

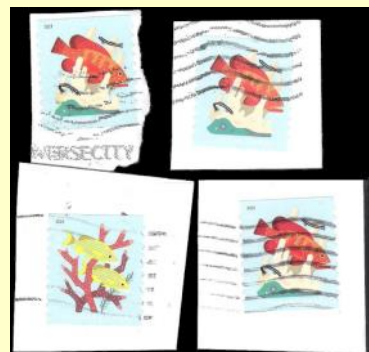
JOURNAL OF THE
PLATE NUMBER
COIL COLLECTORS
CLUB — PNC³

COIL LINE

More Color Omitted Coral Reef Error Coils Found

PNC³ member Jeff Fiszbein has reported that he has now found five non-plate-number copies of the <35¢> Forever postcard rate Coral Reef stamps with the aqua word “POSTCARD” missing.

He reported on June 7th



that all of his copies came from 25-pound mission mixtures and that he believes that there may have been a lot of rolls sold at post offices.

Although there have been no used PS1s found yet, there are currently two PS5s of these error strips listed on eBay.

Jeff asks our readers who have found any of the error stamps to please let him know.

In this issue... Beyond the Numbers: Flag Over City P.86 President's Message P.89 23¢ Washington Plate Number Comparison p.90 Stacked Coil Collecting Challenges P.91 G Stamps—The “S” Prefix and Aging p.95 Coil Line Classifieds P.94 PNC First Day Covers P.96

Scott 2915C #44444 – NOT!

By John Himes



Figure 1 - 32¢ Flag Over Porch coil, plate number 44444, dated 1995 with 12 x 12 die cut

Recall that in the March edition of **Coil Line**, the lead article was about a new discovery – a Scott 2915C Flag Over Porch self-adhesive PS3 coil strip with plate #44444 that had just been reported in a lead article in Linn's Stamp News. This strip had gotten a certificate from the American Philatelic Society expertizing service (APEX) stating that it was “genuine.” This was an amazing story, as this plate number had previously only been known on the water-activated gum Scott 2913 and the self-adhesive gum Scott 2915A. Since then, many of us have been poring over our stashes looking to see if we might also have a 2915C stamp with this plate number.

Fast forward to Thursday, April 29. That morning I received an e-mail from PNC³ member and Linn's Stamp News Editor Jay Bigalke letting me know that Linn's had prepared an updated article on this find. (This was followed up by the same article being published in Linn's May 17th issue, available on the internet on Saturday, May 1). Previously only a fairly-low-resolution scan was available to Linn's – the same slightly blurry scan that we featured in the March **Coil Line**. Linn's had been contacted by the finder of this strip in late April. They asked if they could see the actual stamps, and they were forwarded to them. Upon closer inspection, they were able to determine that this strip had red 1995 dates in the lower left corners of the stamps. (See **Figure 2** on page 87.) This is odd, because both 2915A and 2915C have red 1996 dates. Only the water-activated gum stamp, Scott 2913, has the red 1995 date. This sent up an immediate red flag for Linn's.

(continued on page 87)



Beyond the Numbers

Lynnette Wood

Flag Over City

Scott #3281 is just one of several 33c Flag Over City stamps issued in many formats in 1999. The Flag Over City stamps replaced the Flag Over Porch (FOP) stamps issued from 1995 to 1997 as a “workhorse” stamp for first class mail. And, like the FOPs, the Flag Over City stamps can be challenging to collect and can become a specialty in themselves. Versions of the stamps exhibit many of the features that I have written about in other columns: Perforated and die cut, square and round corners and shoulders, peaks and valleys, small dates and large dates, and back numbers; as well as a plethora of errors, freaks and oddities.

The illustrator hired by the USPS to help design this stamp was Hiro Kimura, a Japanese-born artist educated in Hawaii and California, who eventually settled in Brooklyn, New York. His clients were wide-ranging and have included many large American companies that are household names. If you’ve ever played an Atari game, you have probably seen the work of Hiro Kimura.

The September 28, 2005 issue of the Tampa Bay Times featured an article that mentions Kimura’s inspiration for the design for this stamp. According to the article, the depiction of “Old Glory fluttering in front of a stylized skyscraper” features what Kimura said he imagined the United States was like during the time he was growing up in Japan. He is reported as having told the USPS that “this is the picture that I formed in my mind when I thought about the United States.”

This is interesting because, once you get past the long list of production varieties, it is precisely a design variety apparent in one of the skyscrapers that provides yet another variation to look for. Two types are recognized: Type I has clearly distinguishable long vertical lines at left and right of the tallest building, and Type II which features almost solid lines, as shown in **Figure 1**. The Type II stamps always have a small date (Scott #3281c) whereas the Type I stamps can have either a large (Scott #3281) or small (Scott #3281d) date. Fortunately, the types are specific to the plate numbers, so sorting the stamps by plate numbers will have the effect of also sorting them by type. Still, it is an interesting observation and shows once again what you can find when you go beyond the numbers.



Figure 1 - Scott 3281 33c Flag Over City coil, Type I (left, plate number 111A) and Type II (right, plate number 555)

The Type II stamps always have a small date (Scott #3281c) whereas the Type I stamps can have either a large (Scott #3281) or small (Scott #3281d) date. Fortunately, the types are specific to the plate numbers, so sorting the stamps by plate numbers will have the effect of also sorting them by type. Still, it is an interesting observation and shows once again what you can find when you go beyond the numbers.

As always, please share your comments and thoughts with me at PNCsAreCool@gmail.com.

Scott 2915C #44444 – NOT! (continued)

(continued from page 85)



Figure 2 - 1995 date found on newly discovered 32¢ Flag Over Porch self-adhesive stamps

In questioning the finder, Linn's learned that the person with the stamp worked for a BEP subcontractor which was given a number of rolls of this stamp for the purpose of testing their new self-adhesive stamp creation process. Eventually, those test rolls were returned to the BEP, but one roll was later found on a shelf, and it's from that roll that this strip of 3 was removed for expertizing. Apparently, the rest of the roll, containing 97 more stamps, is still intact in the possession of the finder, and that would indicate that there are probably three more plate numbers (four in rare cases) still on the roll.

Linn's asked this person why they had torn a strip of 3 from the roll for expertizing. They said that the mount provided on the expertizing form would only hold 3 stamps, so they tore off 3 to place in the mount. Obviously, this person is not a PNC collector, and probably is not even a stamp collector, or they would have known to slice the stamps cleanly from the roll – not tear them off with jagged edges.

So, why is there a 1995 date on a stamp that should only exist with a 1996 date as a self-adhesive stamp? Linn's speculates, and is probably correct, that the plates used to produce Scott 2913 with plate #44444 were used to create this batch of test stamps. Also, it's obvious that the die cutting mats that were eventually used for Scott 2915C were also used, as the die cut pattern on these stamps matches the 12x12 peak pattern found only on 2915C.

Jay goes on to say that the Editors of the 2022 Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue will have to figure out where to list this find in the catalog. He says he doubts that it will show up in the postage stamp section of the catalog and cites the unissued 1998 nondenominated Yellow Hat postcard-rate stamp for precedence.

As you can imagine, when this news broke here in the PNC³ community, e-mails were flying left and right! Interesting insights came from Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, Michael Mules, Doug Iams, Jeff Fiszbein, former **Coil Line** Editor Ronald Blanks, and others. There were a number of opinions about how to classify this stamp.

Some argued that it is a test stamp. But test stamps have unique designs and are issued to post offices for stamp machine testing purposes. This stamp does not have a unique design, nor was it ever issued to post offices. So, most have ruled out the test stamp category.

One respondent feels that some of these might have gotten used on mail, and thus saw postal use. But there's no evidence that this is so, and another argues that that would not make it a legit stamp, any more than a counterfeit stamp. So, does it belong under counterfeits? Probably not. It was never intended to fool anyone, was never sold as a genuine stamp, and almost certainly never made its way onto mail.

Some argued that it's a legitimate postage stamp. They suggest that it should be checked for tagging, and if tagged, then it can be considered genuine. BUT ... a legitimate stamp has to be made available for postal use, and this never was intended for that purpose. So, most have rejected it as a legitimate stamp that would need its own catalog number.


Some, picking up on Jay's comment in the article, argued that it's like the "H" rate Hat postcard stamp that never was officially issued, but did get released in small quantities in the aftermarket. (continued on page 89)

Uh-Oh! The editor is running out of articles!

The Coil Line "Finished Copy" folder is running low and as I put this issue together, I find that I don't have enough to fill another month.

Articles don't have to be long and they don't have to be perfectly written. Just send me a paragraph or two about a favorite or interesting item and I'll take it from there. I can also provide photos or illustrations to enhance your article.

Deadlines and procedures are available upon request. Send any articles and/or questions to me via email at: scott.walker.6482@gmail.com



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Editor: Scott Walker

scott.walker.6482@gmail.com

Print Edition Mailings: Brian and Cory Snippen

snippenb@gmail.com

Digital Edition Emails: Frank Covey

ecoilline@comcast.net

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Classified ad rates are six cents a word per issue with a minimum of \$3.00 per ad. Members receive two 50-word ads per year per member at no charge. (There is a 10¢ per word cost for more than 50 words.)

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Mailed from Zip Code 87185 on or near February 20, 2021.

Scott 4157 plate # V222 (issued July 4, 2007, 14 years ago this month)

PNC³ Contacts

PNC³ Website: www.pnc3.org

Scott Walker, Webmaster: email webmaster@pnc3.org

(For Coil Line-related matters, please see column at left for appropriate contact.)

Elected Officers

Tom McFarland, **President**, PO Box 372, Jamison, PA 18929. email: philatomic@verizon.net phone: 609-273-4103

Robert Martin, **Vice President**, 850 Locust Grove Rd., York, PA 17402 email: mauistampcollector-dude@gmail.com phone 408-893-1040

Daniel Farrar, **Secretary**, 3386 Excalibur Circle NW, Canton, OH 44708. email: farrard2@gmail.com phone: 330-477-6913

Mel Borofsky, **Treasurer**, 101 W. Sterling Way, Leesburg, FL 34788-2781. email: melborofsky@comcast.net 352-483-1408

Robert Thompson, **Past President**, 12431 Golden Thistle, Houston, TX 77058. email: rthompson@pncvarieties.com phone: 713-397-1772

John Himes, **At Large**, PO Box 453, Cypress, CA 90630-0453. email: johnwhimes@yahoo.com phone: 714-826-8552

Lynette Wood, **At Large**, PO Box 183, Deer Harbor, WA 98243. email: PNCsAreCool@gmail.com

PNC³ Catalog Committee: Jill Ambrose, Frank Covey, Andy Jakes, Tom McFarland, Gene Trinks, Peter Tukker, Frank O'Brien.

PNC³ Auctioneer: Joe Sedivy

Coil Line Production

Editor: Scott Walker

Digital Edition Producer: Scott Walker

Senior Consultant: Gene Trinks

Technical Consultant: Alan Thomson

Contributing Writers: John Himes, Robert E. Thompson, Bob Rabinowitz, Rob Washburn, Frank Covey, Doug Iams, Gene Trinks, Lynnette Wood, John Greenwood, Al Haake, Ron Blanks, Dan Forgues

Proofreaders: John Himes, Michael Mules

Printing: State Wide Printing, Albuquerque, NM

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The March issue of **Coil Line** reported a find of plate number 44444 on the Flag Over Porch self-adhesive coil with 12 x 12 die cutting, Scott number 2915C. Since then, new information has come to light that speculates as to how the stamp came to be and that affects how the find will be classified. John Himes writes about this on page 85.

The United States Postal Service has requested an increase in several rates with a desired effective date of August 29. The request includes increases in both the first ounce First Class rate, from 55¢ to 58¢, and the Post Card, from 36¢ to 40¢. The Additional Ounce rate would remain at 20¢. The last increase in the First Class rate was in January 2019, which is also the last time a new First Class Forever coil stamp was issued. New Forever designs have frequently been issued along with rate changes even though existing stocks will continue to cover the new rate. Could the August rate increase signal the issuance of a new Forever coil stamp? We'll have to wait and see. The Post Card rate was already raised in January of this year and the Barns Forever stamps were issued at that time. It seems less likely that a second design would be issued for that rate in the same year.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

as of June 1, 2021

New Members (+2)

Stanley Wardlow (2434)
2474 305th St.
Montrose, IA 52639

Michael R. Moss (2435)

P.O. Box 3072
Alpharetta, GA 30023

Reinstated

Paul Tripp (2314)

Membership at Beginning of Month.....	405
New Members.....	+ 2
Reinstated.....	+1
Membership at End of Month.....	408

As I write this, plans for the Great American Stamp Show are proceeding. The American Philatelic Society has met all the desired participation benchmarks and the show will go on. We have requested our usual booth and meeting space at the show but haven't yet received all of the details. I expect to be able to provide that information next month. Hope to see you there.

Scott 2915C #44444 – NOT! (continued)

(continued from page 87) It appears that those were printed and intended for postal use, but just never distributed because there were already sufficient stamps at that rate in the post offices, and it wasn't needed. That stamp does not have a Scott catalog number, but it does have a footnote under Scott 3269 explaining that some are in the marketplace. This new find of the #44444 strip was obviously never intended for postal use, unlike the "H" postcard stamp.

Another opinion was that this is a proof. But proofs generally are new designs. This is an existing design. So, most collectors won't feel that it belongs in that category.

A specimen? No. Those are actual stamps printed and then, generally, overprinted for postal authorities in other countries. This is not that.

I think a conservative opinion is that this should be footnoted under 2915C (and pointed to from 2913) as a known pre-production printing on self-adhesive paper, that it was never issued, that it has a 1995 date similar to 2913, that it has die cuts similar the 2915C, and that it has no postal validity. The Editors of the Scott Catalogue certainly have some thinking to do in the next month or so before they finalize the copy for the 2022 catalog.

If any of you do find one of these used in a mixture (which I think is doubtful at this point in time), then that might open up a new can of worms. Please be sure to report any such finds to me so I can share them with Linn's and the PNC³ community.

23¢ George Washington Plate Number Comparison

By Scott Walker

While researching Scott 3617, the 23¢ George Washington coil stamp, I noticed some differences in the plate numbers. To further investigate what I found, I assembled all of the mint strips in my collection onto several stock pages and scanned them at the same time at 1200 dpi to determine what I was seeing under 10x magnification. What I found was that there is some notable variance with some plate numbers. Plate numbers V11, V13, V21, V22, V24, and V35 all appear to be quite similar. Not so with plates V36, V45, and V46. On plates V36 and V46, the V and number 6 are about 20% larger than the V used on previous stamps. This is most noticeable on plate number V36. Also, the plates used for plate number V45 features the smaller V and number 5, but with a larger number 4. This can be explained by the fact that the plates used for each color (green and gray) seem to be consistent across the numbers, but I found it interesting that such variance occurs between the plate numbers and wanted to share this with other PNC collectors.



Figure 1 - Scott 3617 23¢ George Washington with Large V & 6 and small 3

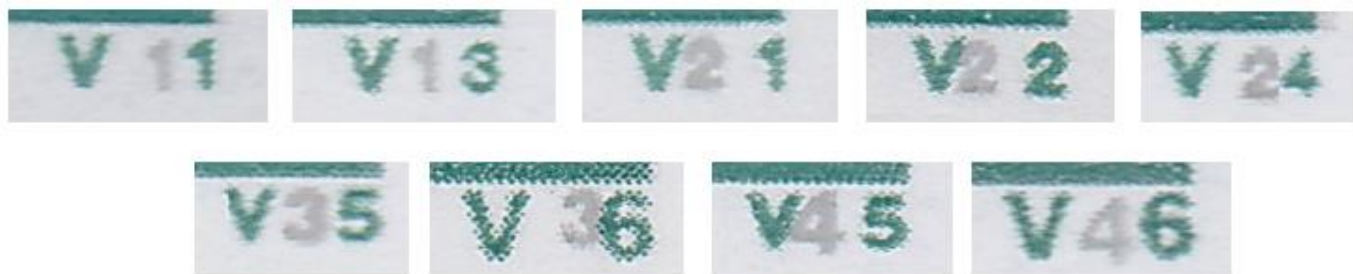


Figure 2 - Scott 3617 23¢ George Washington plate number comparison

Stacked Coil Collecting Challenges

By Frank Covey

Banknote Corporation of America (BCA) has created recent coil issues in stacks with tiny pieces of paper called microbridges holding the stack together. Several rolls in the stack can be collected without separating them from one another. Stacked coils show off the microbridges best.



To the left you can see how nice the microbridges look when they have not been separated from the coil above or below.

Unseparated stack of two →



In this article I will illustrate the Barns coil (2021-1) which comes in stacks with microbridges in between the rolls. The Barns issue pays the post card rate forever.



The first challenge is to get the coil unwound without breaking the microbridges. I put my thumb on the bottom of the roll and my forefinger on the inside top of the roll and slowly and carefully spool the coil tighter. This breaks the coil loose from the wrappers that bind the coil together. Next, I take a small pair of scissors to cut the wrappers as close to the front of the coils as I can. It is difficult to keep the microbridges intact at the front of the rolls, but sometimes it is possible. Broken microbridges at the front of the rolls do not ruin your effort.



A small pair of scissors works best for cutting the wrapper without breaking the microbridges at the front of the roll.

(continued on page 92)

Stacked Coil Collecting Challenges (continued)

(continued from page 91)

As soon as both wrappers have been cut, put tape across the stack to prevent any further separation of the microbridges. Do this as close to the front of the rolls as you can even if there has been some separation. Then put another piece of tape across the stack on the first pair without broken microbridges. I use Scotch Magic tape that is nearly invisible.

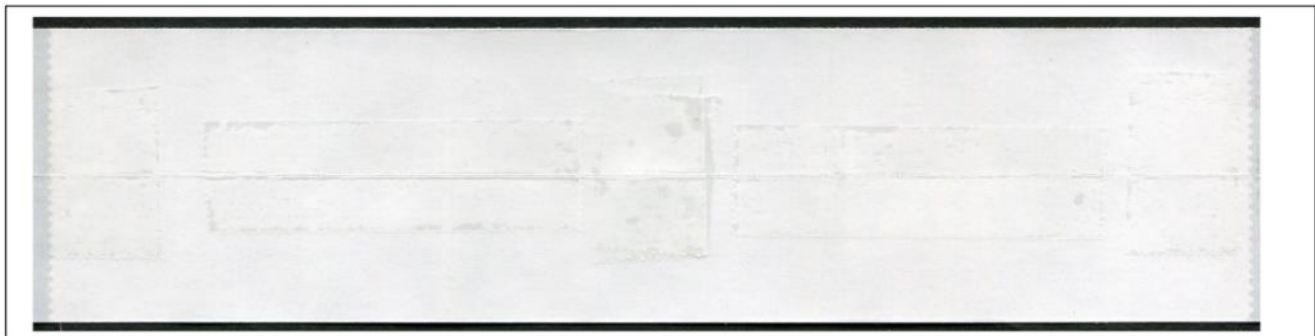


To the left is a taped pair. Tape is being removed from the pair with no residue left. I do not know if one would have the same result if the tape had been on the back of the stamps for years. But the stacks in my collections will never be separated while I own them.

Barn coils are best saved in strips of nine with the B1111 plate number on the summer barn in the middle of the strip and a summer barn without a plate number at each end. The next challenge is to carefully unroll the stack and find the first plate number putting a strip of tape across the stack on the plate numbered stamp and then tape four stamps left and right of the plate numbered stamp. I hold the coil down with something handy like a saltshaker. I do my work on the marble countertop in the kitchen. Then I put more tape between the tape already on the rolls to make sure that almost all the stamps have tape protecting the microbridges.



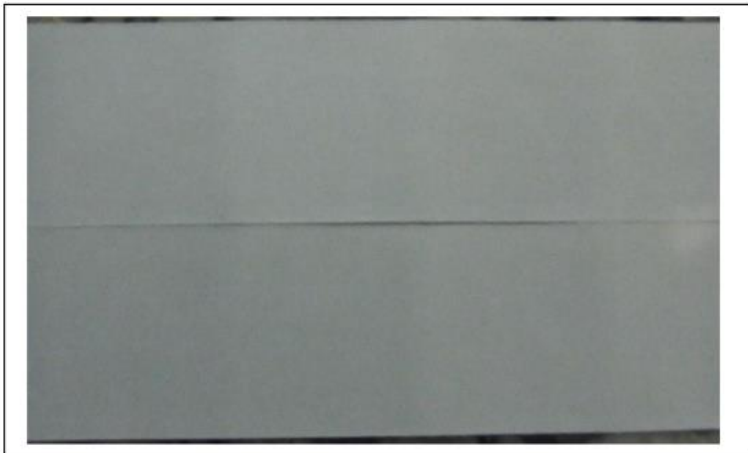
Front and back of Barns coils stack of two



(continued on page 93)

Stacked Coil Collecting Challenges (continued)

(continued from page 92)



It is not unusual to find that some of the stack has separated as you unroll the coils making the collecting of coil stacks more challenging.

The back of the stack to the left shows some separation in the middle but is tight at the ends.

The Barns coils are printed in a web many rows high. The top and bottom of the web have a smooth cut. Another collecting challenge is to find a stack of two with either a smooth top or a smooth bottom. All the rows between the top and bottom have microbridges both on the top and on the bottom. A stack with microbridges top, bottom and middle is yet another way to collect the Barns stacks. The illustrated stacked PS9 coils above have a smooth bottom.



The coil ends of the stack like the beginnings are difficult to keep together, so I consider myself fortunate to be able to save a roll end intact. As an added bonus, this roll end has a B1111 plate number.



(continued on page 94)

Coil Line Classifieds

PNC USED singles, used strips, MNH PS5s, purple machine cancels. Great prices! Guaranteed quality! No hassles! Visit <http://www.angelfire.com/ca5/HimesPNCs> or send LSASE for lists to John Himes, PO Box 453, Cypress, CA 90630-0453. Please specify what you collect. Or email johnwhimes@yahoo.com 12/21

New address & updated lists: Booklets/Booklet Panes by plate # & varieties. Choose 1) Conventional 2) Make-shift 3) Self-adhesive. Doug Iams, c/o DCA, 4115 Concord Pike, Wilmington DE 19803, dougiams@comcast.net

USED PNCs on and off cover. Our new eight-page list of Used PNCs is yours free. We also have a free new 33-page list of MNH PNCs, Booklets, Booklet Panes, many by plate number and position. Specify which list is wanted. Vic Collinino, PO Box 300-P, Stratham, NH 03885-0300 or email your name and address to vimco@comcast.net 4/22

Wanted-Color Omitted Errors: 2523Ae 29c Mt Rushmore Medium Brown; 2915Ai 32c FOP Tan; 3265c (33c) "H" Black & 3265f (33c) "H" Blue, both with die cut; 4262b 27c Tropical Fruit Kiwi Light Green; 5172a (5c) USA & Star Red. Scans and/or purchase wanted. Robert Thompson rthomp5711@gmail.com. 713-397-1772.

THE FIELD GUIDE TO COLLECTING PNC COMMERCIAL COVERS by Rob Washburn **AVAILABLE APRIL 24, 2021** on the 40th Anniversary of the first PNC. Contains earliest usage dates and scarcity ratings for every plate number, and more. Illustrated. Spiral bound. 104 pages of easy to read listings (for us older collectors). \$20 postpaid. Rob Washburn, PO Box 840, Skowhegan, ME

Stacked Coil Collecting Challenges (continued)

(continued from page 93)

The stack between plate numbers is also collectible making better use of the coils. On the bottom of page 93 is a roll end strip of nine with microbridges top, bottom and middle with the summer barns left, right and middle. This is the same layout as a plate numbered strip. The challenge here is to collect strips of nine without plate numbers with a different barn at the ends of the strip. There is a different barn for each season in the Barns issue.



Even a stack that breaks apart can create some nice collectibles. Above a strip of 5 with a smooth bottom and spring barns at the ends.

Auctioneer Joe Sedivy is taking auction lots for the PNC3 Fall Auction #65 until August 21. The auction consignment sheet can be found on this month's wrapper and on the PNC3 website. Consignments will only be accepted from members in good standing.

G Stamps—The “S” Prefix Stamps and Aging

By John Himes

In recent years, when buying collections of PNCs, I’ve noticed a trend with the red G coils that have the “S” plate number prefix – Scott 2891 (perforated) and 2892 (rouletted). When comparing these strips with the black G strips (Scott 2889) and the blue G strips (Scott 2890), more often than not I’m seeing a comparative brownish toning of the stamp paper on the “S” prefix stamps. I’ve scanned a Scott 2891 on top of a Scott 2890, and hopefully you can see the difference in the paper on the two types. (See **Figure 1.**) Although the 2891 stamp paper appears quite a bit browner in person, it’s probably not going to show up well in the scan. But if you look closely, you can see some definite browning along the top and bottom of the stamp.

When these stamps were new, I recall that they all were on bright white-appearing paper. But now many of the 2891 and 2892 stamps seem to have a brownish toning in the paper. I think we can discount improper storage as the culprit, as I’ve seen these all come out of the same album or stock book using the same type of storage, yet the “S” prefix plate numbers are starting to show this “toning” while the others are not. I speculate that the gum on the “S” stamps may be somewhat acidic, causing this issue. However, it could be a factor of something in the paper stock itself.

I would invite our members to check their own examples of the G stamps to see if yours are exhibiting this same issue. Perhaps we can unravel the mystery of what’s causing this and either slow the progression of the toning, or even reverse it if we can find the cause.

I would love to hear from you if you have information to share on this topic. You can find my contact information on the Officer’s page of this issue.



**Figure 1 - Scott 2891 32¢
G Old Glory coil (top)
and Scott 2890 (bottom)
showing brownish
toning on top stamp**

In December, 2020, I wrote about the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon (Scott 1903) first day of issue with plate number 4 on a USPS Souvenir Page.

I recently acquired another souvenir page, this one with plate number 3. Both plate numbers 3 and 4 are extremely rare and have a catalogue value of \$2,000 each according to Scott/Mellone's 2009 U.S. First Day Cover Catalogue & Checklist.

I found the souvenir page with plate number 3 in position 3 (Figure 1) in an eBay auction of 42 different USPS Souvenir Pages issued in 1980 and 1981. While searching the images of the listing for PNCs issued in 1981, I noticed a small mark of color below the Mail Wagon in the stamp on the right end of the strip and suspected that it may be a PNC.

Using information from Ken Lawrence's 1990 Plate Number Coil Handbook, I knew that only plate numbers 3 and 4 are found on USPS Souvenir Pages and spent \$31.50 (plus \$4.00 shipping) to buy the pages. When they arrived a week later, my hunch was confirmed and I was able to add the page to my PNC FDC collection. Sometimes it pays to study the literature on PNCs.



Figure 1 - Scott 1903 9.3¢ Mail Wagon USPS Souvenir Page with plate number 3