years later. The 10c blue map stamp of 1926 was the first to incorporate the words 'Air Mail' . . . The 24 cent rate of the 1918 stamp covered air mail *and special delivery service* combined, making this technically our country's first air mail special delivery stamp".[10]

In our opinion, philately seems to overlook such technical arguments, but instead establishes its own definitions, which in time become a part of the philatelic language understood by all. The most basic guidebooks for philatelists are the postage stamp catalogs, which list and price all stamps for collectors. *Every catalog that we consulted lists the 1918 issue of the United States as air mail stamps.* Therefore, despite any objections that in a strictly technical sense may be correct, philately has classified this 1918 issue as air mail stamps and will continue to do so.

Fakes

Stamp collecting is a delightful hobby offering both great enjoyment and the opportunity for study and education. Yet it has its unpleasant side. There are sharp operators who move into philately to practice deception upon the less informed collectors. Fortunately, through its mediums of information and some of its institutions, philately has been

10 "The 24c 1918 Invert" by Henry H. Huff. "Philately", Jan. 27, 1947, p. 116.

very successful in combatting such trickery, but not in stopping it completely.

Philatelic deceptions take many forms from outright imitation, counterfeiting, to repairing or restoring stamps to have them pass as a more valuable collector's item than they actually are.

Reperforating A Straight Edge

One realizes that a condition quirk with collecting stamps is a lesser demand for a straight edge copy. Many cannot understand this. This is a fact, and a long explanation of the reason for this unpopularity is out of place in an article like this one.

The original sheet of 100 contained 19 straight edge copies, as previously stated. So a profitable operation could result if one bought the less expensive straight edge copy, altered it into a perforated copy and then was able to palm it off successfully. This has been done. (Fig. 14). Fortunately the philatelic experts have detected this. The illustrated copy comes from the files of the Philatelic Foundation, New York, N. Y., whose Expert Committee has issued a written opinion stating that the top margin of this copy has been reperforated.

Luckily not all of the 19 straight edge copies can be reperforated. All of the copies from the right side (Positions Nos. 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100) are cut so close at the right that there is not enough margin left to add any perforations. But stamps from the top row (Positions Nos. 1 to 9) have such a wide margin on top that a skilled faker can reperforate these copies. The Position No. 10 copy can be reperforated on the top, but nothing can be done with the other straight edge at the right. (Fig. 16)

Manufacturing A Fake Copy

A fake copy has been made of this famous error. The method used was not a new one, similar fakes having been produced with the 1901 Pan American Exposition inverted centers. The faker skillfully removes the center from a normal copy and then places the cut-out center reversed in the frame. He then rebacks the stamp, regums it and has imitated a copy with an inverted center. When skillfully done, it is difficult to detect.

Litigation ensuing from the purchase of



Fig. 15. Positions 10 and 20 in a pair as offered in the Col. Green auction, which was then sold separately as single copies. Notice the close margins on the right but the wider one on the top.



Fig. 16. Position 10 copy. Photo by L. W. Giles.

one such faked copy some years ago is contained in the Court records. Reprinting all or parts of these records would not be practical in this article because of space requirements. However, recounting what substantially happened is so interesting that we shall include it, knowing that without reference to the actual Court records, accuracy will be somewhat sacrificed. Nevertheless, the story that follows is believed to be generally factual.

About 20 years or so ago, a man walked into a stamp dealer's office and offered for sale a copy of the 24c air mail invert. The dealer, not wanting to buy this for his stock, told this party that he would like to retain this stamp on consignment for a short time

because he thought he had a prospective buyer. This was agreed upon. The dealer gave this man a written receipt for a 24c air mail invert at the asking price.

The dealer at once wrote to his prospective customer. But between the time after the owner departed and the prospect replied, someone in this dealer's office inspected the copy left on consignment more thoroughly. Only then was it discovered to be a fake, made from cutting out the center from a normal copy as described above.

When the owner of this copy returned to learn if the dealer had been able to sell it to his customer, he informed the seller of the status of his copy. But its return was refused. The man maintained that he had delivered a genuine 24c air mail with an inverted center and had a written receipt for such a copy, not a faked one. The case went to Court and a verdict was rendered against the stamp dealer. The Court ruled that the written evidence showed a receipt for a genuine copy of this valuable error and the dealer had to make good.

Since that time, it is known that similar faked copies of the air mail invert have been made. To the best of our knowledge, all of them have been detected by the philatelic experts. Despite the elaborate claims of some pseudo-scientific philatelic authorities, who go into long detail about the use of expensive scientific apparatus like X-ray machines, any recognized philatelic expert can spot these fakes without scientific instruments. A good philatelic knowledge is the best means, knowing what to look for.

However since faked copies are being offered to collectors upon occasion, it is advisable for any prospective buyer to secure the opinion of competent experts.

Conclusion

The relatively short history of this 24c air mail invert has been sensational. As previously pointed out, there have been other U. S. stamps with inverted centers. Furthermore, the 1871 issue of U. S. Revenue stamps produced 22 inverted centers. All are valuable philatelic property. But from the day in 1918, when this air mail error was discovered, it has basked in the spotlight of publicity. From the first day it was a front-page story, and has remained so. There could be some future U. S. inverted centers, although under present highly developed printing methods, this is a remote possibility. For many reasons, this air mail invert is "the star of the show." The other errors are more like the "supporting players."

But another factor that makes this 24c air mail invert such an outstanding philatelic gem is the significance behind the stamp itself. This stamp marked the beginning of a new era in communication, air mail. This 24c stamp was the first issued by a government for use on a regularly scheduled air mail service.* Looking back, one sees that within ten years after this stamp was issued, air mail had received a rather wide public acceptance all over the world. And after another ten or fifteen years, air post had become one of our most important and popular means of communication. The economic, political and social changes brought about by this 20th century means of speedy communication is a long, fascinating story, too long to be told here. Suffice it to notice that it is truly remarkable that the beginning of such an essential service also produced a most sensational philatelic rarity, the 24c air mail with the center inverted. It also stimulated one of the most popular philatelic specialties, aero-philately.

If this story comes to a close on a somewhat ecstatic note, it is not because our emotions have carried us away. The 24c air mail error has become an extraordinary stamp. It has captured the imagination of thousands, collectors and non-collectors. It has proved to be gilt-edge philatelic property. Equally remarkable is the fact that despite so few being able to afford to own a copy, so many show an intense interest in this stamp. Whenever this error is exhibited, it becomes the star attraction. Nor has it ever become a topic of philatelic controversy. No one has ever questioned its status as a collector's item, which cannot be said of many other famous stamps.

And what a wonderful medium of free publicity this error has been for philately!

* Italy in 1917 and Austria in March, 1918 had issued air mail stamps before the United States. However, both these European air mail issues were provisional, not definitives, nor were they used upon a regularly scheduled air mail service.



Fig. 17. The Position No. 1 copy. Photo by L. W. Giles.



Fig. 18. Left: a copy from the second row in the sheet. Right: a copy from the sixth row in the sheet. They show the difference in centering, those from the upper part of the sheet being far less well centered than copies from the lower half. Photo courtesy by Raymond H. Weill Co.

The most widely-read magazines and newspapers run some story about this stamp practically every year. Collectors and non-collectors in almost every part of the world know about this stamp with the airplane upside down. Its design has been used for ladies' and men's jewelry. Ash trays and other giftware showing this error have had wide sales. One may call it "the Kohinoor diamond" of philately. What better proof of this statement can be found than the previously mentioned free booklet advertised on the back cover of American youths' most popular reader, the comic book! Almost every one, whether or not a collector of stamps, wants to know about this stamp with the airplane upside down.

Acknowledgements

As noted towards the beginning of this article, the work of compiling all the data has progressed slowly over many years. Numerous stamp collectors and dealers were helpful in supplying information, no matter how slight. The names of many dealers, who supplied pertinent information, are found mentioned in the body of this article. To the credit of the stamp trade, we cannot recall one dealer who did not quickly and willingly reply to a request for information. Special mention must be made of *Ezra D. Cole,* who not only worked long hours offering excellent suggestions, but who also worked diligently over the Col. Green auction catalogs extracting the essential data used in this study.

Many collectors were helpful. One name stands out, *Mrs. Ethel McCoy,* whose great interest in this work already has been noted.

The great philatelic libraries of the COLLECTORS CLUB and the PHILATELIC FOUNDATION were often consulted for reference purposes. Without the help of the Club's librarian, *Mrs. Eldridge,* we believe that this writing on the famous air mail never "would have gotten off the ground". Thanks also to *Eugene V. Connett 3rd* for his editorial assistance.

And finally my sincere appreciation to my many air mail stamp friends, those members of AERO PHILATELISTS, whose constant encouragement of my interest in air mail stamps has been so stimulating ever since we first joined together back in 1946.

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BOLIVIA-CHILE

The Handstruck Stamps of La Chimba & Antofagasta

By DEREK PALMER

In the late 1860's Bolivia's only coastal province, called Departmento Litoral, was a very sparsely populated region, consisting of vast expanses of the completely rainless Atacama desert, with but a very few townships inland and on the coast. It was no easy matter to secure personnel to run a postal service in so desolate a place. And so, as a financial inducement, the Bolivian authorities, in May 1872, decreed that postmasters in that province could keep for themselves the monies paid to them for mailing letters and that, instead of franking letters with adhesive stamps which, of course. would have to be accounted for, they could forward the mails franked with handstruck stamps.

About this time, Chilean prospectors, who made up a large proportion of the inhabitants of this Bolivian province, discovered silver inland at Caracoles, and uncovered immense deposits of nitrate on the pampa nearer the coast. As a consequence of these discoveries, there was a great influx of people from outside. The mining activities, which followed, created a considerable increase in the correspondence mailed, principally from the small port of La Chimba, one of the three ports of the Province, the others being Cobija and Mejillones.

In the early days, prior to 1868, all mail originating in La Chimba or thereabouts, was sent by messenger to Mejillones for despatch. But when steamers commenced calling at La Chimba fairly regularly, a local postmaster was appointed, one Isaac Alcalde, an employee of the nitrate company.

The earliest handstruck stamps from La Chimba were a framed FRANCA, and an oval CANCELADO; these are known in both blue and black inks between March 1875 and June 1876.[1] (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1. The earliest handstruck stamps of La Chimba. (Oct. 1875).

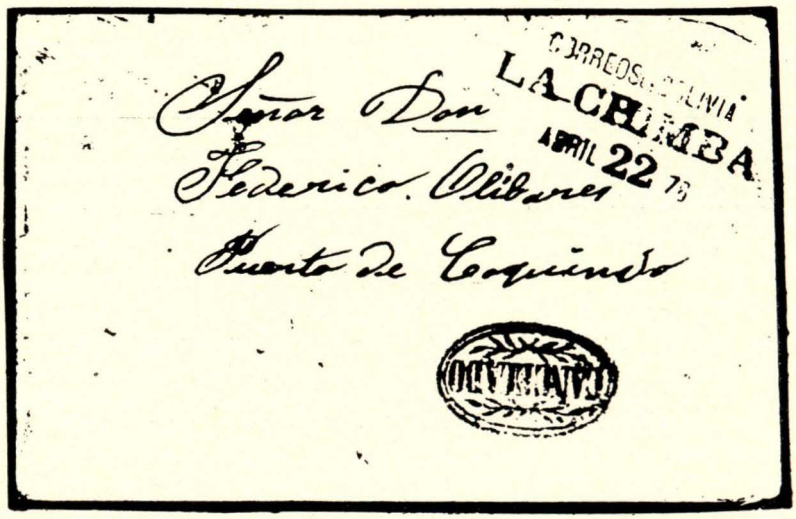


Fig. 2. The shortlived, dated handstruck stamp.

Between April and June 1876 a much more modern type of handstruck stamp was in use, consisting of three straight lines reading "Correos de Bolivia/La Chimba/date". This was impressed in greenish-blue ink and is known in two types, one with the letters of LA CHIMBA are 3mm. high, the other 4½mm. high. The oval marking CANCELADO continued in use. (Fig. 2)

[1] The dates of usage given are generally based upon the arrival backstamps.

The third handstruck stamp appears to have had the longest life of any of those used in this little port. The design was oval shape and bore the inscription "Correos de La Chimba - Bolivia", surrounding a design of a two-masted steam vessel. This type is known impressed in black, green and bluish inks; it is found in combination with the framed FRANCA and the oval CANCELADO already described, and also with an un-

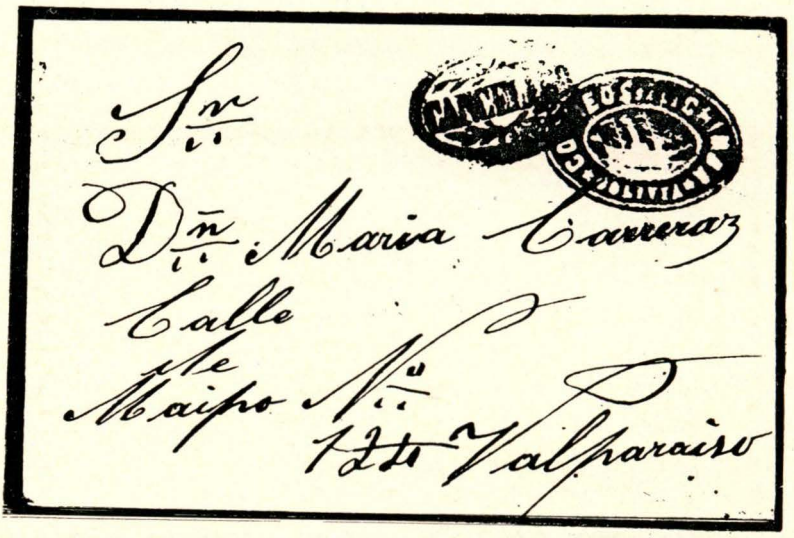


Fig. 3. The two-masted steamer design, the best known of the La Chimba handstruck stamps, (Dec. 1876).



Fig. 4. The elaborate "Bolivian Arms" design, the first to bear the name Antofagasta, used in Nov. 1876.

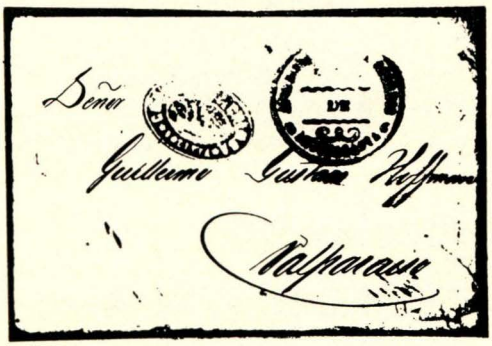


Fig. 5. The "steamer" design used in combination with a new type of circular handstruck stamp; August 1877.

framed FRANCA marking. Covers are known used between September 1875 and November 1877. (Fig. 3) In May 1877, a tidal wave, following a severe earthquake, overwhelmed the lowest Section of the town of La Chimba and washed away the building where the post office was established. In view of this historical fact, regarding which there can be no doubt, one wonders how covers can exist with the steamer device handstruck stamp, used at a later date.[2] Was the handstruck stamp itself recovered after the tidal wave had receded; or had covers been stamped previously and sold to the public, who used them later on?

For several years, since about 1870 in fact, the name, La Chimba, had been replaced by the new one, Antofagasta. This change finally appeared on a handstruck stamp (Fig. 4) which bore the wording "Admon. Correos de Bolivia/Antofagasta", surrounding a rather elaborate reproduction of the Bolivian coat of arms. This is known used in November 1876, in bluish-green ink, in combination with a diamond-shaped framed FRANCA, as shown in Fig. 9.

2 The late Mr. E. F. Hurt, in his catalogue of "Local Postage Stamps" (reprinted as Volume 6 of "Billig's Specialized Catalogues"), listed the La Chimba "steamer" stamp under Bolivia, but his reasoning for considering them as locals was at fault when he wrote:—"That this was a private enterprise is shown by the fact that no covers seen bear adhesive stamps, whereas, since 1853, the use of adhesives in Chile had been obligatory . . ." La Chimba or Antofagasta was Bolivian territory at the time these handstruck stamps were in use and, until after 14th. February 1879, the Chilean postal authorities had absolutely no jurisdiction there.

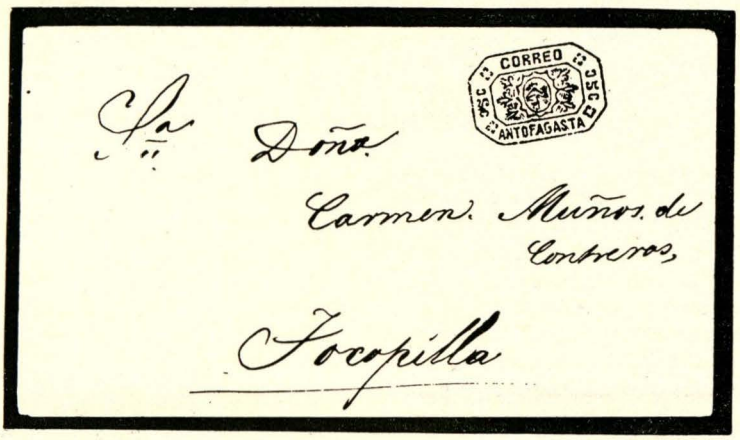


Fig. 6. The octagonal handstruck stamp, with value 5c., about 1878.

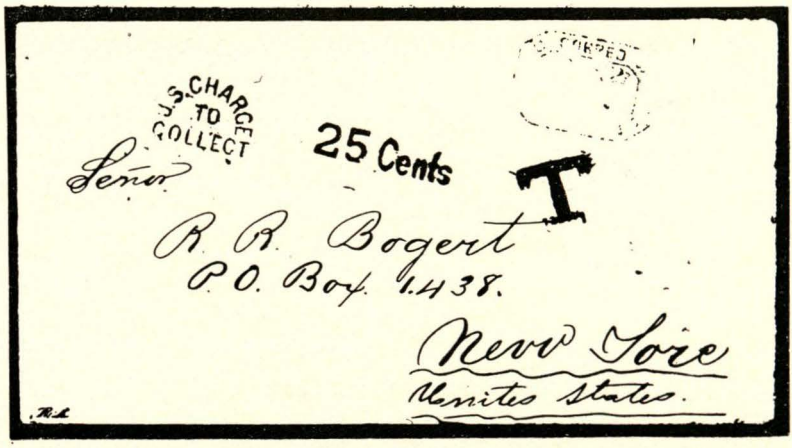


Fig. 7. The octagonal 10c., used to New York and sent via Lima and London, Sept. 1878.

A more simple circular handstruck stamp, with wording ADMINISTRACION DE CORREOS/DE/ANTOFAGASTA, was in use in August 1877, in combination with the oval steamer design, both in bluish-green ink. (Fig. 5)

The third, and last, issue of handstruck stamps bearing the name "Antofagasta," introduced a decided change. There were two, of similar design, and both had a value inscribed on them, 5c and 10c., (Fig. 6) the neat octagonal design has the Bolivian arms in the center, "Correos—Antofagasta" in the top and bottom panels, and the value repeated in the two side panels. The letter "c", for centavos, not only appears after the figure of the value, but also before it, in a reversed position. Some of the older catalogues listed a 50c. value in this design, probably mistaking the "c" which follows the value, for a figure "o". The ink used was bluish-green, and covers are known dated between December 1877 and December 1878. The cover illustrated in Fig. 7, addressed to New York, bears backstamps of Lima (Sept. '78) and London (Nov. '78); it will be noted that postage due was charged by the U. S. postal authorities.

Both the oval La Chimba steamer and the octagonal Antofagasta handstruck stamps have been counterfeited. (Fig. 10).

With the increasing activity in the nitrate business, which was almost entirely in the hands of foreigners and worked by Chilean miners, relations between Bolivia and Chile became very strained. They finally reached breaking point, when Bolivia decreed that the nitrate plants should be put up for auction to satisfy the payment of taxes, which the Chileans contended was an entirely illegal procedure. A very interesting cover, both from the historical and philatelic aspects, is illustrated in Fig.8 (Ladislao Errázuriz collection). Fortunately the letter, which this cover contained, has been kept; it was written on February 14, 1879. It briefly describes the capture of Antofagasta early that very morning by Chilean forces, "without a shot being fired". As will be seen, the cover is franked by three Bolivian 5cts. stamps, which have been pen-cancelled; it is backstamped Caldera 16th



Fig. 10. Counterfeits of the steamer device and the octagonal handstruck stamp.



Fig. 8. A cover mailed the day the Chilean forces occupied the Bolivian port of Antofagasta, rare usage of Bolivian adhesives, pen-cancelled. Feb. 1879.

Feb. '79 and Copiapó 17th Feb. '79. This is the only cover, originating in Antofagasta and bearing Bolivian adhesive stamps, which the writer has ever seen.

"The Guerra del Pacifico"—The Nitrate War—of 1879-84 commenced with the capture of Antofagasta, and there remains but one more handstruck stamp to describe, the one illustrated in Fig. 9. This curious diamond-shaped design with FRANCA in gothic lettering, so unlike any other Bolivian marking. It is known both alone or in combination with the octagonal handstruck stamp previously described, and also cancelling a Chilean 20cts. stamp of the 1867 issue, on a cover backstamped Valparaiso 22nd February 1879 (Harry S. Porter, F.R.P.S.L. collection).

After February 1879, Antofagasta and the former Departmento Litorial, became an integral part of Chile, and that country's adhesive stamps came into use for all postal purposes, thus bringing this interesting period of the handstruck stamps to a close.

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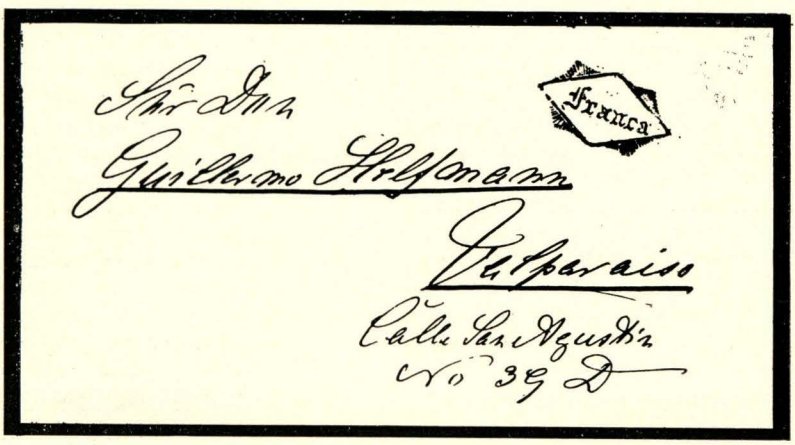


Fig. 9. The diamond-shaped FRANCA handstruck stamp, Feb. 1879.

STAMP COLLECTING

by ABRAHAM ODFJELL

Of hobbies there are many, but none is so universally spread over the world, or involves as many people as "stamp collecting". The first impulse one receives is simply that of just collecting, a trait with which nearly all of us are born. The second impulse is that of curiosity. When some of these queries are answered, then comes the endless fascination of collecting, the strong desire for more information, along with the pleasure of obtaining a rare cover or a stamp to fill a gap in the album page. Collecting then becomes a thrill.

The question, "What shall I collect?" is often asked. For a boy or a youth, I would advise "the whole world". One can get many stamps from many countries for one dollar or so. When sorting them, questions arise like—"Where is Afghanistan?"; "What bird is this?" And so at the same time a boy or girl are collecting knowledge along with stamps. Of course, the home country, in your case, the United States, usually comes first, and with the hundreds of commemorative stamps available more knowledge is added to their education. Then one may trade, buy or sell, all of which adds to the charm of our hobby.

An adult collector can help and guide a junior, but it is well for him to be cautious not to be pedantic. One of an experienced collector's rules should be sparing but sound advice to other collectors, because aside from basic training, stamp collecting is a matter of individual taste and inclination. Of course, those of us interested in the same country or group can help one another and assist with information concerning our particular field of interest. For instance, the Elmhurst Philatelic Society, Illinois, has formed its society into a group of collectors of Mexican stamps only with members from all over the globe. Through their journal, the "Mexicana", the members receive rather extensive information about the many intriguing issues of Mexico. Similar specialty groups have been formed for many other countries, periods or special issues, postmarks or philatelic literature. There are groups for postal history, for topical collecting such as religion, animals, architecture, shipping, or medical stamps, also for postal stationery, revenue stamps, or any variation which intrigues the individual. We know the human mind can create ideas by the thousands, all of which when applied to philately make it a personal one, free and unbound as no other. The students have a large field; just as explorers, they have the opportunity to use their proficiency and go into the lesser or unknown. People interested in art have inexhaustible source material for their interests, viz: architecture, painting, drawing. It is the same for the music lover, the archaeologist, the lover of flora and fauna. There is no form of intellectual activity that cannot be exercised in philately.

Stamp collecting has another name "philately", which was given to it almost a century ago. Under this name, it has been taught in courses in many schools and universities. Learned papers have been read and respected scholars have been produced. Many of these philatelic scholars have done much to develop philately by cultivating new branches of study, introducing orderly techniques of collecting and raising the standards of philately itself. Further, we know that many past mistakes have been corrected by competent students. However, scholars and students are humans, so errors in judgment and research will be found in the future just as they occurred in the past. Thus there is a never-ending source of interest for future students. This shows that philately is not easy, but this very fact makes it fascinating rather than humdrum.

Stamp collecting is simply a pastime for most of us. Its merits are many, but it

needs constant encouragement not only by the scholars of philately but also for the collector, the dealer and the postal departments of the governments. It is here that the philatelic societies with their periodicals can be of such fundamental importance. With the issuance of scholarly magazines by equally competent philatelists, our hobby will thrive and remain a healthy pastime for all its followers.

Among the world leaders in such work and guidance stands the Collectors Club of New York, which is now celebrating its 60th Anniversary in 1956—it being founded in 1896. Its members own a practical and beautiful building at 22 East 35th Street, New York, a worthy home for this distinguished organization in the midst of one of the great philatelic centers of the world.

This clubhouse has been the meeting place for a number of philatelic organizations, because the Collectors Club considers itself "the Host to Philately". Here visitors are cordially received by the Collectors Club staff and members. The building houses the



An outstanding event in the Club's history. Back in 1951, through a co-incidence, the ROLL OF DISTINGUISHED PHILATELISTS was being returned from Toronto, Canada after Capex to England. Mr. Abraham Odfjell, having been selected for this great honor, was visiting New York. So the occasion was taken to have Mr. Odfjell sign the ROLL OF DISTINGUISHED PHILATELISTS here at the Collectors Club, New York.

finest philatelic library in the country, if not the world. And it is in constant use by students from every quarter of the globe.

The building and its library are valuable properties; but in my opinion the Collectors Club's most valuable asset is the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST which is now in its 35th volume (in itself a jubilee). However, more important than the number of years are the contents of these 35 volumes. From the first number which I received, it has represented the Collectors Club in a splendid manner. Its format, printing, illustrations and its valuable articles have all been of the best and second to none. It has been a very important part of the volunteer labor performed by the members of the club, both amateur and professional. The Board of Governors has been wise in its recognition of the importance of the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST and has not stinted in its efforts to keep the standard high regardless of the costs. It was a wonderful thing to increase it from a quarterly to a six-times a year basis, meaning more quantity and better quality.

The Collectors Club is such an important institution in the philatelic world that I am certain all right-minded philatelists will continue to support the valuable work it has done year after year—now a total of sixty—to serve its members—to glorify philately.

It is 35 years since I had the privilege of being accepted as a Collectors Club member. I have seen the growth of our club along with its philatelic activities, which are many. On my visits I have met the many members, both the modest and the prominent ones. They—past and present—have become my friends. The goodwill and courtesies shown me have been great, indeed.

Therefore I take this opportunity to express my best wishes for the progress of the Collectors Club in the years to come, all to the benefit of philately in general and to each of its twelve hundred members from almost every corner of the world.

LEST WE FORGET

(Continued from Page 86.)

go thou and do likewise. In recent years there has been an astonishing reduction in the amount of space devoted to these matters.

"The King is dead, long live the King", is all very well as a political precept, but it should not apply in philately. It is up to the philatelic friends of the deceased, to the societies to which he belonged, and to the journals to which—over many years—he contributed, to see that his life-long services to the hobby receive fair recognition. These people rendered the major services to philately. It may well be that in most other things they were just average citizens. In that event who else but their fellow collectors *can* pay them tribute? To do *something* is easy. But to do real justice is not so easy, because the greater the figure the deceased was and the larger his activities in our field, the more knowledge of him and the more research into his activities is entailed. His character, his writings, his club activities, his exhibition experiences (to name a few deeds) each and all demand some real research if a true picture is to be presented. The writer, of recent years, has frequently been perturbed by the scant obituary references to people—and many were friends—who spent a lifetime serving the hobby.

These remarks extend to all stamp journals. The policy of the editorial staff of THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHLATELIST, obviously, seems in full accord with the writer's thoughts. But it has not always been so, and it is vital that it should be so maintained in the future. We know, of course, that "all the King's horses and all the King's men were quite unable to put poor Humpty-Dumpty together again." It is, however, up to the present generation to put together the records of these past careers and to put them together well. Who knows, that, some day, somebody may write the biography of a philatelist and may even write it in a sufficiently entertaining way to have people read it. The hobby could only benefit by such things and "forgetting 'em soon" is not only shortsighted, but damaging to philately because the real services to it seem in vain.

Lest the note struck by the writer seem too plaintive and perhaps too demanding, let him assure his readers that all *he* wants on *his* tombstone—assuming one be then available (*or* in THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST) —are the words: "He done his best"*.

* For proof of this, see Vol. 34, pages 235-6 of THE COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST. *(Editor)*

AUSTRIA

The Tokay Roulette

By EDWIN MUELLER

While the connoisseurs of fine wines will associate the name of Tokay with the famous Tokay wine, the pride of the Hungarian wine-growers, it has quite a different meaning for the philatelists, and in particular for the collectors specializing in the stamps of Austria. For them, Tokay was the place where the so-called *Tokay Roulette* originated, the only private separation which can be found on the stamps of the 1850 issue of Austria. Every specialist of the stamps of Austria—and also those of Hungary, because they consider the Austrian stamps before 1871 as forerunners—is eager to include one or more examples of this roulette in his collection, a desire, which owing to the scarcity of the rouletted stamps, quite often fails to materialize.

Although the Tokay roulette for a long time has been known on the Austria 1850 issue, no serious efforts have been made to write a history of this variety, to investigate its origin and the circumstances, which led to its creation. Again the scarcity of material may have been the reason for this lack of research, as well as the difficulty of locating official documents related to these varieties. At the present time, the philatelic student is further hampered seriously by the "Iron Curtain", because most of the official documents concerning the postal service in Tokay, as well as a rather large percentage of covers with rouletted stamps, are in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, from which information is difficult to obtain, if at all. Nevertheless, over the years we were able to study about forty covers as well as about 30 loose copies, which we estimate represents about 60% of all copies still preserved. And the notes we have made about them, together with the meager information, which can be found in the Austrian postal files, will enable us to reconstruct the history of these interesting varieties, so by evaluating the facts and data found, we can arrive at important conclusions concerning their manufacture and use.

The Tokay roulette derives its name from Tokay, also spelled Tokai or Tokaj, a market village in the Zemplen district of Northern Hungary on the Tisza river, which became famous through the grapes which grow in the vineyards of the neighboring hills and from which the Tokay wine is made, a vintage well-known the world over. In 1855, Tokay had a population of 5712, which has not grown much since then, and which was still only 5844 in 1930. 98% of all rouletted stamps were used at Tokay, and only about 2% at Homonna, which was a small village about 60 miles north of Tokay. Use of rouletted stamps is also reported from Varanno, a village also about 60 miles north of Tokay and only 10 miles west of Homonna, but we have never seen genuine copies used from there. Tokay was one of the oldest post offices in Hungary. It was opened before 1749, the year of the first great reorganization of the postal service in Austria. In Homonna, there operated only a postal agency which was opened on January 4, 1812, and was closed in 1839 but re-opened only on May 1, 1852. In Varanno (Varano), a postal agency has existed since June 1, 1846. Incidentally, Tokay seems to have been during a century the home of progressive postmasters, which is not only proven by the use of rouletted stamps. Tokay was also the first post office in Hungary from which a postmark is known, namely from 1752, only one year after the first postmarks were introduced by the Austrian postal service in Vienna, and several years before postmarks

came into use in Pest and Buda, the twin-capital of Hungary.

As is well known, Austria issued its first postage stamps, the issue of June 1, 1850, imperforate. But shortly afterwards the intention to issue perforated stamps as soon as possible was making itself felt. The first formal suggestion to make use of Henry Archer's invention was made as early as September, 1851. On February 2, 1852, a decree was signed to the effect that in the future the stamps should be issued perforated. Although the first trial perforations were presented by the State Printing Works on April 18, 1852, they did not prove satisfactory and further experimenting delayed the official introduction of the perforation until November 1, 1858, simultaneously with the issuance of the second issue of postage stamps, in changed design and new currency. The first Tokay roulettes appeared shortly after the decree of February 2, 1852. It may well be that newspaper reports about the intentions to introduce a means of separation in the nature of a perforation were influential in the creation of the Tokay roulette.

Considering the facts, which we could establish from the study of the copies we were able to check during the last twenty years, we come to five rather surprising conclusions: 1. The Tokay roulette did not originate in Tokay, but was first used in Homonna and only several months later in Tokay. 2. The roulettes used in Homonna and Tokay are identical. 3. They were used consecutively, and therefore in all probability were made by the same person who moved from Homonna to Tokay. 4. The roulette was applied by the postmaster himself. 5. The postmaster used the rouletted stamps only for letters paid for at the post office, and did not sell rouletted stamps to the public.

Now we shall have to prove these five points, a task which in part is not at all difficult. All dated copies of the rouletted stamps with Homonna cancellation were used in June 1852. We know no copies used before or after June which fact explains the rarity of the rouletted stamps with Homonna cancellation. The first rouletted stamps were used in Tokay only four months later—our earliest date is November 1, 1852—and the use of rouletted stamps continued for about two years, until the end of September 1854, our last recorded date being September 28, 1854. A few examples exist of much later use of rouletted stamps in Tokay—as late as October 1858—to which we shall refer later. The roulette of the stamps used in Tokay is exactly the same as that previously used in Homonna. So this leads to only one conclusion, that it was made by the same person. Considering the fact that the use of rouletted stamps in Homonna stopped before it started in Tokay leads to the further conclusion that the person who made the roulette had moved from Homonna to Tokay, continuing the practice he started in the former place. We shall prove later that it was the postmaster who applied the roulette. This would indicate that the postal agent, who managed the Homonna postal agency—in all probability from its opening on May 1, 1852—after a short period was transferred to the Tokay post office. Unfortunately, we could not prove this theory when checking the official files, as the personal files of the postmasters are missing. But the files reveal that the position of managing the post office in Tokay became vacant in March 1852, the administrator being dismissed for untrustworthiness. Thus it seems quite possible that the able postal agent in Homonna—and he was able, which is proven by the use of the rouletted stamps—several months later was promoted by becoming the successor to the dismissed administrator of the much more important Tokay post office. Considering that there is no other way to explain the facts stated above, we can reasonably conclude that the postal agent in Homonna first introduced the rouletted stamps there, after a few months was transferred to Tokay and continued to do so here. The fact that the use of rouletted stamps practically ceased in 1854 does not permit us to conclude that this was due to the fact that the postmaster, who originated the rouletted stamps, ceased to work in Tokay, because the occasional recurrence of rouletted stamps in the years thereafter seems to indicate his further activities there, although a successor may also have used the rouletting device occasionally.

That it was the postmaster—at least in Tokay, as the meager examples of rouletted stamps used in Homonna do not allow valid conclusions—who applied the roulette was

claimed by several authors, but none could prove it. The fact that the use of rouletted stamps was not confined to one business concern or a group of firms, but that they were used by many firms and private persons was considered a strong indication. But it could still mean that the rouletted stamps did not originate in the post office but with one of the



Fig. 1. Face and back of registered letter sheet from Tokay, Nov. 1, 1852, to Vienna, via Tallya and Pesth, franked with 9kr for postage and, on the reverse side, a bottom margin copy of 6kr for registration fee. In addition, remnants of a third stamp, probably also 6kr, are visible on the reverse side, by which the return receipt, to which the "RR" on the face refers, was attached to the letter sheet. All three stamps are rouletted, the 6kr shows no roulette between stamp and margin. Use of a rouletted stamp for attaching the return receipt of the letter proves rather conclusively that it was the postmaster of Tokay, who made and used the roulettes.

shops authorized to sell postage stamps, usually also selling tobacco, which was a government monopoly in Austria and Hungary. Rouletted stamps were also found on registered letters—which were usually franked at the post office—which made this latter possibility less probable. Now we located a registered cover shown in Fig. 1, which proves conclusively that it was the postmaster who used the rouletted stamps. As the postal administration supplied him directly, but only with unrouletted stamps, there can be no explanation other than that he rouletted the stamps before using them. The pictured registered letter sheet was sent on November 1, 1852 by a private person in Tokay to a government agency in Vienna (the Hungarian "Becsben" means "in Vienna"), with a return receipt (indicated by the "RR" marked on the face, at bottom left) attached to its reverse side. The 9kr stamp on the face, unfortunately badly damaged, paid the required postage; the undamaged 6kr stamp on the reverse side the registration fee. There are the remnants of a third stamp on the reverse side of the letter sheet, which can only mean that the 6kr stamp which paid for the return receipt was used to attach the return receipt to the letter sheet, a very frequent practice. In removing the return receipt to be signed by the addressee and returned to the sender, this 6kr stamp also was torn, the larger part remaining on the return receipt. As the return receipts were always attached by the post office against payment of the fee in cash, this permits only one conclusion, namely that the postmaster himself used—and therefore had made—the rouletted stamps.

It now remains for us to prove that the postmaster rouletted the stamps only for his own use and did not sell them to the public. The majority of stamps used in Tokay from 1852 to 1854 were unrouletted, which fact, by the way, was also important for the fakers, otherwise they would not have had suitable material to work on. This shows that rouletted and unrouletted stamps must have been in use simultaneously. Had the postmaster sold rouletted stamps to the public, one or the other of the users would undoubtedly have separated them by scissors, by cutting them apart just as if they had been imperforate stamps. This is a common practice with the rouletted stamps of various countries, but not for the Tokay roulettes. All copies we know were separated with the help of the roulette. We have never seen a copy cut by scissors. These indications leave only one conclusion, that the postmaster rouletted the stamps for his own use at the post office only.

During the period of regular use of the Tokay roulette in Homonna and Tokay, from May 1, 1852 to September 30, 1854, the following types of Austria stamps, all on handmade paper, are known to have been used at these post offices (Types according to the Specialized Catalog of Austria, 1952):

1kr: Ia, Ib, III
2kr: Ib, III
3kr: Ib, IIIa
6kr: Ib, Ic, III
9kr: IIc, *IIIa, IIIb*

Of these thirteen stamps, we know nine—those types listed in italics—with genuine Tokay roulette. One of them—6kr, Type Ic—is only known from Homonna, while all others exist with Tokay cancellation. In respect to rarity, the least rare rouletted stamp is the 9kr (Fig. 2), closely followed by the 3kr (Fig. 3). The 6kr (Fig. 4) is considerably scarcer, while of the 1kr and 2kr only one copy each, together on one cover, is known (Fig. 5). Most Tokay roulettes are single frankings. Multiple frankings are only known of the 3kr and 9kr, while combination frankings exist 1kr+2kr for the 3kr rate (Fig. 5), 3kr+6kr for the 9kr rate (Fig. 6), and the registered cover (Fig. 1), with 9kr on the face and 6kr for the registration fee on the back. Multiples are known of the 3kr and 9kr, a strip of three of each (Fig. 7 and 8), of which the latter was cut off at left. Probably this was a larger strip from which one or more defective copies had been cut off.

The stamps known rouletted after the main period of use constitute a problem for the student because they cannot be reasonably explained. We know 1kr, Type III, and 3kr, Types IIIb and IIIc, on cover; the 9kr, Type IIIb, off cover, all on machine-made paper. The earliest of these roulettes was used in December 1856, the last in October 1858 (Fig. 9). We could not find the slightest difference between the roulette on these late-comers and copies from the period of

1852 to 1854; and we must consider them genuine. Why the postmaster of Tokay stopped using the roulette in 1854 and occasionally used it again in later years is a question that we cannot answer. In any event, these rouletted stamps on machine-made paper are much rarer than those on hand-made paper, although they will not command higher prices, due to the unexplained circumstances which led to their manufacture.

The roulette was in all probability applied with a hand-operated wheel, which had a

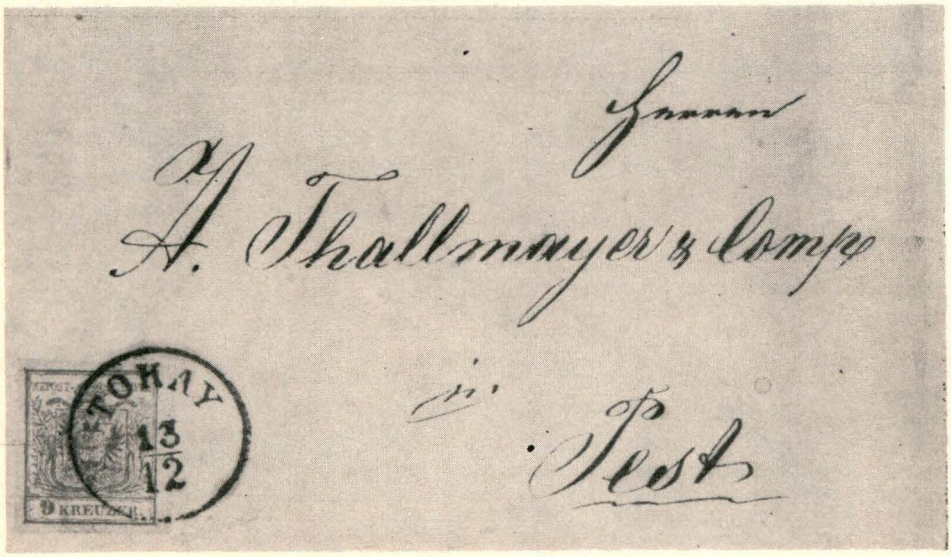


Fig. 2. A rouletted 9kr on letter sheet from Tokay, Dec. 13, 1853, to Pesth.

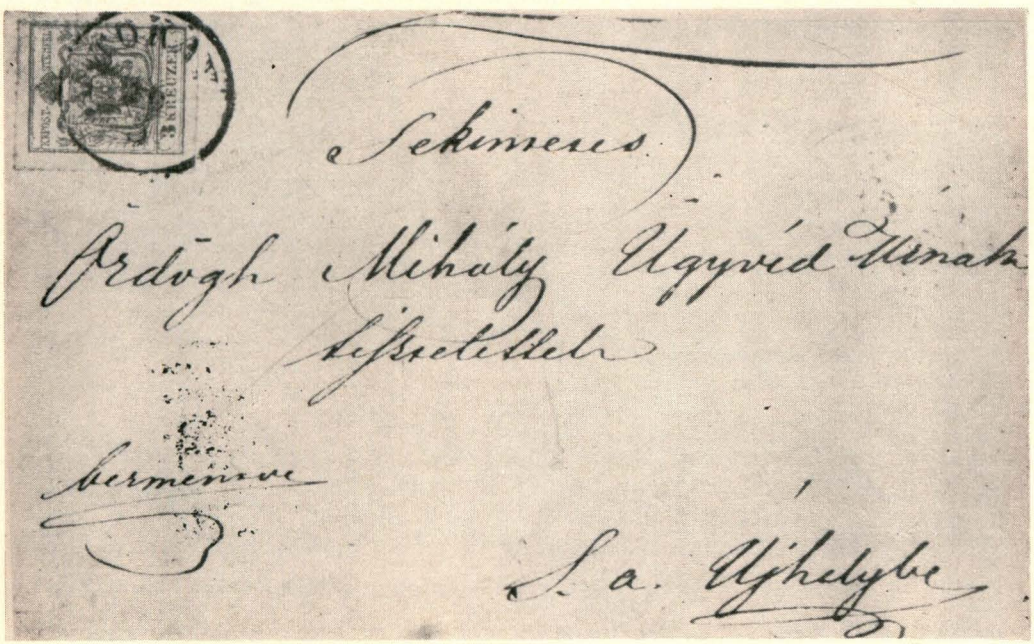


Fig. 3. A rouletted 3kr on letter sheet from Tokay, May 16, 1854, to Satoralja Ujhely.

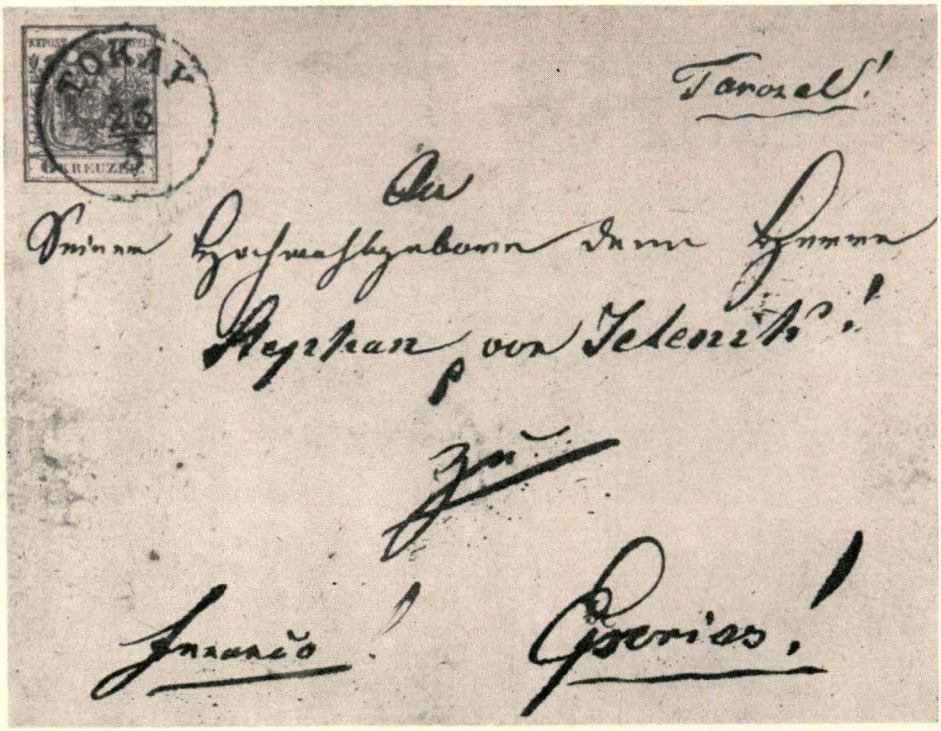


Fig. 4. A rouletted 6kr on letter sheet from Tokay, March 23 (probably 1853), to Eperies.



Fig. 5. The only known example of rouletted 1kr and 2kr, used for the 3kr rate, on letter sheet, Tokay, Feb. 4 (probably 1853), to Miskolcz.



Fig. 6. An example of use of rouletted 3kr plus 6kr for the 9kr rate, cancelled Tokay, June 24 (probably 1854).

sharpened broken edge, embossing a line of short slots of about 1mm. length in the paper; the bridges between these slots were about 1/3 mm. wide. With a perforation gauge, the measurement is almost exactly 14¼. The person, who applied the roulette to the sheets of stamps, obviously used a ruler as guide. But the roulette was rarely applied in parallel lines, the lines deviate on almost every rouletted stamp so that none of them is an exact geometrical rectangle (Fig. 10, 11, 12). Furthermore, the ruler does not seem to have been held tightly and under the pressure of the rouletting wheel it often veered on the end, producing a "curved" roulette, of which we can see good examples in Fig. 12 and on the last stamp of Fig. 8. The sheet margin at first was not separated by a roulette. So there is no roulette between stamp and margin, as can be seen on the 6kr stamp of Fig. 1. Later, the margin was also rouletted and it is now separated from the stamp, as can be seen in Fig. 8. We know of only one major variety of the roulette, a double roulette between two columns, on a 3kr, Type IIIa, used on March 19, 1853. Obviously, the first roulette was applied too much to the left, as it ran through the frame of the stamp at left; and the second roulette was added in about the center of the space between the two columns.

The Tokay roulettes were a popular field for the fakers, who have imitated them for about 60 years. Their products are dangerous only for those who do not know the facts about the roulette; of the specific marks of genuineness, the peculiarity that the genuine rouletting lines are practically never really parallel is the most conspicuous one. There are other small details which make it even safe to judge the genuineness of loose copies, but these we shall not publish, because we do not want to help the fakers to improve their products. In recent years, the material with genuine roulettes has become so elusive—practically all is in leading Austria collections and none on the market—that the fakers have

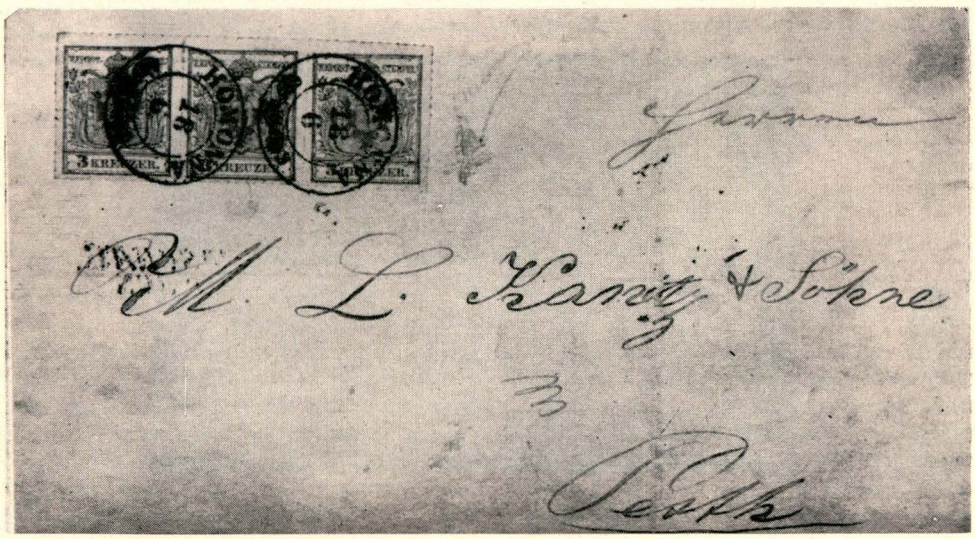


Fig. 7. Strip of three rouletted 3kr on letter sheet from Homonna, June 18, 1852, to Pesth.

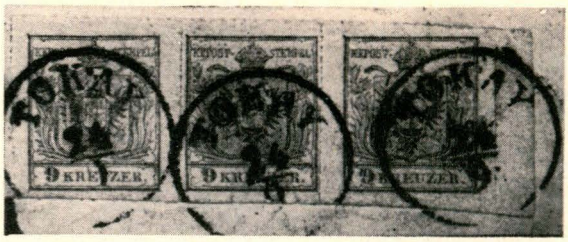


Fig. 8. Strip of three rouletted 9kr (originally probably a larger strip), cancelled Tokay, Sept. 24 (probably 1854).

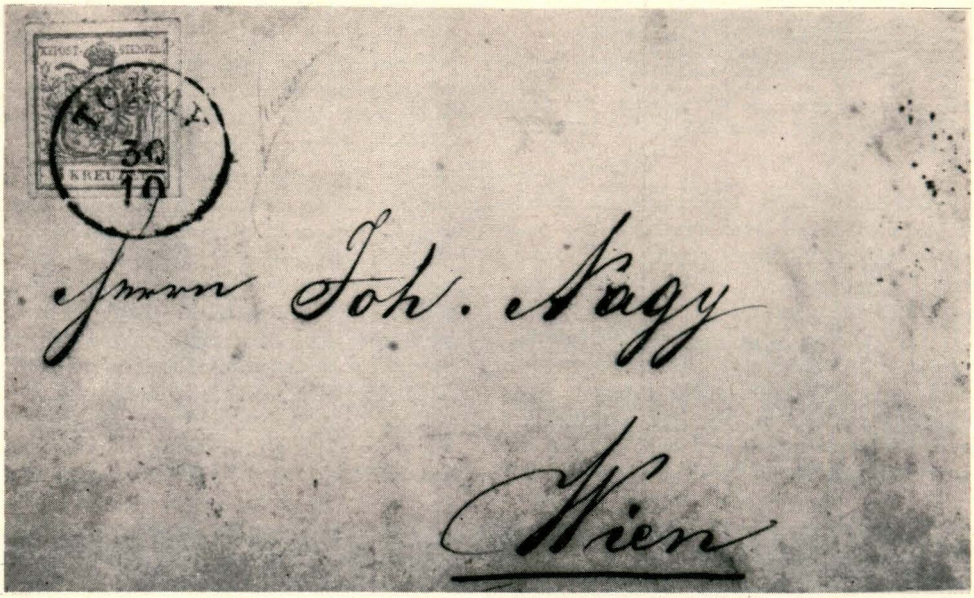


Fig. 9. A rouletted 1kr on machine-made paper on letter sheet from Tokay, Oct. 30, 1858, to Vienna, the latest known use of a rouletted stamp.



Figs. 10, 11, 12. Odd sizes of rouletted stamps, as they are characteristic for most genuine copies, with the lines of roulette not running parallel.

found the field too risky, as no sensible collector would buy such a rouletted stamp without having its genuineness checked by an authoritative expert committee. Much more frequent are the cases, where stamps which were torn apart with a knife or a letter opener, in this way acquiring ragged edges, are sold as "roulettes" either by ignorant or disreputable people. Such "pseudo-roulettes" usually are from towns other than Tokay, and therefore will not fool an alert collector. In previous years, there was also a "trial roulette 8" and a "trial perforation 14" reported from Tokay, both on the 9kr. Such copies were also in the famous collection of

(Continued on Page 141.)

FRANCE

The Rough Stereotype 1876 Printings of Type Sage Stamps

By STEPHEN G. RICH

In collecting the Type Sage or Peace and Commerce design stamps of France, in use 1876 to 1900, a fact hitherto of slight interest imposed itself on my notice from roughly 1948 onwards. This was that on a few values, copies with early dates of cancellation usually in 1876 except on the 40c, were almost always very roughly-printed in appearance. The rough print contrasted strikingly with the good workmanship of the issue as a whole. Indeed, absence of mention of this variation struck me as most remarkable in all the literature of the subject.

The rough print showed on the Type 1, "N under B" stamps of 5c, 15c, 25c, 30c and 40c face, and the earliest 25c in Type 2, "N under U." The next discovery was that *all* Type 1 15c and 25c stamps were in the rough print. In accumulating "dated shades" material to establish for my own satisfaction the succession of shades by cancellation dates, for each value, and in acquiring successively earlier and earlier dates of use thus shown, the smooth printing appeared suddenly on the 5c Type 1, 25c Type 2, and 30c Type 1.

The rough print might have been attributed to a particular printing press or method of printing. But examination of the stamps with the lens showed that the rough appearance was caused primarily by the background lines being broken up into dots and dashes, irregularly. It was not the result of clogging of the printing plate by dirt, by ink not properly washed off at the end of each day's run, or in any other way, since such cloggings occurred on both smooth and rough printings at all periods and on almost every value of each type.

Search for an explanation of this was rewarded in first instance in the Kohl Handbook, Vol. 2, page 664. Dr. Munk states (my translation):



A. Stereo B. Electro

Fig. 1. Stereo and Electro Printed Sages, Type 1 30c

"After a short experiment with stereotyping—that is, with the simple molding of the working dies in flong and casting in type metal (Maury p. 358)—the stereos were considered as unsuitable. The change was made to producing matrices or molds in gutta percha (in the earliest period also in wax.) These, like the lead moulds previously used and mentioned, were assembled into groups and from them printing electrotypes of entire groups of stamps were made in the electrotyper's tank."

Reference to Maury cited by Dr. Munk ("Histoire des Timbres-Poste Francais", 1907, p. 358, yielded only this further sentence (my translation):

"Mr. Derriey proposed to substitute for these fussy detailed operations the system of casting the clichés directly in type metal, as printers' type is made: a system which had long been used by Mr. Hulot."

The reference to Mr. Hulot was to the man who had had charge of stamp production in France from 1849 to 1876, but whose establishment had now been superseded with the preparation for the new issue.

The next lead came incidentally to studying the controversy as to whether Sage stamps in Type I, "N under B", first issued, were from the original die or the remade die after the original master die had cracked. The much-cited letter of Mr. L. Mouchon to Mr. A. Maury in 1898, in "Le Collectionneur de Timbres-Poste" of Nov. 30, 1898, yielded some relevant knowledge. However, it was necessary to see the first printing of this letter, in the source locus, since Mr. Maury, quoting it in his 1907 book just mentioned, omitted several sentences and also made one change of the statements of fact, without so indicating in any way.

From Mr. Mouchon's letter I quote (my translation): speaking of the remade die and the 16 working dies for the various values derived therefrom:

"They case-hardened these 16 dies and they made from them matrices in copper into which they cast type-metal; thus they secured movable units of type, which they assembled as plates for printing. But this material wore out too quickly and they abandoned it, to return to plates made by electrotyping."

The identification of the rough printings as being those from stereotypes, would seem to be indicated by the citations thus far. However, it seemed wise to hunt for further mention. The only one located, up to writing this article, was in "Yvert's Catalogue France et Colonies", 1927, page 31, but missing in later editions (my translation):

"Time was pressing; the original die was clamped together and clichés made from it in lead, which served for printing the first supply of stamps of the new type".

The statement, "time was pressing" may well indicate that there was need to get the new stamps into production, for at least the values of most extensive use, without delay, as the Maury 1907 book and that of Brunel in 1928, both clearly indicate that the postal service was anxious to end dealing with Mr. Hulot, who had made the stamps up to this time.

The next step was to ascertain whether the characteristics of the early printings of Type Sage are those normally found when stereotypes, not electrotypes, were used for printing stamps. For this purpose I took as starting-point the Cape of Good Hope 1861 "Woodblock" stamps, which are positively known to have been printed from stereotypes. The original plates still exist, in the South African Museum, Capetown, and have been repeatedly examined by various students such as the late A. A. Jurgens. The fact that they are assemblies of stereos is definitely established. They are casts in type-metal, of molds of a die.

My own nine copies of that issue, when studied under the glass, showed precisely the same sort of small flaws, of broken-up thin lines all over the design, as did the early rough printings of the Sages. The reproductions of 1940-41 printings from the Woodblock plates, in the well-known Jurgens book on the Woodblocks, confirm this.

Furthermore, I was fortunate in having both an electrotype and a stereo of the design for the 1936 Tipex stamp exhibition seal, preserved from publicity for that affair, in the cuts file at my office. Examination of these, otherwise identical in every way, revealed the same breaks as on the early Sages on the stereo, but not on the electro—the thin lines, especially of a background ruling, broken into irregular dots and dashes.



A. Stereo Type 1 B. Electro Type 2

Fig. 2. Stereo and Electro Printed Sages, 15c

Rough stereotype characteristics show conspicuously on the early 5 centime Sages. The earliest known copy, March 27, 1876, illustrated by Dr. Carroll Chase in "Le Marcophile", Sept. 1949, is indeed a typical stereo copy. I have not established to my satisfaction when the electro and smooth product suddenly replaced this; but thus far the date seems to be close to Dec. 1, 1876. This antedates the appearance of the Type 2 stamp, reported for Dec. 4, 1876.

Material seen or owned by me does not yet enable an estimate to be made of when the stereo 5c stamps vanished from use save for isolated single copies.

The 15c in Type 1, the brownish gray stamp, is, as already mentioned, always a rough stereo product. Earliest date is May 1876, but no source mentions exact date, and "Kohl Handbook" also gives "April?" on authority not stated. My material shows that the Type 1 stamps vanish almost wholly after Nov. 27, 1876, the Dec. 6, 1876 copy used for the illustration earlier in this article being the only later use I have yet seen.

The Type 2 of 15c, always smooth electrotype printed, shows up Oct. 14, 1876 according to the Yvert and other specialized catalogs, but I have not yet been able to locate a copy earlier than Nov. 28, 1876.



A. Stereo Type 1 B. Stereo Type 2 C. Electro Type 2

Fig. 3. Stereo and Electro Printed Sages, 25c

A curious, irrelevant point on this value is that the old 15c Ceres turns up not too infrequently used in August and September 1876, contemporary with the great period of use of the stereotype 15c Sage Type 1.

The 25c is by all means the most interesting of the five values on which rough stereo prints occur.

Type 1, which occurs only as a stereo print, rough, is reported as first appearing May 13, 1876. Despite seeing several hundred copies over a ten-year period, I have not yet seen it earlier used than July 27, 1876. It seems to vanish suddenly after Aug. 28, 1876, save for one lone copy with Nov. 8, postmark which I was able to acquire.

Type 2, the only Type 2 stamp to appear as a stereo, is reported as early as July 20, 1876 by the authorities. My own earliest seen date is August 3, 1876. The stereo printed Type 2 25c seems to be the regular stamp from then to the end of the year, replacing the Type 1 within a month. Its use peters out over the first months of 1877, the latest date of use seen by me being Feb. 26, 1877—only four 1877 copies have thus far been seen by me.

The fabulous se-tenant pair of Types 1 and 2 side by side on this stamp is definitely a rough stereo print. I have had the pleasure of examining such a pair recently. Unfortunately, date of postmark is not clear.

The electro, smooth 25c Type 2 shows up first on Oct. 30, 1876. The next appearance is Dec. 18, 1876, the copy used for illustrating this article. Only one other December 1876 use has thus far come my way; but from Jan. 1, 1877 onward, it is clearly the regular stamp of everyday use.

As with the 15c, isolated late use of the old 25c Ceres occurs, but more sparingly, to late October 1876.

The 30c in Type 1 continued in use until 1880, so that any consideration of the Type 2 stamp may be omitted here.

Reported as first used June 11, 1876, I have not been able to discover or see a copy used before Oct. 18, 1876, the one used for illustration in this article. This is a rough stereo copy of the most pronounced sort. The stereo print stamps continue in regular use for this value through February 1877, and reappear May 4 and 7 of that year.

The smooth electro product first shows up, as far as I have found, Feb. 1, then April 10, both in 1877. From June 11, 1877 it seems to be the sole variety.



Fig. 4. Stereo Printed Sage 40c Type 1.

The final value, the 40c, brings us into a field plagued by an additional difficulty. This is the value upon which it has for long been reported that the Type 1 "N under B" and Type 2 "N under U" stamps appeared simultaneously, or Type 2 even a few days before Type 1, both in June 1878. Search and advertising for Type 2 copies used before 1881, by me, over a period of five years, has resulted in a total failure to secure even one copy surely used earlier than Nov. 16, 1881. One copy, apparently but not surely postmarked Aug. 4, 1880—the year so poorly struck that it could be 90 or 00 instead of 80—did turn up, with postmark type pointing to 1880.

Before discussing the stamp, I, therefore, state here that in my judgment that that date of June 1878 given by Yvert and March 1878 for it given by Kohl, as applying to the Type 2 variety, is clearly copying of an unnoticed error from the days when the types were first separated.

On the 40c, the Type 1 stamp, reported as issued June 1, 1878, exists as a stereo rough print only. It first shows up for me on Oct. 7, 1878, continuing in regular use, dates in every month readily to be found, to Jan. 13, 1882. Except for one early copy of Type 2, Nov. 16, 1881 and the possible 1880 isolated copy, Type 2, electro smooth print, takes on abruptly with Feb. 3, 1882.

(Continued on Page 152.)

BELGIUM

The "Termonde" Inverted Centers

By A. DE COCK



Courtesy of Willy Balasse

Recently we have laid our hands upon some documents which make a contribution to the history of the 65 centimes postage stamp, depicting the townhall of Termonde, issued on August 5, 1920 (Scott No. 139) and of which a small sheet containing 25 stamps with inverted centers was sold at the main Post-Office in Ghent.

The initiative of proposing to the Minister of Posts, Mr. Renkin, the issuance of a stamp commemorating the martyrdom of Termonde was due to the Deputy, Oscar Vermeersch.

In his letter of July 26, 1919, he wrote the following:

"Some time ago, I already had drawn the Minister's attention to Termonde, a town which suffered most from the German invasion, and which has never had the merit of being recognized as one of the most stricken towns of Belgium.

"Both Dinant and Louvain have been honored by a stamp and Liege, which did not suffer at all, will have the same honor to-day.

"One should remember Termonde, and the Minister has promised it. One could dedicate to that town a stamp of '20 centimes'. For this purpose, I am sending you some photographs of the Townhall and the 'Ancienne Boucherie', as suggested subject matter for the design."

Mr. Vermeersch's proposal was accepted. The Post Office Department was entrusted with the task of selecting the design and entered into negotiations with the firm of Enschedé & Sons of Haarlem, Netherlands with a view of issuing a stamp in two colors of a "20 centimes" denomination.[1]

The project, carried out by Henry Cheffer, received approval in November 1919.

In the meantime, postal rates had been changed, creating a need for a "65 centimes" special delivery stamp. Therefore, the printing firm of Enschedé had to alter the original die and then proceed to prepare the stamps.

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1 The original die of this stamp is in the Postal Museum.

Ten million stamps were ordered. But a paper shortage delayed the delivery. So the firm of Enschedé was obliged to deliver instead a supply of miniature sheets of 25 stamps. Later deliveries might be possible in sheets of 100 stamps, if the needed paper could be obtained.

5000 miniature sheets of 25 stamps were delivered about July 15, 1920. The distribution to the post offices in Belgium was done in such a way that the first day sales could and did begin on the morning of the day previously designated.

One miniature sheet of 25 stamps with inverted centers was included with the supply sent to the Main Post Office in Ghent. Neither the bookeeper nor the clerk, Mr. V. . . , in charge of the Special Delivery letter service, noticed this error.

The Post Office Department itself might never have known of this, had not the newspaper "La Metropole" of Antwerp, published in its column "Notules Philatéliques" (issue of September 20, 1920) the following:

"It is announced that the post office of Ghent has sold a miniature sheet of 25 copies of the 65 centimes stamp with inverted center. It is obvious that this will prove to be a most rare variety."

This discovery caused great excitement in the philatelic world. The clerk, V., sought to justify himself to his superiors and had to undergo severe questioning. We quote a part of his explanation:

"The miniature sheet was among the supply handed to me by the bookkeeper. Neither of us noticed the mistake when examining the stamps, and it is only after having sold about a score, by one or two copies at a time, that my attention was drawn to the peculiarity of these stamps by a hotel groom who bought some of them for stamping the letters some travellers entrusted to him. Nevertheless, I thought that I could continue to retail the remainder of the stamps. Most of these irregular stamps (about 18 to 20) were used as payment for special delivery fees on letters addressed to soldiers stationed in the Camp de Beverloo".[2]

[2] The Ghent garrison was engaged in manoeuvers at the Camp de Beverloo and some special delivery letters, containing banknotes, were sent to several soldiers.

We believe that the above account is not completely accurate. We happened at the time to question some of those who had been fortunate enough to buy some of these inverts and learned the following:

If memory serves me correctly, it was on Friday, August 13th, that Albert Hye de Crom, son and nephew respectively of the well-known Belgian collectors of early 20th century stamps, happened to be in the shop of Paul Couvreur, then operating as a stamp dealer on Rue de la Vache, in Ghent, when someone (could it have been the clerk V . . ?) entered the shop to inform Mr. Couvreur that the main Post Office was holding up "some irregular 65 centimes" stamps.

It took Mr. Couvreur some time, while changing his legendary slippers for a pair of shoes, to close his shop and to get started for the Post Office. Albert Hye, who had overheard the conversation and who had his bicycle in front of the shop, arrived at the Post Office first. He succeeded in buying four copies of the stamps in question. It is alleged that Couvreur obtained three copies; the clerk V . . . probably kept the remainder.

How many copies of these stamps are now known to exist? And what has become of them?

One often wonders about the correct answers to both of these questions!

Before us is a letter from Albert Hye, which offers valuable information. He wrote:

1) a copy sold by myself to Champion.
2) a copy sold to "de Beer", in January 1929, at the time of the "de Beer" sale; (this stamp was bought by Mr. A. de C. for the sum of 7,000 frs.)[3]
3) a copy in my own collection (sold by Prejbiano, in 1924, under number 551, at the time of the "Hye" sale).
4) a copy sold to Grandjean, who lived Avenue du Midi; (acquired by Baronet Caroly; this stamp now is in the Postal Museum).
5) a copy in the collection of Mr. B . . . , of Ghent, sold by M. B. . . . of Ghent to Earl Cornet, through the medium of Kloboukoff.
6) a copy sold in the United States.

[3] Belgian franc then was worth about $o.034 (U. S.)

7) a copy belongs to Paul Couvreur.

8-9) a pair, belonging to Paul Couvreur; (this pair was sold during the War to Mr. W. . . . of Brussels).

10) a copy belongs to a post office employee of Ghent, who asked 15,000 fr for it, six months ago. Besides, I wrote to a French dealer, in order to ask him whether he was interested in it; he replied that it was too expensive.

11) a copy is in Holland.

12) a copy was given by the post office employee (the one who got the remainder of the sheet and who noticed the error) to a friend living in the East of Belgium.

Moreover, we have a letter from an Ostend collector, a Mr. L. D. . . ., who says that he possesses a copy of this error.

We know of the existence of two used copies. The first one was found in the collection of the employee of a textile mill in Roubaix. It had been sold by him in 1928 through Jacquemyns to a Swedish collector. The second one had been sold on December 10, 1928 by a young couple from rural Belgium to Gelli & Tani. The stamp has been resold in February 1929 at the price of 17,500 frs. These cancelled copies probably were acquired by the hotel groom, who first noticed the error and informed the post office employee of it.

There exists a certain number of counterfeits. The forgers, in general, used stamps from the second printing which makes them easy for the experts to detect. A clever counterfeit belonging to a certain Mr. R. . . ., bearing a false signature of guarantee, often had been offered for sale by various parties during the War.

No disciplinary action was taken against the Ghent post office employee, but this experience resulted in a much more careful inspection of stamps delivered to the Postal Administration by the firm Enschedé.

What is generally still unknown is that another discovery of further copies of the very same error was made in January 1921 among a later shipment consisting mostly of a large quantity of half sheets (50 copies) of the 65 centimes stamp. As this supply contained only half a sheet with inverted centers, it seems logical to suppose that the other half of this sheet of 100 stamps should still be in Holland, not having been shipped to Belgium.

Consequently, the Postal Directors, De Rycke and Moiny, were sent to Haarlem, Holland where they did find the other 50 copies. These were destroyed by being placed in a grinder, located in the factory of Van Gelder at Wormersveer. This destruction was carried out in the presence of Messrs. De Rycke and Moiny, assisted by the Controller to the Postal Authorities of the Netherlands, Mr. Pull.

Another pane of 50 stamps was discovered at Malines. This half sheet was destroyed on January 25, 1921 by order of the Postmaster General, Mr. Pirard, in the presence of a special committee invited to witness the destruction.

No other errors are known to have been found, according to my information.

AUSTRIA

(Continued From Page 134.)

Rudolf Friedl, which was sold at auction in Vienna in 1917. We could not locate any examples of these "trials". They must be considered quite doubtful when we know the history of the roulettes, so we can well discount them as genuine varieties.

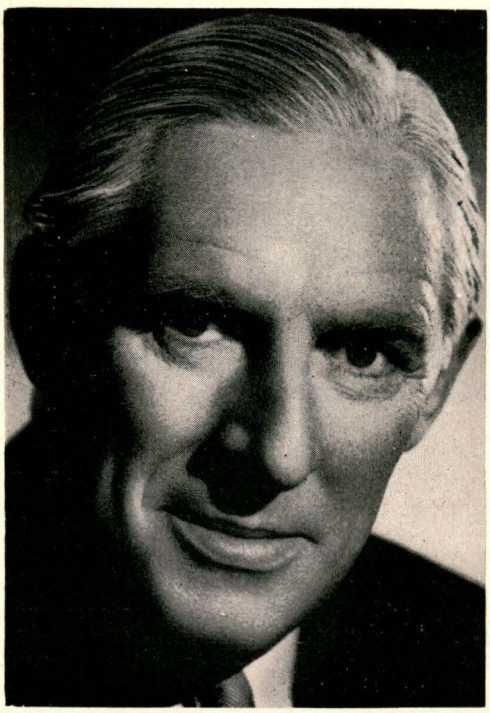
In the Tokay roulettes, the postal official who was in charge of the post offices at Homonna and Tokay from 1852 to 1854, whose name unfortunately we do not know, has created a monument to his progressiveness. Only four years after Henry Archer made his first trial roulettes on stamps of Great Britain and two years before any stamps with a help for separation were issued at all by a postal administration—the first officially perforated stamps of 1854 of Great Britain—the postmaster of Tokay-Homonna started to make and to use his roulettes. Actually, they were the first rouletted stamps ever used by the postal service of any country—the famous Archer roulettes of 1848 are of private origin, known only unused; while the first Archer trials which were actually used, were perforated—and therefore deserve an honored place not only in the specialized collections of Austria and Hungary, but in every collection which deals with the postal-historical aspects of postage stamps as well.

THE ALFRED F. LICHTENSTEIN MEMORIAL AWARD

Sir John Wilson of Great Britain 1956 Recipient

The fifth recipient of the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award is to be Sir John Wilson, world-famous British philatelist. This marks the first time that this award for distinguished service to philately goes to one not an American. This is significant because it demonstrates that this prized honor is an international one. Since Sir John Wilson will be in New York this coming May as an international Judge at Fipex, the medal will personally be presented at a special ceremony here at the Clubhouse on Wednesday, May 2, 1956. A biographical account of Sir John Wilson follows.

He was born October 10, 1898 at Carbeth, Killearn at Stirlingshire in Scotland. He is the second and eldest surviving son of Sir David Wilson, Bt., D.Sc. and he succeeded his father in the baronetcy in 1930. He was educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford. Then he was called to the Bar by Lincolns Inn and practiced in a Commercial Court and at the commonlaw Bar in the 'twenties and early 'thirties.



He has been a collector from his early days as his father collected before him, and he used to help his father with his collection before it was handed over to him in 1924. The father's collection was mounted in Gibbons' Imperial albums and was fairly complete, except for the great rarities, up to 1900, including the whole world, that is Vols. I, II and III of the old Imperial albums that included pages for local stamps and cut-square envelopes. Later he decided to concentrate more on foreign stamps, as the British understand it, than on British Colonials. Thus he has specialized the line-engraved issues of Belgium, the early issues of Spain, Roumania up to 1900, Russia up to 1900 with Wenden and all the Zemstvo Posts, Korea, Shanghai, St. Thomas La Guaira, one or two Portuguese Colonies. Errors and varieties of a great number of countries, and some particular issues, which he fancied without necessarily studying the whole of a group, became favorites of his.

Sir John Wilson joined the Royal Philatelic Society, London in 1921 and was elected to the Council in 1923, continually serving on it ever since. In 1923 he was on the Executive Committee managing the Exhibition in London. He joined the Collectors Club in 1924, being for a time Corresponding Librarian when the late Dr. Brace Chittenden was in that office. He served a double term as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London from 1934 to 1940. This was intended to cover the Centenary Exhibition planned for 1940. But the war postponed this. Thus he was re-elected President in 1949, from which he resigned after the close of the 1950 International Exhibition where he had been Chairman of the Organizing Committee. He has been on the Royal Philatelic Society Expert Committee for over thirty years becoming the chairman after Mr. Thos. Sm. Hall's death in 1937. He has collected philatelic literature on a large scale, both for working reference purposes and for

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UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

Railroad Post Offices

By J. H. HARVEY PIRIE, M.D.

This article deals only with the Railroad Post Offices of the Union of South Africa and of the former separate territories which now constitute the Union. As these offices, locally, are officially called "Travelling Post Offices", with "T. P. O." as an abbreviation thereof, these terms will be used throughout instead of the American form "R. P. O." Furthermore, only regular services are considered, not temporary services and marks of T. P. O.'s on various special touring trains.

This story starts in 1883, when T. P. O.'s were brought into use on the main line running north from Cape Town. At that date, the line had not reached Kimberley or even De Aar, so the T. P. O. at first functioned only as far as Beaufort West. The work done on it was mainly sorting of mail, to which backstamps of the T. P. O. were applied; postage stamps could, however, be purchased and letters posted directly on the train. At first, an additional fee of sixpence was charged for this facility, but this was soon dropped. This service was never taken much advantage of, and stamps (on or off cover) with T. P. O. cancellations are very much scarcer than backstamps of the T. P. O. postmarks.

1883-1890

Up till 1890 there were no T. P. O.'s operating on other lines, so no differentiation in nomenclature was necessary. The early postmarks, therefore, read simply "T. P. O. / UP (or DOWN)", the terms "Up" and "Down" being used in the *railway* sense, not in the purely geographical one. "Up" indicates the trip *towards* railway headquarters (Cape Town in this instance), while "Down" was used on the run away from headquarters.

The earliest recorded specimen of a T. P. O. mark is dated 29-1-84. (See Fig. 1) All the undifferentiated marks are single-circle ones of about 22 mm. diameter, with date in two lines across the center; sometimes there is an index letter above the date. There are a number of varieties of the mark, the differences lying in the size, shape and spacing of the lettering. At least seven distinct varieties are known, one major variety having "Travelling P. O." in place of just "T.P.O."

In giving numbers of varieties "Up" and "Down" marks, if otherwise identical, are here counted as only one. (Fig. 2)

At first this T. P. O. had only two sorting clerks, but even so they were able to take the overseas mail directly into their van, and so save the time formerly spent in sorting it at Cape Town. Post-office records of the period indicate that the work grew rapidly, and there is mention several times of replacement by larger vans and of increases in personnel.

1890. Northern and Western T. P. O's.

By 1890 the railway had reached Kimberley and beyond it at least as far as Fourteen Streams where it crossed the Vaal River. The vans on the section Cape Town - De Aar now used cancellers with the appellation "Western T. P. O.", and those operating from De Aar to Kimberley, and possibly beyond, the term "Northern T. P. O." Undifferentiated marks persisted in use also to some extent for a year or two.

NORTHERN / T. P. O. marks, small single-circle ones, are scarce; only one type has been seen and all specimens are dated in 1890. The office then appears to have been cut out.

WESTERN / T. P. O. marks at first were also of single-circle type, but three or four varieties are known. The wording may be found arranged "Western T. P. O. / Up" or "Western / T. P. O. Up" (Fig. 3) and there is also one of quite different type with only "W. T. P. O./Up (or Down)".

In 1899 a double-circle mark of about 29 mm. diam. came into use; this had the wording "Western / T. P. O. (number)" with date in one line across the center followed by "Up" or "Dn". The numbers run up to at least 7. Some marks, more or less similar to this, remained in use on this section of line for about 50 years.

1890-1900

This period of years saw a number of new T. P. O.'s brought into use.

MIDLAND T. P. O. This was introduced in 1890, running between Port Elizabeth and De Aar, and connecting at the latter with the Western T. P. O. The postmarks at first were of the small single-circle type, but towards the end of the period double-circle marks, with numbers running up at least to 6, similar to those of the Western T. P. O., came into use (See Figs. B and C)* There are at least five varieties of the single-circle marks; in two respects these are unique amongst South African T. P. O. marks:—(a) Those of the first two years were mostly in red, the only ones known not in black. (b) Many, probably the majority, had no "T. P. O.", in their marks, reading merely "Midland/Up" or Midland/Down" as the case might be. (Fig. 4)

UITENHAGE and ALBANY T. P. O.'s. These are the names given to two short-lived feeder services of the Midland T. P. O. The Uitenhage-Zwartkops service operated from 1893 to 1897, dealing with mail from the Graaff Reinet line. This information has been gleaned from post office records, but no actual specimen of the postmark has so far been recorded so the character of the postmark is still unknown. The Albany T. P. O. operated in 1896 and 1897, connecting Grahamstown with the main Midland line. Postmarks are scarce, but a few specimens of the small single-circle mark "Albany T. P. O./ Up" are known. (See Fig. A)*

Orange Free State (O. V. S.), and the South African Republic (Z. A. R.)

In 1893 the Cape T. P. O. service had been extended from Naauwpoort to Norval's Pont, where the railway crosses the Orange River from the Cape of Good Hope into the Orange Free State; in 1894 these services were extended right through the O. V. S. to Johannesburg.

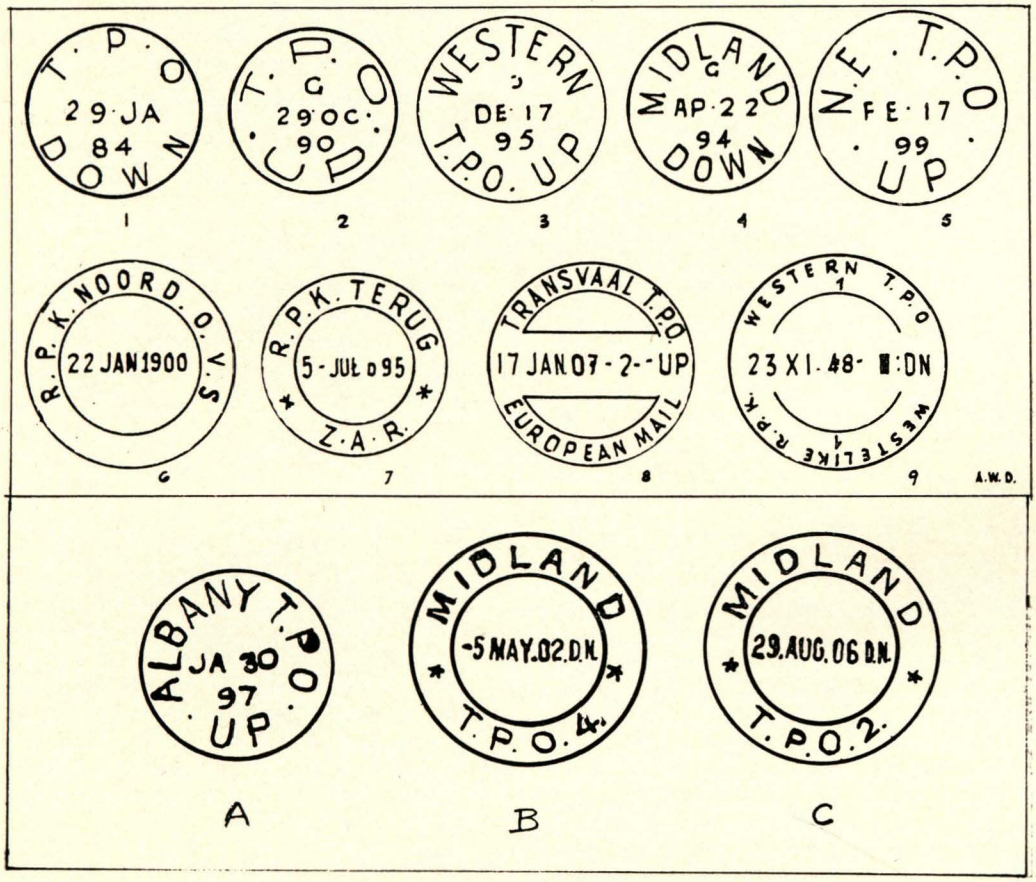
The Cape Railway and Postal Administrations actually at first operated the T. P. O. service as far as Bloemfontein, while those of the Z. A. R. ran the section from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg. In 1895 the Z. A. R. took over control of the T. P. O. right through the whole length of the O. V. S. from Norval's Pont.

It is practically certain that all the cancellers used in the O. V. S. and Z. A. R. are not known even yet; one can only mention the few that are known, regarding them as probably only samples.

The one known from the O. V. S. of this period is a double-circle mark with the wording "R. P. K. NOORD. O. V. S." "R. P. K." (Fig. 6) the abbreviation for "Reisende Post Kantoor", the High Dutch for Travelling Post Office. ("Noord" = "North"). known from the northern section are "R. P. K. HEEN / Z. A. R." and "R. P. K. TERUG / Z. A. R.", meaning "Travelling Post Office / Away" and "Travelling Post Office / Back". "Away", and "Back" refer to directions from, or to, railway headquarters at Johannesburg. Two types of the "R. P. K. Heen" mark are known, differing in the size of the lettering. (Fig. 7)

At this period there was extensive transmission of parcels of raw gold and of diamonds by the weekly special train run to connect with the mail boat for Europe, and an armed escort travelled all the way from Johannesburg to Cape Town with the T. P. O. From Norval's Pont to Cape Town this fast Mail train was known as "6 UP". I have heard reports of a T. P. O. mark with this designation, but have not actually seen a sample, so cannot vouch for its existence.

* The postmark illustrations, Figs. A, B and C have been supplied by S. G. Rich.



Figs. 2-9. Major types of South African T. P. O. marks.

Figs. A-C. A few types of T. P. O. markings.

Other types of South African T. P. O. marks

Natal

In 1893, by agreement with the Z. A. R. Authorities, the Natal Postal Administration put into operation a T. P. O. between Germiston and Newcastle. It was purely a one-way service once a week for speeding up the sorting of the European mail sent up by train from Cape Town. Possibly even at this stage there may have been some mail picked up en route; there certainly was later on after the Boer war period. Postmarks are very scarce, the mark being a double-circle one with T. P. O. at top and NATAL at bottom, date in two lines across the centre.

Eastern and North-Eastern T. P. O.

The railway systems of the Eastern Cape were linked up with the Cape T. P. O. services by the institution in 1897 of (a) an Eastern T. P. O. running between Queenstown and Rosmead Junction *via* Stormberg Junction, and (b) a North-Eastern T. P. O. running between Rosemead Junction and De Aar. The latter was named North-Eastern to distinguish it from the Midland, which covered the same section of line, but with a different train.

The Eastern T. P. O. shows postmarks of both the single-circle type (2 varieties) and the double-circle type (numbers up to 4 recorded). The North-Eastern marks appear to be all of single-circle type but there are

two very distinctive varieties, one having "North Eastern" in full, the other with only the letters "N. E." (Fig. 5)

1899-1902

All the services operating before the Anglo-Boer War have now been listed. During the war years civil T. P. O.'s in the two Republics ceased functioning; those of the Cape were not suspended, but they were liable to occasional disorganization in the parts near the Republican borders.

1901-1902. British Army T. P. O's.

From about April, 1901 to July, 1902 the British Military Forces ran several Army T. P. O.'s. Their postmarks had "Army Post Office" at the top, the name of the particular office at the bottom and separating these two wordings the letters "E" and "R" (Edwardus Rex). The designations and routes covered by the various T. P. O.'s were: T. P. O. East No. 1 and T. P. O. East No. 2, both operating between Pretoria and Komatipoort (on the line to Lourenco Marques, just short of the Portuguese border). These two offices were later replaced by the Eastern T. P. O.; Northern T. P. O. running between Pretoria and Pietersburg; Western T. P. O. operating between Germiston or Johannesburg and Klerksdorp; Midland T. P. O. from Pretoria or Germiston to Naauwpoort, where it linked up with the Cape civilian services.

S. G. Rich describes these Army services, and illustrates the type of mark in his "Philately of the Anglo-Boer War," pp. 139-140.

1902-1913

Most of the services in the Cape, Natal and through the Orange River Colony (as the O. V. S. was now named) went into full operation again after the end of the Anglo-Boer War. The Eastern service was extended from Queenstown to East London. The Western T. P. O. in this period has provided us with a new type of single-circle mark reading "Western T. P. O. / R. L. S." (which is taken to mean 'Registered Letter Section').

As in the case of the pre-war T. P. O.'s plying through the Orange Free State, there is again a lack of complete knowledge about the post-war marks of the T. P. O.'s travelling through the Orange River Colony; the following are known as samples:

(a) A double-circle mark with "T - P - O - NORTH - O - R - C / 3".

Double-circle marks with chords, all with "TRANSVAAL T. P. O." at the top; date in one line across the centre between the chords, followed by "Up" or "Down".

At the bottom the following are known:

(b) Numbers—"1" and "3"—two different sizes of mark.

(c) "European Mail"—two different sizes of mark. (Fig. 8).

(d) "Registered".

(e) "PRETORIA / T. P. O." I have seen one specimen of a double-circle mark with this wording, dated in 1908, but I have now no knowledge of its whereabouts. A senior Postal Official, who knew of this T. P. O. having been in existence, described it to me as operating on the lines of the T. P. O. NATAL. It was a one-way, once-a-week service. Postal clerks went as ordinary passengers to Kroonstad; there they picked up the European mail for Pretoria on its way up-country from Cape Town, and were able to have it sorted and practically ready for delivery by the time they reached Pretoria.

1913-1950

In 1913 Ocean P. O.'s were started on the Union-Castle Mail boats and the special weekly T. P. O. run in connection with the European Mail was taken off.

On the outbreak of World War I in 1914 the Ocean Mail sorting was abandoned, and the special T. P. O. service between Johannesburg and Cape Town was restarted. For economy reasons, however, the Midland, Eastern and North Eastern services were discontinued and were never restored.

In 1919 the O. R. C. T. P. O. was taken off, the Transvaal T. P. O. operating the whole run from Johannesburg to De Aar. From that date onwards, there was practically speaking only one T. P. O. service in the Union, viz., between Cape Town and Johannesburg, *via* De Aar, Naauwpoort and Bloemfontein. Throughout, however, it was

run in two sections in so far as staff and offices were concerned, viz., "Western" from Cape Town to De Aar and "Transvaal" from De Aar to Johannesburg. (Fig. 9)

In 1950 it was decided that this service was too expensive; it was stopped. Now there are no T. P. O.'s operating in the Union. During the period 1914 to 1950 there were numerous changes in the postmarks used and at least 6 Western and 13 Transvaal varieties are known; a few in the last ten years became bilingual. Some of the marks of the Transvaal section do not have the word 'Transvaal' in them.

Although the area is now a "dead country" so far as T. P. O. marks are concerned the group of marks can still be recommended for collection. There are a sufficiency of marks of varied character to make a worthwhile collection; a considerable number are moderately easily obtainable, but others are scarce. There is, therefore, the fun of the hunt in trying to assemble a collection; in addition, the fact, that there is still pioneering work to be done in finding marks still unknown, should add even more zest to the search.

(Continued on Page 148.)

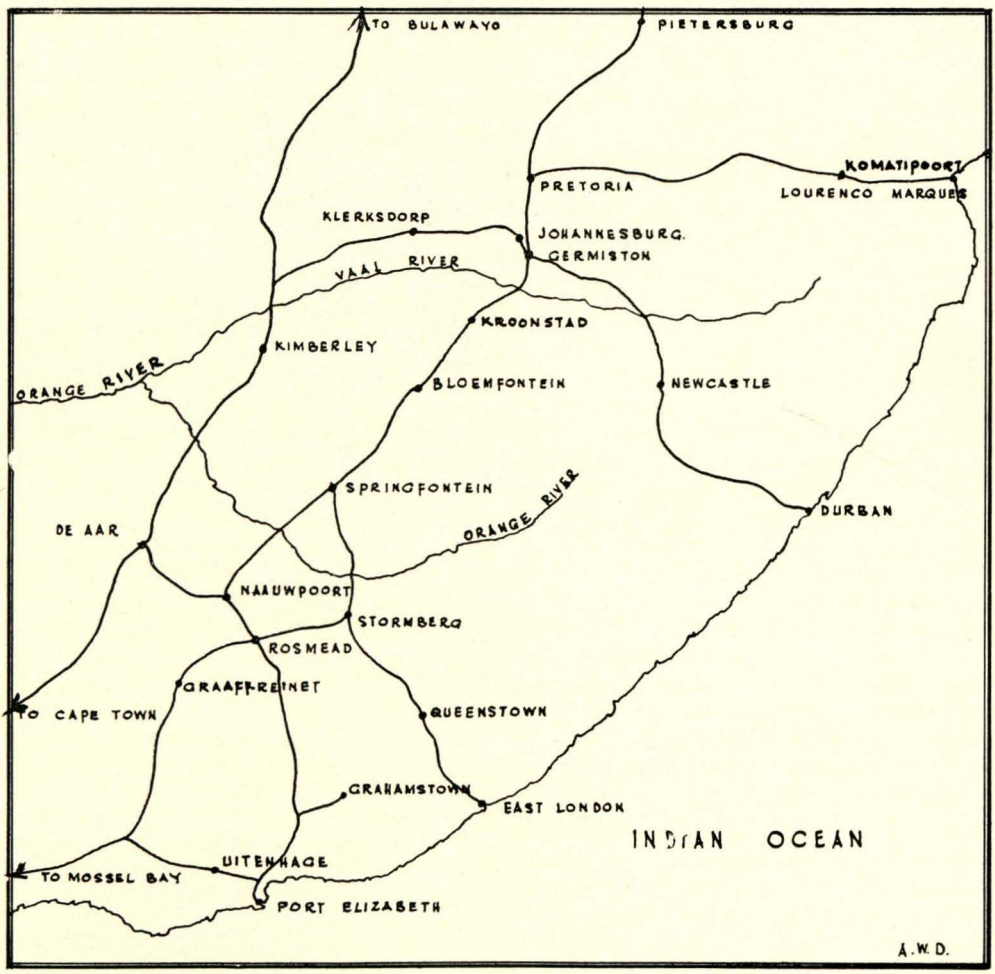


Fig. 10. Sketch map showing Routes over which T. P. O's have operated between 1883 and 1950.

UNION OF SO. AFRICA

(Continued from Page 147.)

The writer has assembled nearly seventy marks which I regard as distinct types, but to get every "Up" and "Down" variety plus every "Number" of those with numbers—this total could probably be almost doubled.

If more scope is wanted in Southern Africa, there are, or have been, T. P. O.'s in German South West Africa, Angola, Rhodesia, Mozambique, Nyasaland, German East Africa, Tanganyika and Kenya, with still quite a lot of pioneering work to do in the last mentioned.

Thanks to Mr. A. W. Duigan, of Johannesburg for drawing the sketch map (Fig. 10) and the small selection of T. P. O. marks.

U. S. GRILL PATENTS

(Continued from Page 85.)

time subsequent to the start of the contract. Consequently the *secret marks* must have been inserted to distinguish the *new* plates made by the Continental Bank Note Co.

Most significant is the fact, here stated, that the plates in the possession of the National Bank Note Co., when their contract had expired, were turned over to the Continental Bank Note Co., the new contractor. This evidence should quiet for all time any dispute as to the origin of the *secret mark* plates. It further shows that there are Continental printings from plates without the secret marks, which should be detectable only by difference in paper and ink.

The existence of die proofs of all the denominations showing the distinguishing "secret marks" indicates that the dies were marked after being received by the Continental Bank Note Co. From these dies, new plates were prepared as required for printing.

Summary

The philatelic importance of these papers is beyond all question. They shed new light upon much that has been accepted as fact from the evidence provided by the stamps themselves. They contain much that has been known before. But also they disclose much that is new. We particularly want to stress the importance of the letters relating to the development of the grill and to its experimental use, prior to its adoption by the Government. The facts are here. It remains now for the students of United States stamps to make proper use of them, eliminating such controversy as witnessed in the past, because students did not have some of these documentary facts available.

SIR JOHN WILSON

(Continued from Page 142.)

the early rare items. He has acted as a judge for very many international exhibitions, and as chairman of International Board of Judges in London, Madrid and Toronto, being prevented by indisposition from accepting the same honor in Cape Town, South Africa. He has exhibited "hors concours" in many foreign exhibitions from Berlin (1930) up to the present time.

Sir John Wilson has written many articles on stamps and on literature. His outstanding literary accomplishment is the production of the deluxe book on the Royal Philatelic Collection, published in 1952, and holds the Crawford and Tapling medals of the Royal Philatelic Society in this regard. He is an Honorary Life Member of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and holds membership in the Collectors Club, the Societe Philatelique Belge, the Academie de Philatelie, Aero Philatelists, the Spanish Academy of Postal History besides being Honorary President of the Caldonian, Stirling and Indian philatelic societies.

Perhaps Sir John Wilson's most important philatelic service is his eminent position as Keeper of the Royal Philatelic Collection, having been appointed in 1938.

The nature of the above biography does not begin to do justice to the world-wide philatelic reputation of Sir John Wilson. Since about 1935, no International Board of Judges seems complete without him. His position as Keeper of the Royal Collection is an eminent one. The collection is housed in the famous Buckingham Palace, and it is there that Sir John Wilson pursues his philatelic duties. This is no honorary position, but he is constantly at work with this world-famous collection.

TIBET

The Locally Printed Stamps 1912-14

By E. A. SMYTHIES

Tibet has had an astonishing record of springing surprises on unsuspecting philatelists, a disconcerting practice, which involves the specialist in making further additions and rearranging and rewriting his collection! Let me recall some of these surprises:

1. H. R. Holmes in an article in the Philatelic Journal of Great Britain (April 1942) first described and illustrated the two high values, 4 and 8 trangka of 1914 type, twenty-eight years after their introduction! His apposite comment in opening the article reads: "One of the charms of our hobby is the element of surprise. Something unexpected is always turning up!"

2. Nearly a dozen years later, my article in the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST (Sept. 1953)[1] described and illustrated a new cliché of the 4 trangka value of 1933 type, to replace one that had been lost years before, and a whole range of new perforations in this type, also also a 1912 bisect.

3. Shortly afterwards, in the COLLECTORS CLUB PHILATELIST of March 1954,[2] H. D. S. Haverbeck described and illustrated a new value, the 1 sang of 1912 type, which had remained unknown to philatelists for (apparently) *forty years!*

4. A. C. Waterfall in 1955 recorded the discovery of some old covers bearing *perforated* examples of the 1/6th trangka of 1912 type.[3]

5. "Stanley Gibbons Catalogue, 1956 edition", sprang a further surprise by distinguishing between dull ink and shiny enamel printings for both the 1912 and 1914 types.

This is certainly a formidable list of surprises! The locally printed stamps of Tibet obviously have contributed materially to "One of the charms of our hobby".

As the last item in the above list is comparatively new, some further information about it may be of interest to the readers of this journal.

Regarding these dull ink and shiny enamel printings, a contemporary article in "Gibbons Stamp Monthly" gives some information on the following points: (a) What stamps are found in dull and shiny printings (b) how readily to distinguish them, (c) when and why the differences occurred, (d) their relative scarcity.

As regards (a), five values of the 1912 type and the two higher values of 1914 type are found in enamel paint, the newly discovered 1 sang value of 1912 type has not been recorded in enamel paint, and it is probable it does not exist.

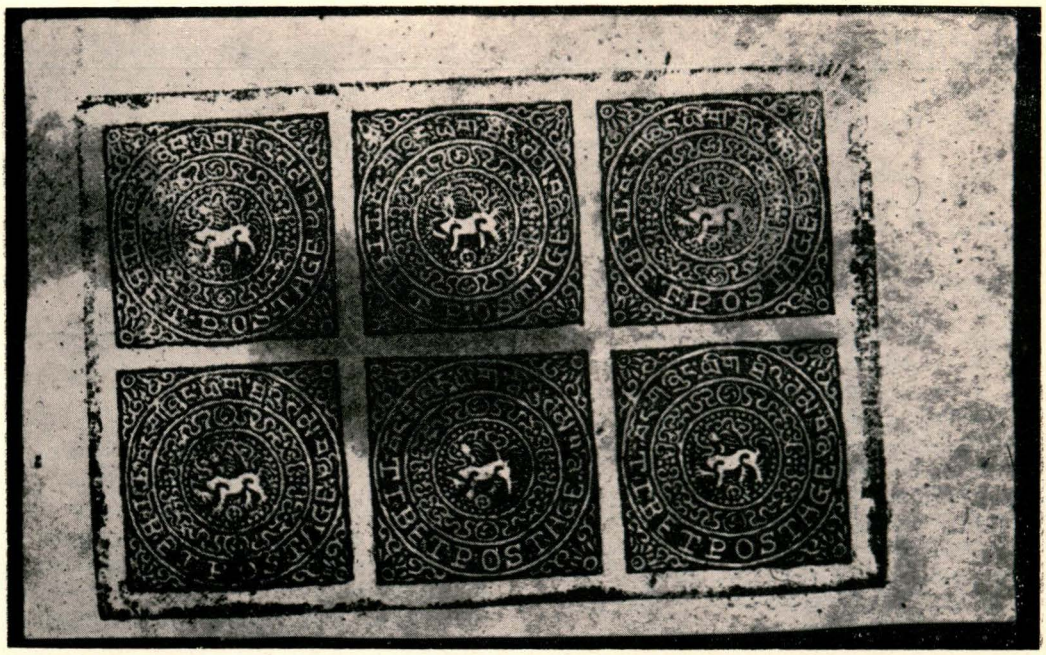
(b) The quickest and easiest way to distinguish the different printings is to examine them by acute reflected light. Hold the stamp or block pointing nearly at the light; the dull ink printing remains dull and flat, while the enamel paint glows and glitters, in extreme cases it appears almost embossed.

(c) As regards the when and why of the enamel printings, we have some direct evidence. Mr. Holmes recorded in 1942 that Colonel Bailey had informed him that he (Col. Bailey) had seen the 1912 and 1914 type stamps being actually printed during his visit to Lhasa in August 1924, and the authorities were using enamel paint out of

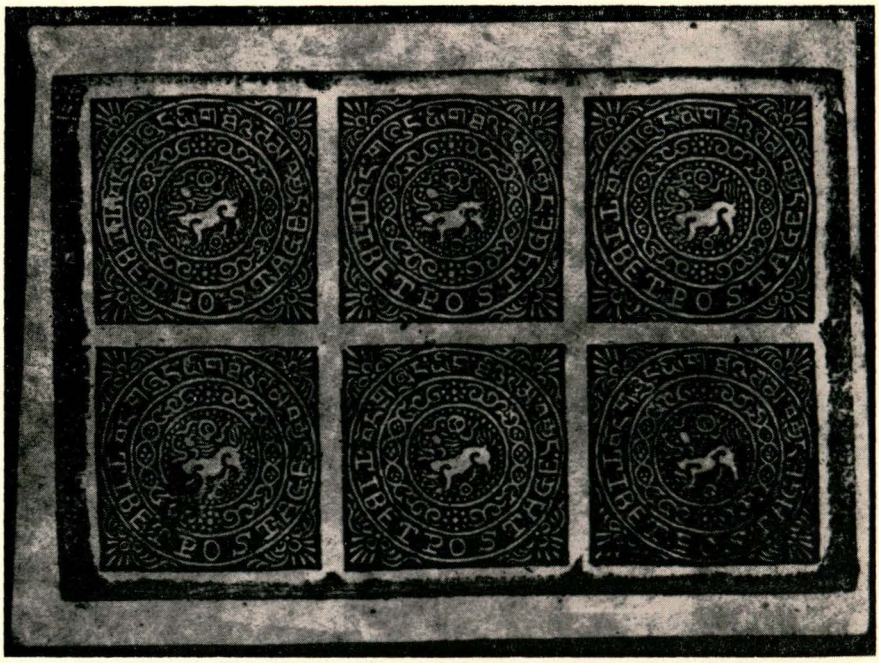
1 Vol. XXXII p. 241.

2 Vol. XXIII p. 81.

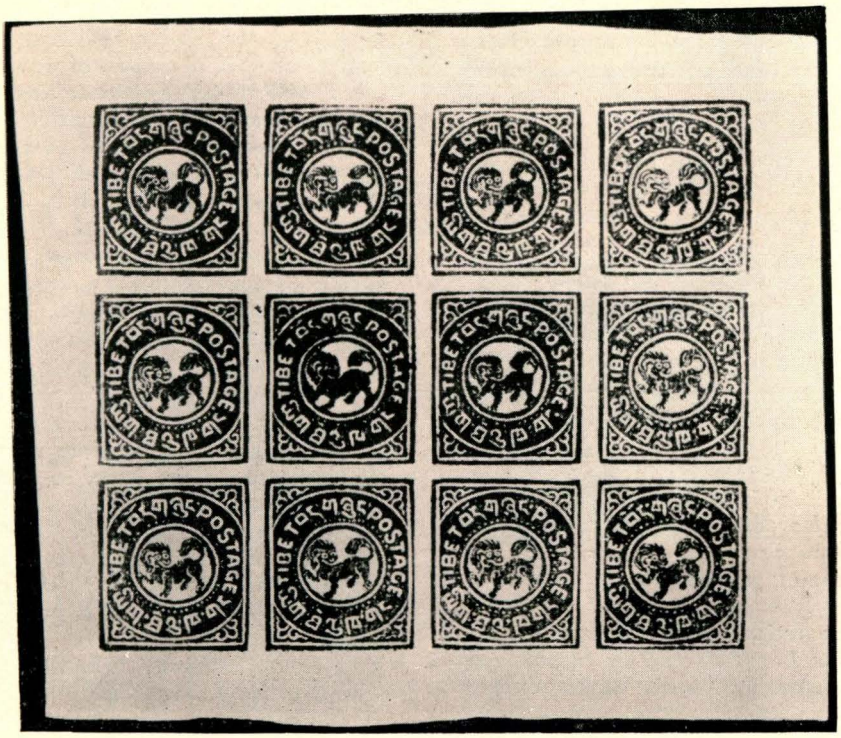
3 China Section Bulletin, Vol. 3, No. 1, June 1955. Published by China Unit, City of London Philatelic Society.



A complete sheet of the 4 trangka of the 1914 issue.



A complete sheet of the 8 trangka of the 1914 issue.



A complete sheet of the 1/6th trangka green of the 1912 issue.

imported 1 lb. tins with gaudy labels. Mr. Holmes recorded his surprise at this, since the 1912 stamps which he had seen were not printed in shiny paint but in dull ink.

Furthermore, the writer has been able to examine the sheets, both of 1912 and 1914 types, that Colonel Bailey had bought at the same time, and there were very few shiny sheets amongst them, the majority being printed in dull ink. This clearly suggests that the enamel paint had only recently been brought into use, and the shiny stamps had not yet gone to any extent into active circulation. This conclusion is supported by the fact that early dated covers have dull stamps, the earliest cover with shiny stamp that the writer has seen is dated 1924, (on some Bailey correspondence).

On the other hand, the Tibet Trade Commission, toured U. S. A. in 1948, and presented sets of 1912 type to interested collectors; Mr. Haverbeck tells me these late supplies were again in dull ink. Later still, in 1952, the writer obtained from Tibet specimens and a few sheets of 1912 type, which were all in dull ink.

We may, in the writer's opinion, justifiably conclude from this evidence that the shiny enamel was used as an emergency printing that happened to coincide approximately with Colonel Bailey's visit in 1924, (doubtless the supply of dull ink had temporarily run out). It was preceded and succeeded by the usual printings in dull ink. This conclusion is corroborated by the larger stamps of 1914 type, in which specialists distinguish between:

(A) Early prints in dull ink, but deep rich colors. (These are rare).

(B) Emergency printing in shiny enamel, still with deep rich colors. (These are very rare).

(C) Later printings in dull ink, but weak rather washy colors. (These are not so rare).

(D) Finally as regards the relative scarcity of dull and shiny stamps. In complete mint sheets (1912 type), there were only

(Concluded on Page 152.)

three in the Bailey Collection, and the writer has seen three or four in another big British Collection. We are informed there are none in several leading American collections, nor in Germany or elsewhere. This suggests that only 6 or 7 mint shiny sheets are located at present, while there are certainly *ten times* that number of dull ink mint sheets extant. Used specimens are more abundant, being found chiefly on covers between 1925 and 1930. There are two complete used sheets of 1/6th trangka green, one used sheet of 1/3rd trangka blue, and another of 1 trangka red in a German collection. Even used, however, the shiny stamps are definitely scarcer than the dull ink ones. In the 1914 type, the Bailey Collection had four mint sheets and 18 singles, of which only one sheet (of 8 trangka) and two singles (also 8 trangka) were in shiny enamel. Up to date we have not seen or heard of a 4 trangka (blue) sheet in shiny enamel. If any reader of these notes has such a sheet, it would be interesting to record this fact.

These notes make no pretence to be an exhaustive summary, but it is hoped that they will give some indication of the relative scarcity of dull and shiny stamps of the 1912 and 1914 type.

FRANCE

(Continued from Page 138.)

The old 40c Ceres was the regular stamp to the appearance of the Type 1 Sage in 1878. But it seems clear that the 40c Sages were prepared much earlier, in the expectation that a supply would be needed. Otherwise, there is no rational explanation as far as I can see, for the stereo printing existing. 40c Ceres were not used up as fast as expected, because the 1876 new scheme of rates reduced their use drastically, limiting it almost entirely to letters to North America.

We do not know whether the separate stereos were locked up in a form like type and used directly for printing, or whether an electrotype of such a form was made, constituting the printing plate. But in view of the evident need for speed in getting the stamps into production, the former supposition is the more likely. This need for speed was caused by the cessation of all work on production of plates or clichés for the Sage issue when the master die cracked. The story of this cracking is given extensively in all literature on the issue, so need not be reviewed here.

Reference to C. L. Allen, "The Journalist's Manual of Printing", 1929, reveals that even that late, casting of a stereo took 3 to 5 minutes, while deposition of an electro took 2 hours. Considering that at least 150 subjects, electro or stereo, have to be made for a sheet of Sage stamps as printed, and that electros then have to be backed and blocked, while stereos are cast type-high, requiring only slight planing and sawing, the saving in time is clear. Furthermore, simultaneous production of several clichés must be ruled out in either case, in view of our knowledge of the size and technical equipment of the stamp works producing this issue.

The question as to whether Type 1 or Type 2 of the Sages is the original die, hotly debated in times past and recently, is deliberately avoided in this article, lest it distract attention from the basal theme.

FIPEX

(Continued from Page 60.)

In another way Fipex is memorable. Never before has the American portion of the philatelic world shown so well its own peculiar or distinctive ways, as seems likely to occur at Fipex. Our own status as a nation, and the strivings toward measuring up to the leadership that events since 1941 have literally thrust upon us, should be well mirrored philatelically by Fipex. In short, the exhibition will be basically a graphic model of American philately, with the international aspect of the show indicating our place in the philatelic community of nations.

Let us neither boast our merits, nor disparage our shortcomings. We respect the likings and habits of every other country; we do things differently in many respects ourselves, because we prefer to. The sight of philatelic material handled otherwise than as we do, in the exhibits from beyond our own borders, may well produce cross-fertilization of stamp ideas amongst us. To the extent that this occurs, Fipex will be of international significance.

FIPEX

The Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition (FIPEX) is now, after many months of careful planning and tireless work by a group of dedicated philatelists, nearing the eventful day for which the stamp world is waiting.

Just before noon on Saturday, April 28, the doors of the new, beautiful New York City Coliseum, the vast $35,000,000 edifice at Columbus Circle, will swing open for the most important philatelic exhibition in history.

Before the nine-day show concludes on Sunday, May 6, it is expected that the attendance record of 200,000 established in 1947 when the Centenary International Exhibition (CIPEX) was held at Grand Central Palace, will be shattered.

Interest, here and abroad, is expected to reach an unprecedented level. Entries have come in from all over the world. The response has been so great that almost every one of the 72 governments invited, from all over the free world, will probably be represented.

As the opening feature of the Coliseum, FIPEX will occupy two floors. A photography show and sports car show will occupy one floor each in the dedicatory program.

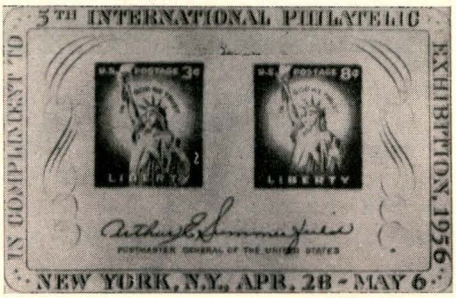
Individual exhibits have exceeded all expectations, young collectors in the 10-18 years age bracket have been competing for a place in the special junior division, and the finishing touches are being applied to exhibits of the U. S. Post Office, engraving, paper, and color processes. Stamp dealers' booths, many philatelic organization lounges and a Lecture Hall will be among other highlights.

Prizes worth approximately $20,000 in gold, silver gilt, silver and bronze from Cartier's, world-famous jewelers, are just one indication of the magnitude of the task and scope involved in FIPEX.

Although the long months of preparation have required the unselfish efforts of many philatelists, it seems certain now that they will feel amply rewarded when the word "success" is written at the close of the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition on Sunday, May 6.

Four U. S. Fipex Issues

Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield has announced that the following items will be issued on the occasion of the Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition, which will be held in the New York Coliseum, New York, N. Y., from April 28 to May 6, 1956:



11-CENT SOUVENIR SHEET

An 11-cent Souvenir Sheet will be first placed on sale at New York, N. Y., on April 28, 1956, the opening day of the Exhibition.

The sheet is 2⅞ by 4¼ inches in dimension, arranged horizontally, printed on the flat bed press on pre-gummed paper. The sheet is not perforated.

In the left and right center, respectively, are shown enlarged reproductions of the 3-cent single color (purple) and the 8-cent bicolor (red and blue) Statue of Liberty stamps, series 1954-56. The sheet is printed in red, blue and purple. The double outline border which frames the wording, "In Compliment to 5th International Philatelic Exhibition, 1956 New York, N. Y., Apr. 28-May 6," the facsimile signature of Arthur E. Summerfield, his title "Postmaster General of the United States," and the background of the 8-cent stamp will be printed in blue. The 3-cent stamp will be printed in purple. The central subject of the 8-cent stamp, the scroll work displayed on each side of the sheet, and the three stars in each corner of the sheet will be printed in red.

3-CENT COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

The 3-cent FIPEX commemorative stamp will be first placed on sale on April 30, 1956, at New York, N. Y.



The stamp will be 0.84 by 1.44 inches in dimension, arranged horizontally, printed by the rotary process, electric-eye perforated and issued in sheets of 50. The color of the stamp will be purple.

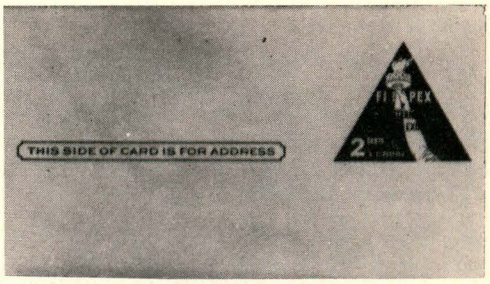
The central design features the New York Coliseum with Columbus Monument in the left foreground. The denomination "3c" appears in the upper left corner and "U. S. Postage" is placed in the top right half of the stamp. Arranged in four lines beneath "U. S. Postage" is the wording "Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition," in dark Gothic. The lettering "New York Coliseum 1956," arranged in one line at the bottom, identifies the building above it. All lettering is in white face Gothic with the exception of the inscription.



6-CENT AIR MAIL STAMPED ENVELOPE

A 6-cent embossed air mail stamped envelope, No. 13 size (3¾ by 6¾ inches) will be first placed on sale at New York, N. Y., on May 2, 1956.

The embossed stamp will be red and is 0.76 by 0.92 of an inch in dimension, arranged vertically. The central subject of the stamp is the artist's conception of an American Eagle in flight, forming a silhouette against billowing clouds. Across the top of the stamp is the wording "Air Mail 6c" and across the bottom, arranged in two lines, is "FIPEX U. S. Postage". Both the lettering and eagle are white.

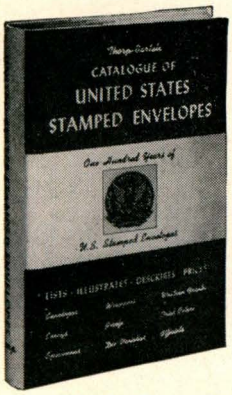


2-CENT COMMEMORATIVE POSTAL CARD

A special 2-cent postal card will be placed on first day sale at New York, New York, on May 4, 1956.

The new card will conform in dimension and style to the present 2-cent postal card except for the stamp. The stamp itself is an equilateral triangle pointing upward and measuring an inch and one-quarter on each side. It is printed in magenta and blue ink. The central design, which is white on a magenta background, depicts the arm of the Statue of Liberty holding the torch of Liberty. Reading across the upper part of the stamp and superimposed on the central design are the letters "FIPEX" in white Gothic. Under this in blue Gothic letters, arranged in two lines, are the words "Fifth International Philatelic Exhibition". In the lower right corner, also in blue Gothic letters, are the words "New York, 1956". In the lower left-hand corner is a white Gothic figure "2," on the right of which and flush with the top is the word "Cents". In white Gothic letters under this and flush with the bottom of the figure "2" is "U. S. Postage".

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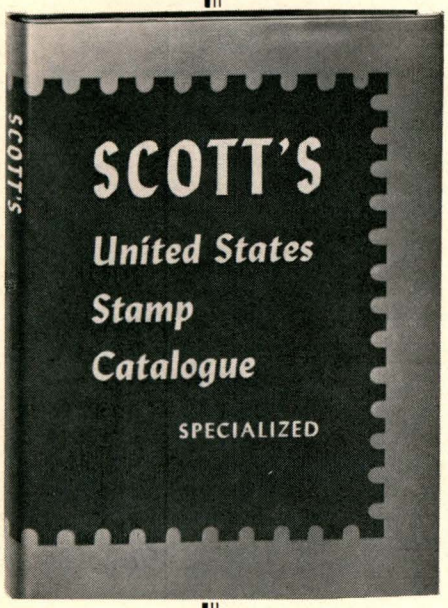
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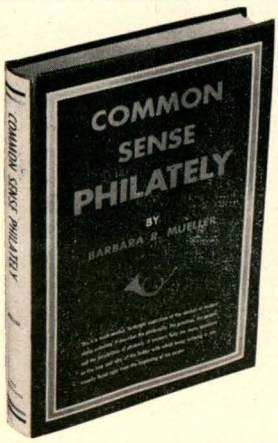
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