

# COIL LINE

## JOURNAL of PNC<sup>3</sup>

Vol. II, Number 3

March, 1989

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### Post Office Inventory-What Does It Mean?

In the Spring of 1986, USPS Headquarters made a concerted effort to round up rolls of 3000 of the 20¢ Pumper from the field. One clerk suggested that they were trying to gather as many numbers possible to offer at AMERIPEX. False theory--the numbers at AMERIPEX were neither exciting nor varied. The reason now seems obvious--the Post Office knew it would ask the rate commission for a 20¢-second ounce, and wanted to be ready.

The flap about the hithertofore rare #12 and #14 is well known, and the philatelic community demanded an accounting. After months of waiting, USPS has now published an inventory of stock in their own vaults and in storage at BEP.

About a year ago, I saw a computer printout of all stamps that existed anywhere in the system. 18¢ Flags were among them; so were Americana coils; so were a lot of items that had been off-sale 15 years and more.

A lot of shredding took place before the inventory was published. The inventory does not preclude the existence of isolated holdings in vaults, or in clerks' drawers, at the local level. (Want any 7.9¢ Americana drums? Call the philatelic window at the Federal Building in Downtown Los Angeles.)

It is not impossible that 18¢ Flag #6s exist at scattered locations, but at least we are assured that they do not exist in quantity in a central repository. Nor is there any worry that they might be later sent back to press--the plates are physically destroyed when they are announced as "cancelled."

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	Bureau Engraving Inventory	Stamp Distribution Inventory
20¢ Fire Pumper (3000 coil)	0	13,466
3¢ Handcar (500)	0	6,381
3¢ Handcar (3000)	2,152	6,356
11¢ Bearcat (500)	47,000	36,000
11¢ Bearcat (3000)	14,272	3,121
12¢ Steamer (500)	12,250	21,428
12¢ Steamer (3000)	0	64
17¢ Dog Sled (500)	1,450	9,681
17¢ Dog Sled (3000)	6,168	1,739
20¢ Official Mail	0	0
22¢ Flag coil (100)		8,395,000
22¢ Flag coil (500)		153,200
22¢ Flag coil (3000)		12,608
	(accounted by number of rolls)	
22¢ Flag test coil		204,000
	(accounted by number of stamps)	

# Letters

How can you order coils from out of town from a Post Office? Could members offer to buy in bulk and break up for other members? Yes, I would be willing to if I knew others would also do it so we could all benefit from whomever happens to get new plate numbers at their local post office. The only conditions I would have are that all share in excess postage and there is no complaint about condition.

Thomas O'Hagan  
Silver Spring, MD

The Domestic Mail Manual expressly prohibits the mailing of stamps out of area. That doesn't mean that it doesn't go on. Often a phone call can accomplish it. The requirement under these circumstances is usually a full-roll purchase, postal money order up front. Sometimes they cover the postage and registration, sometimes not. (Ed.)

My congratulations to Cibulskas. His article on the Bee lines makes sense.

Gary Davis  
Des Moines, IA

I just received a new shipment of stamps from the Philatelic Sales Division in Washington, D.C. The order was processed 1/3/89. The following list shows the plate numbers in that shipment.

Unprecanceled: 2¢ (#1); 5¢ (#3/4); 8.3¢ (#1/2); 8.5¢ (#1); 10.1¢ (#1); 11¢ (#1/2); 20¢ Cable Car (#1); 21.1¢ (#11111); 25¢ Breadwagon (#2); "E" (#1111); 25¢ Flag (#4).

Precanceled: 5.5¢ (#1); 6¢ (#1); 8.3¢ (#1/2); 8.3¢ B-press (#1); 10.1¢ (#2); 12¢ (#1/2); 12¢ B-press (#1); 12.5¢ (#1); 13¢ (#1); 21.1¢ (#111111); 24.1¢ (#1).

Frank Covey  
Macomb, IL

21¢ #2 is in Denver.

Ed Gould  
Roscommon, MI

Cable Car #2 is in Redondo Beach, CA. 1¢ Omnibus B-press #2 is in Downey, CA and in Santa Ana, CA. (Ed.)

Many of the used flags I have found elusive were equally difficult for John Griffin and friends (The Plate Number, Vol. IV, No. 1). My sample of 60 pounds only represents 1/4 of what they went through, but many of the results were the same, while others varied remarkably. A very brief summary follows:

20¢ Flag #1	2.5%	(compared to their 5.13%)
#4	9.0%	(compared to their 4%)
#6	4.5%	(their 2.62%)
#10	2.5%	(their 5.24%)

The rest were very close to total agreement. From 212 22¢ Flags came one #16!! 1 #14; 1 #21. #16 is still a commoner number mint, but why weren't more used?

Having completed the mint collection two years ago, I have found it cheap and entertaining to collect used specimens (not to mention challenging!).

I have accumulated a pile of difficult strips of three which I may well send to myself to gain good used examples.

Tad Richards  
Duxbury, MA

**COIL LINE**

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 Rob Washburn, Treas.  
 P.O. Box 840  
 Skowhegan, ME 04976  
 Advertising: full page, \$28;  
 1/2 page, \$15; 1/4 page, \$8.  
 Classified ads, 6¢/word.  
 Members are entitled to  
 (2) free 40-word ads/yr.

## Letters

A company calling itself Tucson Catalog Co., Tucson, AZ, advertised in Linn's under US Wanted to Buy-Scrap Postage. I wrote to them and received confirmation as to rates--so I sent them some Bees, mint 17¢ Auto, etc. After three weeks I tried to call--no such listing in Tucson. I wrote to a collector I know in Tucson and he checked it out. "Suite 201" was a box number. My friend learned the FBI has an open investigation going on.

I also wrote a letter to Linn's. I got no response whatsoever. Either Linn's is understaffed, or doesn't care to answer the complaint. What bothers me even more, there is no way for me to know who is for real and who isn't. This is another area PNC<sup>3</sup> can really help out.

Edward Gould  
Roscommon, MI

I have been asked by several collectors to act as ombudsman with one dealer or another. Often there has been a misunderstanding, and I have been happy to help. Discretion precludes printing those letters. The above, though, is plain garden-variety fraud. (Ed.)

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Mixture in review: "USA - PNC Flag Mixture on paper. Ounce, about 150 stamps. Unchecked for numbers."

Total stamps: 61, plus 93 faulty.

Value in Linn's "Trends" (Dec. 26, 1988): \$19.95 (faulty not included)

Price: \$7

Source: Soybean Productions, Box 738, Yellow Springs, Ohio 45387 (from their Pricelist #7).

Contents: (Numbers in parentheses are quantities; numbers preceded by a number sign are plate numbers; other numbers are Scott catalog numbers): 1895 #3 (1); #8 (3); #9 (4); #10 (1); #12 (2); #13 (1); 2115 #1 (2); #2 (5); #3 (2); #4 (3); #5 (3); #7 (2); #8 (9); #10 (2); #11 (4); #12 (6); #13 (2); #16 (2); #17 (1); #18 (2); #19 (1); #20 (1); #22 (2).

This mixture consisted of 61 collectible stamps, of which 23 were different, on close-cut, single paper. All were postally used, with wavy-line cancels predominating and, occasionally, grazing the plate numbers. A few pairs were included, all with the plate number on the right-hand stamp.

The huge proportion of faulty (60% of the mixture, with a combined "Trends" value of \$29.05) were due mostly to short, clipped or missing perforations which I did not detect until after soaking. Half a dozen others had cut numbers, and nine had their numbers obliterated by the cancels. Six 22¢ Test Coils (with a "T" at the bottom but no plate number) were also included.

This apparently popular mixture, the only on-paper mix of plate number coils I've ever seen offered, had to be back-ordered. My ounce was received eleven weeks after I mailed my check.

At an average cost of about 11 1/2¢ each, this kitchen floor plate number philatelist was quite disappointed. Most of the common 20¢ and 22¢ PNC used Flags received were offered in the same price list individually at just 10¢ each, and my future orders to Soybean will ask for them on that basis.

- Lio C. Rebmun

Coil Line would like to thank our Midwest sorter for his analysis, and offer him space for future reviews. (Ed.)

# Mixture Sorting: An Opinion

Tom Maeder

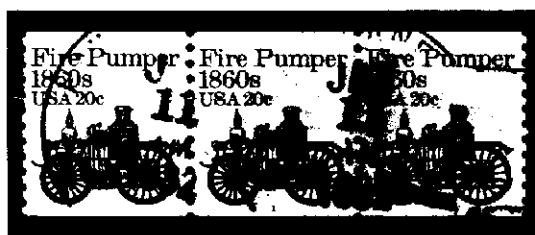
In both the Coil Line and The Plate Number in recent issues, members have been anxious to share their data on mixture sorting. I am not a sorter myself. My only experience was a carton that the widow of a PNC collector gave me as a gift. To me, it is painfully tedious--and disappointing. A full half, or more, have damaged perfs, cut edges, obliterated numbers, or some other flaw that makes the stamp not collection-worthy.

It's a nasty business, but somebody has to do it. From time to time, I have been offered the finds of people with more patience than I. A Chicago sorter found a 20¢ Flag #8 "brick red"--nicely centered, light cancel, perfs all present. It's like winning the lottery--you're lucky it happened once, and you know it's unlikely to happen again.

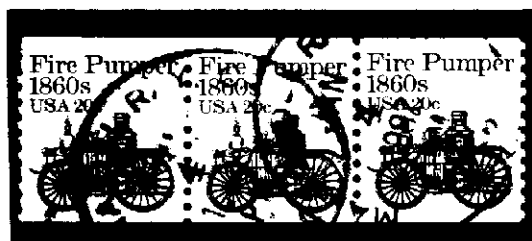
Used strips are a great challenge. You can create them yourself, of course. But that's a lot like kissing your sister--it's real, but something's missing. If you were handed a hundred used strips and were told that fifty were philatelic creations, you could probably come close to picking which fifty they are--e.g., a strip of 5 of the 25¢ Bread Wagon, number on the middle stamp, every perf intact, with a machine cancel; or a Surrey strip with a non-period-of-use postmark.

A "mixture" strip was put on a package or large envelope by a clumsy non-collector, and hand cancelled by a clerk with an over-inked (in the morning) or under-inked (by 5 P.M.) device; or roller-cancelled at the sectional center. The plate number is just as likely to be left or right as it is to be in the middle.

Each strip has its own personality. Premium items, certainly, would be those with a legible town name, or a readable date, or both. These two strips were loaned for illustration. I think that they are exhibition-worthy.



A



B

A--plate number 1, PS3, black ink, Jan. 11, 1982. (The Washburn Catalog lists the earliest known postmark on commercial cover as Jan. 28, 1982.)

B--plate number 2, PS3, purple ink, Marina Del Rey, CA, Jan. 4, 1982. (Washburn Catalog lists the earliest known postmark on commercial cover as Jan. 19, 1982.)

(The Editor is anxious to have members submit xeroxes of interesting material for newsletter-inclusion.)

## Books . . .

The author has sent copies of his books for review. He is a PNC<sup>3</sup> member. He has not requested special treatment, nor sought to have the newsletter promote his books. The opinions expressed are those of the Editor alone.

### PNC Varieties, by Rob Washburn (\$11).

This 40+ page compilation lists virtually every known plate, mat, and tagging variety which has been reported on plate numbered coils. It is organized sequentially by denomination and by plate number, and (when it is known) the variety's position on the roll is noted. There are well over 1,000 entries.

Prices or values are not listed, nor are there any illustrations. But terms are defined and the descriptions are generally clear. The work functions as a valuable handbook on locating known varieties on rolls of stamps that may come our way. Since the positions are listed, we can go right to the spot(s) to check if the roll has any varieties.

The compilation must have been painstaking, especially in regard to mat varieties where there were no pre-existing written sources. The work leaves some room to grow--information is still needed on certain positions, etc.

It is by far the most comprehensive listing of varieties, errors, freaks, and oddities yet published. Its layout is eye-appealing, and it is well worth the \$11 price.

### PNCs on Cover, by Rob Washburn (\$7).

Modern postal history is one of Rob's philatelic passions, and he ranks with only two or three others in knowledge of PNCs on commercial cover.

This 19 page work is a straightforward listing of all denominations and plate numbers, with earliest known usage of that number on cover (other than first day cancellation).

Scarcity ratings are provided. From my own knowledge of the field, I believe that the ratings are accurate.

The publication of the book has already prompted the reporting of earlier usages on a few numbers, and that is as it should be. This will forever be an on-going study.

(Both of the books reviewed are of the same size, and bound in the same manner, as Steve Esrati's Plate Number Coil Catalog. They make nice companion volumes.)



This 17c Bureau precancel "Pre-Sort" is attached to a 20c Flag in a double splice. It sold for \$1,700 in a Jacques C. Schiff Jr., Inc., auction last July in New York City.

Reference to this unique Electric Auto-20¢ Flag imperforate splice was made in the September issue of the Coil Line.

It was discussed again in the January issue of The Plate Number: "The rub is that no Flags were

printed on Cottrell presses and no Autos on the B, C, or D presses. Therefore, a splice is an impossibility."

This analysis is not necessarily true. The cutting, perfining, and packaging is often not done on the same day (nor even at the same plant location) as the printing of the stamps.

When the second facility takes up the task, they splice the head of one printed roll to the tail of another. This joining often turns out imperforate, and is meant to be excised and destroyed.

For the cutting and perfining operation, it is irrelevant what press or presses the stamps were printed on.

# Briefly...

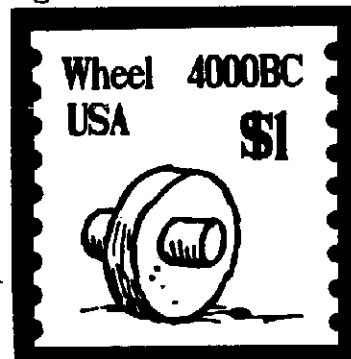
Dave Agrodnia is in the final stages of getting the PNC<sup>3</sup> auction together. The auction catalog will be included with the April newsletter.

The 25¢ Flag on pre-phosphored paper carries plate number 8. There are reports that some clerks handled these as ordinary stock, and that they were sold in some places before the official first day. Those collectors that seek the earliest possible date on commercial cover should keep an eye out for postmarks that precede the February 14 "first day." They're out there.

The January newsletter noted that numbers 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 14 of the 20¢ Flag had come off the shelves during the rate change. Ted Ulrich notes that #5 did, too.

John Galvagni has submitted (whimsically, he assures us) this suggestion for a new transportation coil design.

Leonard Leeds has contributed some postage for the mailing of this newsletter. The printing and mailing of the March letter had an 88¢/unit cost. At that rate, we exceed the \$10 per year dues. We are grateful to Leonard and any other generous persons who might want to contribute. (Precancels are fine, too.)



Treasurer Rob Washburn notes that dues checks were severally made out to Rob Washburn, Eric Russow, Tom Maeder, Coil Line, etc. The club account is at the Franklin Savings Bank in Skowhegan, ME, and is vested in the name of PNC<sup>3</sup>. All payments, whether they be dues, Coil Line advertising, or whatever, should be made to "PNC<sup>3</sup>."

Until the February newsletter, the mailing labels had been printed by Steve Esrati. They are now done by Walter Esparza. The computer listing changes almost daily. Walter lives in Los Angeles County where the newsletter is edited, printed, and mailed. This proximity allows for an up-to-the-minute list on mailing day. We are grateful to Steve for his dedication and thoroughness, and also to Walter for volunteering his time and computer to the task.

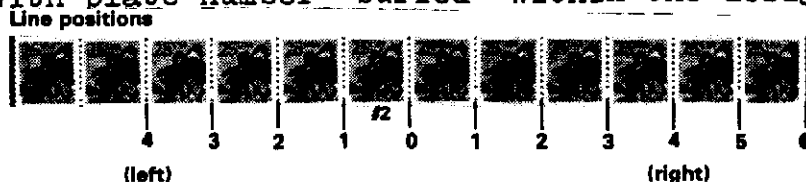
Dave Martin reports that Gerry Adlman produced eight Gamm first day covers with imperf honeybee pairs, and that George Van Natta produced 30 of them. The selling price ranges from \$75 to \$150.

## HONEYBEE JOINT LINES

The following represents an update from last month's listing of 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	
#1	D*	D	D	DD																			DD	D	#1
#2		D	D	DD	DD	D									D			D			D*				#2

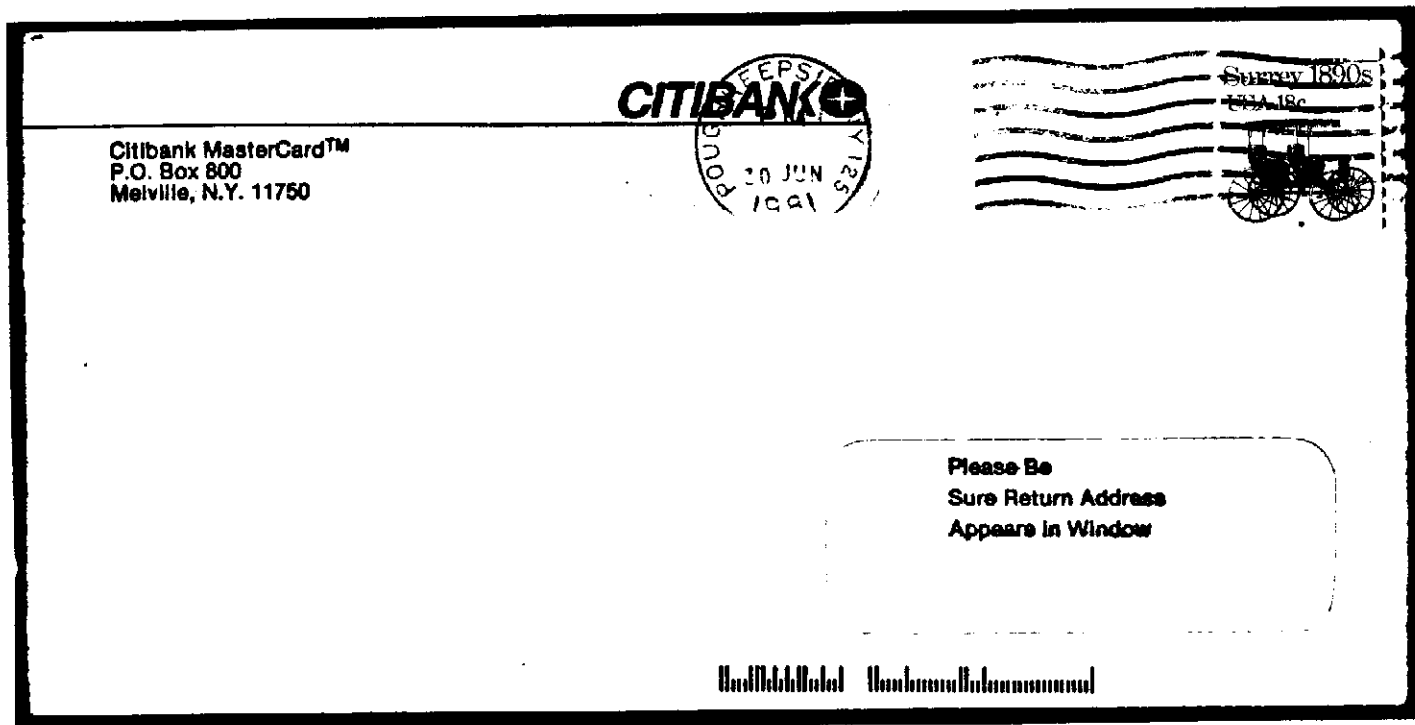
- D = Double Joint Line
- R = Reported, but not Confirmed
- \* = Known with both normal plate number placement, and with plate number "buried" within the design.



# COMMERCIAL COVERS: 18¢ SURREY

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

The 18¢ Surrey coil was first released on May 18, 1981 in Notch, Missouri. Like the 18¢ Flag coil, it was issued to meet the 18¢ first ounce first class rate which was in effect for only a little over seven months. The plate numbers appear every 24 stamps on a roll, and plate numbers 1 through 18 exist. Numbers 1 through 10 are known on first day covers.



#8 Earliest Known Use: 6/30/81

The earliest known usages on commercially used cover are as follows:

<u>Plate Number</u>	<u>Earliest Usage Date on Commercially Used Cover</u>
1	6/2/81
2	6/11/81
3	6/15/81
4	6/15/81
5	6/12/81
6	6/12/81
7	7/23/81
8	6/30/81
9	7/27/81
10	7/24/81
11	8/25/81
12	8/20/81
13	8/24/81
14	8/11/81
15	10/8/81
16	9/14/81
17	10/20/87
18	10/20/87

(continued)

The dates listed above for plate numbers 17 and 18 are for philatelically created covers which were carried through the mailstream. Numbers 17 and 18 are also known on 1c Omnibus FDCs dated 8/19/83. No truly commercial covers are known to exist for those two plate numbers. They were not widely available as they went to press on 9/16/83, near the end of the 18c first class rate period.

Plate numbers 15 and 16 are the next scarcest Surreys on cover with less than 10 of each number known. Numbers 3, 4, 13 and 14 are also quite scarce on cover and are priced from \$10 to \$25 each. All of the other numbers exist in limited quantities but are available for prices ranging from \$6 to \$15 each.

As for Surrey PNCs tied on cover by purple machine cancels, numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are known. Off cover used singles of numbers 3 and 16 are known with purple machine cancels, but neither are known yet on cover. If any collectors have numbers 3 or 16 tied on cover by a purple machine cancel, please let me know.

I received one new report this past month, 18c Flag #3 has been found on a cover dated 5/20/81.

Next month I will review the 20c Flags on cover.

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New Applicants (previously unpublished)

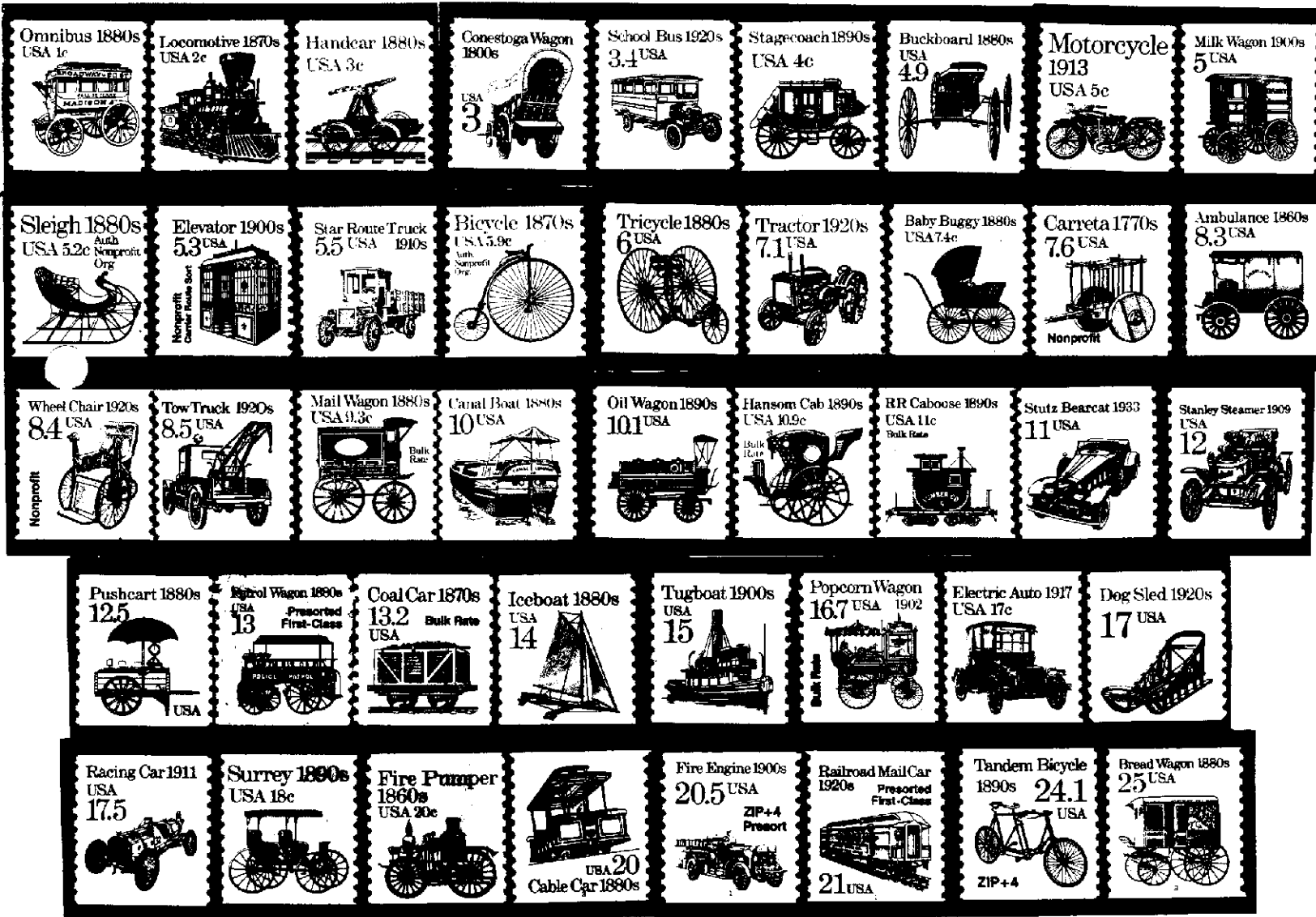
Philippe deGain	Grand Rapids, MI
Charles Hanson	Des Moines, IA
C. Alan Worth	Cupertino, CA
Robert Rowe	Nashville, TN
Richard Thomas	Lewisburg, PA
Robert Niblick	Sioux Falls, SD
David Zerbian	Virginia Beach, VA
Robert McQuail	Falls Church, VA
Kurt Brown	Pringhar, IA
Francis Bartolomeo	Downey, CA
Margaret Gurtshaw	Bowie, MD
H. Wietfeldt	Grand Rapids, MI
Joyce Kirk	Louisville, KY
Stephen Lasker	Lincolnwood, IL
Suzanne Clement	Goshen, CT
Joseph Clary	San Francisco, CA
Stephen Dubina	Pittsburgh, PA
Francis Lipa	Baltimore, MD
James Inbody	Phoenix, AZ
Lawrence Wolff	Magalia, CA
Kent Knebel	Berthoud, CO
Michael Lipson	Reston, VA
Edward Chmielewski	Grand Rapids, MI
Dawn Petersen	Elk Grove Village, IL
David LaVergne	Boston, MA
Robert Read	Pittsburgh, PA
Greg Cohen	Fair Lawn, NJ
Richard Nazar	Somerset, NJ
Dean Hawk	Massillon, OH
Russell McClelland	El Paso, TX
Robert Emmett	Houston, TX

# Survey

I had a conversation with my philatelic clerk recently about off-sale coils. Wasn't such-and-such a beautiful coil? "Are you kidding?" she retorted. "That was the ugliest one in the whole series."

Let's judge them on best and worst design, color, and subject. Mail back the enclosed survey form. I wonder if there is any consensus on the good, the bad, and the ugly.

For the sake of simplicity, let's judge re-engraved and re-designed mates as one, and tagged and service-inscribed common designs as one.



# your permit

Richard Schulman forwarded this page from the Jan. 5 Postal Bulletin. The Post Office is not so much changing its policies as it is trying to get its employees to understand existing policy. The basic change here is deletion of the prohibition against permit holders re-selling precanceled stamps.

Unchanged are the rules for single-piece mailings using precanceled stamps pursuant to receiving a permit (Form 3620). Stand your ground--you can receive a permit at no charge from any post office in the country (does not have to be your home post office). However, mailings must be at the post office where the permit is issued, and handing the mail to a clerk for cancellation is still the rule.

(We might note that while the philatelic community struggles with nomenclature--"service-inscribed" or "precanceled"?--the post office still refers to these stamps as "precanceled.")

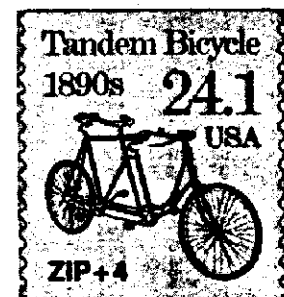
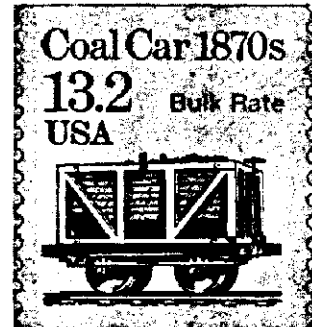
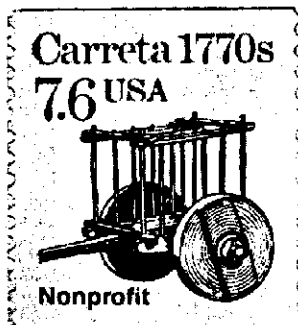
POSTAL BULLETIN

21706, 1-5-89, Page 29

DMM Notice

## PRECANCELED STAMPS

Effective with DOMESTIC MAIL MANUAL (DMM) Issue 30, 3-19-88, Part 143, Precanceled Stamps, is reformatted. Some new text appears in addition to other changes to enhance clarity. However, no substantive changes have been made. The precanceled stamps appear below.



Some of the more notable changes are:

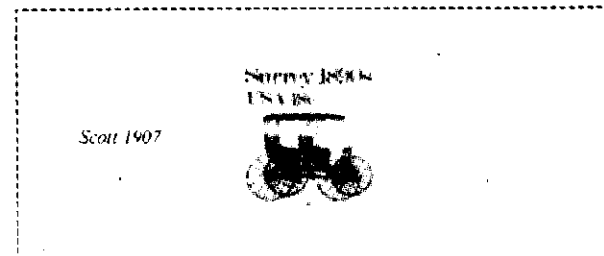
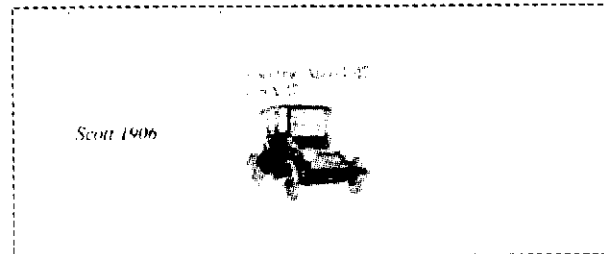
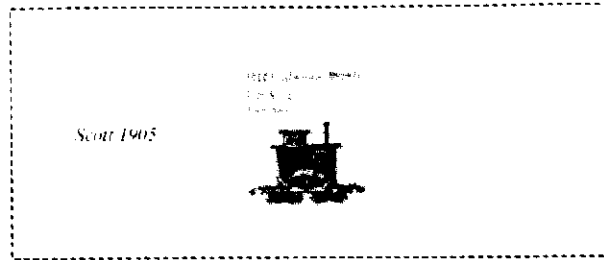
1. Precanceled stamps affixed on single piece rated mail will be canceled or postmarked at mail processing units in accordance with POSTAL OPERATIONS MANUAL 423.2, 423.31, and 423.32.
2. Uses of stamps precanceled with the rate designation have been clarified.
3. Text has been added in DMM 143.31, Nonpermit Holders, specifying (for clarity) that precanceled postage bought for philatelic purposes includes collecting and the exchange of collection items.
4. Since stamp collectors may also be permit holders, the prohibition in former DMM 143.22, constraining permit holders from selling unused precanceled stamps obtained under their permit, is unnecessary and impossible to administer. It has been deleted.

5 DMM 122.15c has been revised to reflect the return address requirements in former 143.421 (new 143.177).—Rates and Classification Dept., 1-5-89.

## 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.

-12-  
**Ads**

- Wanted:** Transportation Coil FDC by KMC. Any pre-1988 stamp wanted. Does not have to be with plate #. Thomas O'Hagan, 11452 Oak Leaf Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901.
- Wanted:** Plate number coils and Official Mail stamps on cover. Especially need 18¢, 20¢, 22¢, and 25¢ Flags, Surreys, Pumpers, Bread Wagons, fractionals, and precancels. I pay top prices. John Sweeney, 241 6th Ave., Apt. 6F, New York, NY 10014.
- Wanted:** Mint plate number strips of 3; F-VF at reasonable prices. 1891 #3; 1891 #6; 1904a #3; 1904a #4. Reid J. Woodruff, 417 Cameron Lane, Virginia Beach, VA 23452.
- 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 for quote.
- Wanted:** Trades for Honeybee with joint lines. Write with items available for my list of extras. Also trading other PS5's. Don Eastman, 24 Bemis St., Berlin, NH 03570.
- Trade:** 10.1¢ mint #1 artillery shell 3R, dot after 'A' 6R. Double-dotted 1 in oil 20L. Also minor varieties on 8.5¢ pc. Trade for common PNCs needed. Write for list. Dave Phelps, 1139 10th, Des Moines, IA 50314.
- Trades:** New member looking to establish trades--have mint strips of 5's, 3's, 2's and 1's and used for same. Send want/trade list or SASE for same. Frank Beck, Box 252, Little Chute, WI 54140.
- Trade:** Have extra Honeybee joint line #2, 9L. Will trade one-for-one for any other position. Tom Maeder, 1604 Bardale Ave., San Pedro, CA 90731.
- Book:** The postcard included with this newsletter is a paid advertisement.

### What you don't know can hurt you

Every issue of *The Plate Number* has news that helps you collect PNCs intelligently. Whether it's about a new "hash mark," the double impression or the joint lines on the Honeybee, a question about the authenticity of a costly first-day cover, or what you and other collectors have found in the way of varieties, *TPN* reports it all. No other journal comes even close. *TPN* is a must for PNC collectors.

Recent issues have revealed all sorts of information that subscribers could find nowhere else, not in *Linn's*, not in *Stamp Collector*, not even in *Coil Line*.

Six issues \$15 (\$13 for PNC<sup>3</sup> members), please add \$3.50 for first-class mail or if you live outside the United States and Canada.

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