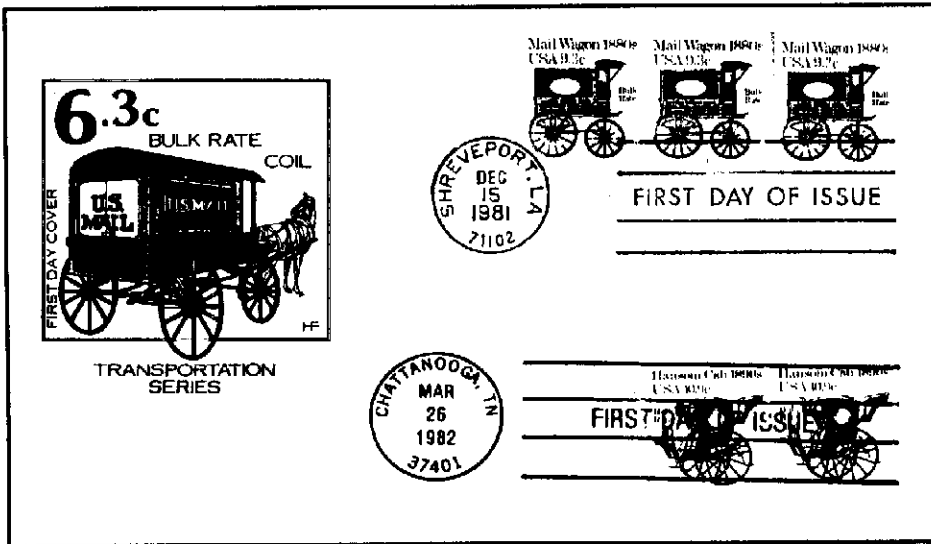


# Precancel sales by dealers still illegal, USPS warns



**6.3¢ MAIL WAGON?** This House of Farnam cachet is a rarity, and this FDC may be unique. Story on Page 69.

## 17¢ precancels are plated

By Tom Maeder

"Plating" sheets of stamps (reconstructing whole sheets from fragments) is as old as philately. It began in the

1840s with Britain's Victoria heads (including the Penny Black), and was relatively easy because each stamp from the sheet was "face-different."

Today it is tougher, because the master die is supposed to make an identical image in every position, and usually does. Now Jerry Clark has managed a partial plating of Plates 3 and 4 of the 17¢ Electric Auto by using the precancel mats. It was painstaking, and I was privy to his progress

*Please Turn to Page 70*

It is illegal to sell precanceled stamps, USPS recently warned Frank Marrelli, a dealer in Kenosha, Wis.

Further, USPS told Marrelli, who is also a bulk mailer, that he may only use a single precanceled stamp on bulk mail.

The first situation is caused by a section of the *Domestic Mail Manual*, which apparently was written when it was illegal even to own mint precancels.

In those days, collectors who wanted to obey the law had to soak the gum off unused precanceled stamps. "Used" precancels could be collected.

The section of the *DMM* which causes all the prob-

*Please Turn to Page 67*

### The Plate Number

Published six times a year by Stephen G. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120-0130. Subscription price is \$10 a year.

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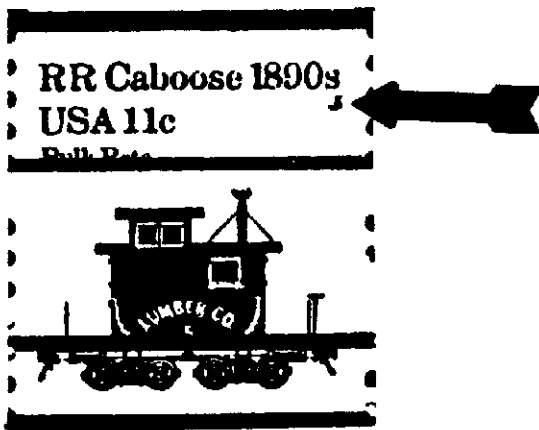
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# How to exhibit your PNCs

## TRANSPORTATION SERIES

11¢ Caboose

### CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES



"The Sitting Duck"

In this occasional feature, *TPN* will illustrate pages submitted by readers to help collectors show off their PNCs.

The first example (shown in part above) comes from Jerry Clark, who found the "Sitting duck" variety on the 11¢ Caboose precancel in the same row of stamps that also shows the "Brake shoe" variety.

Clark's page is headed by the title, "CONSTANT PLATE VARIETIES" and is followed by a photographic enlargement of the variety with a large arrow pointing at the "duck."

Under this enlargement, he has named the variety.

To prove that the variety is a recurring error, he then mounted two strips, with the variety situated on the center stamp. While there was no need to use a strip of seven and a strip of five, Clark's doing so

points to a good lesson. By using two different lengths, he avoids dullness. Two strips of different lengths help attract the viewer; two equal strips tend to bore.

Clark ends the presentation with a text block indicating that the variety occurs at 9R and on the roll with the "Brake shoe." So far so good.

He then writes: "The flaw, resembling a duck floating on water and facing to the right, is in the upper right quadrant of the stamp."

This last sentence, it is suggested, is quite unnecessary since the viewer can see all this for himself on the enlargement and with the aid of the large arrow.

The only other criticism one might make of Clark's presentation is that he used black mounts. Modern philatelic judging has penalized exhibitors who use these mounts. Clear mounts are preferred.

## Catalog Update

**Page 4:** Plate 12 was printed on the C and D presses, not the B Press.

**Page 5:** Plates 18 and 19 exist imperforate.

**Page 6:** Plates 5 and 6 exist imperforate.

**Page 12:** Plates 1 and 2 exist imperforate.

**Page 13:** The precancel style on Plates 3 and 5 is given as Style 4. It should be Style 2.

### New stamps

22¢ Flag, Plates 23, 24.

5.5¢ Star Truck, inscribed, Plate 2.

10.1¢ Oil Wagon, precanceled, Plate 2 (line gap).

## ADLETS

**Classified ads are 15 cents a word. There is no charge for your address.**

**WANTED FOR PERSONAL COLLECTION:** PNCs on commercial covers. 18¢ Flag #6, 7; 18¢ Surrey #1, 3, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 20¢ Pumper #12, #14; 5.9¢ Precancel any #; 18¢ Washington Monument precancel any #; 7.4¢ Precancel; 8.5¢ Precancel; 7.1¢ Precancel; 5.5¢ Precancel. Write with details and price. Rob Washburn, 5 1/2 Coburn Ave., Skowhegan, ME 04976. (6-87)

**BUYING PNC FDCs.** Write first. Thomas Gift, 1959 Haviland Ave. Bronx, N.Y. 10472. (4-90)

**BACK ISSUES** of *TPN* are available. There were seven issues in Volume I. All are \$1 each. There were five previous issues of Volume II. All but Issue 4 and 5 are \$1. Issue 4 is \$2; Issue 5 is \$3. Steve Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130.

**PLEASE TELL ADVERTISERS YOU SAW THEIR AD IN *TPN*.**

## Lighthouse plans hingeless, illustrated albums for tagged, precanceled PNCs in PS/3 or PS/5

Lighthouse plans to publish a fully illustrated set of hingeless album pages for mounting tagged and precanceled PNCs in strips of three or five. It will also contain spaces for used plate number singles.

The new album is expected to be ready in the first quarter of 1988, according to a reply from the firm in Germany to a stamp collector in Virginia, who complained bitterly that Lighthouse had dropped mint coil pairs from its 1986 supplement.

The collector wrote:

Lighthouse now feels that because current

printing procedures have made coil pairs obsolete, it is no longer necessary to have spaces for pairs. Therefore, they are providing spaces for only a single. This is incredibly flawed logic since U.S. collectors save coils in a minimum of a pair regardless of whether they are saving line pairs. The following issues were collected in pairs despite the fact they do not have "line pairs": the 6-cent Flag, the 8-cent Flag, the 10-cent Flag, the 13-cent Flag.

I'm convinced that American collectors, when given a choice, will want to continue saving coil issues in pairs. I believe that collectors

save them in this format because that is the minimum number of stamps that show that this issue is a "coil," and, thus, different from sheet stamps.

After stating that Lighthouse is always pleased to hear the views of its customers, the firm replied as follows:

We are all free to collect what we will, in whatever format we care to. And realizing what it means to change an 80-year-old deeply ingrained habit, one has to be very careful and really think twice before advocating any changes. This we attempted to

do...

Our company has undertaken a poll among principal Lighthouse dealers in your country on what they think their collector clients feel to be the best solution for saving coil stamps since the last Cottrell presses were scrapped in November 1984.

The question was:

"What kind of spaces would you like to see in an album for B, C, and Andreotti press coil stamps?"

Here are the results of that survey:

Spaces for coil singles:

Yes	No	Don't know
89%	11%	—

Spaces for coil pairs:

Yes	No	Don't know
22%	67%	11%

Spaces for strips of 3 (with plate number):

Yes	No	Don't know
100%	—	—

That the minimum number of stamps must be two to prove that an issue is indeed a coil ... is not actually true.

Lighthouse then attached a synopsis of press comment appearing since 1984 on how to collect coils. It noted, for example, that the 1987 Brookman catalog listed coils only as used singles (without plate number), mint singles (without plate number) and mint strips of three (with plate number). It noted that the popular Harris catalog followed Brookman and that neither listed pairs.

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## USPS calls P/C sales illegal

*Continued From Front Page*

lems is §143.22, which says: "Precanceled stamps may be purchased for the purpose of paying postage or for philatelic purposes. Permit holders may not sell unused precanceled stamps obtained under their permits."

The permit referred to is Form 3620, "Permit to Use Precanceled Stamps or Envelopes." Form 3620 is free, albeit many post offices have attempted to charge the \$50 annual bulk mailing fee to collectors who tried to obtain the permit.

But precancel use by collectors is now permitted. The change was spelled out in *Postal Bulletin* 21574, dated July 10, 1986.

The way the law now reads, precancels can be bought by collectors and can be used by collectors. But they may not be sold.

There are other requirements for the legal use of precancels by collectors.

For example: One cannot mail precancels in another city, only in the one where the permit was issued. One cannot put mail bearing precancels in mail boxes, they have to be handed in at the post office and must be given a circular date stamp.

Marrelli received a letter from the main post office in Milwaukee stating:

"As you have been previously cautioned, you may not sell stamps you have pur-

chased as a permit holder and stamps you have purchased as a collector may only be used in collection activity."

That makes the sale of precancels illegal.

The penalty for violating this provision of the *DMM* is revocation of the precancel permit.

Marrelli was also warned:

"A mailer may not utilize precanceled stamps of differing denominations to arrive at the appropriate rate for a mailing. The precanceled stamps designated for the specific rate category must be used."

This resulted from an attempt by Marrelli to use 9.3s and precanceled 1s to make up the 10.1¢ rate.

Marrelli's problems have gone on for more than two years.

# How big is a coil on the 22¢ Flag?

By George V. H. Godin

At the time of AMERIPEX a collector reported that Plate 2 of the 22¢ Flag had been printed on both the B Press and the C Press. Since the interval between plate numbers on the B Press is 52 and the interval on the C Press is 48, the report created a short-lived fright. But nobody ever found a roll in which the interval was anything but 52.

All other B Press printings of the 22¢ Flag are produced in rolls of 500 or 3,000. On this plate alone there were also bubble packs of 100 with the plate numbers 52 apart.

This was the result of the Postal Service's desire to be able to offer collectors a choice of 22¢ Flags from either the B or the C Press. Plate 1 had been printed on the C Press in coils of 100. So on Plate 2, rolls of 100 were specially made from stamps printed on the B Press.

The sleeve used on the B Press has 52 stamp subjects around the cylinder and has 18 rows. This makes 936 stamps in one revolution with 18 stamps showing a plate number.

Normally, B Press printings are processed on the Huck coiler to make rolls of 500 and 3,000.

The following 22¢ Flag plates have been printed on the B Press: 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 21. (The chart on Page 52 of *The Plate Number* is in error in assigning

Plate 12 to the B Press.) Plate 9 was to have been printed on the B Press but was canceled with no impressions available.

The other 22¢ Flag stamps were printed on either the C Press or the D Press or both. The D Press is a C Press with an added unit for printing by offset lithography. The sleeves for the C and D presses are completely interchangeable and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing can therefore use either press as dictated by production needs for other stamps.

Production on the C and D presses uses a sleeve with 48 stamps around the cylinder and 20 rows across the sleeve. There are 20 plate numbers across the sleeve, which prints 960

stamps per revolution. But there is an exception.

The 960-stamp-sleeve product is usually used with the Goebel coiler. But when production from the C and D presses is intended to be run through the Huck coiler, a width of 18 is required. In those instances, the C and D presses use a sleeve that is only 18 stamps wide and waste paper where the other two rows would have been.

The only 22¢ Flag stamp to be made for use with both coilers so far has been the Test coil, which has 18 rows of 48 stamps, or 864 stamps per revolution. It was made in rolls of 100 and 3,000. The large coils came off the Huck, while the small were from the Goebel coiler.

The data for the C and D presses:

Plate	Size	Press	Coiler	Coil size
1	48x20=960	C	Goebel	100
3	48x20=960	C	Goebel	100
5	48x20=960	C	Goebel	100
7	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
8	48x20=960	D	Goebel	100
11	48x20=960	C	Goebel	100
12	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
17	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
18	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
19	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
20	48x20=960	C/D	Goebel	100
1T	48x18=864	C	Both	100/3,000

Note that Plate 8 was printed only on the D Press.

## WANTED

Plate Number Coils on legitimate, non-philatelic covers. I am buying all numbers of: 18¢ Flag, 18¢ Surrey, 20¢ Fire Pumper, 20¢ Consumer Education, All fractional precancels. 20th-century postal history is my specialty.

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# Upside-down 9 creates a 6.3¢ rate in cachet

Charles Teschemacher of Buffalo did not know what to make of a first-day cover he found in August. The House of Farnam cachet that accompanied the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon, in a strip of three from Plate 1, clearly said the rate was 6.3 cents.

John Halliday of the House of Farnam cleared up the mystery, but in the process he declared that there could be only nine more covers like Teschemacher's, putting Teschemacher's cover into scarcity Category E.

Halliday said the artist made a mistake by turning the "9" upside down. Halliday said he did not no-

tice and sent the art off to the printer.

But when the covers came back from the printer, Halliday noticed. The printer would not allow any credit because the error had been Halliday's. So Halliday ordered a corrected printing.

To salvage something from his costs for the 6.3 printing, Halliday sold about 100 covers with the inverted number as cachet varieties.

"How many of those 100 would have had plate number coils?" Halliday was asked.

"No more than 10," he replied.

It is not the first such variety. Ac-

cording to Ken Lawrence there are cachets for the 7.7¢ Saxhorns of the Americana Series that say "7.9c."

Teschemacher's cover also bears a numberless pair of the 10.9¢ Hansom Cab with an FDOI cancel. This is dated three months later. This, according to FDC expert Glenn Estus, is something a collector would have produced later and is of no consequence.

But when added to a cover of which only 10 may exist, the extra FDOI cancel may make Teschemacher's cover unique.

## Watch for Cut Number to Find 4.9¢ 'Rain Crack'

When Tom Maeder saw the cover of the 1987 *Catalog of Plate Number Coils* he wondered where Steve Esrati got the copy of the "Rain Crack" shown in the drawing.

So far, all copies seen by Maeder were cut low, with the plate number (5) cut. All, so far, have been Gap 2R.

"This," he said, "may be a help in finding them because the average philatelic clerk would take one look at the roll of 4.9¢ Buckboards, see it was cut low and throw it into the scrap as uncollectable."

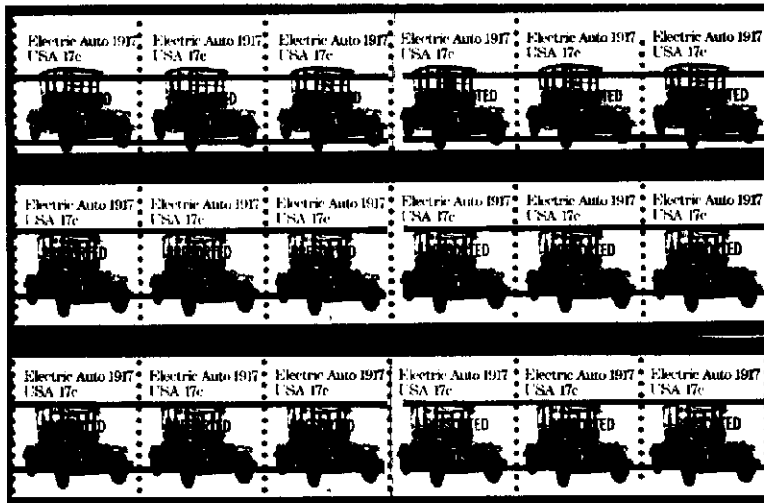
Maeder made the original find of this crack.

Looking for miscut rolls from Plates 5 and 6 may be the way to find these.

A recent find was reported in the area of Syracuse, N.Y. It, too, was cut low.

The catalog's cover drawing was based on the USPS publicity photo of the stamp and had the crack and the plate number drawn in. It was done by Esrati and he, a non-artist, could not move the bottom edge of the stamp up.

### SPECIAL OFFER TO TPN READERS ONLY

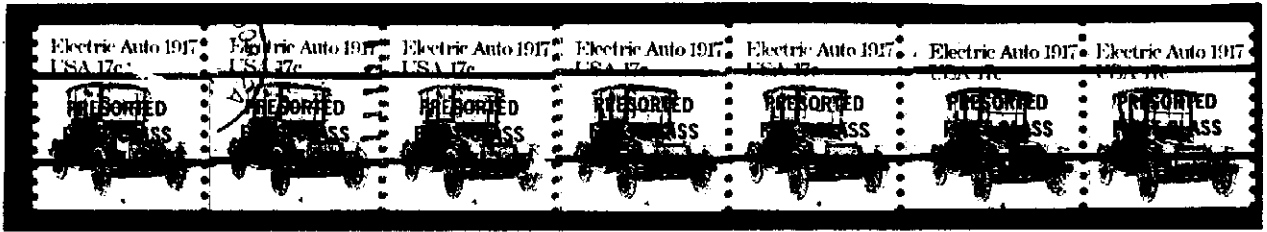


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# Line heights lead to plating of 17¢s



ILL. 1: How the heights of the precancel lines vary from row to row, as seen on stamps from the first six (B) rows of the BA plate. The rightmost stamp is a line pair. If you lay a ruler across this illustration, the top and bottom precancel bars rise all the way from left to right.

*Continued From Front Page*

over the two or three months it took.

The 17¢ Auto was a Cottrell issue. Each plate had 18 rows of 24 images each. They were curved into an arc of 180 degrees, each plate having to be paired with another to form a 360-degree printing surface. Where ink slopped into the grooves between the two plates, a joint line was printed.

On precanceled versions, the paper with design imprinted passed around a second printing cylinder which did the precanceling over the design. This is done with four rubber mats. Each mat is 9 rows of 12 images each. Four of them are placed around the cylinder to make an 18 x 24 printing surface. Where the 12 images of one mat meet the 12 images of the adjoining mat, a gap exists in the horizontal precanceling bars.

Because the 360 degrees of the design is 18 x 48 and the 360 degrees of the precanceling is 18 x 24, it takes two revolutions of the precanceling cylinder to overprint the one revolution of the design images. This means that each of the two Cottrell plates gets an identical overall image from the precanceler.

The 17¢ Auto exists with three different precanceling types. In Type A, the word "PRESORTED" is 11.5mm long. On Type B, it is 12.5mm, and on Type C, 13.5mm. Plates 3 and 4 of the Auto exist with an A and B image se-tenant. That means that an A-mat and B-mat have been wrapped around the cylinder side by side. It is unknown whether this was a mistake by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, or whether printers never cared whether the precanceling looked uniform, and just used whichever mats were handy. But such mixing is not the norm, and the products of such a press run are interesting.

The 17¢ Plates 3 and 4 with a B-A image, precanceling gap four stamps to the right of the joint line, had only limited geographic distribution. Someone found a roll with an "F" missing from the word "FIRST," and strips of Plates 3 and 4 of this variety went at a premium price in a Sam Houston Philatelics auction. Another roll had extraneous and recurring dots at the gap. These two varieties were from different rows of the same mat.

Jerry Clark found a supply of 17¢ 3-4 BA, and found nine different, constant, mat varieties from nine different rolls of stamps. This meant that he had examples from each of the nine rows of the B-mat, se-tenant with the nine rows of the adjoining A-mat.

Would it be possible to tell the vertical positioning of each of these rows relative to each other? That is the really tough part; some would say impossible. But Jerry is convinced he has done it, and I think he has, too.

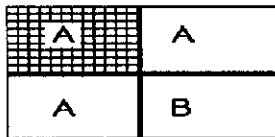
Jerry's nine mat-different rolls each had a numbered stamp from Plate 4 as the first stamp on the roll. Having come from the same vertical cutting and the same box of 50 rolls, it could be inferred that these nine rolls all came off the press at the same instant.

It was noted that the precancel bars struck the design at different elevations on each row. Seemingly, the height of the whole mat is a millimeter or two shorter than the height of the design plate; hence, there is "elevation creep" from one row to the next. By placing the first stamps

# and point up import of mat varieties

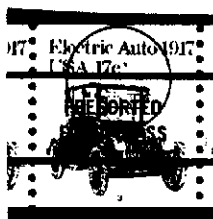
in each roll in ascending order of pre-cancel-bar height, it was deduced that this represented each row's position on the press. Ill. 1 shows this detective work.

It should be noted that half the rolls in the box were 3-4 A-A, gap 4R. It is clear that of the four rubber mats used in the precanceling of this run, three were type A and one was Type B. Jerry has concluded the following configuration:



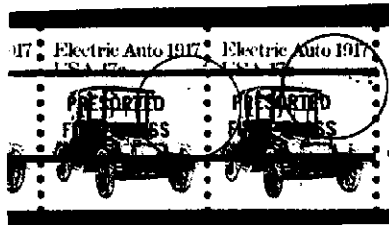
Each mat is 12 stamps wide and 9 stamps deep.

Some examples of the A-A mats of the top nine rows got away. By the time the research project got under weigh, some A-A rolls from the box had been sold. And whereas it is still possible to identify nine different rows from the mats, the necessary ingredient of "the same first stamp" in each row (to identify relative row positioning) was lost. So really, then, we have half a plating of Plates 3 and 4. A description of each B-A row follows:

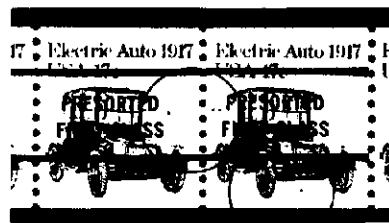


**Row 10: "Dot Over Bar."** One dot above top precancel bar in numbered stamp.

**Row 11: "Missing F."** The "F" of "FIRST-CLASS" is completely missing from the first stamp of the A mat.



**Row 12: "One Dot—Five Dots."** One dot two stamps immediately to the left of the gap and five dots on stamp immediately to the left of the gap.



**Row 13: "One Dot—Two Dots."** One dot two stamps left of the gap and two dots one stamp immediately to the left of the gap.

**Row 14: "Dot over D."** Dot over "D" of "PRESORTED" on last stamp of B mat.

**Row 15: "Banner Top A-Bar."** No distinguishing features other than that the top bar of the "A" flares at the end like a pennant at the A gap like this:



**Row 16: "Hole in D."** Small hole on inside loop of "D" of "PRESORTED" on stamp one right of the line.

**Row 17: "Pointed Top A-Bar on A Mat."** Top bar of the A mat has a beveled, pointed top at the end of the A mat like this:



**Row 18: "Raised A Mat with Concave Ends."** The bars of the A mat are noticeably higher than the bars of the B mat; both top and bottom bars of the A mat have concave ends.

These mats were used in other press runs of the 17¢ Auto, and in combination with other mats not used in this press run. If you examine your 17¢ Auto precanceled strips on Plates 3 through 7 (and the 12¢ Torch in the Americana Series, which also used Type B mats), you may find these same varieties repeated. (Plates 1 and 2 have been found only with Type C mats until now.)

Perhaps Jerry Clark's patience, resourcefulness, ingenuity, and scholarship on these plates could inspire someone to tackle the 4.9s, 8.3s or 3.4s, each of which has its own distinctive and interesting mat characteristics.

## New gap is reported on the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon

Rob Washburn, who collects PNCs on commercial covers, has discovered a new gap variety on Plate 3 of the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon in which the gap falls at 3R. He found two strips.

Since Plate 3 was paired exclusively with Plate 4, the 3R Gap should exist on Plate 4, as well.

# Transportation coils differ in papers,

By Richard Nazar

As I originally reported in the Feb. 24, 1986, issue of *Linn's*, two distinct paper types exist on several issues of the Transportation Series.

Each paper type differs from the other two categories: gum texture and fluorescent quality under long-wave ultraviolet (UV) light (a band from 3,000Å to 4,000Å). Phosphor-tagged stamps glow under shortwave UV (2537Å).

When Type I paper is exposed to longwave UV, it typically appears as bright blue-white in varying degrees according to the amount of chemical brighteners present in the paper. Some degree of brightener is always present in Type I paper, even if only as small fibers.

Type II paper does not exhibit this brightness under longwave UV. Instead, it appears dull yellow-brown or "dead," showing no trace of chemical brighteners.

Using a longwave UV light is probably the quickest way to examine large quantities of Transportation coils for the paper types. Longwave UV passes through acetate mounts, clear cellophane (the type that is wrapped around sealed post office rolls), and the plastic bubbles now used to package rolls of 100 stamps. For the record, shortwave UV does not pass through these plastics.

The gum on both types is dull (dry gum) in appearance, but there is a difference in texture.

The gum on Type I paper is marked by diagonal ridges that run at an approximate 45-degree angle from the base of the stamp (in a SW-NE direction). These ridges are sometimes faint and difficult to see, but they are always present on Type I paper.

To best view the gum ridges, hold the stamp (gum side toward you) below an incandescent light source and

slowly begin to rotate the stamp in a clockwise direction. The ridges will become apparent when the light shines across the stamp from the northwest corner. Avoid looking for the gum ridges with fluorescent (overhead tube) lighting—this type of light does not cast shadows well. The shadows formed by the light

shining *across* the peaks and valleys of the ridged gum makes the texture visible.

The gum of Type II paper is very different. Type II gum is typically much smoother in appearance, sometimes only showing faint horizontal striations. This gum is also very sensitive to fingerprints. Be

Table A

## Cottrell Press Varieties

All other Cottrell issues have been reported only with Type I paper (diagonal gum ridges and fluorescent paper).

Scott	Value	Plates	Comments
1897	1¢ Omnibus	5,6	Exist on Type I and Type II
1897A	2¢ Locomotive	8,10	Exist on Type I and Type II
1899	5¢ Motorcycle	3,4	Exist on Type I and Type II
1903a	9.3¢ Mail Wagon	2,4	Exist on Type I and Type IIa (Gap 3L)
2132	12¢ Steamer	12	Exist on Type I and Type II
2134	14¢ Iceboat	12	Exist on Type I and Type II
2134	14¢ Iceboat	3,4	Exist only on Type I
1906	17¢ Auto	1,2,3,4	Exist on Type I and Type II
1906a	17¢ Auto	3,4	Exist on Type I and Type II (Style C, Gap 4L)

Table B

## B Press Varieties

All other B Press issues have been reported on Type II only (smooth gum on "dead" stock).

Scott	Value	Plates	Comments
2225	1¢ Omnibus	1	Exists only on Type I
2226	2¢ Locomotive	1	Exists on Type I and Type II
2228	4¢ Stagecoach	1	Exists only on Type I
2125	5.5¢ Star Truck	1	Exists only on Type I
2126a	6¢ Tricycle	2	Exists on Type I (Gap 7R) and Type II (Gaps 6L, 7R)
1902	7.4¢ Baby Buggy	2	Exists on Type I and Type IIa
1902a	7.4¢ Baby Buggy	2	Exists on Type I and Type IIa
2231	8.3¢ Ambulance	1	Exists on Type I (Gap 9L) and Type II (Gap 7L)
2129	8.5¢ Tow Truck	1	Exists on Type I and Type II
2129a	8.5¢ Tow Truck	1	Exists on Type I and Type II
2130a	10.1¢ Oil Wagon	1	Exists on Type I (Gap 9L) and Type II (Gap 7L)
1905	11¢ Caboose	1	Exists on Type I and Type II
1905a	11¢ Caboose	1	Exists on Type I, Type II and Type IIa
2133a	12.5¢ Pushcart	1	Exists on Type I (Gap 5L, 7L) and Type II
2135	17¢ Dog Sled	2	Exists only on Type I
2131	25¢ Bread Wagon	1	Exists only on Type I

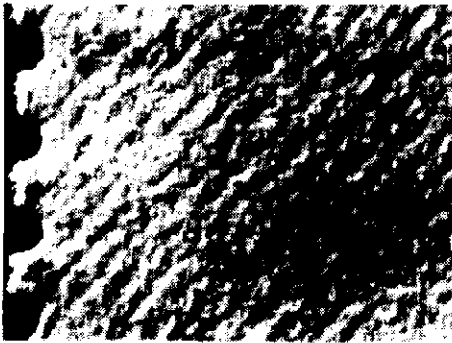
*Editor's note:* This article is an update of Rich Nazar's original article on this subject that appeared in *Linn's* (© Linn's 1986).



# and here's how you can tell them apart

sure to use stamp tongs with Type II papers to avoid marking the gum.

These striations are very heavy on a few Transportation issues and clearly appear as distinct, horizontal, evenly spaced ridges. I assigned this gum texture a Type IIa subtype designation—which denotes that it has the fluorescent qualities of Type II



Type I



Type II



Type III

paper, but the gum texture is distinctly different from the more lightly striated gum of Type II.

The gum textures allow a collector easily to discern the two paper types without the expense of a UV lamp. The gum textures might be a problem for some collectors to notice immediately, but with the aid of a good incandescent light source and after learning what to look for, the textures become apparent.

Inquiries to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing resulted in a response from Executive Assistant Paul R. Frey, dated Sept. 12, 1986. Frey said: "The variations in gum appearance reflect the different gum application equipment used by the different suppliers."

He also said that BEP does not consider the papers of different suppliers as consistently and distinctly different because the papers "are purchased under the same specification, P:PSDG-1 (April 27, 1979)." BEP claims that there is no difference in the paper stocks used on the Cottrell presses and the B Press (for the Transportation Series) and, therefore, any Transportation coils may be printed on either Type I or Type II paper—or both.

Although there are now more than two dozen paper varieties on the Transportation Series, the 20¢ Fire Pumper and the 18¢ Surrey have been found only on Type I paper. This is an unusual coincidence if there is no relation between press and paper type.

I have also asked BEP whether it is possible to get some idea of quantities pro-

duced of each of the issues on the different paper types, but the only response was that no such information was recorded in the printers' logs.

After going through dealers' stocks, I am certain that some of the paper varieties demand premiums over the more common versions. It also appears that some paper types had uneven distribution, so that a majority of a certain printing was shipped to different regions. This appears to be the case with the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon (precanceled 3L) of Plates 2 and 4 on Type IIa paper. Only one very limited find was announced by dealer Kim Cuniberti. To date, this is the only Cottrell issue found on Type IIa paper.

The tables show reported paper varieties as of Oct. 1, 1987.

I have sent examples of the paper types to each company supplying dry gum paper to BEP for identification. Their responses should clarify the origins of the paper types.

This study will continue as more varieties are found and as BEP continues to print coil stamps on paper stocks from different suppliers. It will take nationwide awareness by collectors of the Transportation coils to fully understand what paper varieties exist. New finds of paper types are still being made on stamps printed on the old Cottrells as collectors search through the series for constant plate varieties and gap locations.

If you have any paper varieties from the Transportation Series that are not listed in the tables accompanying this article, please inform me of your findings. I am also interested in learning the gap positions of the papers used for precancels. To verify finds, I ask that you send plate number strips to Richard Nazar, R.F.D. 3 Box 427D, Somerset, N.J. 08873. All letters will be answered and all stamps will be returned.

# FDCs with Plate Number Coils

No. Stamp	Plate	P/S	Docket	Condition	Price
1 86c Flag	1	1	American	VF	17.00
2 86c Flag	5	2	Delaware	VF (# on right)	100.00
3 20c Flag Text	T1	3	Artmaster	XF	6.00
3a 22c Flag Text	T1	3	Artmaster	VF	7.00
3b 22c Flag Text	T1	3	SMC	F	6.00
4 20c Commem	1	3	Peram	Superb	20.00
5 20c Commem	1	4	Artmaster	XF	40.00
7 20c Commem	4	2	ArtCraft	VF	25.00
8 (22c) D	1	1	ArtCraft	F (# on right)	20.00
9 (22c) Official	1	1	American	VF	17.00
10 (22c) Official	1	2	Delaware	VF	25.00
11 (22c) Official	1	3	Peram	XF	25.00
12 (22c) Official	1	3	Peram	F	25.00
13 (22c) Official	1	3	Artmaster	F	13.75
14 (22c) Official	1	3	ArtCraft	VF	15.00
15 1c Trans	2	3	ArtCraft	F (-17c Green)	4.00
16 2c Trans	4	4	ArtCraft	VF (+ 2c Text)	23.00
17a 2c Trans	3	3	SMC	Pair (# left) (-2000 numbers, small holes)	7.00
18 4c Trans	3	5	ArtCraft	Pair (# on left of strip)	10.00
20 4c Trans	3	5	ArtCraft	VF (# on 2d stamp)	17.00
21 8c Trans	1	4	ArtCraft	F	17.00
22 8c Trans	2	4	ArtCraft	Superb	20.00
23 5.2c Trans	1	3	Peram	Superb (+5.2c Single)	10.00
24 5.2c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	VF (+5.2c Single)	10.00
25 5.2c Trans	1	4	Artmaster	Pair (# on left)	3.00
26 5.2c Trans	1	4	Artmaster	VF (on 2d stamp)	3.00
27 5.2c Trans	1	4 PC	Artmaster	Superb (tagged) (+4 X 5.2c tagged without #)	17.00
28 5.2c Trans	1	3 PC	SMC	Superb (tagged) (+4 X 5.2c tagged with #)	20.00
29 5.2c Trans	3	4	ArtCraft	Superb	25.00
30 5.2c Trans	3	2	American	Pair (+10c overprint)	10.00
31 5.2c Trans	4	2	American	VF (+10c overprint)	10.00
32 5.2c Trans	4	4	Artmaster	VF	25.00
33 5.2c Trans	4	4	ArtCraft	Superb	20.00
34 7.1c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	F (+1c B Press)	4.00
35 7.1c Trans	1	3 PC	Artmaster	VF (+1c B Press)	10.00
35a 7.1c Trans	1	5+5	Peram	VF	20.00
36 7.4c Trans	2	3	ArtCraft	VF	10.00
36a 7.4c Trans	2	3	SMC	Pair (# left)	10.00
37 8.5c Trans	1	3	American	VF	7.00
38 8.5c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	VF	5.00
39 8.5c Trans	1	3	ArtCraft	VF	5.00
40 8.5c Trans	1	3 PC	Artmaster	XF	15.00
41 8.5c Trans	1	3+3	SMC	XF (Tagged) VF (PC)	25.00
41a 8.5c Trans	1	5+5	Artmaster	XF	25.00
41b 8.5c Trans	1	5+5	SMC	XF (Tagged) F(P/G)	15.00
43 9.3c Trans	1	2	Fleetwood	XF (+2c American)	25.00
44 9.3c Trans	1	2	Fleetwood	Pair (+2c American)	17.00
45 9.3c Trans	2	2	Fleetwood	XF (+2c American)	25.00
45a 9.3c Trans	2	2	ArtCraft	Pair (+2c American)	12.00
46 9.3c Trans	2	4	ArtCraft	Pair	17.00
46a 10c Trans	1	3	ArtCraft	XF	5.00
46b 10c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	XF	5.00
46c 10c Trans	1	3	Peram	XF	7.00
47 10.3c Trans	1	4	ArtCraft	VF	25.00
48 10.3c Trans	1	4	Artmaster	F (# on left stamp)	15.00
49 10.3c Trans	1	2	Delaware	VF	25.00
50 10.3c Trans	1	3	Peram	XF	25.00
51 10.3c Trans	2	2	ArtCraft	F	15.00
52 11c Delaware	1	2	Belton	VF Bellows (# on right)	17.00
53 11c Delaware	1	2	Belton	Pair Bellows (# on right out)	12.00
54 11c Delaware	1	3	ArtCraft	XF	17.00
54a 11c Delaware	1	3	SMC	XF	20.00
55 12c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	Superb	10.00
56 14c Trans	1	5	Chamberlain	XF (Short strip ended)	5.00
57 17c Trans	1	2	American	Pair	4.00
58 17c Trans	2	2	American	Pair (# on left)	3.75
59 17c Trans	2	4	ArtCraft	Pair	7.00
60 18c Trans	1	1	Dallas	XF (Head pointed) (+single cancelled overprint to prove First Day)	75.00
61 18c Trans	1	2	Fleetwood	F	20.00
62 18c Trans	1	4	ArtCraft	F	25.00
63 18c Trans	2	2	Fleetwood	XF	30.00
64 18c Trans	2	2	Fleetwood	F	22.00
65 25c Trans	1	3	SMC	XF	12.00
66 25c Trans	1	3	Artmaster	XF	12.00
67 10c Movement	No #	2	ArtCraft	VF (tagged error)	15.00

Please order by number. Condition refers to the PNC. Most items are one of a kind and an attempt has been made to describe them fully. Instant refund for any reason. 5% discount for orders over \$50; 10% discount for orders over \$100. Terms: Cash with order, please.

I also have the following strips:

	S	XF	VF
Scenic Wagon	2.50	2.00	1.75
17.2c Bazar	4.00	3.00	2.75
comm. PC	5.00	4.00	3.25
10c PC (R)	3.75	3.00	2.50

### SPECIAL OFFERS

5.2c Wash mark (4-6) (2L) VF-XF \$75 a pair in strips of 10.  
 4.3c Rain Crack (R) (2R) \$100 in PS/10  
 5.2c (4-6) (3 1.0L) \$25 ea. (Superb); \$10 (XF); \$13 (VF); \$11.75 (F) in PS/10  
 10.3c (2) Low entry on 2L, Gap 3R, \$50 in PS/10

Stephen G. Esrati

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

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In Ohio, please add 7.0% sales tax.

# Dealer orders B Press 12s, gets Cottrells

When USPS put the B Press version of the 12¢ Stanley Steamer on sale through the Philatelic Sales Division, collectors thought this would be the easy way to obtain them.

Not so!

One dealer, Al Haake, ordered three rolls of 3,000. When they arrived, each strip had a clear joint line and showed plate numbers 1 and 2.

While on the subject, it is worthwhile knowing that the "First-Day Cover" of the B Press 12¢ shown in *Linn's* in September may not be the earliest usage of the stamps, which were shipped out when four large mailers of post cards needed stamps and there were no more Cottrell 12s available.

The B Press stamps were shipped to Kansas City in June, as reported in *TPN* in the last issue. And it is almost certain that some were used long before the date on the "FDC" in September.

Reports of early usage requested.

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Ken Lawrence is compiling information on the earliest usage of all PNCs. In many cases, of course, the earliest use is a first-day cover. But on other strips, Lawrence needs reader reports on their earliest usage.

He has listed the following so far in *The United States Specialist*:

18¢ Flag, Plate 6, Oct. 6, 1981; Plate 7, Nov. 9, 1981.

18¢ Surrey, Plate 11, Sept. 10, 1981; Plate 12, Aug. 25, 1981; Plate 13, Aug. 28, 1981. Plates 14-18, No reports.

If you wish to help Lawrence, the address is P.O. Box 3568, Jackson, Miss. 39207.

\*\*\*

In the September issue of *First Days*, Wayne Anmuth reviewed the FDCs of the 20¢ Fire Pumper and 10.9¢ Hansom Cab. In both cases, collectors have recently found new

## All the News of PNCs

FDCs (both listed in the 1987 PNC catalog).

Anmuth gave this advice: "Search diligently when you attend a bourse—you may find that elusive number on an FDC, or even a number that no one knows exists."

\*\*\*

When the 17.5¢ Racing Car was issued at Indypex, every precancel was cut through the number. This will make it difficult to find real FDCs unless one is willing to accept stamps with split numbers.

Early reports indicate that one simply could not find the 17.5¢ precancel with whole numbers. Later, better rolls were put on sale at the boutique in L'Enfant Plaza in Washington.

What ever happened to the selected stock USPS used to provide to collectors? Certainly a stamp show at which a stamp is going to be issued should get at least a few stamps that are in collectable condition.

The tagged stamps, incidentally, were OK. But these were available only in rolls of 100.

\*\*\*

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, writing in his own newsletter, observes that the only se-tenant precancel types that have made it into *Linn's*' "Price Trends" are those that appear inside a strip of five. These are the 1L and Line Gap versions of Plates 5 and 6 with the BA overprint.

Other se-tenant gaps, of course, fall outside the strip of five.

\*\*\*

A. S. Cibulskas has issued his first price list for strips with the numbers on top and for stamps with no plate numbers at all.

The following is excerpted from his accompanying newsletter:

When first issued, there were numerous reports on the 5.5¢ Tow Truck with the number on top. However, no subsequent finds have been made.

Anyone familiar with this field of collecting knows that a strip of at least 55 (some prefer 60) is necessary to define a "no number" strip on a B Press issue. Since long strips are sufficient to "turn off" some people, reports are fewer.

However, a strip of six or seven is sufficient to define a 5.5¢ issue.

"How come?" you ask.

It has been found (by Jerry Clark, Wayne Youngblood and others) that the "burned rubber" plate variety at 2R is known only from the top row of the printing plate. Hence a miscut of the top row could result in a missing plate number as long as the plate variety shows in the strip.

\*\*\*

Dealer Tom Maeder has issued a sensational 11-page October-December list. It is illustrated and shows a batch of new plate and mat varieties not previously reported.

Among the items offered are commercial covers from the environs of Erie, Pa., with the 22¢ Flag in Erie blue at \$3.95 per cover; plate and mat varieties, gaps, and a spectacular imperforate miscut from the top row of the the 22¢ Flag that is only about seven-eighths of an inch tall and in which only the top four red stripes of the flag appear. The upper portion is made up of electric-eye marks. Maeder offers them at \$100 a pair.

To obtain the list, send a SASE (with 39 cents in stamps) to Maeder at 1604 Bardale Ave., San Pedro, Calif. 90731.

\*\*\*

The tagged 17.5¢ Racing Car has been reported to exist imperforate.

# Plate and Mat Varieties — Part VI

Compiled by A.S. Cibulskas

## 4c Stagecoach

- a. Numerous (approximately 8 to 12) extraneous straight and parallel lines about 1-2mm in length at about a 45-degree angle throughout the left body of the stagecoach. Constant at 2L of Plate 2. (Haynes)
- b. Possible plate crack or scratch at 1L of Plate 3 on precanceled version. Tangential line extending from the left wheel at about 7 o'clock for about 2mm. The appearance is that of a "trail of sparks." (Schattinger)

## 4.9c Buckboard

- a. Two-pronged spike below and to the left of the left front wheel at 11L of Plate 1 precanceled. (Numerous reports)

## 5c Motorcycle

- a. Plate crack at 1L of Plate 2. Crack is in the form of a straight line parallel to the perfs from the bottom edge and extending about a quarter inch upward. Constant. (Anon.)

## 5.5c Star Route Truck

- a. Possibly another chill-roller doubling.

Most noticeable in the "a" and "r" of "Star." Very much resembles effect seen in 11c Stutz. However, position and constancy were not defined. (Ostreicher)

## 10.1c Oil Wagon

- a. "Bursting Shell" variety. Now confirmed as being at 30L/22R, not as given in the PNC catalog. (Clark)

## 12c Stanley Steamer

- a. Possible plate crack at 1R, in the form of a line approximately 2mm long and parallel to the joint line just in front of the left tire and extending downward from the axle almost to the bottom of the wheel. Constancy needs to be defined. (Ostreicher)

## 14c Iceboat

- a. The previously reported double-mast variety has now been confirmed to be a marking from the grippers used in stamp-vending machines. (Clark)

## 17c Electric Auto

- a. Plate chip on 1L of Plate 2. Left side of the joint line just below the third perforation hole. Constant. (Anon.)

b. Mat variety: The letters "ORTE" are blurred beyond recognition on 1R of Plates 3 and 4, Type A. (Thompson)

## 18c Flag

- a. There is a 1.5mm mark (in the color of the lighthouse) in the form of a "shooting star" low on the horizon right of the lighthouse on Plate 7 at 1R. Constancy is unknown. (Richards)

## 20c Fire Pumper

- a. Tail on "P" on Plate 10 at 1R. The flaw is on the second "p" of "Pumper." The photocopy provided appears to show a plate crack typical of others found on Fire Pumpers. It is approximately 1.5mm long downward. Constancy is undefined. (Ostreicher)
- b. "Lazy 1," a dash about 1mm long below the body of the pumper and between the wheels. Constant at 5R of Plate 15. (Rosenberg)

## 22c Flag

- a. Numerous additional reports of under-inkings of the plate numbers resulting in distorted numbers. Recent numbers reported included 8, 11, 17 and 19. (Various)

	LP	PB3	PB5		LP	PB3	PB5
1897 1c Omnibus 1, 2, 5, 6	.40	.60	.65	Precancel 1	1.25	3.00	3.50
3, 4	—	.80	1.00	2130 11c Bearcat 1, 2, 3, 4	1.40	1.70	2.00
1c Bus B Press 1	—	.80	.90	2131 12c Steamer 1, 2	1.25	1.70	2.25
1897A Loco 3, 4, 8, 10	.50	.65	.70	Precancel 1, 2	—	2.50	3.00
2, 6, B Press	.50	.95	1.00	2132 12.5c Push Cart 1	—	1.75	2.25
1898 Herald 1, 2	.50	.75	1.00	Precancel 1	—	1.75	2.25
3, 4	.50	1.35	1.50	2134 14c Iceboat 1, 2, 3, 4	.75	1.00	1.50
2123 3.4c Bus 1, 2	.50	.90	1.00	B Press 2	—	2.50	3.00
Precancel 1, 2	.70	.90	1.00	1904 17c Auto 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1.50	2.70	3.00
1898A 4c Coach 3, 4	.90	1.20	1.40	E	—	16.00	18.00
5, 6	1.25	2.25	2.50	F	—	6.75	8.00
1, 2, B Press	1.00	1.75	1.85	Precancel A 3, 4, 5, 6	3.00	4.25	5.00
Precancel 3, 4, 5, 6	.90	1.60	1.70	Type A 7	—	11.50	12.00
2125 3.4c Board 3, 4	.90	1.10	1.30	Type B 3, 4	—	25.00	30.00
Precancel 3, 4	1.00	1.40	1.50	Type B 5, 6	—	10.00	12.00
Precancel 1, 2, 5, 6	1.30	1.80	2.00	Type C 3, 4	—	5.00	6.00
1899 5c Motorcycle 1, 2	.90	1.00	1.50	Type C 5, 7	—	22.50	23.00
3, 4	.90	1.80	2.00	Type C 1, 2	—	18.00	20.00
1900 5.2c Steigh 1, 2	2.75	7.25	9.00	17c Doghead 2	1.50	3.00	3.50
3, 5	—	65.00	75.00	1907 18c Surrey 1, 3, 4, 7	6.50	25.50	26.00
1900A 5.2c Precancel 1, 2	2.50	3.75	4.00	2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10	3.00	4.00	4.50
3, 4, 5, 6	2.75	11.00	12.75	13, 14, 17, 18	6.00	11.00	12.00
5.5c Truck Mini/PC 1	1.40	1.70	1.75	11, 12, 15, 16	5.00	7.75	8.00
1901 5.9c Bicycle 3, 4	2.25	8.75	11.00	1908 20c Pumper 1	20.00	48.00	185.00
Precancel 3, 4	6.00	13.50	15.00	2	30.00	165.00	700.00
5, 6	6.50	20.75	22.00	3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13	2.50	3.50	4.00
2127 5c Tricycle 1	1.25	1.85	2.00	7, 8	10.00	74.00	75.00
Precancel 1, 2	1.25	1.85	2.00	5, 15, 16	5.00	8.00	6.00
7.1c Truck Mini/PC 1	1.00	1.50	2.00	12, 14	40.00	170.00	170.00
1902 7.4c Buggy 2	4.00	7.75	9.75				
Precancel 2	1.50	2.80	2.75				
2128 8.3c Ambulance 1, 2	1.25	2.00	2.25				
Precancel 1, 2	—	2.00	2.25				
3, 4	—	3.75	4.00				
B Press 1	1.25	2.75	3.00				
8.5c Truck Mini/PC 1	—	2.50	3.00				
1903 9.3c Mail Wagon 1, 2	3.50	15.00	18.00				
3, 4	—	18.00	25.00				
5, 6	—	130.00	150.00				
(Ave. #5 Pr. 20.00)							
Precancel 1	—	20.00	25.00				
4, 5, 6	—	3.70	4.70				
2, 3	—	15.00	16.50				
8	—	59.00	60.00				
10c Boat	1.00	2.00	3.00				
2129 10.1c Oil 1	1.00	2.75	3.00				
Precancel 1	—	2.75	3.00				
1904 10.9c Cab 1, 2	3.00	22.00	23.25				
Precancel 1, 2	—	23.50	25.00				
3, 4	—	50.00	395.00				
3, 4 Ave	—	—	250.00				
1905 11c Caloose 1	2.50	4.00	5.00				

	LP	PB3	PB5
11	8.00	13.50	15.00
25c Brevetwagon	2.50	3.50	4.25
1891 14c Flag 1	45.00	300.00	490.00
2	7.00	19.00	35.00
3	100.00	325.00	600.00
4, 5	—	7.50	8.00
6	450.00	—	—
7	12.00	30.00	35.00
1895 20c Flag 1	3.00	9.00	50.00
2	25.00	65.00	180.00
6	—	30.00	70.00
2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12	2.00	6.50	11.00
11	—	14.00	15.00
13, 14	—	3.75	6.00
Precancel 14	—	7.00	7.50
2114 22c Flag 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 21	1.00	4.25	4.50
6, 1, 3	—	9.00	10.00
2112 22c D Eagle 1, 2	4.50	4.00	6.00
18c Wash. 1112, 3333	—	2.75	3.25
PC 3333	1.25	3.00	3.50
PC 11121	—	5.00	5.50
2005 Consumer 1, 2	6.00	38.00	150.00
3, 4	4.00	38.00	110.00
2116 111111, 111121	—	3.25	3.70
PC 111111, 111121	—	3.50	4.00
O130 20c Official 1	10.00	22.00	80.00
O139 22c D Official 1	—	22.00	80.00

TERMS: Payment with order. Prices subject to change without notice. Will take U.S. postage at face in trade.

**DISCOUNT** Deduct 5% on orders over \$50  
10% on orders over \$150.

CONDITION: F-VF, Never Hinged. If you require VF-S add 40% to List. 110% for plate strips of 20 (18c, 20c 22c only).

## STAMPS 'N' STUFF

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# Dealers aren't driving up PNC prices

A question being asked repeatedly is whether the market for PNCs is being driven by dealers. Many sales of expensive strips have been from one dealer to another. Some of the material sold at Steve Ivy's auction at STAmPsHOW in Boston was consigned by one dealer and bought by several other dealers.

Recently, record prices have been reported on sales by dealers to dealers, including a \$2,500 tag on an 18¢ Flag from Plate 6 in Superb condition. Previously, the same stamp in Superb was bought in one dealer's auction by another dealer, and was then sold in a complex three-way deal that did not allow the computation of the price at which the stamp was eventually sold. (The strip was swapped for a pane of non-PNC imperfs.)

**B**ut all this dealer activity should not becloud the central fact. Dealers do not buy stamps in order to place them in inventory and hold on to them; they buy them for resale at a profit.

A clue to the market, therefore, may be in the dealer offers to buy since these set a floor under the prices being asked. If Dealer A wants to pay \$100 for Strip 1, and Dealer B is offering to sell it retail at \$185, then you know that your strip is worth at least \$100 since you can sell it for that. Since you cannot know what Dealer B paid for his strips, you have to make a guess.

But here you must be careful. Dealer B may have bought the strip at any price from less than face to somewhere near his selling price. You cannot tell and you have no way of finding out.

The sales price is no clue to resale value although it is this price (compiled from several dealers) that is used as a basis for the prices listed in the PNC catalog.

Many dealers also swap stamps among themselves to get rid of excess inventory and to fill holes where their supplies are down. There is no way to set real value on such exchanges. But you should know this: When dealers can no longer swap among themselves to obtain what they need, that's when the price starts to climb in buy offers.

And this is where scarcity becomes real. Stamps dealers cannot find are the ones for which their offering prices continue to climb because they must find a way to persuade collectors to part with their strips.

On some strips, there are no reservoirs of supply, no hoards anyone knows about, no dealers with secret stashes. And so the price goes up.

Which brings us back to the original question. Is this market dealer driven?

If this term is supposed to mean that dealers are driving up prices to increase their profit on stamps they already possess, the answer is a loud no. Most of the astronomic advance is coming on the buying side of the transaction, not the sale side. Those "Stamps Wanted" ads in the back of *Linn's* do more to push up prices than anything else.

Here's why.

Suppose you are a dealer and you own 120 strips of five of Strip X, which now sells for \$10 in F-VF. (Most dealers who advertise their F-VF price also charge a hefty premium for strips in better condition. A few dealers use their VF price as their base price and deduct for F and add for XF and Superb. Some dealers advertise their strips by grade.)

One day you browse through the *Linn's* classifieds and find an offer to buy Strip X at \$8 in XF or better. You check your stock and find that Strip X comes out with normal distribution, with 60% of your strips in VF, 15% each in XF and F, and 5% each in Superb or Poor or damaged.

You decide that your prices are OK for now.

**A** month later, the wanted ad offers \$10 for Strip X. Until now, that was your retail asking price for F-VF. You do a little arithmetic and decide that if someone is willing to pay \$10 for an XF copy, he must be selling them for around \$20. Your price for XF (at 40% over F-VF) is only \$14. So you decide that you will raise the price in your next list to \$14 for F-VF.

You also make a mental note to yourself: "Watch this guy's buy ads. If he goes up again, raise your price again."

As should be obvious, dealers are not willing to pay more for stamps they are

trying to find because they seek to raise the price of something they already own. They raise their buying price to try to own it in the first place.

Such price increases cannot be called fictitious since they are what dealers are actually paying. But a cautionary word must be included here.

Quality is a big factor in price. At Steve Ivy's sale, at STAmPsHOW 87 in Boston, an 18¢ Flag from Plate 6 sold for a bit more than \$1,000 just days after a similar strip had been sold by M&M/Southwest for \$1,200.

There was a 10% commission at Ivy's; none at M&M.

**O**ne look at the pictures in Ivy's catalog brought a snort from dealer Frank Marrelli: "It's only Fine!"

As long as there are collectors out there who are trying to buy the scarce strips, dealers will try to have them in stock. And as long as dealers do, prices will continue to move up.

The end does not yet appear to be in sight. And the prices we are seeing are real, honest-to-goodness ones, not faked.

## Cuniberti list offers strips by paper type

Kim Cuniberti, who does business as Contemporary Coils (P.O. Box 3654, Danbury, Conn. 06813-3654) has issued a price list that includes some varieties by paper type.

Cuniberti's list prices all strips according to grade.

You may obtain the list by sending a 22¢ SASE to him.

## No BEP plate report

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing did not issue a plate-activity report for stamps printed since March.

Collectors had been looking for Plate 2 on the 12.5¢ Pushcart because the last report indicated the assignment of a plate number (as well as for Plate 2 of the 5.5¢ Star Route Truck).

The 12.5¢ has yet to appear, but the service-inscribed 5.5¢ is out, along with an unexpected Plate 2 of the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon, also service inscribed.

# WANTED

For a competitive exhibit of plate number coils, I need interesting and unusual material, particularly PNCs used on piece and on cover. I would especially like foreign destination usages.

**KEN LAWRENCE**

P.O. BOX 3568  
JACKSON, MS 39207

## Last-minute news

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz has found a constant colored dot centered under the right truck (that's two wheels and a boxlike object in between) on the 11¢ Caboose. The dot is about 2 mm under the boxlike object at 27R.

He also found the new 10.1¢ off Plate 2 with a line gap.

Tom Maeder has found a mark (not the Shell with Fins) above the "W" of "Wagon" at 15R on tagged and precanceled 10.1¢ Oil Wagon. It is not in the mat, but in the plate.

On the 17¢ Electric Auto, Maeder has found a blue dot above and to the left of the "E" on 1R of Plate 6. He has tagged and precanceled examples.

Veteran dealer Vern Kraus has found an odd-looking plate chip on the joint line of Plate 7 of the 17¢ Auto. It looks like a "J".

Jerry Clark has devised a way of showing (under ordinary room light) the vertical tagging gaps found on PNCs, even including the screw heads that hold the plates in place. That's a whole new ballgame!



*To all PNC enthusiasts:  
Enjoy the hobby! Enjoy the times!  
Cheers!*



**COIL PLATE NUMBER STRIPS**

**A.S. CIBULSKAS**

28 Westwood Road, Stamford, CT 06902 • (203) 327-9676

# APS thanks PNC Study Group

I want to take this moment to thank you and your group for participating in STAmP-SHOW 87 at the Sheraton-Boston Hotel. It was a very successful 101st APS anniversary convention and it is affiliate meetings such as yours that bring in collectors for the social occasions that add so much to the hobby.

I hope that you will be able to participate in future shows. Thank you very much.

John M. Thornton  
Director of

Communications, APS

*In reply:* The PNC Study Group is grateful to APS for letting it meet without charge in Boston. It could do so because the study group is a committee of the Bureau Issues Association, an APS affiliate. Plans for a 1988 meeting of the study group await formation of the national PNC society. STAmP-SHOW 88 will be in Detroit.

## Sleigh whip

My Sleigh whip is similar to Ken Lawrence's.

Tom Beschoner  
New Orleans, LA

## Early Erie blue

I recently acquired a cover dated March 1986 from California with the blue Capitol building variety, a full six months before the Erie, Pa., find.

Ken Schoolmeester  
Greensboro, N.C.

## 21.1¢ usage

Glenn Estus is correct. There are legitimate uses for the 21.1¢ rate, mainly banks that send out unsorted bills to their customers daily.

My point in *Linn's*, which he remembers imperfectly, is

## Letters to TPN

that these users have no need for stamps which, in the cost of affixing, would use up the amount saved off full first-class.

Stamps are used as a lure to open a piece of promotional bulk mail, and those mailers would certainly use the 17.5¢ presort rate.

Ken Lawrence  
Jackson, Miss.

*P.S.:* The "first day" for re-engraved 4¢ Stagecoach was Aug. 15, 1986 (not Aug. 14 as I said on Page 62.) Sorry about that.

## Missing numbers

I have a roll of 500 of Plate 5 of the 20¢ Flag. The 5s are extremely light. I call them "Disappearing Fives."

I was able to find the plate number in several instances only by counting from the last plate number.

Would these be collectable as a regular variety? Or are they the very last 5s printed, with a weak impression, and therefore just dregs?

Paul Filipkowski  
Gainesville, Fla.

*In reply:* Anything you want to collect is collectable. Weak plate numbers on this value have been found on Plates 2 and 3, as well.

## Real 17.5¢ FDC

I attended the first-day ceremonies in Indianapolis for the 5¢ Milk Wagon and the 17.5¢ Racing Car and prepared some first-day covers for myself.

On the 17.5¢ service-inscribed stamps, the only stamps the Postal Service could supply were with the plate number split, part on top, part on the bottom. The entire stock of precanceled

17.5s was like this.

This would make any FDC with a split number a true FDC. Any covers with a full number would be canceled after the first day.

Carl B. Wicklund  
Florissant, Mo.

## Why the long plate number?

What is the meaning of the number that appears right after the plate number in the 1987 catalog? For example, on Scott 1891, you have:

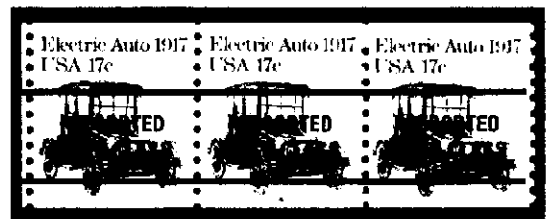
Plate 1 39649-1

On the same line is "Max PNCs" 15,381,000

B. L. Friedman  
Rochester, N.Y.

*In reply:* The five-digit number followed by a suffix is the full number used to designate a plate by the BEP. The suffix is the number we see on the stamp. This is the "proper name" for a plate. We may call someone Bill, but his "proper name" is William Q. Smith.

"Max. PNCs" is a theoretical number computed to show the maximum number of stamps that could have been printed given the impression total reported by BEP. The maximum is never achieved. Unknown to us are the number of stamps destroyed as printer's waste, destroyed as obsolete, and destroyed by inspectors at BEP.



## 17¢ SPECIALTY LIST

Write for free 11-page price list; richly illustrated. A browser's delight.

- 17¢ Precancel Types
- Cottrell Gap Positions
- Constant Plate Varieties
- Used Plate Singles
- First Day Covers

**Tom Maeder**

1604 Bardale Ave.  
San Pedro, CA 90731

☎ (213) 833-7937

# Off-color Motorcycles puzzle BEP

By Frank Norulak

In April 1987 I purchased a roll of 500 of the current 5¢ Motorcycle in southern California to use the "scrap" for postage and to add 20 plate strips of Plates 1 and 2 to my trading portfolio.

When I opened the roll, I noticed that the color was darker than I had expected, almost a deep gray-black.

I wrote Ken Lawrence, Belmont Faries, Chuck Yeager and John Hotchner. I was urged to send examples of the stamps to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for their "expert opinion" on how the stamps came about. I did.

Here's the Aug. 28, 1987, reply from Paul R. Frey of BEP:

This is in response to your letter concerning the enclosed strip of four 5¢ Motorcycle stamps printed in a color which differs from the norm. You submitted the stamps for examination and a report of our findings.

The stamps were determined to be genuine after being scrutinized visually and microscopically with ambient and ultra-violet illumination. Microscopically, the stamp appears to have a higher percentage of black pigmentation in the green ink than Motorcycle stamps which were printed with the correct color.

This particular strip of stamps appears to have been printed with a green ink which has a darker color than sheets of the 5¢ Motorcycle stamps stored in Bureau of Engraving and Printing's archival collection. They are also darker than Motorcycle stamps obtained randomly from circulation. It is our opinion that the dark color of the submitted stamp is due to inconsistencies in the ink used for this printing.

The 5¢ Motorcycle stamp, issued in 1983, was the last stamp printed on the Cottrell press. To date, there have been no reprintings of this stamp. Prior to this stamp, the 17¢ Electric Auto postage stamp was printed with blue ink. The submitted stamps show no evidence of being contaminated with blue ink. The stamps

could not have been printed, by error, with Stutz Bearcat ink because the Stutz Bearcat postage stamp was not printed and issued until 1985.

A total of four hours were required to complete this examination. There is an initial two-hour charge of \$10 plus \$10 for each hour thereafter, in addition to a \$3.85 postal fee to return the stamps by registered mail. Please remit a \$33.65 check made payable to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing...

After reading the letter, confusion reigned. For example: while stating that the stamps were genuine, BEP said the stamps had been printed with a different colored ink than was used for the normal stamp.

While admitting responsibility for using the wrong ink, BEP does not acknowledge the stamps to be a color variety or a color error suitable for catalog listing.

An article by Belmont Faries, in *Stamp Collector* for Dec. 9, 1985, on the death of the Cottrell presses explained the BEP comment that the 5¢ Motorcycle had been the last stamps printed on the Cottrell presses.

Faries said the 5¢ Motorcycle was the "last new stamp to be printed in 1983." It was issued Oct. 10, 1983, and was produced on plates made earlier in 1983. At that time it was believed that the Cottrells were to have been retired in mid-1983. The last two Cottrell presses at BEP were retired at 4 p.m. on Nov. 20, 1985. Two others had been junked after the fire of March 4, 1982, that destroyed Plate 2 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper.

But six more Transportation stamps were assigned to the Cottrells after the 5s were printed: 3.4¢ Bus, 4.9¢ Buckboard, 8.3¢ Ambulance, 11¢ Stutz Bearcat, 12¢ Stanley Steamer and 14¢ Iceboat.

Mr. Frey's comment about the 5s being the "last" stamp printed on the Cottrells does imply that all 5¢ Motorcycle stamps were printed at the same time.

To my knowledge, several off-color Motorcycle rolls were found at the same time mine were, all in southern California.

As no additional rolls have come to light, I can only speculate that a few rolls of the gray color left BEP in a mixed box of 50 rolls of 500 stamps each.

Because these stamps were printed more than four years ago, many may have been used for postage.

Just a final word on the charges by BEP for their opinion. I think the charges are fair and justified, because without such charges everyone would send everything found to BEP for an opinion.

However, I do wish BEP could be more exact in their opinion as to the color or to be more accurate as to the history of the Cottrell presses.

## Linn's pulls an ad after dealer protest

An ad that ran in one issue of *Linn's* quickly drew the ire of other dealers, who protested to the stamp newsweekly.

**TRANSPORTATION**

★ COILS ★

★★ SAVE 10% ★★

Circle item(s) needed on any recent legitimate price list & take off 10% (for items in stock) first time buyers take additional 5%.

## Silence from the 'others'

When a plea appeared in *Linn's* to help form the Transportation Coil Study Group (TCSG), several members of the Plate Number Coil Study Group volunteered to help. They received no replies.

Several of Steve Esrati's customers even requested the 15% discount he gives to members of the PNC study group.

This summer, the TCSG sent out its

third *Bulletin*, including a letter from Gerald Clark that was simply photocopied in full. Clark's work in this issue of *TPN*, continues where that letter left off.

Annual dues in the organization are \$10 for basic members and \$15 for full members. There is no explanation of the difference in membership levels, nor is there an explanation of member benefits.

In effect, the advertiser was undercutting ads that run regularly in *Linn's* and could offer those discounts by saving on ads and on printing his own price lists.

After the protests by other dealers, all of whom run their price lists in *Linn's*, the ad was pulled by the management.

Is this censorship? No, it is just a belated attempt to police dealers. The ad should never have appeared even once. *TPN* refused to run it.



## Investors - Traders

Below is a listing of some better plate # strips of 5 that I am offering in modest quantities at attractive prices relative to current retail. Please look it over carefully.

Everything F-VF NH; VF-S + 40%

	Per 10	Per 25
4c Mint # 1,2,5,6	15.00	35.00
4c Pd #3,4,5,6	12.50	35.00
5.2c Mint # 1,2	70.00	169.00
5.2c Pd # 1,2	35.00	80.00
5.2c Pd #3,4,5,6	75.00	180.00
5.2c Pd # 4,5	75.00	180.00
5.9c Mini (PS3) # 3,4	65.00	155.00
5.9c Mini # 3,4	90.00	210.00
5.9c Pd # 3,4	90.00	210.00
6c Pd # 1,2	15.00	35.00
7.4c Mint # 2	95.00	230.00
7.4c Pd # 2	20.00	44.00
8.5c Pd # 1,2	14.00	33.00
8.5c Pd # 3,4	30.00	70.00
9.3c Mint # 1,2	99.00	245.00
9.3c Pd # 1	150.00	420.00
9.3c Pd # 2,3	100.00	240.00
9.3c Pd # 4	45.00	102.00
9.3c Pd # 5,6	25.00	55.00
10.9c Mini (PS3) # 1,2	120.00	285.00
10.9c Mini # 1,2	180.00	450.00
10.9c Pd # 1,2	127.00	315.00
11c Columbo Mint # 1	42.00	97.00
11c Pd # 1	27.00	66.00
11c Suez # 1,2,3,4	11.00	25.00
12c Pd # 1,2	19.00	44.00
14c Iceland # 1,2,3,4	14.00	33.00
17c Mint # 5	17.50	40.00
17c Mint # 6	120.00	300.00
17c Mint # 7	45.00	105.00
17c Pd # 1,2C (F-VF only)	70.00	165.00
17c Pd # 3A-5A	31.00	74.00
17c Pd # 3,4B	150.00	340.00
17c Pd # 5B	60.00	140.00
17c Pd # 3,4C	45.00	105.00
17c Pd # 5,7C	110.00	250.00
18c Surrey # 7	140.00	350.00
18c Surrey # 9,10	28.00	65.00
18c Surrey # 11,12,13,14	52.00	125.00
18c Surrey # 15,16,17,18	55.00	135.00
20c Pumper # 3,4,5,9,10	29.50	70.00
13c Flag # 4,5	43.00	105.00
13c Flag # 7	150.00	390.00
20c Flag # 3	63.00	150.00
20c Flag # 11	80.00	190.00
(22c) D Official #PS3	200.00	500.00

### \*\*\* NEW ISSUES \*\*\*

5.5c Pd # 2	14.50	42.00
10.1c Pd # 2	25.00	60.00

Payment with order. Over \$5,000, deduct 5%. Most other #s available in quantity.

## GAPS Wanted

To meet the needs of my customers, I need a number of difficult GAPS. Look in your collections, accumulations, rolls, etc. I'll pay as follows, F-VF (VF-S +30%).

5.2c 3.5 2L	PS5	25.00
5.2c 3.5 1G	PS4	25.00
5.2c 4.5 4L	PS10	16.00
5.9c 3.4 5R	PS11	20.00
9.3c 1.2 4R	PS10	20.00
9.3c 3.4 4L	PS10	20.00
9.3c 3.4 5L	PS11	22.00
9.3c 3.4 6LR	PS12	25.00
9.3c 5.6 1R	PS5	35.00
9.3c 5.6 3R	PS9	22.00
9.3c 5.6 6LR	PS12	25.00
17c 5.7 5C	PS11	17.50
17c 5.7 6LR	PS12	50.00

The size of the above long strips involves three stamps to the left or right of the line and three beyond the gap. I will accept the above with 2 stamps beyond the gap as well.

## Comprehensive price list of coil # strips

Many of you are on my mailing list or have seen my comprehensive price list, featuring EVERYTHING—complete. I offer PS3 and PS5, F-VF, and VF-S. I give discounts, free albums, and what's most important, fast service, quality material, and customer loyalty. Please let me hear from you. Send a SASE for the current price list.

## Hash marks

"Hash marks" have been discovered on late-printed 5.2c and 9.3c Precancels. They appear as 2mm-long vertical lines, about 1/2mm thick, 6 stamps to the right of the GAP, near the bottom of the stamp. They are dramatic; although the basis for their existence is unknown. Thus far, 12 different strips have been identified with prospects for more possible but unlikely.

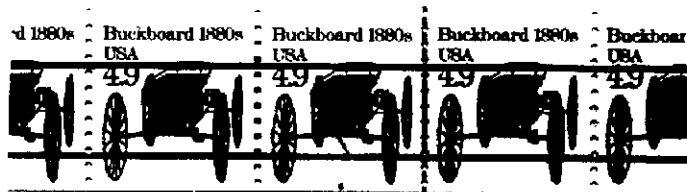
5.2c 4.5 Gap 2L (hash mark 4R)	ea.	50.00
5.2c 4.5 Gap 3L (hash mark 3R)	ea.	POR
5.2c 4.5 Gap 3 1/2L (hash mark 2 1/2 R)	ea.	POR
5.2c 3.5 Gap 3L (hash mark 3R)	ea.	75.00
5.2c 3.5 Gap 5L (hash mark 1R)	ea.	POR
9.3c 5.6 Gap 3L (hash mark 3R)	ea.	35.00

All F-VF PS12s; VF-S + 40%

## Plate Cracks — New Discovery

The most widely held plate crack is the well-known 4.9c Buggy Whip, which is known both on mint and precanceled, Plate #4. While serious collectors have known of the existence of a 5.2c Sleigh Whip on Plate #2, most have not been able to locate this elusive strip. I have found some in a 6L/6R roll and offer them as PS5's or longer.

But the most dramatic news is a NEW PLATE CRACK on the 4.9c Buckboard. It is as clearly visible as the Buggy Whip, rather long, about 2.5-3mm, extending from within the buggy to well below it. I have named it the "Buggy Rein." It occurs on the plate # stamp of #6, probably toward the end of the printing run.



5.2c "Sleigh Whip" Precancel #2 PS5 \$75.00  
4.9c "Buggy Rein" Precancel #6 PS 5 \$75.00

## GAP Collectors

I believe that I have the broadest stock of GAP types in existence. My price list appeared in the previous TPN and, while I'm revising it now, I will honor orders against List #3 for a reasonable period, or until sold out.

Other dealers, even some who scoffed at GAPs last year, are making attempts to serve this market but have limited offerings, generally on more current Cottrell issues. Clearly, significantly greater interest has sprung up in GAPs.

Customers who purchase from me comprehensively will, of course, have first crack on the most elusive strips in short supply such as 3.4c 1,2 LG; 4.9c 5,6 4L; 5.2c 1,2 5L; 5.2c 3,5 2L; 5.9c 3,4 5L; 9.3c 1,2 4L, 2,4 4R; 10.9c 1,2 4R; 17c 6A 5R, etc.

If you missed my comprehensive offering in the last TPN, send a SASE and I'll send you a GAP price list.

## Dr. Robert Rabinowitz

37-E Stanwick Place, Stamford, Conn. 06905

(203) 325-2312

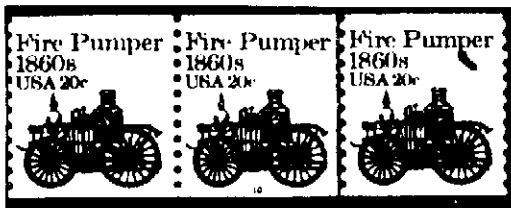
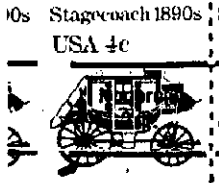
Evenings: 7-10 p.m.; weekends: all day

# Treasure Hunt

By A.S. Cibulskas

To date, there have been no reports to confirm constancy of the Surrey plate cracks pictured in the last issue.

The following, graphically enhanced, show possible plate cracks on the 4¢ Stagecoach and the 20¢ Pumper which are described on Page 76.



## Coming in TPN

The January issue of *The Plate Number* will include a fascinating review of Dennis D. Chamberlain's pioneering in the field of plate number coils, including his prophetic vision of price movements at a time when no PNC sold for more than \$100.

Also on tap is an article by George V.H. Godin on the controversy he tried to avoid when he devised his own names for precancels (which are used in the PNC catalog). But other collectors have different views on precancels, with the result that what we view as one precancel style can be termed two or more styles under different systems. Conversely, our three styles on the 17¢ Electric Auto become two styles in other systems.

Since this issue was lacking a BEP report on plate activity, we hope there'll be one in January.

Definitely coming is something totally new, the *TPN* average of 29 blue chip PNCs. We're working on it.

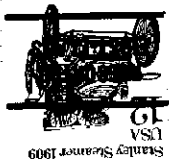
There'll also be the usual features on varieties, prices, collecting methods and, we hope, exhibiting. If you have exhibit-ready pages, send in a photocopy.

Till then, happy holidays! Happy hunting!

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