

# The Plate Number

## Postal Service Policy on Re-Engraved Stamps Recalls Strange Doings in Early Tagging Era

By Steve Esrati\*\*

On Aug. 1, 1963, the first tagged stamp (Scott C64a) was issued in Dayton, Ohio.

It was the first of more than 50 stamps that had previously been issued without tagging.

Dayton was chosen because it was headquarters of the National Cash Register Co., one of the prime contractors in experiments on postal automation that depended on the application of phosphors to the stamps.

Because of this, early tagged stamps were put into public use only in a small area around Dayton.

An award-winning account of what then happened was written by Dr. Leon J. Cheris for *First Days*. The following segments appeared in May/June 1980:

"The postal engineers on the project wanted no interference with their work. They felt that if a special stamp was to be issued, it would be necessary to handle hundreds of thousands of First Day Covers, thereby negating the normal testing condition. The Post Office Department philatelic staff maintained that the event was important to U.S. postal history and wanted a First Day observance to record it as a permanent record of the test.

"This dispute fell into the jurisdiction of James F. Kelleher, then Special Assistant in Charge of Philately for then-Postmaster General Edward Day. It was his decision to institute, FOR THE FIRST TAGGED STAMP ONLY, a new treatment (emphasis by Dr. Cheris).

"A special cancellation would be used, but since the 8¢ air mail stamp had already been issued plain, and the phosphor coating was essentially invisible, it was the same stamp to him. The cancellation would read, 'FIRST DAY OF USE -- LUMINESCENT TAGGING.' Covers would be serviced, but not with the machine used for the testing experiment. The Washington (D.C.) First Day Cover crew would process the covers as they would for any First Day and with their own special dies and handstamps.

"Unpublicized at the time was the additional part of Kelleher's decision that was to affect the First Day Cover collecting fraternity. After the 8¢ air mail stamp was issued in tagged form, there was to be no further normal 'First Day of Use' or ['First Day of] Issue' recognition for any forthcoming variety of stamp or postal stationery that had been issued in plain form without tagging."

There is something vaguely familiar

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## Postal Service Policy on Re-Engraved Stamps Recalls Strange Doings in Early Tagging Era

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the DAV on Aug. 13. It was not known when the first stamps would be issued, but it was my impression that this would happen in Cincinnati. So I planned to go to Cincinnati on Monday, Aug. 18, to obtain stamps and to get some canceled on the first day.

Before undertaking the six-hour drive, I called accountable paper in Cincinnati and was told the stamps would not be put on sale there to the public because they had all been earmarked "for one customer," the DAV. I canceled the trip.

My Aug. 15 story was not printed in *Linn's* because the publication was leaning over backward not to break the embargo to which it had agreed. Still, the story would have appeared in print too late to tip off any FDC collectors.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Yeager found that the stamps had been put on sale Aug. 15. He prepared six covers and sent four to *Linn's* for illustration.

Neither *Linn's* nor Yeager knew at the time that the six would be first day covers since earlier use could have taken place in Cincinnati if the stamps I had reported as having been shipped on Aug. 13 had been put into use by the DAV.

Yeager had another streak of good luck on Sept. 30, when he prepared covers for *Linn's* on the first day of the reissued 14¢ Iceboat.

He had done so also on Aug. 29 for the re-engraved, precanceled 8.3¢ Ambulance.

But FDC collectors were justly unhappy. Here were significant new stamps that were being issued under the old Kelleher Rule.

Yeager was harassed by collectors, as was the Stamps Division of USPS.

On the front page of the Oct. 20 issue of *Linn's*, there was a story saying that USPS would try in future to provide advance notice before releasing more re-engraved stamps.

Then came an announcement from Washington that the 1¢ Omnibus would be re-issued in a B Press

printing. The Postal Service said specifically, "No first day cancellation will be offered." It gave no first day date, either, although *Linn's* and I both called USPS to learn that the stamp would be issued Nov. 26.

The new stamps this time could be easily distinguished from the old because of a change in the placement of the face value.

Instead of "USA 1c," these stamps would say "1 USA," with the "1" twice as tall as "USA."

Joe Brockert of the Stamps Division explained that USPS had been amazed at the interest collectors had shown in the differences between the Cottrell and the B Press stamps. He said there was some annoyance because the differences were difficult to distinguish. "We decided," he said, "to make it easier in line with our new guidelines on numerals of value."

But he told both *Linn's* and me that there would be no first day covers.

Then came two surprises. First, Brockert reversed himself and announced that FDCs would be made available for the 1¢ stamp with the big 1. At the same time, he denied that there would be any backdating to make FDCs of the re-engraved 4¢ Stagecoach.

Then came a find by Thomas Beschorner of New Orleans, an Artcraft FDC of the new Stagecoach (illustrated on the back page of this issue).

Leo August of Artcraft said his agent had made 500-600 covers, all canceled with a handstamp. There was no text saying "First Day of Issue" in the cachet.

August said Artcraft had sold all the covers at \$2 each (\$10 for covers with plate numbers).

Meanwhile, despite the Kelleher rule, stamp collectors are distinguishing between the Cottrell and the B Press stamps, more so than between tagged and untagged stamps of the 1960s. The Scott catalog will give the 4¢ DAV stamp its own number (2228). Our babies won't be Scott stepchildren.

Except as first day covers.

*Plate Number Coils are still so new that things have not yet settled down into cosy convention. Two veterans of PNC collecting have laid down some challenges to the way we do things. What this means is that we may have to change. Your views are earnestly solicited on both issues.*

### Naming Se-Tenants

By Ken Lawrence\*\*

Jiri Chytil has pointed out an inconsistency in our catalog listings. He is the collector who pioneered the method of saving long coil strips. In the case of the Cottrell issues, these strips show the plate pairings. In the case of the overprinted editions (precancels), the strips show the gap positions, regardless of where they fall on the web.

Others who collect long strips often call them "Chytil strips."

Chytil uses the same nomenclature as the rest of us, but in a way that covers the entire universe of PNCs consistently. Most of us, on the other hand, began with designations that apply to short strips of three, four, or five, and later extrapolated those terms to longer formats. That's where we run into inconsistencies.

The specific problem arose with the mixed-style precancel overprints on the 17¢ Electric Auto coils we call Styles AB or BA.

For Chytil, the first letter describes whichever precancel style is on the stamp with the plate number. The rest of us have tended to label the strip by reading from left to right on a short strip.

The two systems agree most of the time, but in at least one instance, they do not.

The first se-tenant precancel styles were reported on Plates 5 and 6. In one case the stamps had a Line Gap, in the other the gap was 1L. We have called both of these Style BA, since the time of Dennis Chamberlain's\*\* initial offering in November 1984. (He had announced their existence and labeled them in July.) That's how they are listed in *The Catalog of Plate Number Coils*.

On the Line Gap examples, the Style B overprint is on the plate  
(Continued on Page 5)

### Naming the Stamps

By Steve Esrati\*\*

Eugene Y. Liu thinks it is wrong to apply the nomenclature used to describe perforations as a way to describe stamps.

What he is talking about is this:

If the stamp right of the joint line on a strip from the Cottrell Press is a 1R, what is the stamp just to the left of the joint line called?

Some of us have simply called them 1L, meaning the stamp left of the joint line.

This would work fine as long as all strips come off the Cottrell. But what if they don't, as in the case of the 11¢ Caboose, the first stamp without a joint line?

We took the easy way out. We pretended that there SHOULD HAVE BEEN a joint line to the right of the plate number and then counted from there.

Liu thinks that's absurd. Further, he says it is fine to use these designations to point toward a vertical row of perforations, but not to count stamps.

"We collect plate numbers," Liu said, "and we should use the plate number as our basis, not the obsolete joint line."

I confess that I was easily persuaded by Liu. The catalog has now engaged an artist to draw all the constant plate varieties. In my instructions to him (Wayne Youngblood\*\*, a Nebraska collector), I suggested that we term the stamp with the plate number as "NS" for "numbered stamp" and that we count other stamps from there.

This, of course, would mean that the stamp we now call 2L would suddenly change its name to 1L. But since we are still young and are not married to the past like a certain catalog printed in Sidney, Ohio, we can change.

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**Naming Se-Tenants**

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 number stamp. In that instance, our system agrees with Chytil's.

But on the Gap 1L strip, Style A falls on the stamp with the number, so Chytil calls it Style AB.

Several other se-tenant overprints have since been found, on Plates 3 and 4 and on Plates 5 and 7, but in every case the gap is sufficiently far from the plate number that a strip of nine or ten stamps is required to show the se-tenant variety. Short strips from these rolls are simply Style A or Style B. As collectors got interested in these, they adopted Chytil's terms spontaneously, and that is how they are listed in the catalog.

The result is that Style BA Gap 1L is now a glaring inconsistency. I suggest we change our designation now, and incorporate Chytil's rule into our next catalog.

```
#####
# 22¢ FLAG PLATE 6, PS/5 #
# SUPERB ... $24 #
# XF ..... $20 #
# VF ..... $16 #
# FINE ..... $12 #
# #
# Stephen G. Esrati #
# P. O. Box 20130 #
# Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130 #
#####
+++++
+ PNC COLLECTORS +
+ +
+ I edit the TPN column on +
+ varieties on coil plate number +
+ material. Items of possible +
+ interest (but not now limited +
+ to) include: constant plate +
+ and mat varieties, i.e. plate +
+ cracks, missing periods. Also, +
+ miscuts resulting in at least +
+ full numbers at top or +
+ numberless line pairs, plate +
+ flaws, hashmarks, guidelines, +
+ ink blobs, etc. +
+ Any information, reports, +
+ examples in these areas would +
+ be appreciated. +
+ +
+ A.S. CIBULSKAS +
+ 28 Westwood Rd. +
+ Stamford, CT 06902 +
+++++
```

**Naming the Stamps**

(from previous page)

Note that this refers to stamps, not the gaps in the precancel lines. Those probably should stay as they are.

The floor is open to you and the debate can begin.

Alan Malakoff\*\* has already begun the debate on Ken Lawrence's suggestion about renaming precancels.

"Leave the ones with the two lines alone," said Malakoff, "but call the new ones service indicators, like airmail inscriptions."

His point is that today's stamp may say "Non-profit, Carrier Rt." but tomorrow it may be given a different designation.

Malakoff agrees with Lawrence that the new stamps should not be called precancels.

**CATALOG CORRECTION**

Sharp-eyed Paul Hudson of Virginia has found a mistake in the catalog that escaped everyone else.

The order of colors given on Page 49 for the Washington Monument is all wrong.

It should be red, blue, yellow, black tone, black type.

The error originated with bad data from USPS, which resulted in the guessing noted in a footnote.

Which brings to mind the point made previously about the difficulty in seeing the yellow plate number on the stamps.

The study group's Thom Wheeler placed some blue cellophane across a magnifying glass to kill two birds with one stone: enlarge the numbers and make the yellow number clearly visible. As the Alka-Seltzer ads used to say: "Try it, you'll like it."

**TIME TO RENEW?**

If your mailing label says "1-87" after your name, you must renew now.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

**Back Issues of TPN**

Back issues are available from TPN, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120. To cover copying and mailing, please enclose \$1 for each issue desired.

THE PLATE NUMBER 6

What You Always Wanted to Ask About PNCs but Didn't Dare Ask

**QUESTION**

Peter Banchieri of San Luis Obispo, Calif., asks:

I am sending a photocopy of the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon, Plate 4, on commemorative panel. This number is not listed in my PNC catalog. I would like to know if these qualify as legitimate FDCs and also if this one is still the only known first day cancel.

**ANSWER**

By Glenn A. Estus\*\*:

The FDC listings in the PNC catalog are based on my research over the last few years.

Your discovery is very interesting since this plate was sent to press more than a month after the stamp was issued.

This is not unusual since I would assume that these commemorative panels are made whenever they are needed. I would also assume

that some panels exist with Plate Number 3.

I am not sure that this classifies as a first day cover since it is not a cover. However, it is, so far, the only one to be found.

Most FDC collectors do not collect panels and so would not have access to them. Also, most people only have one copy of a panel in their collections since one must buy a subscription a year at a time.


**QUESTION**

From A. S. Cibulskas\*\* of Stamford, Conn.:

I have a copy of the 8.3¢ pre-cancelled with two plate numbers 1, both complete and entire and distinctly away from the edges of the stamp.

I have seen numerous copies of normal 1 at the bottom and a partial low 1 from the next roll on

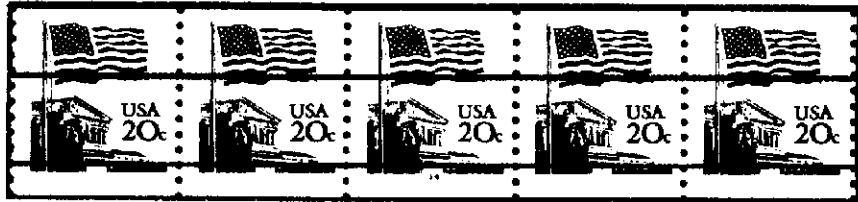
**22¢ #6!!**  
PLATE



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Pl.# Strip/3.....	\$4.50	\$7.00
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What You Always Wanted to Ask About PNCs but Didn't Dare Ask

(from previous page)

top; but this is the first time that I have seen a copy with both numbers entirely intact and clear of the edges.

Is this fairly uncommon or am I just naive?

ANSWER

By Steve Esrati\*\*:

It is very, very uncommon, Al. I have seen one such stamp out of 100 or more with parts of two numbers.

There are several points about the double number variety of the 8.3¢ that should be known.

1. Stamps showing the low number alone are hardly ever seen because they are unrecognized by most people.

The test for these is really quite simple.

Lay a straight edge vertically on the stamp so that it intersects the 1. Now look at where the straight edge crosses "Ambulance" and "USA." If it hits the "A" of "USA" the stamp is normal; if it hits the "c" of "Ambulance," the 1 is low.

2. This gives us a second test, used when both numbers are seen on the stamp. If we lay the straight edge down so it hits both numbers, the straight edge will not be perpendicular if the top number was printed low. If the straight edge stays perpendicular, the stamp is a miscut and the top number is not from the low row.

3. The degree of rarity on the stamps showing a double number is only in part based on the joint line. The key consideration is how much of the top number shows.

QUESTION

By Steve Esrati:

Why did Linn's change the nomenclature from "joint line" to "join line"?

ANSWER

By William A. Hatton of Linn's: Charlie Yeager insists that we call it a join line.

ANSWER

By Charles Yeager, Washington

correspondent of Linn's:

There's no joint at the point where the two plates came together on the Cottrell press after they were bent to fit around the cylinder. The printers at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing correctly call it a seam.

ANSWER

Michael Laurence, publisher of Linn's:

We will continue to call it a joint line.

QUESTION

By Dr. John Greenwood\*\*:

What is this on the 4¢? [Dr. Greenwood sent in a strip of three of the 4¢ from the Cottrell press. Part of the word "Stagecoach" is missing. If a line were drawn through the ends of the letters that appear, the missing portion would look like a rectangle.] I have two of these on strips from Plate 6.

ANSWER

By Steve Esrati\*\*:

The shape of the missing text gives us a clue that most newspaper readers should recognize at once since it often happens in pasteup photocomposition when an impurity is left on the page of type. The trouble is that we are not here dealing with pasteup but with intaglio engraving. So the impurity must be on the plate itself. It could easily be a piece of Scotch brand tape or a paper label. It would, of course, repeat itself.

\*\*\*\*\*

\* REDUCED!!! \*
\* \* \*
\* 20¢ Flag, Plate 11 \*
\* I bought these high. I \*
\* gotta sell low. \*
\* \* \*
\* SUPERB ... \$34.37 \*
\* XF ... \$30.25 \*
\* VF ... \$27.50 \*
\* SORRY, strips of 3 cost \*
\* same as PS/5. \*
\* \* \*
\* Stephen G. Esrati \*
\* P.O. Box 20130 \*
\* Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130 \*
\*\*\*\*\*

## Watch Out! Prices Can Be and Are Being Rigged

By Steve Esrati\*\*

Call it the bailout symptom, or call it panic, but whatever you call it, it's something to reckon with.

Here's how it works.

For several months, dealers cannot find a particular PNC strip. For purposes of this article, let's call it El Scarco.

Buying prices start to go up. No offers.

Buying prices keep climbing. Still no offers.

Suddenly, from some remote corner of Lower Slobbovia (for you younger people, that's a place where Li'l Abner, the hero of the funnies when I was young, used to go with great dread) four badly centered strips of El Scarco are offered.

The offer comes with a photocopy of the bad strips. The price, however, is not bad, only \$175 each or \$600 for the lot.

With it comes an offer of a "sealed box" of 500 rolls of another PNC rarity in coils of 100 and a "sealed roll" of 3,000 of another hard-to-find item.

The roll is a "bargain" at \$1,000; the box is \$1,250, a high-roller's gamble for someone who does not know which plate numbers the box contains.

A few dealers nibble at the items offered by the Slob (native of Slobbovia).

As they do, they are offered "the only two known sealed rolls" of that \$1,000 roll. Trouble is that two dealers shell out for four such rolls and the Slob is still offering other rolls.

But what of El Scarco? The badly centered ones apparently are just a come-on. Soon, the buyer is told that a few superb specimens have been found in nearby Upper Slobbovia.

The Slob, however, is a known quantity. He has previously sold scarce items (in poor condition) to dealers at wholesale and then advertised those very same strips at a lower price for retail sale. As it happened, the Slob's strips,

sold under various names from various addresses, turned out to be better in quality than the wholesaled strips. What the Slob had done was to unload his worst material.

This sort of thing causes dealers to start calling each other to try to figure out what is going on.

It doesn't take long for word to get around that the "only two rolls" are part of a larger hoard and that the sealed box has long since been pried open to disclose that the four shabby copies in the picture came out of that or a similar box.

In other words, the market is flooded and the Slob is trying to unload while the getting is good.

And now an odd thing happens. Dealers suddenly find that they are flooded with offers from all over the country for all of the Slob's items, including lots and lots of Los Scarcitos. That's the bail-out.

These hard-to-find items, it turns out, have been stashed away waiting for a market top. When news gets out that Slob has some, everybody tries to cash in. It's a form of programmed trading similar to Wall Street's. Most of the hoarders cash in before the public is aware of the selloff. A few wait too long and can't get their investment back.

This is not idle chatter. It has happened within the last few months with:

**5.9¢ Plates 5-6** (which turned up on Long Island, mostly in bad centering; but superb copies are hoarded).

**17¢ Plate 7** (which USPS put on sale).

**18¢ Flag Plate 7** (found by the Slob and other dealers) and now selling for prices ranging from \$70 to \$100, down from **buying** offers at \$150 and up.

**20¢ Flag Plate 11** (found on sale at a Connecticut post office and also offered by the Slob).

**20¢ Pumper, 12-14** (found in a Maryland post office).

**22¢ Flag Plate 6** (found on



**Watch Out! Prices Can Be and Are Being Rigged**

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sale in Houston).

All of which leads to an ever-shorter list of the real Scarcitos: 10.9¢ 3-4; 20¢ Pumper 2; 18¢ Flag 6.

On a much lower order of scarcity are the 20¢ Official and 20¢ Flag 4. Finally, there are Plates 3 and 5 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh and Plates 5 and 6 of the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon. Both of these are tagged (unprecanceled) and are scarce only in XF and Superb; other copies are plentiful.

Still under clouds of suspicion are 20¢ Pumper 12-14 (because we don't know whether the Slob or his friends managed to hoard them) and 18¢ Surrey 17-18 (which are getting scarce again even though they were on sale at face at the Philatelic Sales Unit).

Finally, because we simply have no data, we are not sure whether the 8.3¢ 3-4 are common or scarce.

\* \* \*

Some results from the Oct. 18 auction of Sam Houston Philatelics: 18¢ Flag, Plate 7, PS/5, XF, est. \$250-300 -- \$185.

18¢ Flag, Plate 5, imperf., PS/7, XF, est. \$125-150 -- \$120.

A strip of three of 20¢ Flag from Plate 11 did not sell.

A dealer's lot of 100 20¢ Fire Pumper PS/5 from Plates 9 and 10, all VF or better, was estimated at \$450-500 and sold for \$135. A second such lot brought in \$130. Picture it, each strip cost the buyer about \$1.30. They retail around \$5. (These were recently on sale at the Philatelic Sales Division.)

**Lighthouse Albums to Reflect Collecting Customs**

By Wolfgang Schoen\*\*

(Adapted from an article written for the USA/Canada Study Group of the German Philatelic Federation. Schoen lives near Hamburg and works for the Lighthouse album firm.)

Since the turn of the century it has been the custom in the United States to collect coil stamps in pairs, especially as joint line pairs (which cost more).

"What's the story on the prices for the 20¢ Flag from Plate 12?" a collector asked, noting a huge spread in the price among dealers.

The catalog prices a VF strip at \$5 (generally the base price for most 20¢ Flags).

The Bureau reported 6.92 million impressions off this plate. We calculate, therefore, that there are 69.2 million stamps around that show a plate number. It is absolutely inconceivable, therefore, that these could be rare. If a dealer asks much more than the catalog price for these, wait a while.

And here we get into the argument so well put by George V.H. Godin in his first "What Is 'Scarce'?" article in TPN Number 2.

Are there 6.9 million PNC collectors? Seeing that a find of a relative few rolls of 100 of the 18¢ Flag Plate 7 cut the selling price by more than half (and we calculate 21.6 million of those to be out there), why should this value be expensive?

Be careful. Don't mortgage the children's college money on PNCs. The price structure is still very much in flux. That's why we print these reports, to keep you informed about prices.

Until things settle down, with a few well-known exceptions, show some skepticism. Even dealers can overpay as some did for "only two rolls known" and as I did for the 20¢ Flag from the "scarce" Plate 11.

The Scott Publishing Co. was simply swamped by this and continued through the 1986 catalog to list coils as pairs, even when joint line pairs no longer exist and when most collectors no longer collect pairs.

This is so because the newer presses no longer use plates wrapped around a cylinder. Instead, they use a sleeve. The sleeve has no edges and therefore prints no joint lines where the plates meet.

THE PLATE NUMBER 10

## Lighthouse Albums to Reflect Collecting Customs

(from previous page)

After much discussion in the philatelic press, many collectors decided to collect in **strips of three** with the plate number in the middle.

Such mounting documented that the number appeared only at intervals in the roll and that the adjoining stamps had no number. Further, having the number in the middle presented a pleasing and balanced appearance.

The widely distributed *Brookman Catalog* reacted first and started listing PNCs as **strips of three**. The *Michel USA Catalog* fol-

lowed suit.

Part 22 of *Stanley Gibbons Catalog* (2nd edition of 1985) has not yet caught up with triplets. But Scott announced that it would price triplets in its 1987 edition of the *Scott Specialized*.

In view of all this, Lighthouse albums will no longer provide spaces for pairs. There will be spaces for singles (since used PNCs come almost entirely as singles) and as triplets.

It might be wise to switch your standing new-issues order to the new format.

## On Expertizing PNCs --- Part III

By Ken Lawrence\*\*

Besides the **18¢ Flag** numbers, the premium numbers on the **20¢ Fire Pumper** are likely candidates for forgers, if not today then in the future when prices go higher.

Prices on Plates 12 and 14 dropped dramatically after new supplies came on the market. If prices on these numbers remain relatively lower, a greedy forger might be tempted to shave the "1" off a Plate 12 strip, transforming it into a "2."

It should be easy to detect this by examining for a disturbance in the phosphor coating in short-wave ultraviolet since these stamps are fully tagged.

Examination in long-wave ultraviolet (black light) should also detect other forms of doctoring such as manipulating other digits, especially "3"s, to make them appear as "2"s (or "13"s into "12"s) or by splicing "1s" onto "4s," or "4s" onto "1s," to make "14s" if the prices of 12 and 14 rise again.

Even under ultraviolet, magnification may be required to detect expert doctoring. In that case, be very cautious not to look directly into the shortwave UV lamp by mistake, or you could permanently damage your vision.

After that, the same considerations would apply to these PNCs as to the 18¢ Flags (see *TPN* 2, Page 12).

A faked "3" or "4" on a **10.9¢ Hansom Cab** precancel, whether ac-

complished by doctoring the more common numbers or by adding faked numbers, would be tougher to detect or prove since precancels carry no tagging.

If, in the future, certain precancels themselves become very costly when compared to their unprecanceled counterparts, the first check should be to see whether the ostensible precancel stamps are tagged. That would detect a forged precancel.

But if certain gap positions become expensive, the problem could be much tougher.

Creating a gap where none exists can be done by shaving away a portion of the precancel bar, while filling a gap with black ink may be even easier.

One could protect oneself against this in part by insisting that any rare precancel strip be paired with its Cottrell plate mate. The precancels on both should agree. Familiarity with constant mat varieties and their positions could also uncover attempts at fakery.

The biggest danger of all, I fear, is not that forgers will place their products directly on the market. That would be taking needless risk.

Instead, I think, A clever PNC forger would work more like a jewel thief, waiting for an opportunity to switch his bogus strip for one of our real ones by sleight of hand

**PNC PUZZLE****What Repeats After Every 42 Stamps?**

By Eugene Y. Liu

If you are only chasing the plate numbers on U.S. coil stamps issued since 1981, you will probably be caught off guard if I ask, "What repeats once in every 42 stamps on those coils?"

You remember other numbers clearly: 24, 38, 48, and 52. You may think I counted it wrong or even that I'm only kidding.

If you collect only in strips of five or less, you would not know the answer. But occasionally I have to buy a full roll. I do this out of necessity sometimes (for stamps meeting the first-class rate), or just because I can afford it (1¢ or 2¢ stamps). And that's when I can make my "find."

It would be a shame to let our momentum slow down after we have acquired every known plate number. But there are still three things one can do, all from the primary goal of stamp collecting -- to enjoy and look closely at what one has collected.

o **Plate varieties**, like the well-known "buggy whip," may be hidden in your collection.

o If you are involved in U.S. classic stamps, you are glad that the Transportation Series have almost covered the printing **color chart**.

o Finally, how about the **perforations**?

This is where you will find the answer to my question. The same perforation pins punch the coil once every 42 stamps. Buy a roll and examine it carefully. If you happen to find a roll with blind perforations, it will clearly show that the unpunched hole(s) repeat every 42 stamps.

[Editor's note: After finding some strips with the blind perfs in the same location with respect to the joint line, I challenged Mr. Liu's claim. Charles Yeager, Washington correspondent for *Linn's* checked with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and was told that Mr. Liu is correct on all stamps printed in coils of 500 and 3,000.

[My strips apparently came from rolls of 100, where the blind perfs are not 42 stamps apart.

[Mr. Liu, meanwhile, bought a strip of 60 of the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon. Here is what he found:

Stamp 3: Plate number

Right of stamp 6: Precancel gap

Right of stamp 10: Blind perf

Right of stamp 32: Precancel gap

Right of stamp 52: Blind perf

Stamp 55: Plate number

[Gaps on the 10.1 (and other B Press stamps) always repeat every 26 stamps. So add 26 to the numbers Mr. Liu mentioned at the top of this article.]

**EXPERTIZING III**

(from previous page)  
or while no one is watching.

Our expensive PNC strips are not as visually distinctive as the costly stamps and covers of yesterday. But once our special material generates comparable philatelic excitement, we'll want to show, not to say show off, our latter-day gems. That is when the danger will be upon us.

Expertizing for us may turn out to be as much the exercise of vigilance as the mastery of counterfeiting technique and its detection.

**Using the Tables**

The tables on the following pages are constantly updated.

The numbers "5/7" would indicate that a gap has been reported at this position for strips printed on Plates 5 and 7. The position is found at the top of the chart.

Stamps outside the central section are considered "no gap" by those collecting strips of five.

Please report any gaps not shown here to Larry G. Haynes\*\*, 2213 Mockingbird Lane, Baytown, TX 77520.

Page 13 shows gaps on stamps not off the Cottrell press.

THE PLATE NUMBER 12

Table of Known Precancel Gap Locations

By Larry G. Haynes and the Gap Committee

Gap	5L	4L	3L	COLLECTED BY THOSE SEEKING STRIPS OF 5				2R	3R	4R	5R	6R/L
				2L	1L	Ln	1R					
Face												
3.4¢						1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2			
4¢				3/4 5/6	3/4 5/6	3/4 5/6						
4.9¢			3/4 5/6*	3/4 5/6*	3/4	3/4	1/2 5/6	1/2 5/6	1/2			
5.2¢	1/2 3/5	3/5 4/6	3/5 4/6	4/6	3/5	3/5			1/2 3/5		1/2	1/2 3/5
5.9¢	3/4	3/4				3/4 5/6					3/4	3/4
8.3¢				1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2 3/4	1/2 3/4				
9.3¢		1/2	1/2	1/2 2/4		3/4	* 3/4			1/2 2/4	1/2	3/4 5/6
	3/4 5/6	3/4 5/6	5/6	5/6 4/8			5/6	3/4	5/6		5/6	5/6
10.9¢		3/4*	3/4			1/2 3/4	1/2 3/4	1/2	1/2	1/2 3/4		
12¢		1/2			1/2	1/2						
17¢												
Style A	3/4	3/4		3/4 5/6	3/4 5/6	3/4				3/4 5/7	3/4 5/7	3/4
Style B					5/6	5/6				5/6		
Style AB				3/4*						5/6 5/7	5/7	
Style BA					5/6	5/6				3/4		5/6
Style C		3/4 5/7	3/4 5/7			1/2 3/4	3/4					5/7

LAST UPDATE: DEC. 15, 1986

\* Indicates a change from last chart published

**Precancels with No Gaps and With Gaps Every 26 Stamps**

Value	Plate Number	Location	Value	Plate Number	Location
6¢	1 2	11L/15R	10.1¢	1	13L/13R
		6L/20R			14L/12R
		8L/18R			16L/10R
		11L/15R			23L/3R
		16L/10R			
		21L/5R	11¢ Caboose		NO GAP
7.4¢	2	7L/19R	12.5¢	1	4L/22R
		14L/12R			7L/19R
		15L/11R			10L/16R
8.3¢ (B Press)	1	8L/18R			11L/15R
					12L/14R
					17L/9R
					18L/8R
20¢ Flag		NO GAP			

**Prices Soar on Imperforates**

By John Greenwood, DDS\*\*

The prices of imperf PNCs are rising rapidly -- particularly for the Transportation issues.

Try buying them at an auction.

Several dealers have promised to buy all available stock at auctions, and prices reflect this.

The relatively common 20¢ Flag imperfs are going for in excess of \$100, and better numbers are going for \$170 or more.

The 22¢ Flag imperfs have been in the \$125 range with new numbers going for \$150 to \$200.

Buying through private placement may be less expensive.

Updating the imperfs, here is a rundown on the known Flags:

**20¢:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12. (This adds Plate 1 to the catalog's list.)

**22¢:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11.

Also found imperforate are:

The **17¢ Auto**, Plates 1 and 2.

The unprecanceled **18¢ Washing-**

**ton Monument**, Plate 1112.

Finally, the **6¢ Tricycle**, Plate 2.

**Help wanted:** There is a report of a roll of **5¢ Motorcycle**, but I have not seen it. If you know of it, please let me know. (276 W. 9th St., Upland CA 91786).

I also need confirmation on the existence of a plate number on the **20¢ Official** imperf.

By Tom Maeder\*\*

Sam Houston Philatelics has a roll of 500 of the **6¢ Tricycle**, Plate 2, imperforate. The roll contains nine plate numbers, but six are partly obscured by the precancel lines; three are clear.

The rolls come from New England and the finder has held them since April.

Bob Dumaine, owner of Sam Houston, told me about it at Ameripex. He has just bought them and is selling a numbered strip at \$500 each.

**'Burned Rubber' Is Real; The 'Nail' Isn't**

When Myron G. Hill Jr.\*\* went to buy his **5.5¢ Star Route Truck** stamps, the postique clerk told him everyone was excited about the "nail in the tire" variety.

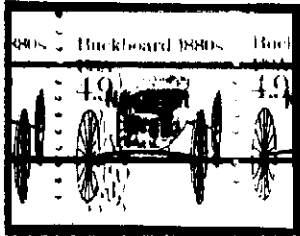
When she showed it to him, it turned out to be the plate number.

That "1" sure is close to the tire!

**Al Haake\*\*** has found a constant plate variety on the new **5.5¢**, which looks like a diagonal line under the rear tire. Haake christened it "burned rubber."

By Al Cibulskas\*\*

A spectacular new plate crack, or rather more than 30 of them, has been found on Plate 5 of the **4.9¢ Buckboard** by Tom Maeder\*\*.



The cracks, which are partly shown above, gave Maeder a bit of trouble. Here is his report:

"There are more than 30 vertical hairline cracks on the left half of the stamp, all detached from each other.

"At first I thought that these had to be caused by inking from the [precancel] mat, but now I've concluded that they must be in the plate.

"The reason: the ends of the parallel precancel bars move throughout the roll in relation to the perforations. So do the two lines of text in the precancel. But the vertical hairline cracks remain stationary. They are also constant.

"If they are cracks, they are certainly the most dramatic in American philatelic history."

The following have been reported since the listing in *TPN* 6. Names in parentheses are of those reporting the variety.

## I Plate Varieties

### **1¢ Omnibus**

a. Plate chip. On the joint line of Plate 4. Chipped plate causes start of a line about 1mm long parallel to the joint line about a third of the way from the bottom. Constant; multiples exist. (Anon.)

### **5.2¢ Sleigh**

a. Triple joint line on Plate 5. Constant? Found throughout roll. Three distinct lines show at the joint. To date found only on precancels. (Dr. R. Rabinowitz)

b. "Broken Runner" variety, on 1R of Plate 2. Approx. 2mm of sleigh runner not inked and missing. Constancy uncertain. (K. Cuniberti)

c. "Flying hyphen" variety, at 3R of Plate 2, between "Nonprofit" and "USA." Constant on precancels. (K. Cuniberti)

### **4.9¢ Buckboard**

a. Lower Transfera at 8L on Plate 1. Entire design is shifted downward approximately 1mm below normal. Constant. (Anon.)

### **6¢ Tricycle**

a. "Cat scratch" variety. Plate flaw resulting in two or four parallel slanting lines of varying darkness under the "1" of "Tricycle." The "1" itself shows an uninked spot halfway up its shank. Constant at 7R on precanceled Plate 2. (T. Maeder)

### **10.1¢ Oil Wagon**

a. "Artillery Shell I" constant at 3R and headed toward front of canopy. Confirmed on regular and precancel. (S. Esrati)

b. Dot Over "i" in "Oil" constant at 4R regular and precancel. (A. Haake)

c. "Fireball"/"Artillery Shell II". Additional report changing location from 23R to 29R. (S. Esrati)

d. "Artillery Shell III". Shell is aimed toward front of the wagon. Position unknown. Found only on precancel. (S. Esrati)

### **14¢ Iceboat**

a. Chill roller doubling effect. As in all such cases, this looks like a double transfer but is not. The doubling is most noticeable on the "14" and the guy wires at the bottom of the boat. Several examples submitted on Plates 3-4. (G. Clark)

### **20¢ Fire Pumper**

a. Red dot where plate number should be, but slightly to the left. Awaiting confirmation of

## Constant Plate and Mat Varieties -- Part IV

(from previous page)  
constancy and relative position and plate number. (Nowosadko)

**18¢ Washington Monument**

a. Red triangle or star to the right of the top of the monument. Constant at 8L on Plate 1112. (E. Liu)

**21.1¢ Letters**

a. Two separate and distinct lines like those caused by doctor blades. Upper line is black; lower is blue. Constant on roll with Plate Number 111111. (Neuhaus)

**22¢ Flag**

a. "Clipped A". Upper portion of "A" in "USA" missing. Appears randomly with various amounts of the "A" missing. Guesstimate: Approx. 15% max. missing. (J. Rebeles)

**II Mat Varieties****3.4¢ School Bus**

a. Step between words. About 0.5mm step between "CAR" and "-RT SORT." (Nowosadko)

b. Printing of the words noticeably finer and less inked to left of gap than to right. (Nowosadko)

**4.9¢ Buckboard**

a. "Missing Period" after "Org" at 1R of gap. No additional information available. (R. Whittemore)

b. "Spike" variety. Approx. 1.5mm long spike at 30-degree angle from inside of left front tire and resting against the tire. Constant on stamp to left of gap. (Anon.)

c. "Missing 'r'" in "Org." On 1R of Plates 1 and 2. Can be easily detected by noticing that the grill in the background is not filled in. This strip also contains an "O" with a missing top at 2L and several stamps in which the horizontal part of the "r" in "Org." was missing. (Paul Hudson).

**5.9¢ Bicycle**

a. Three precancel lines found on roll of Plates 3 and 4. (Hudson)

b. "Moon Over Gap" variety. Gap strip shows large (about 3-4mm) crescent moon (almost perfectly shaped) at the end of and above the top bar's gap. Plate number and constancy unknown. (Anon.)

**8.3¢ Ambulance**

a. Several strips of the "missing period" variety have been supplied. The most striking is strip of 48 containing 24 missing periods scattered randomly. (Anon.)

b. Top of the letter "k" clipped. Plate 2, Line Gap. Found at 1L, 2L, 4L on the same strip. Constancy uncertain. (R. Kugel)

c. Truncated last "s" on rolls from Plates 3-4. (T. Maeder)

d. Top diagonal missing on "k" of "bulk." This is on the B Press reissue and is constant at 20L and 25L. (Anon.)

**10.1¢ Oil Wagon**

a. Dots above roof of wagon constant at 23R of number and 7L of gap. (Anon.)

**12¢ Stanley Steamer**

a. "Apostrophe" variety between the "i" and "e" of "Stanley" constant on stamp left of gap. (Anon.)

**17¢ Auto**

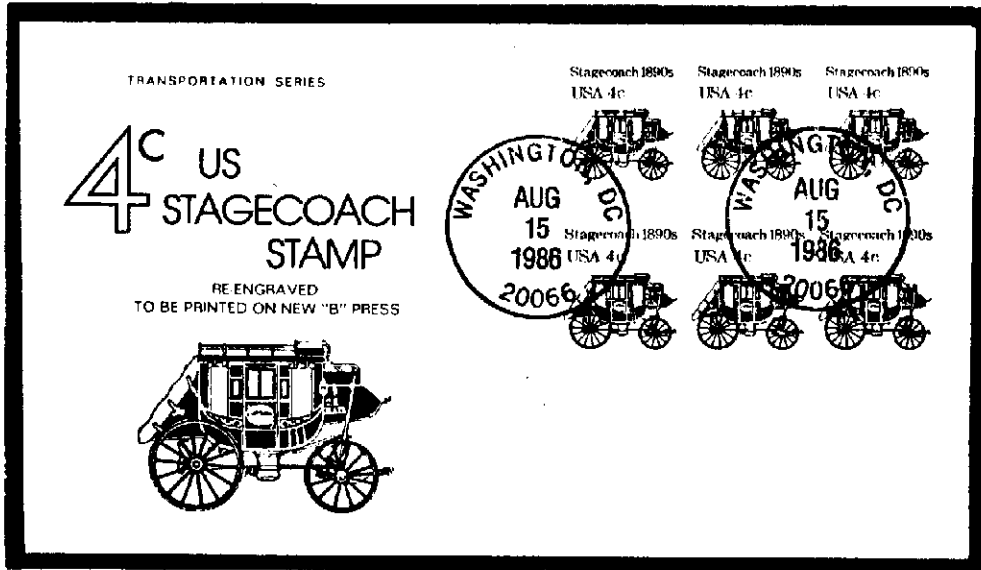
a. Mat lines that look like multiple plate cracks but are in the color of the precancel and not of the stamp. Lines through "U" of "Auto" to top edge, and three more parallel to perfs about 1mm removed and 1, 2 and 3,mm long. Constant left of gap throughout roll from Plates 5 and 7, Style AB. (A. Cibulskas)

b. "Missing F" in "First" constant on 6L on Plates 5 and 7. (E. Rusow)

b1. Same, but now reported on Type BA of Plates 3-4. Constant throughout one roll. (G. Clark)

b2. Distorted letters on b1 at the far end of the A mat.

COVER OF THE MONTH!



ARTCRAFT FDC Leo August, an owner of Washington Press' Artcraft division, says the firm made 200-300 FDCs of the re-engraved 4¢ Stagecoach and sold them for about \$2. A handful of covers with numbered stamps sold for \$10.

Forwarding and Address  
Correction Requested



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STEPHEN G. ESRATI  
P.O. Box 20130  
Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130