

COIL LINE

JOURNAL of PNC³

Vol. II, No. 8

Whole No. 14

August, 1989

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Collector Interest Survey

195 members responded to the survey. That listing of interests was presented in the July issue. The following summary lists the percent of respondents who collect each area.

PS5	83 %	Constant Plate Varieties	14 %
Used Singles	64	Coil Labels	13
PS3	51	PS2	13
EFO	42	Paper Types	13
Commercial Covers	37	Numbers at Top	7
Used strips	35	Tagging Errors	3
PNC on First Day Cover	32	Imperfs	3
Precancel Gap Positions	32	Mint Longer than PS5	3
Mint Singles	20	Souvenir Pages	2
Precancel Mat Varieties	19	Ceremony Programs	1

PNC³ Auction No. 2

Dave Agrodnia is now accepting consignments for our second mail auction. (See page 15.) Please address all auction correspondence to Dave, and not to the Editor. Dave Agrodnia, 219 School St., Berlin, NH 03570.

Election of Officers

Ballots were due by July 31. Results will be published in the next issue.

STaMpsHOW 89

PNC³ members will meet at STaMpsHOW on Saturday, August 26, at 1 P.M. There will be a formal presentation, with time for socializing and trading. This was to be the "yearly meeting," but since we will lack an officers' quorum, the "yearly meeting" will be held at World Expo in Washington, D.C. in November. We hope that many of you will be able to attend the Anaheim show in August. If you can't, we'll be thinking of you.

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Member Bill McMurray has designed two nominees for inclusion in the transportation series.



Letters

I am doing research on commercial mass mailers that have used precanceled United States plate number coils. I would be grateful for assistance from fellow collectors.

If you own any commercial precanceled PNC covers, please let me know the name of the mailer of the cover as well as the specific stamp and plate number. Your cooperation in this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Rob Washburn
P.O. Box 840
Skowhegan, ME 04976

As Publicity Chairman of PNC³, I requested 200 admission passes for our members to attend two upcoming ASDA shows. The ASDA was very generous to send these passes, and they are available to you free of charge:

Stamp Festival 89	National Postage Stamp Show 89
Sept. 8-10, 1989	Nov. 8-11, 1989
2 Harmon Plaza	Madison Square Garden
Secaucus, NJ	New York, NY

Please send me an SASE, mentioning the number of passes desired, and which show you will be attending.

Larry Thibodeau
634 Derringer Dr.
Bel Air, MD 21014-4815

Has anyone computerized the plate number coil stamps in mint and used singles, pairs, strips of 3 and 5, on cover, and FDC? I would be interested in being contacted by anyone who has such philatelic software in 5-25 DISC for a Tandy/IBM computer.

Carl B. Wicklund
4812 N. 10th, Apt. 50
McAllen, TX 78504

I, for one, am going to miss the Cottrell strips--not so much for the joint lines and more frequent plate numbers, as for the excellent choices the USPS made in designs and colors. I think the recent PNC³ survey indicated some of those preferences.

Peter Wurzbach
P.O. Box 743122
Dallas, TX 75374

On June 10 I received the following from Philatelic Sales in Washington:
25¢ Yosemite pre-phosphored #8; 25¢ Yosemite "C" Press #7;
25¢ Yosemite "B" Press #2; 1¢ Omnibus "B" Press #1;
12.5¢ Pushcart (Item 7759) #2; 8.4¢ "C" Press #2.

Fred Parsons,
Chambersburg, PA

On June 17 I received the following PNCs from Philatelic Sales, Washington:
Unprecanceled--11¢ Bearcat (#1,2); 12.5¢ Pushcart (#2); 20¢ Cable Car (#1); 21.1¢ Letters (#111111); "E" (#1111); 25¢ Bee (#1);
25¢ Yosemite B-press (#2), C-press (#7 tagged).

Precanceled--7.6¢ Caretta (#1); 8.4¢ C-press (#2); 21.1¢ Letters (#111111).
The story in the June Coil Line on the "Readers' Digest" 12.5 Pushcart was quite a scoop. Without the story I would not have had PNC #2 in the length I collect. Thanks!

Frank Covey
Macomb, IL

On June 21 I received the following from the Philatelic Sales, Washington:
Unprecanceled--14¢ Iceboat #2; 12.5¢ Pushcart #2; 25¢ E #1111;
4¢ Stagecoach #1; 21.1¢ Letters #111121; 25¢ Bread Wagon #1;
25¢ Yosemite pre-phosphored #7; 25¢ Yosemite block-tagged #7.
Precanceled 21.1¢ Letters #11111.

Rick Rollins
Piscataway, NJ

Letters

I'm writing with two pieces of information:

1) I'd like to report that the black forest with ski slope has appeared in Iowa. I have the opportunity to look at incoming mail from all across Iowa, and I noticed this variety right away--partly perhaps to having had it pointed out in Coil Line. As it would happen, I was travelling the way of the town it was postmarked in and stopped at the P.O. Alas, they had been sold at least a month earlier; the clerk remembered them because they had gotten mixed with the 20¢ Flags because they were so dark. I went then to the mailer. He had some of the roll left, and I traded him for regulars. They were plate number 5, block tagged. I saw a second one on a letter postmarked in Des Moines. The sender had 37 left. They definitely are not from the same batch, as these are cut low, cutting the #5.

2) I have had, unfortunately, to deal with APS insurance. I have always felt this was a very good idea, even better after burglars walked out with my safe with my entire stamp collection inside. I have always kept track of every acquisition--even face from the P.O. Unfortunately, I made the ghastly error (I still can't believe I did it) of leaving my inventory with my stamps in the safe since it was fireproof. Anyway, it is most important to call: a) police--don't give the value, as in our town it will be printed in the paper and everyone will know the value, including other burglars; b) call your local dealers; c) call stamp insurance.

To make an insurance claim, you must have an inventory. They have never asked for more than a brief description; for example: Volume II of Harris Plate Block Album, nearly complete; or, stock book of plate blocks, about \$50 face, etc. Only items of significant value--over \$2,000, I think--need to be listed separately. Anyway, as well as I thought I knew my collection, there is no way you could remember it all.

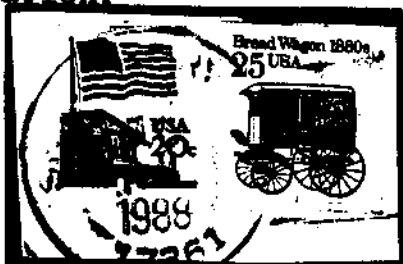
Fortunately, the story has a happy ending. The burglars tried to sell the entire collection to Stamps 'n' Stuff. The sellers told the police that they were only trying to return the collection, as my name was on it. The only thing missing were covers which had my name on it--probably pitched as too hot to handle. Another important tip--notify all local police stations. The Des Moines police didn't inform the suburban police, so they didn't hold the sellers.

My suggestions: (1) get the insurance--it's CHEAP! (2) bite the bullet and do the inventory; (3) Report thefts immediately. If I had waited even hours longer, it might have been too late.

Dave Phelps
Des Moines, IA

Enclosed is an interesting piece of contemporary usage. What are the odds of 2 PNC's on the same letter? Got this from a mixture; it's not a philatelic creation.

Greg Cohen
Fair Lawn, NJ



Flag #9
Bread Wagon #1

Assuming a mailer was using coils from 2 different rolls, the odds are 2704 to 1 if the 2 rolls are B-press printings. (Ed.)

COIL LINE	
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Change of address notices and club applications: Eric Russow, Secy. P.O. Box 17374 Whitefish Bay, WI 53217	
Dues should be sent to: Rob Washburn, Treas. P.O. Box 840 Skowhegan, ME 04976	
Advertising: full page, \$28; ½ page, \$15; ¼ page, \$8. Classified ads, 6¢/word. Members are entitled to - (2) free 40-word ads/yr.	

Briefly...

The following are some late arrivals on the Collector Interest Survey. If you are energetic, you can bubble them in on last month's chart.

Ed Acker M3, M1, U1, Us	Kent Knebel M5, U1
John Dineen U1, U3, FDC	Lloyd Kopisch M5, M3, U1, CPV, EFO, a, c, d, g
Lenore Gray M5, M3, FDC	Mike Lipson ComCvr, CPV, b, c, d
Charles Hanson M5, M3	Gary Lovinger M5, M1, U1, ComC, c, e
David Hendricks M5, M3, M2, M1, U1, Us, Com.Cvr, FDC, EFO, CPV, b, c, g	Bob Soccorsi M5, M3, M2, M1, U1, Us, Com.Cvr.
	Ernest Stein M5, Us, FDC

Tugboat #2 has been reported on cover, postmarked in Minneapolis, MN.

PNC³ member Marguerite Doney received a Bronze at NOJEX for her transportation coil exhibit.

Thanks for contributions of postage from Tad Richards (\$30.00) and Charles Hanson (\$39.53).

Plate #2 on the Honeybee must have gone back to press; several new positions have been reported.

HONEYBEE JOINT LINES

Honeybee "D" Press Double Joint Line Positions

	Left											Right												
	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Plate #1	X	X	X	X	X															X*	X	X	X	
Plate #2	X*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X*	X*	X*	X*			X*	X*	X				X	X*	X		X

X = confirmed

X* = new since last report



Iver Hodesh submitted this single which he got from a mixture. It has all the evidences of being used on a bulk mailing: cut edges, and the two characteristic horizontal gum bends from an affixing machine. The single horizontal black line appears to be from a precanceling mat, and not from some other form of cancellation. Where is the second line? Bottom row of the plate with a precanceling mat misaligned high, perhaps? Does anyone else possess singles or strips of this mat variety?

New Applicants

BERGSTROM	ROBERT	WHEATON	IL
BUSCHLEN	DWIGHT	RIVERSIDE	CA
ROWIN	JOHN	EDINBURG	TX
SMITH	LATHROP	REIDSVILLE	NC
THOMPSON	LARRY	GRAND JUNCTION	CO
SLAWSON	DENNIS	SYKESVILLE	PA
STEIN	ERNEST	BATH	NH
CAMAK, JR.	JAMES	IRVING	TX
ADAMS*	JAMES	EAST LANSING	MI
LAPOINTE	DANIEL	VAN BUREN	MI
TISON, JR.	JOHN	NEWPORT BEACH	ME
MONTI	DENNIS	ROCKAWAY	NJ
HOEHN	RON	FLORISSANT	MO
DIXON	PAUL	SALEM	OR
RAND	RODERICK	BERLIN	NH
GALU	JOHN	MIDDLETOWN	NY
HAIRE	THOMAS	SCHERERVILLE	IN
KERMAN	HOWARD	CHICAGO	IL
MADDOX	KAREN	REDONDO BEACH	CA
STEPHENSON	GEORGE	FREERPORT	NY
WILHELM	JOHN	NAPERVILLE	IL
VALINSKY	JOE	SHERMANSDALE	PA
CHRISTENSEN	CHRISTOPHER	WOODCLIFF LAKE	NJ

Summary

368 July Report
 +23 New Applicants

 391 Currently Active

Change of Addresses:

George E. Kuhn
 P.O. Box 492111
 Leesburg, FL 34749

Alex Kesselman
 P.O. Box 833842#328
 Richardson, TX 75083

James Lehr
 10 Colony Blvd.
 Colony North #535
 Wilmington, DE 19802

Recent Auction Results

SUBURBAN STAMP, INC.

June 10, 1989 (Buyers add 10%)

603 *	#1891a, 18c Flag, Imperf Coil Plate #5 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 250-300.) (Ph).	-----	200-
604 *	#1895a, 20c Flag, Imperf Coil Plate #9 Strip of Five, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 100-200.)(Ph).	-----	74-
605 *	#1895a, 20c Flag, Imperf Coil Plate #9 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 150-250.)(Ph).	-----	80-
608 *	#1906b, Auto, Imperf Coil Pair Plate #1 and Line, Never Hinged, Very Fine (Ph).	175.00+	130-
609 *	#1907a, Surrey, Imperf Coil Pair Plate #10 and Line, Never Hinged, Very Fine (Ph).	110.00+	140-
613 *	#2115a, 22c Flag, Imperf Coil Plate #2 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 200-250.)(Ph).	-----	150-
614 *	#2115a, 22c Flag, Imperf Coil, P.O. Tape Splice joining Two Imperf Strips of Three, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 150-200.) (Ph).	-----	86-
615 *	#2130b, Oil Wagon, Imperf Precanceled Coil Pair, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 100-150.) (Ph).	-----	100-
616 *	#2130b, Oil Wagon, Imperf Precanceled Coil Plate #1 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 500-750.) (Ph).	-----	600-
617 *	#2133b, Pushcart, Imperf Coil Plate #1 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 300-500.) (Ph).	-----	160-
618 *	#2134a, Iceboat, Imperf Coil Plate #1 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Fine-Very Fine. (EST. 500-750.) (Ph).	-----	350-
619 *	#2136a, Wagon, Imperf Coil Plate #2 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 150-200.) (Ph).	-----	100-
620 *	#2136a, Wagon, Imperf Coil Plate #3 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 150-200.) (Ph).	-----	100-
622 *	#2262b, 17.5c Racing Car, Imperf Coil Plate #1 Strip of Six, Never Hinged, Very Fine, EXTREMELY RARE as Only Two Plate Strips are Known. (EST. 4,000.-5,000.) (Ph)	-----	5,250-
623 *	#2279, "E", Imperf Coil Pair, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 100-200.) (Ph).	-----	110-
628 *	#2281, Honey Bee, Coil Single, Black Omitted, Never Hinged, Very Fine. (EST. 250-350.) (Ph).	-----	310-
638 *	#0135a, 20c Official, Imperf Coil Pair, Never Hinged, Natural Ink Smear on Right Stamp, Very Fine, a Very Rare Error. (EST. 1,500.-2,000.) (Ph).	-----	1,450-

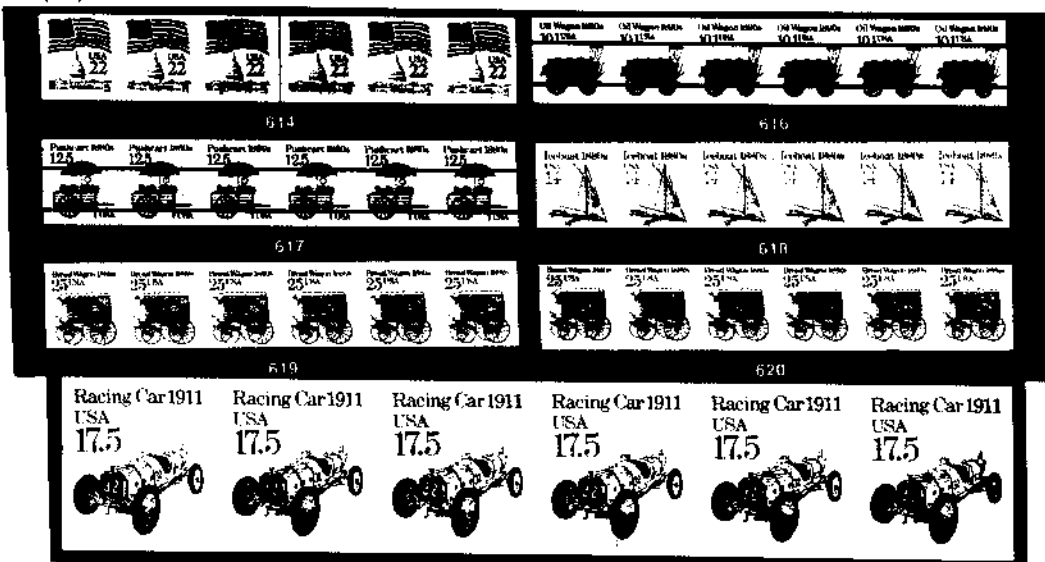
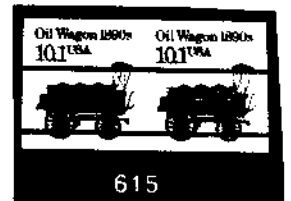
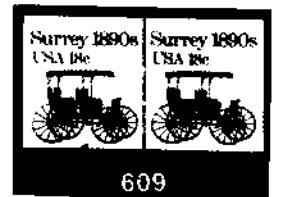
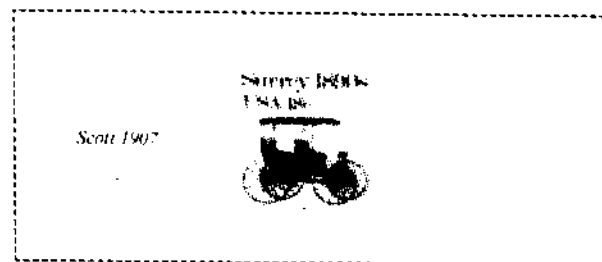
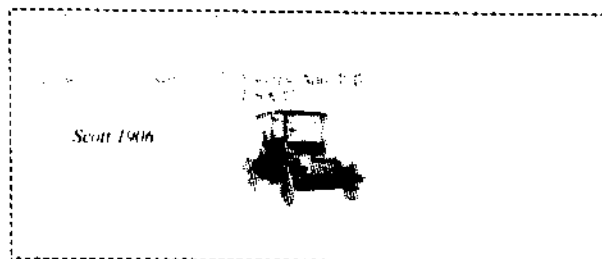
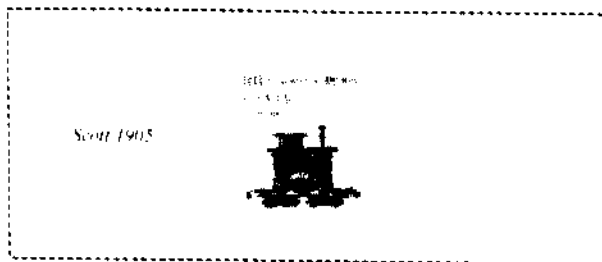


PLATE NUMBER COILS

1981-84

Transportation Issue



Collect the Scott Way... with Scott's

PLATE NUMBER COIL ALBUMS

Featuring:

- Three albums. Spaces for all Plate Number Coils listed in the *Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue*. Two albums for strips of three, both will accommodate strips of five. Brand new is the Scott Comprehensive Plate Number Coil Singles Album.
- The Plate Number Coil pages provide spaces for one example of each strip. The Comprehensive Album and the Singles Album provide spaces for every plate number of every issue.
- Chemically neutralized paper protects your stamps for generations.
- Pages may be housed in a handsome sturdy binder.
- Yearly supplements available to keep your album up-to-date.
- Scott numbers with each space in the album.

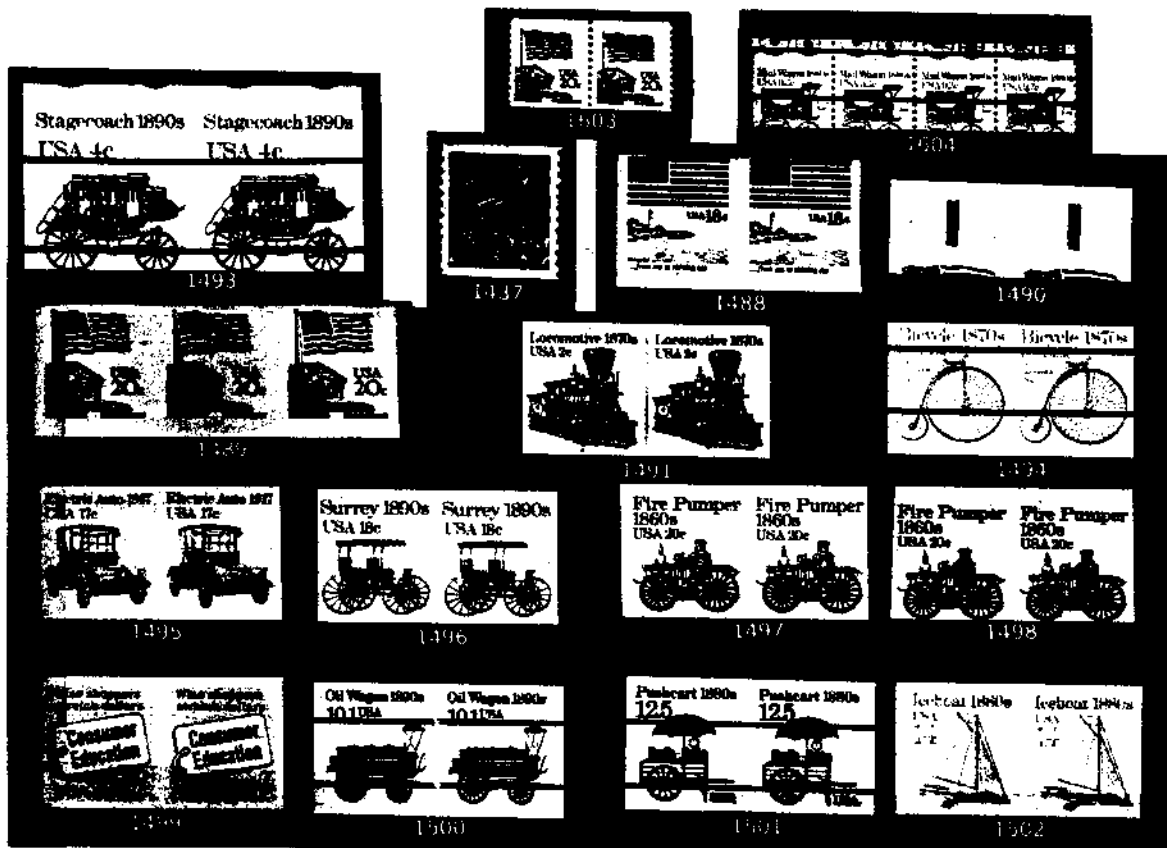
Recent Auction Results

Jacques C. Schiff, Jr., Inc.

JULY 13, 1989

(Buyers add 10%)

1436	#2281a, 25c Honeybee, Pair, Intaglio Black omitted, small fault at bot (front and back) where pairs stuck together), o/w F-VF.....	(PH) May Prorated Realized	320.00	280-
1437	#2281a, 25c Honeybee, Single, Intaglio Black omitted, w/o gum (removed from unmailed envelope), few ribbed perfs. VF.....	(PH) May Realized	180.00	160-
1488	#1891a, 18c Flag, Pair, w/PI #2 under 1st stamp, Imperforate, NH, F-VF.....	(PH) Apr Realized	85.00	72.50
1489	#1895a, 20c Flag, Strip (3), w/PI #8 under center stamp, Imperforate, NH, F-VF.....	(PH)	E.VIII	80-
1490	#1895a, 20c Flag, Miscut Pair from top sheet row, Imperforate, w/vert EE bars (normally trimmed) & small portion flag at bot.....	(PH) May Realized	87.50	57.50
1491	#1897Aa, 2c Locomotive, Line Pair w/PI #8, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH)	E.VIII	130-
1492	#1897Aa, 2c Locomotive, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(75.00) May Realized	46.00	50-
1493	#1898Ac, 4c Stagecoach, Prec Pair, Imperforate, NH, Aver-F.....	(Back Cover Photo) (600.00) Oct Realized	480.00	500-
1494	#1901b, 5.9c Bicycle, Prec Pair, Imperforate, F-VF.....	(PH) (250.00) May Realized	250.00	260-
1495	#1906b, 17c Auto, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) (175.00) May Realized	150.00	160-
1496	#1907a, 18c Surrey, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) (110.00) May Realized	100.00	105-
1497	#1908a, 20c Fire Pumper, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) (110.00) May Realized	100.00	105-
1498	#1908a, 20c Fire Pumper, Pair, Imperforate, NH, light bend across top, Aver-F.....	(PH) (110.00) May Realized	100.00	16-
1499	#2005a, 20c Consumer Ed, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) (100.00) May Realized	72.50	75-
1500	#2130b, 10.1c Oil Wagon, Prec Gap Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) May Realized	125.00	130-
1501	#2133b, 12.5c Pushcart, Prec Pair, Imperforate, VF.....	(PH) (75.00) May Realized	40.00	42-
1502	#2134a, 14c Iceboat, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) (75.00) May Realized	87.50	72.50
1503	#2136a, 25c Breadwagon, Strip (5) w/PI #2 under 3rd stamp, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH)	E.IX	170-
1504	#2279a, "E" Rate Coll, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) May Realized	150.00	170-
1505	#2280a, 25c Yosemite, Pair, Imperforate, NH, VF.....	(PH) May Realized	72.50	70-
1506	#2281a, 25c Honeybee, Pair, Imperforate, NH, F-VF.....	(PH) May Realized	36.00	36-
1603	#1895, 20c Flag, Pair, Black field Slate Blue instead of Black.....	(PH)	E.VII	85-
1604	#1903, 9.3c Mail Wagon, Prec Line Strip (4) w/PI #4, Miscut puts wheels & Plate No at top.....	(PH)	E.VI	44-



Searching

Ed Gould

(Second in a Series)

This month's topic was to be on postal employees and choosing Post Offices to contact. We will be getting back to that later, but first I would like to give you:

A Lesson in Questions

One reason there are still valuable rolls of stamps to be had in Post Offices across the nation is the fact that they are easy to miss.

One New England distribution center had 250 rolls of 500 20¢ Flag stamps in its inventory for the past year. What made these different from other such rolls was the fact that they were plate #2, an early printing. They could have just as easily been plate 1, 3, or 4.

Late in 1988 this Post Office ordered 20¢ coils to meet the second ounce rate. These stamps arrived in 5 unopened boxes, 50 rolls each. They were stacked in the vault and an open box of rolls were placed on top. Throughout the months of January and February, collectors and dealers contacted this office searching for obsolete coils. The questions, answers, and subsequent results were all the same. Look carefully. Can you see the mistakes?

Question: Do you have 20¢ Flag rolls of 500?

Answer: Yes.

Q: May I see them?

A: Yes.

Q: Are all the rolls like this one?

A: Yes.

Q: Do they all have the same plate number?

A: I don't know; I can't see any.

Q: How many more rolls do you have?

A: 280.

The collector then buys one or two rolls. Once home, a disappointing plate 13 would be found. The same thing would happen by mail. There would be minor variations, but the results would be the same. I was one of those collectors. At \$100.00 a roll, I reached a point where I had to find a way of distinguishing newer printings from old.

The answer was in the coil label. Early printings had an engraved label with the US flag in the background. Newer printings did not have this design. I had saved one such label from a roll I had purchased two years earlier.

I photocopied a new want list, complete with coil labels, and sent it to every Post Office that had any kind of 20¢ Flags. I got back to the New England Post Office.

Q: How many rolls do you have?

A: 260.

Q: How many have the flag design on the roll?

A: 250.

I alerted a nearby collector and he verified plate #2. We were able to purchase a couple of rolls for trading.

Three weeks ago the order came down from division--destroy these old rolls. Four weeks ago I learned that two of the unopened cases were made from white cardboard; three, including the newly opened case, was brown. Plates 1-4 used the engraved label; I had not gone the one step further and inquired about exterior packaging.

reviews

Linn's Trends.

Linn's published a "Trends" listing of PNC prices in its June 26th issue. The prices quoted are supposed to represent an average, or consensus price, based upon advertised dealer retail prices. I think that Greg Manning (who compiles the data) has managed to do that. Listed are all known numbers of PS3, PS5, and used singles in F-VF condition.

Most prices show stability from the last "Trends" listing six months ago. Most notable increases were in the 5.2¢ Sleigh, 9.3¢ Mail Wagon, and 10.9¢ Hansom Cab. These early Cottrell fractionals are starting to take on the look of PNC "classics," if such a term can be used for stamps that were issued just eight years ago.

Other increases were in the 20¢ Pumper #7, 8, 11 because they have not re-emerged in Post Office inventory, and in 18¢ Flag #3 and 6, probably because the confirmation of no Post Office stock has calmed the jitters. 20¢ Flag #4, 6, and 14 continue to climb, as do 22¢ Flag #3, 7, 14, and 17-21. Sometimes it is difficult to know which Flag numbers are going to be tough until they are all used up. 22¢ #3 seems to be in very short supply.

The greatest number of price increases seems to be in used singles. Even non-PNC collectors recognize these as "face different" stamps, and there may in fact be a broader base of demand for the singles than for the mint strips.

I think that \$2.00-\$3.50 for Bread Wagon singles is a bit steep. This material comes from sorters and soakers, and there is often an eighteen month time lag before they are culled from mixtures and appear in dealers' stock books. There will be more available.

The last six months have seen no significant new discoveries of off-sale material to de-stabilize the marketplace.

PNC BOOKLETS

PNCs On Cover

A compilation of all known PNCs on cover. Emphasis is on commercial covers and includes scarcity ratings for each plate number. Also included are separate listings of PNCs on FDCs.

\$7.00 postpaid

PNC Varieties

An indispensable booklet for variety collectors. Includes imperfs, plate flaws, color/inking varieties and tagging varieties. Over 1,100 listings.

\$11.00 postpaid

****Special**** both booklets for \$16.00

Rob Washburn
P.O. Box 840
Skowhegan, Maine 04976

Plate Number Coil Catalog, 1989 Steve Esrati, Editor.

There has probably been no area of American philately more closely researched and documented while the material was still new than plate number coils.

Esrati's Fifth Edition catalog, while not the definitive work on every aspect of PNC collecting, is still the best compendium available.

The introduction makes the claim that every basic fact about each issue known at the time of publication is included. It is.

The charts in the appendices are most helpful. Added this edition is an introduction to PNC labels.

The greatest general criticism heard is about Steve's catalog-numbering system. It seems to be having a hard time catching on.

Each subsequent edition is an improvement--it is an honest work, lovingly done.

(A specifically critical review is on page 10 of this issue.)

review

Esrati's 1989 Catalog Gap Chart

Robert Rabinowitz

Interest in Cottrell Gaps has increased sharply since the publication of the Lighthouse PNC album. The 1989 Gap Scarcity Chart in Esrati's "Plate Number Coil Catalog" is significantly improved over 1988. However, some problems still exist.

If collectors plan to use the gap chart for trading purposes, someone could get hurt seriously. For example, the 17¢ 3/4 AB 5R is evaluated as a "C-D" while the 17¢ 5/7 AB 4R is more highly valued as a "D." The latter retails at about one-fifth what the former does.

Look at the 9.3¢ 3/4 3R. These are valued at "D," with the notation that a "find" has been made. Either this "find" is a more closely guarded secret than was "Operation Overlord," or no find at all was made.

The 5.2¢ 3/5 Line Gap PS5 is a rather sought after strip. However, after Diane Thompson's partial roll find, almost all serious collectors who were willing to pay the price have a set. And a few dealers may have a set of PS4 and/or PS5 available. Contrast these with the 9.3¢ 5/6 1R which is extremely rare and few collectors have ever seen. Esrati's catalog evaluates both the 5.2¢ 3/5 LG and the 9.3¢ 5/6 1R as "E's." Which set would you rather be receiving in a trade?

The Gap chart continues to provide ambiguous statements such as "several finds," "a few finds," "low availability despite many finds," etc. How large were these finds; if Esrati and Co. don't know, the comments re: finds are meaningless.

An inconsistency appeared in defining the value of 17¢ 3/4 C 1R; we were told that they are "less common as PS6's." No one asked me. The inconsistency here is that the same statement could be made for 10.9¢ 1/2 1R, 9.3¢ 3/4 1R, and almost all the other 1R Gaps. Why single out 17¢ 3/4 C 1R?

Half-gaps, although illustrated in the Lighthouse Album, sought after by almost all serious Gap collectors including those who serve on Esrati's "Study Group," and offered on the price lists of the leading Gap dealers, are totally ignored.

What is a half-gap? To me and others I've spoken to, it is a gap which has the visual appearance of being directly in the center of a stamp as opposed to the standard position straddling a row of perforations. Is it a mat variety, or a printing freak? Yes, some might agree it is. However, since collectors, dealers, and album makers broadly recognize it, shouldn't Esrati's catalog make some attempt to provide an indication of value?

Some would argue--what about a one-quarter or three-eighths gap? The fact is that few if any collectors demand any fractional gap besides the half-gap, most likely because of the symmetry associated with the latter.

Some interesting half-gap situations exist. Before the discovery of the 5.2¢ 3/5 2L about 18 months ago, dealers and collectors considered the 3/5 1½L as either a 1½L or a 1L. No one thought to call it a 2L, a then-unknown gap. But today, unless given "its own place," it's impossible to categorize it.

Another example comes to mind. Let's say a 10.9¢ 1/2 Gap ½L were found. Is it a line-gap (common) or a 1L (unknown)? Obviously it's neither, and must be called what it is.

There is certainly a place for half-gaps in the next Esrati catalog; hopefully, Esrati will consult with the principal gap collectors and dealers rather than seeking inputs from some of the Gap non-entities who appear as members of the "Study Group."

Editor's Note: For the record, Esrati's Gap Committee includes Larry Haynes (who has the most complete gap collection in existence), Gap-dealer Kim Cuniberti, and non-entity Tom Maeder, among others.

COMMERCIAL COVERS: 17¢ AUTO

Rob Washburn
P.O. Box 840
Skowhegan, ME 04976
(7th in a Series)

The 17¢ Electric Auto coil was released on June 25, 1981 in Greenfield Village, Michigan. Plate numbers 1 through 7 exist and numbers 1 and 2 (tagged only) are known on first day covers. The plate numbers appear every 24 stamps on a roll.

The tagged 17¢ Electric Auto coils were issued to pay for each additional ounce on first-class mail and were used for such purposes during the 18¢, 20¢ and 22¢ first-class rate periods. Although available for four months prior to the rate change to 20¢, no 17¢ Electric Auto PNCs are known on a cover cancelled during the 18¢ first-class rate period. This is probably due to the fact that the savings of just one penny wasn't deemed important enough by mailers to justify buying rolls of 17¢ coils for use on mailings. I have only seen one cover using a 17¢ Electric Auto coil (not a PNC) used during the 18¢ rate period.

The precancelled version of the 17¢ coils exist with three different types of precancels (Types A, B and C). These coils also exist with combinations of A-B and B-A precancels. The precancelled versions were issued to pay the 5-digit sort rate (11/1/81-2/16/85) and Zip+4, carrier-route sort rate (2/17/85-4/2/88).

The earliest known usages of the 17¢ Electric Auto are as follows:

<u>Plate Number</u>	<u>Earliest Known Usage Date On Commercially Used Cover</u>
1	12/10/82
2	7/8/82
3	5/7/83
4	1/3/83
5	6/?/85
6	2/1/85
7	11/1/85
3A	No cancellation
4A	No cancellation but outside envelope reads "Acceptance Date: 5/14/86"
5A	12/4/87
6A	8/14/87
7A	2/24/87
3B	12/29/87
4B	12/31/87
5B	No cancellation but contains contents dated 1983
6B	12/12/85
1C	11/30/87
2C	12/1/87
3C	12/9/87
4C	12/3/87
5C	12/28/87
7C	No cancellation
5AB (Gap 5R)	11/20/87
7AB (Gap 5R)	12/2/87

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26 HARLOW ST. - P. O. BOX 592
BANGOR, MAINE 04401



ATTENTION: Esther Waters, Clerk

Superior Court
County Courthouse
Skowhegan, Maine 04976

Despite the fact that these coils were in use for nearly seven years, 17c Electric Auto PNCs on cover are difficult to find. Tagged numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4 are relatively inexpensive with prices ranging from \$5-\$10 each. Numbers 5, 6 and 7 are more expensive with prices \$10 or more each. The precancelled versions are quite scarce, and I would value them \$15-\$25 each or more. The precancelled PNC covers listed above with cancellation dates were all philatelically prepared, but were carried through the mailstream.

As for the precancelled versions of the Electric Auto, the following are known mailers of such PNC covers:

<u>Plate #</u>	<u>Mailer</u>
4A	National Republican Congressional Committee
7A	Eastern Airlines
5B	Time Magazine
1C	Communications House
4C	Dreyfus Service Corp.
7C	I.C. System, Inc.

As you can see from the above list, very little information was available to me in preparing this list. Nevertheless, given the difficulty in determining the authenticity of covers with precancelled stamps, a list of this sort will, hopefully, help collectors in the future, and I plan to include such information when I review other precancelled issues in the future. Please let me know about your holdings of not only Electric Auto covers, but also all other precancelled PNCs on cover.

As for varieties to look for on the plate number stamp of Electric Auto PNC covers, there are several LOMs ("layout marks" consisting of dots and lines) which exist. Other varieties include: on #1--broken axle crack and #2--plate chip on joint line. Tagging breaks are also known on most all of the tagged versions.

There was only one new report this month of an earlier usage...22c Flag #14--3/6/87.

Next month, I'll review the 17c Dog Sled and the 14c Iceboat.

12.5c #1: A STUDY

Lee Warzala

Last October, I began putting together a collection of mint plate number singles which included paper type varieties. My Type I and Type II examples of the 12.5¢ precancel #1 were placed side by side. As I looked at them, I began to realize that the "Bulk Rate" overprints seemed different. My first thought was that one was showing more wear; but nonetheless, I examined them under a 30x microscope. If wear were present, it should be uniform. If a different precancel mat was used, as in the 17¢ Electric Auto, the difference would be measurable.

The height of the 'B' on Type II was taller (2.22mm versus 2.18mm), which could indicate wear. If the length of 'Bulk Rate' was also longer, the 'Wear Hypothesis' would be confirmed; but lo and behold, it was shorter (10.55mm versus 10.64mm).

Admittedly, the differences were slight. The idea of a Type A and Type B precancel on 12.5¢ would never catch on unless the collector had an easier way to decipher them. This led to the hypothesis that the "Precancel Type correlates directly to the Paper Type." This would mean that when the BEP went to a new paper supplier, they coincidentally (or deliberately) went to a different precancel mat.

I knew to prove this I would have to closely examine many stamps. My conclusions are based on examination of 157 strips from at least 37 different source rolls.

At this point, the following seem to be true:

Conclusion #1: Type A and Type B Precancels exist on 12.5¢ plate #1.

Conclusion #2: Type 1 (Light) and Type 2 (Dark) Olive colored inks exist on 12.5¢ plate #1.

Conclusion #3: Type I, II, and III papers were used on 12.5¢ plate #1.

Conclusion #4: Combinations of the above include:

- Type IA1
- Type IA2
- Type IIB2
- Type IIIA1
- Type IIIA2

The Type A Precancel found on Type I paper was easy, as the characteristics were very uniform. All 134 strips had longer "Bulk Rate," measuring at least 10.62mm. Ninety percent fell within 10.62-10.67mm. The remaining 10% (14 strips from at least 3 different rolls) were larger still (10.70-10.72mm). My feeling after looking at all these strips is that one row of the Type A precancel mat had this larger variety.

For those unfamiliar with paper typing, there is a third way to decipher the Type A precancel. The letters generally have a more squared-off appearance. For example, The "B" stands upright and the leg of the "e" has squared-off corners with plenty of 'daylight.' Even under magnification, the leg of the "e" never touches the head of the "e." e

Conclusion #5: All 12.5¢ #1 stamps that have Type I paper also have Type A precancel.

Conclusion #6: All stamps having Type A precancel have the characteristic 'open e' regardless of wear, degree of inking, or positioning on the precancel mat.

Type B Precancel

Before I go into details, please bear in mind the existence of Type III paper was not yet confirmed when I started my research.

There was also a great deal of uniformity in the Precancel found on stamps with Type II paper. They appeared shorter in length, but taller in height. 21 of the 24 strips I examined fell within the following dimensions: length was 10.52-10.56mm. Height was 2.20-2.25mm. The "B" was slanted slightly to the left. With the naked eye, the leg of the "e" has a round appearance with only a sliver of daylight, or about 20% of the time, no daylight at all. Under magnification, the leg touches the head of the "e" 93.5% of the time. e B

Unfortunately, my research was halted when 3 strips did not conform to

the above description, but to the description of the precancel found on Type I paper. They were: No gap strip of 5; 10.65 x 2.12; open 'e'
 10R gap: 10.67 x 2.15; open 'e'
 10L gap: 10.65 x 2.15; open 'e'

A few months later, Kim Cuniberti (who supplied me with some of the gap strips) informed me that Richard Nazar confirmed the existence of Type III paper and that Type III was confirmed on the 12.5¢ precancel. Kim also noted that while checking his strips he saw a difference in the olive ink, suggesting that I examine the strips under a long-wave UV lamp. Lo and behold, many of my strips glowed like a copper penny, while others appeared dark brown, under the UV lamp.

The journal The Plate Number supplied me with the final piece of the puzzle by publishing Nazar's copyrighted article on Type III paper. I went back to look at my 24 Type II strips and pulled out 3 which appeared to have Type III gum texture. You guessed it: these were the same 3 strips which didn't conform to the Type B precancel characteristics.

Thus I'm offering other PNC collectors this history of precanceled plate number one:

The history began on Type I paper. The ink used was light olive (looks brown under long wave UV) and on overprint using Type A was applied (gap 11R). During the same period, the BEP also began using Type III paper. The same ink and precancel were used as Type I paper (gap 10R).

The first major change occurred when the BEP added something to the ink which had luminescent qualities. The only evidence of this is a single strip which has a streak of olive ink near the edge. Unlike the rest of the ink, this glows bright orange under long wave UV light, not the bright copper color. The color of the stamp changed from Light Olive to Dark Olive. During this period, the Type A precancel was again used. (Gaps include 5L, 6L, 7L, 8L, and 9L on Type I paper; and 10L on Type III paper.)

By the time Type II paper was used, there had been at least eight separate press runs representing tens of millions of stamps. During this time, wear did occur to the Type A precancel mat, but the basic dimensions remained the same, or got slightly larger.

When the Type II paper was finally used, only the Type 2 ink remained and was used. At the same time, for some unknown reason, the BEP went to a different precancel mat, where the words were slightly shorter in length and the script was slightly different. At least three additional press runs occurred (gaps 8R, 7R, and 4L).

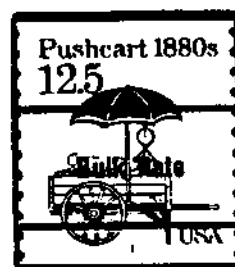
Conclusion #7: 12.5¢ stamps printed on Type II paper have the Type B precancel.
 Conclusion #8: 12.5¢ stamps printed on Type III paper have the Type A precancel.

Granted, these observations are based on a relatively small (approximately 850) sample of stamps, but I feel there is enough evidence to warrant my conclusions. I invite my fellow collectors to critique the findings.

	Type A	Type B
Height of "Bulk Rate"	2.07-2.14mm	2.20-2.25mm
Length of "Bulk Rate"	10.62-10.72mm	10.52-10.56mm
Found on Paper Type	I and III	II
Design of "e"	always open	ink joins 'leg' to 'head'
Plate Ink	Light or Dark Olive	Only Dark Olive
Gaps	5L, 6L, 7L, 8L, 9L, 10L, 10R, 11R.	4L, 7R, 8R



Type A



Type B

PNC³ Auction

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(circle)	
AVE F FVF VF XF S	

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- FINE VERY FINE (FVF) THE JOINT LINE, IF ANY, TOUCHES THE PERFS AND THE PLATE NUMBER IS CLEAR OF THE BOTTOM EDGE. FOR ISSUES WITHOUT A JOINT LINE, THE NUMBER WILL BE CLEAR OF THE BOTTOM EDGE. IN BOTH INSTANCES, AT NO POINT IN THE STRIP WILL THE DESIGN BE CUT BY THE PERFS.
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- SUPERB (S) ANY JOINT LINE WILL BE PERFECTLY CENTERED WITHIN THE PERFS AND THE STAMPS WILL BE PERFECTLY CENTERED.

For Sale or Trade: PNC Collection of mostly PS5, some PS3 and PS2. Seek used strips, singles, and commercial covers in trade. Best offer. Send #10 SASE for complete list. Greg Cohen, 7-09 Cedar St., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.

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Wanted: TAG SHIFTS and other TAG varieties. Coil strips with & without plate nos. Describe, send sample, prompt offer. TAG SHIFT HARRY MUEGGENBURG, 3525 Bluff Court, Carmichael, CA, 95608.

Wanted: New Issues PNCs. Trade or Buy, face +10% minimum. Write first. Send list to Red Raider Stamps, 4123 W. 18th, Lubbock, TX 79416-6008.

Buying: \$2.00 for any commercial cover with plate number postmarked May 23, 1989 (baby's birthdate). Tom Maeder, 1604 Bardale Ave., San Pedro, CA, 90731.

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