

# BEP reports low total PNCs for 7.1T1, but lots of 18M3P

By the Plate Number Coil Study Group

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has released another batch of plate-activity reports, bringing our data up to June 1988.

It has given us these indications:

- The idea of printing the 5¢ Milk Wagon when the Cottrell presses were taken out of service was an afterthought. At first, a 5¢ Motorcycle plate was prepared for the B Press, then canceled

*This article was prepared with the cooperation of A.S. Cibulskas, George V.H. Godin, Ken Lawrence, Alan Malakoff, and Thom E. Wheeler, and was written by Steve Esrati.*

without any stamps being printed. The Postal Service had issued B Press ver-

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sions of the 1¢, 2¢ and 4¢ stamps before it decided to expand the series with more vehicles.

- There was a low printing of the tagged version of the 7.1¢ Tractor, a total of only 57,918 impressions or a maximum of 521,262 PNCs.

- The printing total of the 18¢ Washington Monument from the combination of plates that says "33333" is huge. Our calculations show more than 48 million stamps. One Plate 3 was still in use to print the stamps bearing the numbers "43444."

- Printing of the 18¢ Washington Monument stamps showing the numbers "43444" began June 10. Collectors found the stamps in August. Indications are that they were needed by large First Class mailers before the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car was issued. Such mailers included People for the American Way and Time magazine.

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## Grading on Honeybee is difficult; Uncut '1' turns up

By Al Haake

Grading on the 25¢ Honeybee has been difficult because the intaglio plate numbers float up and down, often being partly inside the rectangle printed by offset.

This has been especially true of Plate 2 where a perfectly centered stamp with a clear number occurred about 0.5% to 1.0% among the huge number of strips I stripped out of rolls.

The floating number is a product of the printing process and its movement up and down is normal. Still, a collector wanting perfect centering may find that it is almost impossible to achieve it.

Such a strip could be priced as high as \$50, although this is crazy when one considers the large number of stamps of this value being printed.

Similarly, stamps where the plate number is wholly inside the offset rectangle are about as scarce as stamps where the plate number is clear of the rectangle.

I have discussed the grading of the Honeybee with fellow dealers. They experience the same problems.

I have had difficulty finding Extra Fine stamps of Plate 2 and bought 30 strips from Jerry Koepp of Stamps 'n' Stuff, who had been lucky to find a roll of 3,000 that was fairly well centered. One of those strips was perfect. It's the only one I've seen.

So far, there do not appear to be premiums for the superb copies in which all centering is perfect.

Even inside the same rolls, sometimes, you find quite different heights of the plate number. The best rolls appear to be the 3,000s, but the numbers still float. If you find one number 50% into the de-

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## The Plate Number

Published six times a year by Stephen G. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120-0130. Subscription price is \$15 a year (\$13 to members of PNC<sup>3</sup>). Please add \$3.50 for first-class mail or for addresses outside Canada and the United States.

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# TPN's Data Bank

All information here is from the Postal Service. Brackets indicate additions. Data Bank uses only material about the design, usage and printing.

## Press changes

Production of the coil stamps listed (in the box at right) is being moved to new printing presses at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. It was not necessary to re-engage or otherwise modify the designs or sizes of these stamps, so no [First Day] cancellations are being offered for stamps printed on the new press. The only differences between stamps produced on the B and C presses will be the plate number intervals.

Press Changes					
Stamp	Original Press	Plate No. Interval	Current Press	Plate No. Interval	
21¢ RR Mail Car	B	52nd stamp	C		48th stamp
25¢ Yosemite	B	52nd stamp	C		48th stamp
3.4¢ Wheel Chair	B	52nd stamp	C		48th stamp

**First-Day City:** New York, NY  
**Printing Process:** Intaglio (B Press, BEP)

**Colors:** Black  
 Red ("Nonprofit/Carrier Route Sort"), PMS 185  
**Size:** .71 x .82 inches / 18.0 x 20.8mm (image area)  
 .87 x .96 inches / 22.1 x 24.4mm (overall)

**Plate Number:** One single digit on every 52nd stamp  
**Stamps per Coil:** 500 or 3,000

**Colors:** Black  
 Red, PMS 185 ("Presorted First-Class")  
**Size:** .71 x .82 inches / 18.0 x 20.8mm (image area)  
 .87 x .96 inches / 22.1 x 24.4mm (overall)

**Plate Number:** One single digit on every 52nd stamp  
**Stamps per Coil:** 500 and 3,000 (pre-cancelled only)



## 5.3¢ Elevator

[PNC Catalog number: 5.3T1P]

Artist Lou Nolan based his design of a vintage elevator cab on period drawings. "Elevator 1900s" and "5.3 USA" appear above the image in two lines of black type. "Nonprofit" and "Carrier Route Sort" are printed in red along the stamp's left side, with the lettering on end, running from bottom to top. The stamp is intended for non-profit third-class mailers who present to the carrier route.

The Elevator brings to 39 the number of different vehicles featured on stamps in the Transportation Series. Whether pushed or pulled, powered by muscle, steam or gasoline, all were created to move from "here" to "there" along a horizontal line. The elevator is the first to take a vertical path and is, arguably, the most significant of all in its impact.

Did the elevator make tall buildings possible, or did the inevitable move to taller buildings create a need for elevators? It is a question that has stumped urbanologists and architectural historians since skyscrapers first began a race to the clouds. One thing is certain: Without the elevator, the Empire State Building, World Trade Center, Sears Tower and history's other successive "tallest buildings" would still be the stuff of science fiction.

**First Day:** Sept. 16, 1988



## 13¢ Police Patrol Wagon

[PNC catalog number: 13T1P]

The latest stamp in the Transportation Series will be issued in Anaheim, California, on Oct. 29 and will feature a police patrol wagon, the 19th century vehicle which carried officers to and from patrol duty. The 13¢ denomination meets the single-piece rate for presorted First-Class mailings of post cards.

Joe Brochert, a Postal Service Program Manager for Philatelic Design, based the stamp's design on various photographs and drawings provided by the Smithsonian Institution. ...

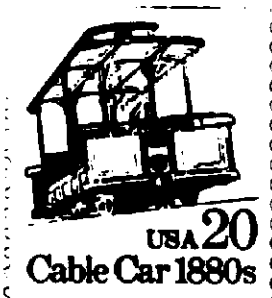
"Patrol Wagon 1880s" appears across the top of the stamp, in one line of black type. Stacked in two lines below that and to the left is printed "USA 13," also in black, and the pre-cancellation inscription, "Presorted First-Class," appears in two lines of red type to the right of the denomination. The black engraving of the patrol wagon is centered in the lower half of the stamp, with the vehicle facing left.

... The Police Patrol Wagon will only be produced with the pre-cancellation inscription. ...

**First Day:** Oct. 29, 1988

**First-Day City:** Anaheim, CA

**Printing Process:** Intaglio (BEP)



## 20¢ Cable Car

[PNC catalog number: 20T1B]

Cable cars, invented in San Francisco, and surviving only there today [The Postal Service is in error, as any GI who ever served in Trieste knows, ed.] will once again travel our nation's streets beginning Oct. 28. But, instead of operating by a gripman's direction, they will be riding as postage stamps. ...

Designed to meet the postage rate for the second ounce [for] First-Class Mail, the 20¢ stamp features a composite drawing of cable cars from the 1880s, primarily the Number 46 "dummy" car. The dummy or "grip" car carried the gripman and a few riders and pulled other passenger cars. The Cable Car is the first design by California artist Don Romano.

The single-color stamp features a cable car riding over the crest of an incline. "Cable Car 1880s" appears in one line of purple type along the bottom of the stamp. Above that, in one line of flush right type, "USA" and "20" appear.

**First Day:** Oct. 29, 1988

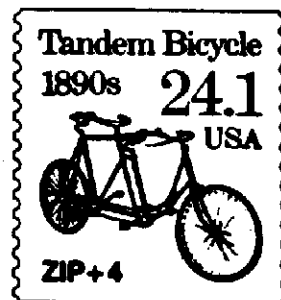
**First-Day City:** San Francisco, CA

**Printing Process:** Intaglio (C Press, BEP)

**Colors:** Purple (PMS 276)

**Size:** .71 x .82 inches / 18.0 x 20.8mm (image area)

.87 x .96 inches / 22.1 x 24.4mm (overall)  
**Plate Number:** One single digit every 48th stamp  
**Stamps per Coil:** 100, 500 and 3,000



## 24.1¢ Tandem Bicycle

[PNC Catalog Number: 24.1T1P]

The Postal Service today disclosed the design of a new pre-cancelled coil stamp featuring an 1890s-era tandem bicycle, or "bicycle built for two," as it was better known. The 24.1¢ stamp, printed in blue with a red "ZIP+4" service inscription, will be issued Oct. 26 in Redmond, Wash. ...

The tandem, symbolic of "work-sharing," is an appropriate image for ZIP+4, which facilitates an automated sort down to small sectors in the delivery sequence. The rate for unprinted ZIP+4 mail is 24.1 cents. Mid-size businesses with ZIP+4 address lists, but without the volume to qualify for the lower presort rate (20.5 cents, 500 pieces), are expected to be principal users of the new stamps.

Christopher Caille based his design on a Smithsonian Institution photograph of a Columbia Model 43 tandem. The bicycle, which the Smithsonian has in its possession, was built in 1896 by the Pope Manufacturing Co. of Hartford, Conn. The firm went out of business in 1913. ...

**First Day:** Oct. 26, 1988.

**First-Day City:** Redmond, WA

**Printing Process:** Intaglio (B Press, BEP)

**Colors:** Blue, PMS 295

Red ("ZIP+4"), PMS 186

**Size:** .71 x .82 inches / 18.0 x 20.8mm (image area)  
 .87 x .96 inches / 22.1 x 24.4mm (overall)

**Plate Number:** one single digit on every 52nd stamp

**Stamps per coil:** 500 and 3,000 [Pre-cancelled only]

## About Data Bank

Many journals use this USPS material almost verbatim, sometimes putting an author's byline on it.

Rather than rewriting it for TPN, it is presented here, in abbreviated form, to allow collectors to get the "official" version.

Even these data are not always correct. For example, the Honeybee was announced as being printed only in rolls of 100, when rolls of 3,000 exist.

# Catalog Update

## New Stamps:

- 5.3T1P—Plate 1 of the 5.3¢ Elevator, red precancel, issued Sept. 2, 1988.
- 7.6T1P—Plate 1 of the 7.5¢ Carrots, red precancel and plate number, issued Aug. 30, 1988.
- 8.4T2P—Plate 2 of the 8.4¢ Wheel Chair, earliest use Oct. 6, 1988, plate number every 48th stamp. (Yeager)
- 20.5T1P—Plate 1 of the 20.5¢ Fire Engine, black precancel, issued Sept. 16, 1988.
- 25H1—Plate 1 of the 25¢ Honeybee, issued Sept. 2, 1988. (Tagging 16.5mm wide on rolls of 100) (USPS said this would exist only in rolls of 100, but rolls of 3,000 exist.)
- 25H2—Plate 2 of the 25¢ Honeybee, on sale Sept. 3, 1988. (Tagging 20.5mm wide on rolls of 100) (USPS said this would exist only in rolls of 100, but rolls of 3,000 exist.)
- 25F4—Plate 4 of the 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite, Sept. 27, 1988, in rolls of 3,000. C Press, plate number every 48th stamp. (Wide tagging) (Rabinowitz)

## Withdrawals:

- 18¢ Monument tagged and precanceled—Oct. 31, 1988
- 4.9¢ Buckboard tagged and precanceled—Oct. 31, 1988
- 10.1¢ Oil Wagon, black precancel—Oct. 31, 1988 (Philatelic Catalog said the red precancel issued June 27, 1988, was to be withdrawn. This is obviously in error.)

8.5¢ Tow Truck, precancel—Oct. 31, 1988

## Catalog Corrections:

**Introduction, Page viii:** The terminology for constant plate varieties does not apply to stamps printed by offset and intaglio. On the offset plate, the interval between varieties will be the same as the length of the offset strip and will not be related to the plate number, which is printed by intaglio. On the 25¢ Honeybee, this interval is 25 even though the plate numbers are 48 stamps apart.  
**Page 37:** The plate makeup of the 25¢ "E" stamps was 18 strips of 24, not 17 strips.

## First Day Covers

- By Glenn A. Emswiler  
 Numbers found on First Day Covers:
- 3¢ Conestoga Wagon 1
  - 7.6¢ Carrots 1
  - 8.4¢ Wheel Chair 1
  - 10.1¢ Oil Wagon (red precancel) 2
  - 13.2¢ Coal Car 1
  - 15¢ Tugboat 1
  - 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon 1
  - 21¢ Mail Car 1
  - E 1111, 1211
  - 25¢ Flag 1222, 2222
- 1, 2, 3

## Imperforate PNCs

By Dr. John Greenwood

- The following strips have been found imperforate:
- 13.2T1P—Plate 1, 13.2¢ Coal Car
  - 21T1—Plate 1, 21¢ Railroad Mail Car
  - 22F17—Plate 17, 22¢ Flag
  - 25F2—Plate 2, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite
  - 25F3—Plate 3, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite
  - 25E 1111—Plate 1111, 25¢ Earth
  - 25E1211—Plate 1211, 25¢ Earth
  - 25T2—Plate 2, 25¢ Breadwagon
  - 25T3—Plate 3, 25¢ Breadwagon
  - 25T4—Plate 4, 25¢ Breadwagon

The following strips have been found imperforate with a paper splice:

- 25F2—Plate 2, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite
- 25E1111—Plate 1111, 25¢ Earth
- 25T2—Plate 2, 25¢ Breadwagon

The following strips have been found miscut and imperforate:

- 25T2—Plate 2, 25¢ Breadwagon
- 25T3—Plate 3, 25¢ Breadwagon
- 25F2—Plate 2, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite

## Information wanted

Data needed for 1989 catalog on Flag/Yosemite imperfs and quantities:  
 John Greenwood, DDS  
 276 W. 9th St.  
 Upland, CA 91786



As the acme of their research and development, Lighthouse are now in a position to offer collectors of tagged and untagged (precanceled) STRIP format PNCs:

(a) All-inclusive, fully illustrated hingeless sets of pages with double-seam mounts that will hold — whatever you have or prefer — either PS 3 or PS 5 PNCs;

(b) individual spaces for the usual -collectable- gap and/or mat positions;  
 (c) and on top of all that, extra long PS 7+ spaces and mounts to even accommodate 3L and 2R gaps.

There are two sets of pages for the whole range of PNC strips, viz.:

- 53 PNC/1 SF: off COTTRELL press, with -Joint Line-, regulars overall tagged, 1981—1985
- 53 PNC/2 SF: B, C/D & ANDREOTTI PNCs, w/o. joint line, regulars block tagged, 1981 to date.

Additionally, there are sets of pages as well for PNC SINGLES, again both tagged and untagged. These can, moreover, also be had as -regular pages (without mounts)- and, of course, as -SF-Hingeless pages (with mounts)-, i. e.

- 53 CS/1 or 53 CS/1 SF: off COTTRELL press, with -Joint Line-, reg. overall tagged, 1981—1985
- 53 CS/2 or 53 CS/2 SF: off other presses, w/o. Joint Line, reg. block tagged, 1981 to date.

Originally, these pages were meant for USED singles. But, obviously, there seem to be quite a number of collectors, too, who save PNC MINT singles (see STAMP COLLECTOR of 11/28/87, page 20, -Modern Stamp Collecting-).

The aforementioned sets of pages are suitably inserted in either a  
 DP-53: Lighthouse PERFECT 2-post turn-bar Binder with -USA- on spine, or  
 DE-red: Lighthouse EXCELLENT 13-ring Binder (w/o. name of country on spine).  
 KA-red: matching Slip Case for either one of the aforementioned binders.

It is a matter of personal preference whether to choose a PERFECT or an EXCELLENT binder. In view of the lengths of particularly the PS 7 spaces and mounts, the editors feel inclined to recommend the DE-red binder for items 53 PNC/1 & 2 SF, since the pages usually get bent less when being turned over.

Supplements: PARTS 2 of the STRIP and SINGLE format albums will be up-dated by annual supplements (or possibly only every other year depending on the number of new PNC issues during any one year).

Summary	Period	No. of Pages	Regular Pages without mounts	SF-Hingeless Pages with mounts
<b>PNC PS 3/PS 5/PS 7 (Regulars &amp; Precancels)</b>				
Part 1: COTTRELL press/joint line/reg. overall tagged	1981/85	62	---	53 PNC/1 SF US\$ 158.00
Part 2: Other presses/no joint line/reg. block tagged	from 1981	32	---	53 PNC/2 SF US\$ 82.00
<b>PNC Singles (Regulars &amp; Precancels)</b>				
Part 1: COTTRELL press/joint line/reg. overall tagged	1981/85	13	53 CS/1 US\$ 18.50	53 CS/1 SF US\$ 36.50
Part 2: Other presses/no joint line/reg. block tagged	from 1981	14	53 CS/2 US\$ 19.50	53 CS/2 SF US\$ 39.00
PERFECT 2-post turn-bar Binder with -USA- on spine			DP-53 US\$ 51.00	
EXCELLENT 13-ring Binder (without name of country on spine)			DE-red US\$ 52.00	
SLIP CASE			KA-red US\$ 24.00	

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# BEP plate activity through June 1988

CAT	PLATE	SERIES	FACE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESSIONS	SUBJECTS	TOTAL	NOTES
25E2	176327-2	E	25	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432	40,266,000	Blue, Andreotti Press
25E2	176329-2	E	25	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432	40,266,000	Black, Andreotti Press
25E2	176328-2	E	25	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432	40,266,000	Red, Andreotti Press
22F1T	177777-1	FLAG	22	02/06/87	03/16/87	02/16/88	238,000	432	2,142,000	C Press (only 18 rows)
22F8	175624-8	FLAG	22	11/04/85	04/27/86	02/05/88	9,173,032	480	91,730,320	C/D Press
22F19	177903-19	FLAG	22	03/10/87	04/09/87	05/20/88	3,629,500	480	36,295,000	C/D Press
22F22	178212-22	FLAG	25	05/15/87	06/30/87	02/23/88	4,721,400	480	47,214,000	C/D Press
25F1	179934-1	FLAG	25	04/04/88	04/19/88			468		B Press
25F2	180101-2	FLAG	25	04/26/88				468		B Press
25F3	180261-3	FLAG	25	05/20/88				468		B Press
25H1	180014-1	HONEYBEE	25	04/14/88				864		Black C Press (see article)
21.1L1	175365-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Blue
21.1L1	175361-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Yellow
21.1L1	175363-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Red
21.1L1	175366-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Black (tone)
21.1L1	175362-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Pink
21.1L1	175364-1	LETTERS	21.1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	408	9,270,780	Green
1T2B	179668-2	TRANS	1	02/10/88	02/22/88			468		B Press
3T1B	178807-1	TRANS	3	09/08/87	11/09/87			468		B Press
5T1B	177083-1	TRANS	5	08/01/86	NEVER	02/05/88	NONE	468	NONE	Motorcycle B Press
7.1T1	177452-1	TRANS	7.1	11/13/86	01/05/87	04/16/88	57,918	468	521,262	B Press
7.1T1P	177509-1	TRANS	7.1	11/26/86	01/05/87			468		B Press P/C to press
8.3T2BP	178919-2	TRANS	8.3	09/30/87	11/03/87			468		B Press
8.4T1P	180445-1	TRANS	8.4	06/22/88				468		B Press
8.5T1P	177454-1	TRANS	8.5	11/14/86	10/28/87	01/15/88	142,500	468	1,282,500	P/C to press
8.5T2P	179060-2	TRANS	8.5	10/30/87	11/17/87	12/04/87	420,500	468	3,784,500	
8.5T3P	179398-3	TRANS	8.5	12/04/87				468		
10.1T2P1	178808-2	TRANS	10.1		09/16/87			468		Black precancel
10.1T2P2	178808-2	TRANS	10.1		06/01/88			468		Red precancel
12.5T2P	177784-2	TRANS	12.5	02/12/87	11/22/87			468		
13.2T1P	180403-1	TRANS	13.2	06/15/88	06/28/88			468		
15T1	180068-1	TRANS	15	04/20/88	05/22/88			468		
16.7T1P	180276-1	TRANS	16.7	05/25/88	06/20/88			468		
21T1P	180499-1	TRANS	21	06/30/88				468		
25T1	177273-1	TRANS	25	09/26/86	10/08/86	04/16/88	1,418,939	468	12,770,451	B Press
25T2	179533-2	TRANS	25	01/21/88	02/09/88			480		C Press
25T3	179696-3	TRANS	25	02/18/88				480		D Press
25T4	179802-4	TRANS	25	03/04/88	03/21/88			480		C Press
25T5	179910-5	TRANS	25	03/30/88	04/04/88			480		B Press

## BEP data on all plates for 25¢ Honeybee

Note: Since only the intaglio C Press applies a plate number, offset plates will not have a catalog number. These data are intended to keep track of the printing history of these stamps.

Cat/Color	Plate	Assigned	To Press	Canceled	Impressions	Subjects	Total	Notes
1 Magenta	179940-1	04/05/88				450		
1 Process Yellow	179941-1	04/05/88				450		
1 PMS Yellow	179942-1	04/05/88				450		
1 Cyan	179943-1	04/05/88				450		
1 Black	179944-1	04/05/88				450		
25H1 (C Press)	180014-1	04/14/88				864		Exist
2 Magenta	179975-2	04/11/88				450		
2 Process Yellow	179976-2	04/11/88				450		
2 PMS Yellow	179977-2	04/11/88				450		
2 Cyan	179978-2	04/11/88				450		
3 Cyan	180126-3	05/03/88	05/07/88			450		
3 Magenta	180127-3	05/03/88	05/07/88			450		
3 Process Yellow	180128-3	05/03/88	05/07/88			450		
3 PMS Yellow	180129-3	05/03/88	05/07/88			450		
3 Black	180130-3	05/03/88	05/07/88			450		
4 Cyan	180307-4	05/31/88	06/06/88			450		
4 Magenta	180308-4	05/31/88	06/06/88			450		
4 Process Yellow	180309-4	05/31/88	06/06/88			450		
4 PMS Yellow	180310-4	05/31/88	06/06/88			450		
4 Black	180311-4	05/31/88	06/06/88			450		
5 Cyan	180318-5	06/01/88	06/17/88			450		
5 Magenta	180319-5	06/01/88	06/17/88			450		
5 Process Yellow	180320-5	06/01/88	06/20/88			450		
5 PMS Yellow	180321-5	06/01/88	06/15/88			450		
5 Black	180322-5	06/01/88	06/08/88			450		
6 Black	180361-6	06/09/88	06/10/88			450		
6 Cyan	180389-6	06/14/88				450		
6 Magenta	180390-6	06/14/88				450		
6 Process Yellow	180391-6	06/14/88				450		
6 PMS Yellow	180392-6	06/09/88	06/21/88			450		
7 Black	180362-7	06/09/88	06/13/88			450		
7 Cyan	180436-7	06/20/88	06/24/88			450		
7 Magenta	180437-7	06/20/88				450		
7 PMS Yellow	180438-7	06/20/88				450		
8 Black	180393-6	06/14/88	06/20/88			450		
8 Yellow	180446-8	06/22/88				450		
9 Black	180394-9	06/14/88				450		
9 Yellow	180440-10	06/21/88				450		
10 Black	180440-10	06/21/88				450		

## Honeybee creates buzz of new ideas

Printing of the 25¢ Honeybee by a combination of offset and intaglio presses gives collectors several new things to watch for.

Alignment is topmost.

We have had the problem of alignment in the past where a stamp was printed in several colors. The most visible was on the 18¢ Washington Monument and 21.1¢ Letters, where vertical alignment of the plates, one for each color, resulted in upward and downward shifts of the plate number suffix for that plate. If alignment was perfect, all the plate numbers would be in a straight line; if not, they would wobble up and down.

Poor alignment also caused visible changes in the image of the stamp design, where design elements would be out of register with each other.

Grading of these stamps by some dealers took alignment into consideration.

On the Honeybee, the alignment prob-

Please turn to Page 100

# BEP plate report answers questions, raises new ones

*Continued from First Page*

- We still lack correct data for the 18¢ Washington Monument stamps showing the numbers "1112" and "1121."

- Printing of the 25¢ Honeybee (PNC Catalog numbers 25H1 and 25H2) was plagued by difficulties. As many as 10 offset plates were made for some colors. (Ken Lawrence says this conclusion is incorrect. "If anything, that number is low. Planographic plates always wear out quickly and must be replaced often.") Only one intaglio plate was made through June. We have stamps from a second plate and know of Plate 3 having been made. Plate 1 printing began in May with offset plates carrying the suffix "5." In June, they were replaced on press by plates bearing the suffix "6." By June 20, black offset Plate 8 had been put on. (Because offset plates carry no plate numbers, we will catalog only the intaglio plate.)

- BEP reported that it sent a 15¢ Tugboat to press as a precancel. Jimmy Chapple of the Stamps Division said no 15¢ Tugboats had been precanceled and termed the report an error.

- While BEP did release more cancellation data on the 21.1¢ Letters stamps, the numbers still do not add up.

In addition, we still have these unresolved plate problems:

- ¶ Printing totals on the 17¢ Auto, Plates 5, 6 and 7, don't add up right.

- ¶ Plates 1 through 6 of the 2¢ Locomotive do not add up correctly.

¶ We still need cancelations of plates for the 14¢ Iceboat, 18¢ Surrey, the 20¢ Official and three plates used for the "D" stamps

- In the experiment with the 22¢ Flag Test stamps, a plate was prepared for printing the stamp as a booklet on the D Press. It was later canceled with no stamps printed. Yet another plate was made for the C Press. It was just to have a "T" and no plate number. It was also canceled without impressions.

- The maximum number of PNCs printed of the 22¢ Flag Test stamp was 2,142,000, a total that appears to justify recent high retail prices. The stamps were printed on the C Press with an interval of 48, but the plate was only 17 rows wide, not the 18 rows indicated in the PNC catalog.

- BEP canceled all Cottrell plates it made for the 22¢ "D" Eagle stamps. No stamps were printed from these. It has yet to cancel the two plates from which plates were actually printed and a B Press plate (40264-1) from which no stamps were printed.

- BEP assigned a Plate 3 for the 8.5¢ Tow Truck in December 1987. The stamps have not been found by collectors, nor is there a report of the plate going to press. The precanceled 8.5¢ stamp was taken off sale Oct. 31 at the Philatelic Sales Division.

- BEP reported a date to press for Plate 8 of the 22¢ Flag on April 27, 1987. Thom Wheeler thinks 1986 is more likely. Also, Alan Malakoff notes that when

the plate was assigned, it was designated for the D Press, but when it was canceled, it was referred to as a C Press plate. The two presses are interchangeable.

But Wheeler is stumped by the date to press for the precanceled Plate 1 of the 8.5¢ Tow Truck, given by BEP as Oct. 28, 1987. That is much too late. First-day covers of this stamp, canceled Jan. 24, 1987, are widely known. Apparently, BEP data are in error.

The most notable finding from the new report is that our concern about the 25¢ Honeybee was correct.

The plate number appears 48 stamps apart, the correct interval for the C Press. BEP reported that the intaglio part of the stamp was to be printed on the C Press but gave a configuration for that press that results in 900 stamps per revolution of the sleeve. Since there is no way to have a plate number appear with an interval of 48 in a sleeve that prints 900 stamps (900 cannot be divided by 48 to result in a whole number), BEP's data for this intaglio printing must be in error.

According to George V.H. Godin, what we have is that the stamps are first printed on the web offset press BEP identifies as Press 43. This is the Goebel Optiforma Press, which prints 18 rows of 25 for a total of 450 stamps per revolution on Plate 1.

The rolls were then taken to the intaglio press, to print the intaglio portion.

Since we know that there were 18 rows of stamps off Plate 1 on the offset press, the entire C Press capacity (20 rows) was not used, resulting in 864 stamps per revolution (18 strips of 48).

This means we can no longer identify varieties by their relationship to the plate number. An offset variety will repeat every 25th stamp, slowly drifting across the roll in relation to the plate number. But there's a bonus. In many instances, we should see two offset varieties between plate numbers.

While the BEP data report only one intaglio plate, Plate 2 of the Honeybee was available at many post offices when the stamp went on sale Sept. 3 (one day after the first day). It was printed with 20 rows of 25.

*Please turn to Page 101*

## BEP data for 18¢ Washington Monument

Color	Plate	Assigned	To Press	Canceled Impressions	Total	Notes
Yellow	174562-1	07/01/85	07/27/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174567-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	05/13/86	NONE	NONE
	175342-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	05/24/88	2,831,400	48,133,800
	180330-4	06/03/88	06/10/88			
Red	174560-1	07/01/85	07/27/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174565-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	05/13/86	NONE	NONE
	175340-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	05/24/88	2,831,400	48,133,800
	180328-4	06/03/88	06/10/88			
Blue	174561-1	07/01/85	07/27/85	4/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174566-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	5/13/86	NONE	NONE
	175341-3	09/11/85	10/23/85			
	180329-4	06/03/88				
Black tone	174563-1	07/01/85	07/27/85	4/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174568-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	3/31/87	NONE	NONE
	175343-3	09/11/85	10/23/85			
	179121-4	11/04/87	06/10/88			
Black type	174564-1	07/01/85	07/27/85	4/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174569-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	3/31/87	NONE	NONE
	175344-3	09/11/85	10/24/85			
	179141-4	11/05/87	06/10/88			

\* These figures are incorrect. The total for all tagged and precanceled stamps must be greater than the total of tagged stamps.

† Total for Plate 174563-1 is fictitious. No stamps were printed from this plate. It is probably the total for Plate 174568-2, which BEP says was never printed.

## First two plates of Honeybee show two different widths of tagging

*Continued  
from Page 98*

lem is exacerbated. It is not just a question of aligning the register of the five colors on the offset press, a difficult enough printing problem.

After printing the offset portion, the rewound roll is put on the intaglio press to print the black body of the bee, the portion printed by intaglio.

And here come problems.

On many of the early strips of the Plate 1 stamps, the plate number was "high." What this means is that the number is not clear of the design. Many plate numbers appeared to have their tops cut off.

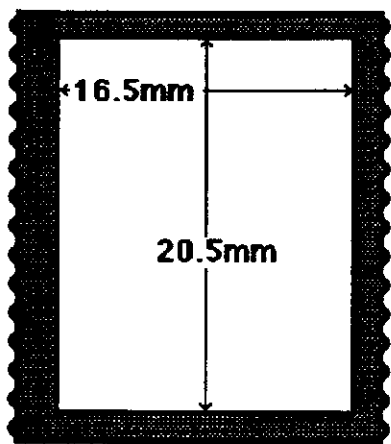
Apparently, the Bureau became aware of this, because the "1" on most stamps is without a top serif. Thus, it looks like this: ⊥, decapitated even if all there.

There are stamps in existence with a full "1" from an experimental early printing, where the tagging was applied on the offset press. First examples of these were reported by Al Haake.

A second consideration is tagging. There are two totally different styles of tagging on rolls of 100. Tagging on rolls of 3,000 has not yet been examined.

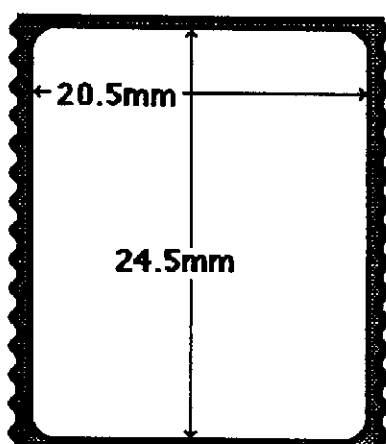
On Plate 1, the block tagging measures 16.5mm across. The shape of the block is rectangular in most cases. But on Plate 2, a change was made. On stamps from Plate 2, the block is 20.5mm wide, leaving only the perforations untagged. And the shape has become like a TV screen, with curved corners.

The change in tagging may be the result of a change in plate makeup and the press used. Some Plate 2 stamps were printed on the D Press, which has both offset and intaglio portions, eliminating the need to rewind the roll. But the D Press was booked up for other stamps (notably the Christmas issues) and some printing took place on the C Press.



**Plate 1 tagging**

Untagged portions are shown in gray



**Plate 2 tagging**

Still another factor affecting the stamps is that a gravure stamp paper was used. This shows up in a plastic-like feel, making the stamps somewhat harder to tear apart than previous PNCs. The paper does not crack when one bends a coil at the perforations before separating stamps. (You do bend stamps before separating them, don't you?)

Then there was the problem of description. The convention among PNC collectors has been to note details such as va-

each set of plate numbers.

Is the Honeybee the start of a new definitive coil series?

Both Assistant Postmaster General Gordon Morison and W.L. (Pete) Davidson, director of the Office of Stamps, strongly denied such an intention.

Davidson said the Bee envelope had proved popular, as had recent animal stamps and the idea was to repeat the bee on a stamp. He said a coil stamp lent itself ideally to a subject so small.

## *Did change of presses cause the difference in the tagging?*

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing has changed presses for three stamps originally printed on the B Press.

The stamps have been shifted to the C Press. That means, of course, that they can also be printed on the D Press.

The interval from one plate number to the next is reduced from 52 (B Press) to 48 (C Press).

The reason for the change was that production on the B Press was backing up. To alleviate this, sleeves were made for the C press. Also, the 20¢ Cable Car was assigned to the C Press right from the start.

The Postal Service said the only difference between stamps on one press and stamps on another would be the interval, but this remains to be seen after examination of the stamps themselves.

Two of the shifted stamps — the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car and the 8.4¢ Wheel Chair — are service-inscribed and, therefore, untagged. But the third, the 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite (25F4), is tagged and collectors have found differences in the tagging on the two presses in the past.

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, who first found 25F4, said the tagging on it is wide.

The tagging change observed from Plate 1 to Plate 2 of the 25¢ Honeybee (see article above) may be an easy way to spot the C Press version of the 25¢ Flag.

Another change also took place at BEP.

The 25¢ Honeybee was originally printed from offset plates measuring

*Please turn to Page 102*

rieties by counting from the plate number. A variety two stamps right of the numbered stamp was termed "2R." This convention dies with the Honeybee because the circumference of the cylinders used in the two printing processes is different.

But there is a bonus. If there is a variety on the offset portion, there will often be two of them between

# Do BEP totals tell scarcity?

Now, after more than seven years of PNCs, we can pause and examine some of the numbers we have been playing with.

The greatest number of possible PNCs so far are from Plate 8 of the 20¢ Flags, with a maximum of 155,398,610.

These maximum figures do not necessarily mean that there are 155.4 million PNCs out there.

We use the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's "impressions" total to make our calculations. The total on which we base the figure includes printers' waste, stamps rejected by internal BEP inspection and any stamps that may have been destroyed by post offices.

The next nine stamps (all from the Flag Series) with high maximums are:

20F9	128,545,400
20F5	101,717,100
22F2	99,273,123
22F8	97,730,320
22F12	82,157,910
20F12	68,190,120
22F5	68,178,980
20F2	62,772,750
20F3	60,979,500

Which immediately raises the question: "Are any Flag stamps scarce?" The answer is yes. The stamp with the lowest possible maximum of PNCs printed among all PNCs is Plate 6 of the 22¢ Flag. It was canceled after only 28,018 impressions and could have produced only 504,324 PNCs.

Next in order of few Flag PNCs possible are Plate 13 of the 22¢ Flag (2,091,852 maximum PNCs); the Test stamp (2,142,000); and Plate 6 of the 18¢ Flag (8,847,000).

Ranking right behind 22F6 in scarcity is the tagged version of the 7.1¢ Tractor (521,262 maximum PNCs). The only other stamps with a maximum less than one million were Plates 1 and 2 of the 4.9¢ Buckboard (901,350).

The following table shows maximum PNCs and the most recent average dealers' price for a F-VF strip of five chosen from the stamps with low printing totals.

Cat	Max. PNCs	Price
22F6	504,324	\$9.71
7.1T1	521,262	2.08
4.9T1-2P	901,350	1.73
20T12-14	1,065,186	23.25
3T3-4	1,100,808	1.27
9.3T8P	1,220,994	97.33

Cat	Max. PNCs	Price
8.5T1P	1,282,500	2.72
4T1C-2C	1,324,602	1.80
5.9T5-6P	1,363,338	53.31

The price column bears no relation to the calculated printing totals.

So let's look at the maximum PNC figures for some stamps with relatively high average dealers' prices for a F-VF strip of five. (Here we are excluding such items as Plates 3 and 5 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh because the maximum PNC figure would include precancels, too.)

Cat	Max. PNCs	Price
18T3-4	2,328,192	\$32.04
20T2	4,342,230	\$22.00
10.9T3-4P	5,142,708	425.45
20T11	6,970,464	35.17
20C1-2	9,608,114	164.92
20T7-8	10,085,742	80.59
20T1	11,213,154	181.58
22F3	17,818,980	27.82
20F4	62,546,320	187.40

Again there is no relationship between

price and the highest possible number of PNCs that could have been printed.

This can only lead to several conclusions, which may or may not be correct.

- Some numbers are scarce because they were mainly used up for postage. Or, these stamps may have ended up in postal vaults.

- Stamps were stripped out as line pairs before PNCs caught on.

- We are trying to rely on quicksand. Over the years, we have found BEP data to be unreliable, and full of errors. Several members of the PNC Study Group believe that some numbers reported by BEP are pure inventions, released to paper over the fact that nobody really knows how many stamps were printed.

In any event, BEP figures must be taken with several grains of salt when one tries to use them to gauge scarcity.

## BEP report causes confusion

*Continued from Page 99*

It was apparently printed at first only on the offset-intaglio D Press, avoiding the rewinding of the rolls. Later versions were printed on the Optiforma and C presses.

Also, an experimental run of Plate 1 was made in which the tagging was applied on the offset press. Tagging was later shifted to the intaglio press. That experimental printing of Plate 1 has a full (not truncated) plate number.

The data in the accompanying tables have been edited to overcome some confusion caused by errors in BEP's reports.

For example, BEP reported that it sent the 17.5¢ Racing Car to press as a precancel on Jan. 27, 1988, and gave its plate number as 178505-1. Previously, BEP had indicated that this was the tagged plate and the precancel bore the BEP designation 178453-1. We have ignored the new date to press.

On the other hand, BEP said it sent the 7.1¢ Tractor to press as a precancel and gave its plate number as 177509-1. And it said it canceled the tagged version of the 7.1¢ value with a relatively low total of impressions. We had previously reversed these two plate numbers, but have

now conformed to BEP's latest data.

Some dates in raw BEP data were also wrong and have been corrected in the tables. The cancellation date of the 22¢ Flag Test stamp, for example, was given as Feb. 16, 1987, 11 months before the plate was sent to press. The date appeared among the plates canceled in February 1988. We have simply changed "1987" to "1988."

We treated the "to press" date for the tagged 7.1T1 the same way because it was sent to press before its assigned date.

Although we list three plates, all bearing the suffix "2," for the 25¢ Earth stamps, we lack data on all other plates used to print them.

But one thing is certain, at least two of the totals reported for the "E" stamp are wrong unless there were other plates we do not know about.

Maybe we'll have facts next time.

### Huge printing order for Honeybee

The Postal Service ordered 110 million rolls of Honeybees in rolls of 100 and 100,000 rolls of 3,000.

That adds up to 11.3 billion stamps, shifting regularly between the C and D Press. We should have some fun!

## AFDCS declines to sign some PNC FDCs; Lawrence links USPS official to covers

By Stephen G. Eszari

The expertizing committee of the American First Day Cover Society has declined to give an opinion on several suspect precanceled covers, according to an article by Ken Lawrence in *Linn's* of Sept. 5, 1988.

- The covers in question are:
- House of Farnam's cover with the B Press version of the 8.3¢ Ambulance.
- Kribbs covers with precanceled 4.9¢ Buckboard stamps.
- Kribbs covers with precanceled 5.9¢ Tricycle stamps.
- Kribbs covers with precanceled 10.9¢ Hansom Cab stamps.

At the same time, the committee signed as genuine Art-Craft and House of Farnam covers showing the B Press version of the 4¢ Stagecoach.

Allison W. Cusick, chairman of the committee, said declining to give an opinion does not prejudice the covers in any way.

Lawrence continued his dis-

cussion of FDCs in the issue of Sept. 12 when he reported on alleged FDCs showing the 6¢ Tricycle precanceled, covers that turned up long after the stamp was issued.

At STaMpsHOW 87 in Boston, I asked dealers and collectors from Maryland whether they had ever heard of R&D Enterprises in Rockville, Md., the firm that was selling these covers. No one had ever heard of R&D, which used a post office box and had no listed telephone.

Lawrence used the Freedom of Information Act to find out who was renting the post office box and was informed that it was Wayne Anmuth, a high-ranking postal official.

Anmuth had previously sold a 6T1P cover to Lawrence.

So Lawrence wrote to Anmuth at the box and was promptly threatened with lawsuits if he printed anything about Anmuth, Lawrence said.

*Linn's* ran the article anyway.

*TPN* did not know how to reach Anmuth for comment.

## Did change of presses cause the difference in the tagging?

Continued from Page 100

18x25. The printed rolls were then taken to the C Press where the intaglio portion was printed.

But this wasted two rows of the C Press's capacity, which is 20 rows.

If your label says "6-88," this is your last issue.

Plate 2 of the Honeybee was printed to use the full capacity of the C/D Press, meaning new offset plates had to be made, which measure 25x20.

These changes may account for the changes in tagging.

Unfortunately, BEP plate-activity data reported in this issue of *The Plate Number* do not yet reflect these changes.

Plate 3 has been made.

We solicit reports on your findings.

## Can chocolate on the press cause a constant plate variety?

It seemed a new constant variety. Missing on the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car was the top of "0s" in "1920s" at 2R.

Of the six strips obtained, one had a huge brownish blob at just about the same place, obviously something foreign on the plate (it looked like a pressman had been eating chocolate and some fell off).

On the next numbered strip over, some brown could still be seen.

But on the next three strips, there was no sign of brown, just missing type.

Which seems to indicate that even when finding two identical strips with what looks like a printing variety, one cannot always be certain.

A.S. Cibulskas, who tries to make order out of an ever-growing interest in PNC varieties, commented on the find:

"This is a key point. I have received numerous reports on these kinds of items. I have, perhaps arbitrarily, decided not to report varieties caused by foreign matter unless separate confirmatory reports have been made from different sources. This is still not foolproof, but will continue until proven wrong."

What this means is: If Smith finds a foreign-matter item in Utah, we will disregard it. If Brown in Ohio finds a similar item, we take another look.

This is reasonable. Plates can be permanently damaged by foreign matter. The variety could continue even after the dirt is gone (onto the stamps in this case).

Constancy, in other words, is not the only test.

It all makes for happy hunting.

### ADLETS

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25¢ Bread Wagon 1, 2, 3, 4

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# USPS dumps seven trailers full of covers; dealer wonders what PNC jewels were lost

Jerry Koepp, co-owner of Stamps 'n' Stuff in West Des Moines, must be a fisherman. He's got a great story about "the one who got away."

A sweepstakes company in Minneapolis was raided by the Postal Service on suspicion that the owner had been engaged in washing stamps (reusing stamps that had not been canceled).

The mailmen carted off seven tractor-trailer loads of covers. The owner of the firm knew he was innocent, but when the case was resolved and USPS offered to return the confiscated mail, the owner's wife said, "Thanks, but no thanks."

So seven semis drove off to the dump.

Koepp does not know what may have been in those seven semis. But he did manage to pick up 7 1/2 tons of covers from the firm. Koepp's haul included stamps from the 18¢ and 20¢ era, including lots of Consumer Education, Pump-er, Surrey and Flag PNC singles. After a diligent search, Koepp said he found no 18F6 used singles, but has found a gold mine of other used material.

"You got to wonder what was in the rest," he said.

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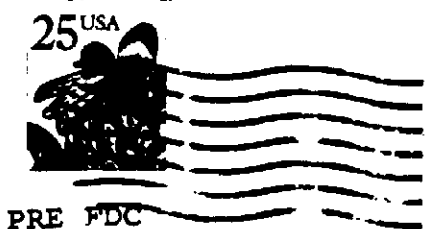
Seen at STampsHOW in Detroit was a SAFE album that is splendid for mounting long strips.

The pages are black with transparent pockets that can accommodate strips up to 18 stamps long. The exact measurements of the pages, each with space for eight strips, are 16 1/2 inches long by 11 13/16 inches high.

The pages (No. 1028) retail at \$2.50 each and the binder (No. 1020) can hold 40 pages. The binder retails at \$39.95. A matching slipcase (No. 1029) retails at \$21.95.

The only drawback is that such pages allow for no write-up.

As with most philatelic accessories, these items may be purchased at considerable discounts from such dealers as Subway Stamp Co.



## PRE-FDC: Frank Marrelli beats the Postal Service by a day.

The 25¢ Honeybee stamp was issued Sept. 2 in Omaha. Frank Marrelli, a PNC dealer in Kenosha, Wisc., obtained some of these stamps before the official first day and made covers that were canceled Sept. 1 in Milwaukee. A close-up of his cancel is shown above.

\*\*\*

Douglas P. Brown of the Postage Stamp Gallery in Chamblee, Ga., has published an album for PNCs. Each page is for one design and provides space for a single, a pair, and strips of three and five. Pages are punched for a three-ring binder. You would need to buy additional pages (at \$1 each) for each plate number beyond the first for that design, so the 22¢ Flag would cost an added \$21 over and above the \$79 for the basic album.

\*\*\*

Postal clerks do not like the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car at all.

For the first time, the wrapper label fails to state a price for a roll of 500. All previous PNC labels had a price.

\*\*\*

Alan Thomson of New Hampshire points out that the 7.6¢ Carreta is the first stamp in the Transportation Series where a plate number appears in a color other than that of the vignette. On 7.6T1P, the plate number is in the color of the service indicator (red).

\*\*\*

Did you know that U.S. stamps are the

thickest in the world? Our stamps, including the gum, are about 0.12mm thick. The stamps of Canada, the United Nations in New York, France, Italy and West Germany measure 0.10mm. Japan and China issue stamps of 0.9mm while recent Mexican stamps measure only 0.8mm.

Here's a wonderful way to solve the Postal Service's profit problem. By printing stamps on thinner paper, millions of dollars could be saved on paper. Going from 0.12 to 0.10 mm would be a saving of 16.7%.

\*\*\*

William Haskins of Massachusetts has found several rolls of 25T1, Plate 1 of the 25¢ Bread Wagon, in which the plate numbers are so weak as to become almost invisible.

\*\*\*

Among recent subscribers to *TPN* are the library of the University of Texas at Dallas and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin at Madison. The Wisconsin library goes back to Issue 1, Volume I.

No philatelic libraries have back issues nor are any of them on the subscription list.

\*\*\*

Tom Beschorner of Washington, D.C., has found a new high transfer, and this one is easy to spot.

On the strip of five of Plate 3 of the 2¢ Locomotive showing the "smoking t," the stamp at the left end of the strip is high by about half a millimeter.

\*\*\*

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz has signed on as the PNC columnist for *The Stamper*, a new monthly magazine being published in Florida by Joseph J. Puleo Jr.

Dr. Rabinowitz's column will be called "Rab's Rap."

In the first (October 1988) issue, the column goes over the basics.

Steve Esrati's "Stamps and Politics" is in it, too.

# PNCs on Unopened Covers

## PNC's on Commercial Covers

Clean, unopened envelopes on 18¢ Flag, 20¢ Flag, 18¢ Surrey, 20¢ Pumper, 20¢ Consumer

<b>18¢ Flag</b>	1	25.00
	2	15.00
	3	50.00
	4	15.00
	5	15.00
<b>20¢ Flag</b>	1	5.00
	2	4.00

<b>20¢ Flag</b>	3	4.00
	4	6.00
	5	4.00
	6	6.00
	8	4.00
	9	4.00
	11	10.00
<b>18¢ Surrey</b>	1	12.00
	2	8.00
	3	12.00
	4	12.00
	5	8.00
	6	8.00

<b>18¢ Surrey</b>	7	12.00
	8	8.00
	9	8.00
	10	8.00
	11	15.00
	12	15.00
	13	15.00
	14	15.00
<b>20¢ Pumper</b>	1	5.00
	2	12.00
	3	5.00
	4	5.00
	5	6.00
	6	7.00

<b>20¢ Pumper</b>	7	6.00
	8	5.00
	9	5.00
	10	6.00
	11	5.00
	12	100.00
	13	5.00
	15	10.00
	16	10.00
<b>20¢ Consumer</b>	1	5.00
	2	5.00
	3	5.00
	4	5.00

# PNC Varieties

1¢	1	Plate gouge 2L (upper right corner)	PS/5	\$5.00
	3	Cracks 2L	PS/5	8.00
	3	Cracks continuation 2L	PS/5	8.00
	4	Chip 1L, bottom, between 2 & 4 perf	PS/5	4.00
	4	Chip 1L, between 4 & 6 perf	PS/2	3.00
	6	Crack 1R	PS/5	8.00
2¢	3	Tail on "T" 1L	PS/3	8.50
		Same	PS/5	12.00
	3	Smoking "T" 1L	PS/2	5.00
		Same	PS/5	15.00
3.4¢	1	Chill roller	PS/5	10.00
	2	Chill roller	PS/5	10.00
4¢	2	Quotation marks 1L	PS/2	4.00
	2	Multiple slashes 2L	PS/5	8.50
4.9¢	1	Double gap on top p/c bar 2R	PS/6	18.00
	2	Double gap on top p/c bar 2R	PS/6	18.00
	4	Buggy whip (mint)	PS/5	15.00
	4	Buggy whip p/c (Line gap)	PS/7,	16.50
	3-4	P/c mat variety: flying dirt clod 2R of gap		3.50
5.2¢	2	Dot over "T" in "Nonprofit"	PS/5	22.50
5.5¢	1	Burned rubber 2R (mint)	PS/5	8.00
6¢	1	Skid mark (mint) 2L	PS/5	5.00
	1	Ink blob (p/c) 1R	PS/5	7.00
	1	Flying dirt clod (p/c) 3L	PS/5	7.50
8.3¢	1	Whole, low shifted 1 on bottom	PS/5	37.50
	3-4	Mat variety: Smoking B in "1860s" 1L of gap	PS/5	7.50
8.5¢	1	Dot right of crank 1L	PS/5	5.00
9.3¢	1	Weeping W (mint) 1L	PS/3,	20.00
		Same (p/c)	PS/5	25.00
	2	Tail on U (mint) 1R	PS/2	14.50
	3	Smoking "g" (mint) 1L	PS/3	45.00
		Same (p/c LG) 1L	PS/5	45.00
10.1¢	1	Flying hyphen (mint) 1R	PS/5	16.00
10.1¢	1	Bursting shell mint 29R	strip of 5	8.50
	2	Dot in "O" of "10.1" 17R	strip of 5	8.50
10.9¢	2	Low transfer 2L	PS/5	70.00

11¢ (Caboose)	1	Brake shoe (p/c)	strip of 5	12.50
11¢ (Stutz)	3	Fender and crack in number 1L	PS/5	12.50
	3	Chill roller 1L	PS/5	12.50
	3	Polishing cloth 1L	PS/5	12.50
14¢	3	Chill roller	PS/5	15.00
	4	Chill roller	PS/6	15.00
17¢	5	Reclining comma 1R	PS/5	8.00
	6	Dot above E 1R (p/c Type A Gap 2L)	PS/5	10.00
	8	Same, mint 1R	PS/5	30.00
	7	Chip on joint line 1R (mint)	PS/5	12.50
	7	Oil drop 1R (mint)	PS/5	12.50
17.5¢	1	Inking variety: Hole in 7	PS/5	6.00
18¢	1	Lightning bolt 1L	PS/2	25.00
	10	Lightning bolt 1L	PS/2	10.00
20¢ Pumper	2	Plate crack 1 1L	PS/2	100.00
		Same	PS/3	300.00
	16	Chill roller	PS/	12.50
18¢ Washington	1112	Color shift	PS/5	12.50

33333	Fimpe on lip (p/c) 2R	PS/5	10.00	
21.1¢	Letters			
111121	Diagonal scratch (mint)	PS/5	15.00	
	Same, extension down (mint)	PS/5	15.00	
	Diagonal scratch		15.00	
	Extension up		15.00	
	Extension down (1st)		15.00	
	Extension down (2nd)		15.00	
20¢ Flag	14	Q line (mint)	PS/5	17.50
22¢ Flag	2	Dot over Capitol 3L	PS/5	8.00
	8	Decapitated "B"		6.00
	8	Blue number "8"		35.00
	20	Blue number "20"		17.00

## No. on Top

1¢	1	PS/2	7.50	17¢	3	PS/2	3.00
	2	PS/3	7.50		4	PS/2	3.00
	5	PS/5	9.00		3	PS/5	4.00
	6	PS/6	9.00		4	PS/5	4.00
	No #	PS/5	15.00		6	PS/5	30.00
4.9¢	3	PS/5	25.00		3A	PS/5	7.50
5.5¢	1	PS/5	7.50		4A	PS/5	7.50

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# Poor editing mars useful book on PNCs

*The Transportation Coils and Other Plate Number Coil Issues*, by Joseph Agris, M.D. Published [1988] by Eclectic Publishing. Hardbound, gold-stamped title and decorations, 8 1/4 x 11, 8 color plates, 331 pp, including tables, check lists, summaries and index. \$41.95 plus \$2.55 postage from the author, P.O. Box 20373, Houston, TX 77225.

By Myron G. Hill, Jr.

Dr. Joseph Agris, an authority on U.S. coil stamps, has compiled a reference book on PNCs from the 18¢ Flag through the nondenominated "E" coil. All coil stamps, including precancels, officials and some varieties, are shown on eight color plates. The stamps are approximately full size on seven of the eight plates (apparently in violation of USPS regulations). In addition, there are black-and-white photos on almost every page, including some excellent UV photos to illustrate tagging.

The book details the background of PNCs as well as the history and printing of coil stamps. Richard Nazar has described the paper varieties. Bureau and town precancels are discussed with USPS regulations regarding usage. The introductory section concludes with a listing of known PNC forgeries with comments.

Dr. Agris gives helpful advice to the collector. In discussing the grading and condition of coils, he points out a fact that some collectors seem to forget: "Remember, you are buying stamps, not joint lines," Dr. Agris cautions, so "the stamps in the strip should be well centered." Of course, he also states that the joint line should at least touch the perforations and "the better centered the joint line, the more ideal." This is elementary advice, but it is essential and bears repeating.

**A**fter the 22-page introduction covering the subjects above, each PNC is discussed and illustrated in detail. Often six or more pages are devoted to a single stamp issue. There is a general description of each stamp, then specific information for the subject, the design, and developments of interest. The actual First Day Program is reproduced for most issues. Plate number statistics, precanceled gap positions, and a summary of information about the specific issue,

## TPN book reviews

such as the date and city of issue, date withdrawn, format, tagging, designer, etc., are also given.

Plate numbers are listed for each issue, but for some stamps these numbers are incomplete when compared to numbers listed elsewhere in the book. The paired numbers listed are not always accurate. For example, for the 1¢ Omnibus, it lists Plate 4 as being paired with Plates 3 and 6, and there is no listing for Plate 5. For the 5.2¢ Sleigh, he states that Plate 3 was paired with Plate 4, and Plate 5 was paired with Plate 6. In fact, Plate 3 was paired with 5 and Plate 4 with 6.

**F**DCs are listed with known plate numbers, and numbers on replacement covers are noted. Earliest known usage for other plate numbers is given where it has been reported. Questionable FDCs are discussed later in the book under the appropriate stamp. For example, the House of Farnam FDC of the re-issued 8.3¢ Ambulance is pictured and discussed perceptively under that issue. Later developments regarding these and other FDCs, which may have been backdated, were recently reported in *Linn's*.

The author discusses errors and varieties for each stamp, but no attempt is made to achieve completeness. Some varieties are omitted which might have been included. A misplaced transfer (low entry) variety is listed for the tagged 10.9¢ Hansom Cab coil, but not for the precanceled version which also exists. No prices are given in the text, but some items are described as common or scarce. There is an ad from Stamps "R" Us at the end of the book with prices for all PNCs, but the prices, apparently from December 1987, are now obsolete.

The production of a book dealing with the complexities of PNCs is commendable. However, the book cannot be recommended without some reservations. It contains little original research or previously unpublished PNC information. This is not a serious objection because probably few collectors have saved and filed all the USPS press releases and

philatelic articles on PNCs, and the book puts everything conveniently in one place. Somewhat more serious is the proofreading and editing of the book. There are numerous typographical errors.

The book was edited poorly. For example, in introducing the Transportation Series coil stamps, Dr. Agris states that the Conestoga Wagon has "yet to appear" and is being prepared for a "future" issue. However, the 3¢ Conestoga Wagon, issued in February 1988, is described later in the book. The last issue described is the "non-denominational [*sic*] 'E' stamp," but that issue is not listed in the Table of Contents. A table of PNCs is included which appears to be based on the table published periodically in *Linn's*, with some plate numbers boxed and others circled. Unfortunately, no explanation of those boxes and circles is given.

Under "Developments of Interest," for the 7.4¢ Baby Buggy, he states: "This is the first definitive stamp intended primarily for bulk mailers and non-profit organizations that did not bear restrictive usage inscriptions." Four short paragraphs later, that sentence is repeated almost verbatim.

**T**he writing style used to describe the various coil stamps is inconsistent. Sometimes the past tense is used, and for other stamps the present tense is used as though it were a press release. This reviewer found it difficult to follow the text easily when the present tense was used to describe obsolete stamps and rates. For example, it states that the 17¢ Electric Auto coil "prepays each additional ounce after the first ounce for domestic first-class mail. In its overprinted precanceled form, it also covers the first ounce of the first-class presort rate." The reader must turn to the rate table to learn when the rates were in effect.

The author states that the 7.4¢ Baby Buggy "provides the new basic third-class rate...." The rate has been changed twice since the stamp was issued. It would have been more informative to

*Please turn to Page 107*

# Denson issues FDC catalog

Denson's Specialized Catalog of Plate Number Coils on First Day Covers, Souvenir Pages and Ceremony Programs, edited and published by Ed Denson, P.O. Box 158, Alderpoint CA 95411. Loose-leaf, 8 1/4 x 11, punched for three-ring binder. Pages \$14.95. In binder, \$24.95. 150 pp.

Ed Denson is a brave man. He has sunk untold effort and energy into a comprehensive catalog listing FDCs with PNCs, more than 2,200 of them. In addition, he has provided background information for PNC collectors of FDCs and has attempted to list every cachet.

The catalog is a work of love and devotion, and one would hope that Denson would make a respectable profit on it.

That, of course, depends on demand for a comprehensive catalog on FDCs with PNCs.

**T**o anyone who collects FDCs, I recommend it unhesitatingly as a "must" item of literature, despite the fact that it has some flaws, not only in many typographical errors, but also in an unfortunate problem with Denson's computer, which often chopped off data in mid-word.

But the computer was not Denson's major problem. That came from Scott

Publishing Co., which refused Denson permission to use Scott numbers. Denson said Scott insisted not only on a fee but also on prior censorship.

**C**harles M. Pritchett, vice president of Scott Publishing Co., said the fee is often \$1, "\$10 at most." Denson was asked \$25.

Pritchett said the "prior censorship" was a clause in the contract Scott requires users of its numbering system to sign.

Later, Scott relented and let Denson use the numbers for the \$1 fee.

"We want people to use Scott numbers," Pritchett said. "We wish the whole world would use Scott numbers."

But at first Denson could not. He uses the uncopyrighted numbers from the *Plate Number Coil Catalog* instead (but often gets them wrong, calling an 18¢ Surrey 18S1 and an 18¢ Monument 18W1.)

Also used are Simmons numbers for souvenir pages.

The catalog is thorough. It lists each PNC and all known cachets. If there are varieties (such as the "Buggy Whip" on 4.9T4), they are listed, too.

Denson's catalog prices for strips of five on FDC may surprise some PNC collectors. Here are a few of the high ones:

18F1	\$250
18F2	750
18F3	750
18T1	140
18T7-8	500
18T9-10	500
20T2	1,500
20F3	350
14T2B	500

Many items that are hard to find are simply left unpriced, such as Plates 4, 5 and 6 of the 20¢ Pumper. Yet, with all the problems Denson had with his computer, these omissions may be unintentional.

**A** serious flaw is the lack of warning that some covers are suspect, such as the \$750 Kribbs cover with a precanceled 5.9¢ Bicycle from Plate 3 or the \$1,500 House of Farnam cover of the re-engraved 8.3¢ Ambulance (both of which the American First Day Cover Society refused to sign). In the second case, of course, there are genuine FDCs that were prepared by Charles Yeager, Washington correspondent for *Linn's*. Yeager only made three or four examples.

Also a slight drawback in this wonderful work is the "00/00/00" given throughout for the earliest known usage (EKU). Perhaps this was caused by another computer gremlin. EKU dates are given, however, in the back of the book where each FDC and commercial (non-FDC) cover is priced.

The EKU dates listed by Denson differ in many cases from those listed in the 1988 *PNC Catalog*, but there are more of them.

Prices for non-FDC covers should be a big help for collectors, who have had no assistance in this field before now. And they are given for singles, pairs, triplets and strips of five.

Denson may have fixed all of these minor irritations by the time you buy your copy of the book, since he plans to print only a few copies at a time. That means some flaws are correctable.

## Agris book suffers from poor editing

*Continued from Page 106*

use the past tense and give the effective dates of the rate.

The organization of some material could be improved. The chill-roller offset, a doubling of part of the design, is mentioned as a variety of the 3.4¢ School Bus. However, no explanation or cross-reference is given at that point in the book. The index has two references for "chill roller offset." The first reference is to the 4¢ Stagecoach, where there is a brief explanation with the conclusion that the exact cause is "not confirmed." The other reference is to the 14¢ Iceboat, where there is a more complete explanation (apparently accurate), but it does not say whether that explanation has been confirmed. The 4¢ coil with the "chill roller effect" is illustrated, but the photo does not show a doubling of the design. Later in the book, the 17¢ Electric Auto

is shown with a clear doubling of the design, but that does not help the reader who looks only at the index for an example.

The 20¢ Fire Pumper was described in the USPS press release as an "Amoskeg" engine, and this is repeated in the text. It has since been reported that it was an "Amoskeag" engine. While this is a small mistake, one begins to wonder whether other, more significant, mistakes are present. Moreover, the purchaser of an expensive book has a right to expect better editing. Nevertheless, the book can be useful to the collector who wants to write up his collection or who desires a reference work on PNCs in his library.

*Myron Hill, a founding member of the PNC Study Group, is editor of Smith's [Law] Review Series. Hill had the original idea for the PNC Catalog and TPN.*

# How did the Honeybee get joint lines?

## TPN research report

The joint line is back, not often, but still back. And it's on a 25¢ Honeybee.

No, it is not supposed to be there.

No, it is not next to the plate number most of the time. But there it is.

The illustration attempts to show what it looks like, but only in a schematic sort of way.

The discovery was made by Harold Potkewitz of Long Island from a roll of Plate 2. Potkewitz reported that the joint lines are 25 stamps apart, the correct interval for something produced on the Optiforma offset press.

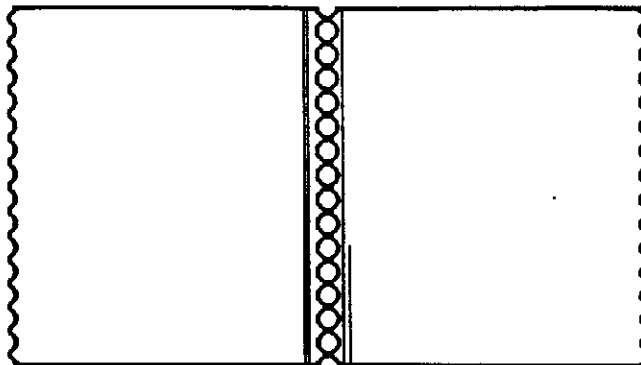
The joint line is actually a series of four lines that are not exactly parallel. Reading from the left, they are blue, gray, violet-black, gray. The right gray line is only seen at the bottom five holes of the strip; the others go from top to bottom.

You will note that the colors do not coincide with the colors used to print the Honeybee: magenta (red), process yellow, PMS yellow, cyan (blue), offset black and intaglio black.

The violet-black line could be a mixture of several of the colors used. The gray may result from a light application of the black ink.

To understand what we are looking at, we must first define a joint line.

On the Cottrell presses, where two half cylinders were put on the press to create one printing cylinder, the joint line was the result of ink filling the gap between the two half cylinders. U.S. collectors sought them as joint line pairs on coil stamps long before there were plate numbers on coil stamps. Standard catalogs



Joint lines on 25¢ Honeybee, from left, blue, gray, violet-black, gray (only to fifth hole).

listed and priced such pairs.

The 25¢ Honeybee is printed on an offset press from a magnetic plate using the entire circumference of a cylinder. The plate is supposed to meet where it wraps around, without a gap. So there should not be a joint line.

But wear can cause the plate to separate, creating a gap. So we end up with joint lines.

The important consideration here is that we are not dealing with a sleeve, such as is used on the intaglio presses, but with a plate that has a top and a bottom.

To get several lines, ones that are not totally parallel at that, we must assume that if the lines come from the edge of the plate, then we must have several plates, one for each offset color.

We know this to be so. There were five offset plates, one for each color.

This, however, does not explain how that violet-black line was produced. The first blue line is from the edge of the plate applying blue ink. The first gray line comes from the black plate. Then comes the violet-black line, which could be the other edge of the blue plate, slightly polluted by red. Or it could be the edges of the blue and red plates that

happen to print out on the same spot. The short line comes from the second edge of the black plate, which apparently is not level on the cylinder holding the plate.

All this brings us to an important question: Are joint lines on the 25¢ Honeybee collectable?

TPN never tells collectors what to collect or how to collect. But obviously we are all collectors.

Since joint lines have now been found, some of us may wish to collect them. And since the lines are 25 stamps apart and not found on all rolls, it would be nice if we could find a joint line that comes exactly to the right of the plate number.

So far, this has not happened, but it would be nice.

Failing that, joint lines would be nice if they fall inside a strip of the length we happen to collect (the longer the strip, the better the odds).

And failing that, any example of a joint line would still be nice to have.

Lee Warzala is offering some long strips with joint lines as far as 12 stamps from the plate number from \$50 up. He sells no-number strips of six from \$15 up. Happy hunting!

## No Bee programs stolen, USPS says

The Postal Service denied a rumor making its way around that someone dressed in a USPS uniform stole a box of programs at the first-day ceremony for the 25¢ Honeybee in Omaha on Sept. 2.

Bee programs were said to be scarce.

"A postal employee moved a box at our direction," Jimmy Chapple of USPS said. "That rumor went around fast and there is no truth to it."

The programs were later distributed to persons who had not received one at the ceremony, he said.

The Philatelic Sales Division will begin to sell first-day programs, probably on a subscription basis, in 1989, he said.

It will be for all ceremonies, not just those for PNCs. Details have still not been worked out, but the price is expected to be \$3 to \$5 a program.

22¢ Flag # 13 PS/5

Low entry #13 \$5.50

High entry #13 \$19.50

F-VF; for VF-S add 40%

**Dr. Robert Rabinowitz**

37-E Stanwick Pl.  
Stamford, CT 06905  
(203) 325-2312

# Plate and mat varieties — Part XII

By A.S. Cibulka

## 1e Omnibus

a. Dot above "b" in "Omnibus" at 4R. Constant. Plate 1, B Press. (Tillett).

b. Plate gouge at the right top of "U" in "USA." Constant at 6L. Plate 2, B Press. (Liu)

## 2e Locomotive

a. Dot over "U" in "USA." Previously reported, now confirmed as constant at 24L. (Maves)

## 3e Conestoga Wagon

a. The long plate crack through four rows of this stamp at 12L has the "Burning Wagon" in the bottom row. (SAdams)

## 4e Stagecoach

a. Slash-like gouges. More gouges similar to those reported in the 1988 PNC Catalog have been confirmed on Plates 1 and 2. New items are as follows:

Plate 1: Slashes similar to those described in the catalog found at 1L and 2R.

Plate 2: In addition to 2L, there are slashes at 1L, too. Constant (Trinks)

## 4.9e Buckboard

a. "Buggy whip," essentially identical to the crack on Plate 4, has also been found and confirmed as constant on Plate 6. (Keydel)

## 6e Tricycle

a. Plate 1, precanceled, has plate scratch at 8L at center left of rear wheel. Constant and in same row as "Flying Dirt Cloud" at 3L. (Maves)

## 8.5e Tow Truck

a. "Flying Flashlight" at 1L on Plate 2 above the "w" of "Tow." Appearance is that of a cylinder, 1.5mm long. (Haake)

## 9.3e Mail Wagon

a. Plate 4, precanceled has constant multiple plate cracks at 1L. Main crack runs down diagonally from the second horizontal bar in the body of the wagon to the top of the foot rest and extends an additional 1mm beyond that. Also several cracks from the 1-2 o'clock position of the rear wheel that run diagonally upward into the body. (Thompson)

## 10.1e Oil Wagon

a. Plate 1, tagged. Arrow with feathers. Previously reported, now confirmed as constant at 19L. (Pesczynski)

b. Plate 1, tagged and precanceled. Dot right of "A" in "USA." Constant at 6R. (Cibulka)

c. Plate 1, tagged and precanceled. Dot above and between the "S" and "A" of "USA." Constant at 22R. (Cibulka)

d. Plate 1, tagged and precanceled. Dot over "i" of "Oil." Constant at 20L. Previously listed in catalog as

precancel only, position unknown. (Cibulka)

Note: The above three varieties (b, c, and d) are in the same row as "Artillery Shell I."

e. Plate 1, tagged. Rocks in road. Constant at 11R. (Clark)

f. Dot under the second "1" of "10.1." Constant at 17R. (Anon.)

g. Plate 1, precanceled. Hoesline at 6L. Constant in same row as Perched Parrot at 15R. (Thompson)

h. Plate 1, tagged. Dot in front of the wagon. Constant at 11R as Artillery Shell II. (Cibulka)

i. Plate 1, tagged. Rock in road. Constant at 6L. (Cibulka)

j. Plate 1, precanceled. Artillery-like marks at 13L and 14R in front of the cab, below the upper precancel line. Each unique to itself and constant. (Maves)

k. Plate 1, precanceled. Plate scratch about 3mm long horizontally above the cab at 20R. Constant. (Maves)

l. Plate 2, red precancel. Constant cracks or scratches at 5L. Doubling effect on spokes on right wheel at 4 o'clock and line, about 1mm long, extending outward from wheel. (Coggins)

## 11e Caboose

a. Precancel. Dot under "1" of date. Constant at 6L. (Eastman)

b. Precancel. Uninked area at left side of caboose. Constant at 8L. (Eastman)

c. Precancel. Break in leftmost wheel at 4-5 o'clock. Constant at 10L. Eastman.

d. Precancel. Dot after "s" of date, almost into perforations between 3L and 4L. Constant. (Eastman)

e. Precancel. Dot at mid-right side of "c" in "11c." Constant at 11L. (Eastman)

Note: All five of the above varieties are from the same row.

## 11e Stutz Bearcat

a. Plate 1. Dot under the first "1" of the denomination. Constant at 2L. (Eastman)

b. Dot over "B" in "Bearcat." Example on a single. Constancy/position have to be defined. (Schön)

## 12.5e Pushcart

a. Plate 1, precanceled. Wart on upper part of right leg of "A" in "USA." Constant at 5L. (Maves)

b. Plate 1, precanceled. Slash/scratch below "USA." Constant at 10R. (Maves)

c. Plate 1, precanceled. Vertical slash above the right side of the umbrella. Constant at 12R. (Maves)

d. Plate 1, precanceled. Dot over first "8" of date. Constant at 20R. (Maves)

Note: All four varieties above are from the same row.

e. Plate 1, precanceled. Rock in road. Constant at 9R. (Maves)

f. Plate 1, precanceled. Line con-

necting the bottom part of the "5" to the umbrella. Constant at 5L. (JAdams)

g. Plate 1, precanceled. Spur on the left of the base of the "2." Constant at 14R. (JAdams)

h. Plate 1, precanceled. Comma-shaped gouge below right side of umbrella. Constant at 17R. (JAdams)

i. Plate 1, precanceled. Double decimal point. Constant at 26L. (JAdams)

j. Plate 1, precanceled. Spur on the upper right rounded part of the "2." Constant at 9L. (JAdams)

Note: Varieties f through j are all found in the same row.

## 15e Tugboat

a. Fish hook constant at the top margin above the "o" of "boat." Constant at 9R. (Clark)

Comment: This looks as if there should be an extension into the row above.

b. Double plate gouge at 1R. Two wedge-shaped gouges as follows: 1) about 1mm left of the upright portion of the "1" in "15." 2) at top right of the numeral. Constant. (Eastman)

## 16.7e Popcorn Wagon

a. Plate gouge/scratch diagonally below and between the wheels progresses downward toward the right corner. Constant at 12L. (Caruthers)

b. Dot at 3L below the left of the "2" in the date. Constant. (McKenna)

c. Dot about 3mm below the "0" of date. Constant at 4L. (Marrelli)

d. Crack/scratch at 1R. Extends down from about 5 o'clock of right wheel almost to bottom edge of stamp. Constant. (Marrelli)

e. Wart on mid-left side of "6" and wart on right wheel about 8 o'clock. Both constant at 13R. (Marrelli)

f. Short line extending down from bottom of left wheel at 6 o'clock. Constant at 20L. (Marrelli)

g. Dot left of wheel at 9 o'clock. Constant at 26L. (Marrelli)

Note: Varieties f and g are from same row.

## 17e Electric Auto

a. Plate 7, Precancel AB. Gap 5R. Dot above "e" of "Electric." Constant at 1R. Essentially identical to variety found on Plate 6. (Maves)

b. Plate 7, tagged. Plate chip at midpoint of joint line. Only one example, constancy uncertain. (Eastman)

## 20e Fire Pumper

a. Plates 9 and 10. Chill-roller doubling. Most noticeable and constant at 3L. (SAdams)

Please turn to Page 111

## Unique material for specialists

4.9e "Buggy whip" #6, newly discovered, gap 2L, 3L, \$75 each F-VF; \$105 VF-S.

10.9e precancel #2, dropped transfer, gap 1R, 4R, \$100 each F-VF; \$150 VF-S.

GAPS for Lighthouse album, including many not available elsewhere.

For example:

3.4e 1, 2, Line gap

5.2e 3, 5, Line Gap, 1L, 2L

8.3e 1, 2, 2R

9.3e 3, 4, 1 1/2R

10.9e 3, 4, 1R

17e 3, 4, A-B 5R

17e 5, 6 B-A, 5R (number on top)

Send for latest prices.

Special offer for TPN readers:

Lighthouse Cottrell album PNC-1 has illustrated pages with built-in mounts for all Cottrell mint and precanceled strips, including all GAPS between 3L and 2R and all known 17e A-B and B-A types. Retail for pages is \$158. You can have it FREE by sending \$142 and when your GAP orders exceed \$1,420, I'll credit you with the entire album cost, \$142

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz

37-E Stanwick Pl.

Stamford, CT 06905

(203) 325-2312



# Prices continue to decline; average rises

PNC prices continued to fall in the last two months, but their decline is not reflected in the *TPN* Average for October because prices of better items have remained steady or even gone up.

The average climbed 3.16 points since the September issue of *TPN* despite continued erosion in the price of Plates 12 and 14 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper, now being sold at just \$8 for a strip of five by Lee Wazzala.

The average is composed of 29 strips chosen because they reflected the trend of the more valuable PNCs. By *PNC Catalog* number, they are:

18F1	18F3	20F4
20F11	22F1	5.2T3
7.4T2	9.3T8	17T8
18T1	18T3	18T7
20T1	20T1	20T2
20T7	20T11	20T12
20C1	20C3	2001
2201	5.2T4P-No	5.9T3P-Ln
5.9T6P-Ln	9.3T1P-No	9.3T8P-2L
10.9T1P-Ln	17T8Pa-1L	

Of these, 5.9T6P and 9.3T8P have climbed in the most recent reporting period. So has 20T11.

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, for example, raised the price of a F-VF strip of five of 9.3T8P from \$95 to \$99. He also raised the price of 20T11 from \$45 to \$49.

But in his List 34A, Dr. Rabinowitz slashed almost all prices from as little

as two cents on some items to \$10 or more on others. The cuts are in the range of 10% to 25%. His cuts did not show up in the *TPN* Average because most of his prices for items in the average stayed the same.

Also rising in his list were Plates 3 and 5 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh, going from \$90 to \$99.

Cuts were also noticed in price lists issued by other dealers, including Wazzala and Al Haake. But both kept their prices for "good strips" at their previous levels, or raised them.

One strip not reflected in the average has had some sensational price hikes. It is Plate 3 of the 22¢ Flag. Dr. Rabinowitz lists it at \$50. Haake's VF price is \$35 and his XF price is \$50.

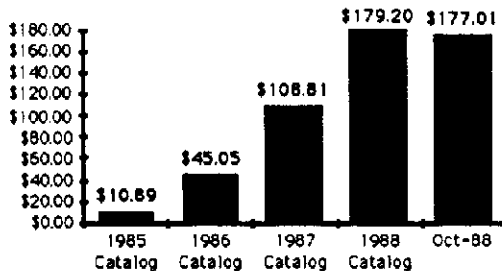
Wazzala is out of this item, and has been since August. Al Hagen of H&H Stamps listed them at \$30 in his October price list.

Jerry Koeppe of Stamps 'n' Stuff, listed the strip at \$28 in the last issue of *TPN*. Dennis D. Chamberlain had it for \$35 in his August-October price list, his fifth anniversary edition.

But almost all dealers whose lists are included in the average have been gradually dropping prices on more common items, even of varieties that have shown few price changes in recent months.

Haake, for example, is offering 4.9¢ Buckboards with a "buggy whip" for

TPN Average



\$10, tagged as well as precanceled. He has similarly dropped prices for many other varieties, with the "rain crack" and "rain crack continuation" on Plate 5 of the Buckboard falling to \$25.

Haake also is selling all his gap positions without a premium over the regular price of the precanceled strip. That puts his 17T3-4P-Ln at \$10; Dr. Rabinowitz charges \$40 for it in F-VF, \$80 in VF-S.

Steve Esrati dropped all his prices across the board in an ad in the last issue of *TPN*, in which he raised the discount on purchases of \$100 or more from 10% to 25%. At the same time, he offered 15% off on orders of \$50 or more.

What has caused the decline in prices of all but the pricier strips? Koeppe and Dr. Rabinowitz attribute it to competition among dealers. Both referred to low-cost offers by some dealers that other dealers sought to match.

Frank Marrelli noted at STAMPsHOW in Detroit that one dealer who bought at wholesale from Marrelli was retailing the stamps at such a small markup that he was losing money on advertising and postage costs. "I don't know how he stays in business," Marrelli said.

Koeppe suspected that some dealers with large inventories were trying to reduce inventory and bring in much-needed cash. He, however, is continuing his effort to build his inventory so

he will have 500 strips of every item (200 on high fliers). He said there are four or five strips where the available supply is so low that he has been unable to meet his goal.

Ed Denson has been hit by a different woe. Denson took stamps in trade according to a trading price list he issued. The trouble was that he would take in dozens of strips of common items in exchange for better material his customers wanted. He found himself being cleaned out of the better items and has had to impose changes in the way he works trades.

Prices on the 22¢ Flag are starting to even out as dealers find they must pay more to rebuild inventory. Plates 1, 7 and 14 are priced at \$15 by Dr. Rabinowitz (who lowered the price of the Test stamp to \$3.50).

Wazzala adds Plate 13 to this trio and charges \$22 XF and \$14 VF. Haake charges \$16 for Plate 1 VF and \$20 XF; \$10 VF and \$12 XF for Plates 7, 13 and 14.

Koeppe's last *TPN* ad priced at \$8 F-VF Plates 7, 11, 13, 14, 17 and 20. And a collector in Arizona is convinced that Plate 7 is the one that will become the jewel of the 22¢ Flag. He is buying out dealer stocks whenever they let him.

Declines have been noted in recent lists in prices of the 17¢ Auto, except Plate 6. Also in more common strips of the 22¢ Flag.

## Lighthouse albums

I carry a full line of Lighthouse PNC (and all other) albums.

Cottrell strips to 1985 \$158.00  
Other strips from 1981 82.00

Cottrell singles to 1985 \$36.50  
Other singles from 1981 39.00

Perfect binder (2 post) \$51.00  
Excellent binder (13 ring) 52.00  
Slip case 24.00  
New: UV lamp for tagging 28.95

My usual discount of 10% applies to purchases over \$100. 5% more off to members of PNC<sup>3</sup>. (In Ohio add 7%.)

**Stephen G. Esrati**

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

(216) 561-9393

## Varieties

I try to carry all plate varieties.

Here are some new ones:

8.5¢ Plate 2, "Flashlight" \$15.00  
10.1¢ Plate 1, P/C, "Artillery Shell I" precursor \$15.00  
21¢, "Tracks" (cont.) \$20.00  
25¢ Honeybee (no #), red line lower right corner \$10.00

Please send SASE for my complete variety list.

Steve Esrati, POB 20130  
Shaker Hts. Ohio 44120



# PNC total for Plate 5 Pumper is raised again

By Stephen G. Esrati

Alan Malakoff has always been skeptical of George V.H. Godin's arithmetic that was published in *The Plate Number's* very first issue about production totals of Plate 5 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper. Those figures have been repeated in the PNC catalog.

To understand Malakoff's argument, it is necessary to repeat the figures from Volume I, No. 1:

After eliminating all paired plates that were printed only with each other, these plate impression totals had been reported by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing:

Plate	Impressions
1	622,953
2	241,235
5	167,732
6	426,508
11	387,248
13	514,931

Francis J. Janeczek, acting manager of the Stamp Management Branch, had reported the pairing of Plates 1 and 2, 1 and 5, 5 and 13, and 11 and 13 in a letter to the Plate Number Coil Study Group in March 1985.

## Honeybee grading proves a challenge

*Continued from Page 95*

sign, the very next one may be 90% into the design.

On a totally different tack, the cutting of the Honeybee rolls sometimes looks like they've been separated by a pair of scissors, with the cut wobbling up and down.

While discussing the problems of grading with Steve Esrati, he told me about the experimental printing in which the plate number "1" had not been truncated into a  $\perp$ . I looked at a roll of 3,000 I was stripping out and, lo and behold, I had found one of these rolls.

The "1" is whole and has a downward slanting serif at the top.

This, at least, proves that the experimental printing was not destroyed and the stamps are out there for us to find.

Because Janeczek had reported the pairing of Plates 1 and 5, Godin subtracted the number printed on Plate 2 to arrive at the following remainder:

622,953	from Plate 1
<u>-241,235</u>	from Plate 2
381,718	printed from Plate 1 with another plate.

Since that balance is clearly more than the entire total announced for Plate 5, Godin assumed that the total for Plate 5 had to be in error.

That brought Godin to the original pairing of Plate 6. Since this had not been reported as paired with other plates by Janeczek, Godin assumed that it was paired only with Plate 5.

Godin subtracted the supposed total printing of Plate 5 from the total production of Plate 6 and came up with a remainder that was unaccounted for.

426,508	Total on Plate 6
<u>-167,732</u>	All of Plate 5
258,776	Unaccounted for impressions on Plate 6.

This proved again that the stated total for Plate 5 was wrong.

Godin then turned to Plates 11 and 13, which had been sent to press on the same date, Feb. 6, 1982.

514,931	Total for Plate 13
<u>-387,248</u>	All of Plate 11
127,683	Unaccounted for impressions on Plate 13.

Since Janeczek had reported a pairing of Plates 5 and 13, all of this remainder had to have been printed with Plate 5.

But then Godin added up all the remainders and came up with a total of 768,177 impressions for Plate 5.

"Wrong," said Malakoff. The error is in the figures for Plates 5 and 6. All of the production of Plate 6 was paired with Plate 5. That results in 426,508 impressions for Plate 5 with Plate 6.

So Malakoff added them up as follows:

381,718	Printed with Plate 1
426,508	Printed with Plate 6
<u>127,683</u>	Printed with Plate 13
935,909	Total Plate 5 impressions

That means the 1989 catalog will use those figures and will adjust the total for "Maximum PNCs" to 16,846,362.

Godin said Malakoff was "100% correct in his figures, if we make the as-

sumption that the data as given in the BEP reports for Plate 5 is too low."

But Godin held out still another possibility "that the error in the report might well be that BEP transposed the figures for Plates 5 and 6." That would mean that the total reported for Plate 5 was intended for Plate 6 and *vice versa*.

Godin noted that Plate 6 was canceled on Jan. 6, 1982, after 426,508 impressions. "The other plate (5) was in the vault for an additional two years and was used, at least, to print Plate 5 with Plate 13 and Plate 1 with Plate 5, and yet was canceled with only 167,732 impressions."

That would mean the totals reported for Plates 5 and 6 should have been:

5	426,508
6	167,732

But that is also impossible. Since all of the run from Plate 6 was paired with Plate 5, this still leaves only 258,776 impressions possible with Plate 1 and Plate 11. Yet we need 381,718 impressions on Plate 5 just to match the production on Plate 1.

So, with all respect to George Godin, the transposition theory doesn't work.

## Variety report XII

*Continued from Page 109*

### 20e Flag

Plate 9. Dot above and to right of "A" in "USA" at 2L. Constant. (David Hendricks)

### 21e Mail Car

a. "Railroad tracks and continuation into row above. Shown in *Lines*. (Marrelli)

### 21.1e Letters

a. LOMs. Dot and line constant at 1L. Dot above left side of red envelope. Line extends on both sides of dot. To date found only on tagged version of Plate 111121. (Cibulskas)

b. Plate 111121, tagged and precanceled. Crack, scratch or ? See separate article in this issue of *TPN*. (Maves)

### 22e Flag

a. Plate 2. Slate blue. First report on this plate. (Bizub)

Note: This item was in a recent Schiff auction.  
b. Plate 2. Short black diagonal line (45 degrees left to right) in margin below building. Constant at 1R. (Washburn)

### E Stamps

a. Plate 1222. Crack or scratch constant at 1L. Red line extends diagonally up from bottom left of stamp at the perfor for about 5mm (and apparently) stops at lower left corner of vignette. (Maves)

# Should rolls of coils from Washington be open, marked?

I recently ordered five rolls of 2TC (the 2¢ Cottrell Locomotive) from the Philatelic Sales Division. I discovered that all five rolls had been opened from the back of the wrapper. Stamps had been uncoiled and recoiled and the numbers "8-10" were written on the label.

Is this standard procedure for the Sales Division or did someone err?

Steve Tillett  
Dayton, Ohio

*In reply:* USPS runs a lottery. You are supposed to get unopened rolls and no one but you is supposed to know what number is inside the roll. But what may have happened is that someone returned these rolls and they were resold. They should not have been.

### Varieties

I received *TPN* today for the first time. I truly enjoyed reading it. I usually hunt through *Linn's* for information on PNCs. *TPN* covers everything I need to know.

The varieties column interested me a lot. Am sending a few strips that I would like looked at and, maybe, give a name if no one else has found them.

Robert Horan  
Union Beach, N.J.

*In reply:* Variety reports should be sent to A.S. Cibulskas, 28 Westwood Rd., Stamford, Conn. 06902, preferably in more than one copy to help confirm constancy. Naming is not done by the study group but, usually, by the finder.

## Letters to *TPN*

### Data Bank draws a boo

I feel you can make much better use of the space used for the new Data Bank section in *The Plate Number*. Anyone that doesn't have this information is not a serious collector.

Reports on inside info, dealer happenings, or your own insights would make much better use of this space. Has anyone had similar comments?

Pat Rinaldi  
Waterbury, Conn.

*In reply:* Data Bank was added to *TPN* for two reasons: To put USPS comments about PNCs on record, with comments (or corrections) where needed, and as a reference source for the many PNC collectors who get only edited versions of this material. Also, some readers live outside the United States and cannot get this information elsewhere.

### Catalog request

In response to your request for notation of prices for precancels, this is what I collect:

With my plate number strips of five of the tagged items, I collect all gap positions (13L to 12R on the B Press and 6L to 5R on the Cottrell).

With my plate number strips of three of the tagged items, I collect the gaps 1L, Line and No Gap, as available.

With my plate number strips of two, I col-

lect, again depending on where the gap falls, either Line Gap or No Gap or both.

With my singles, I try to show the precanceled stamps as a No Gap, not using the 1L or Line Gap varieties when possible.

Lou Bauer  
Plant City, Fla.

### Naming the blues

It seems disingenuous to me to dub the slate blue 22¢ Flag over Capitol variety the "Erie blue," denoting the location of its initial discovery, and then to say that another slate blue isn't an "Erie blue" because it was discovered elsewhere.

A color variety, if legitimate, is not defined by the geography of its discovery, nor by the number of the engraved sleeve from which it was printed, but by the production mistake that caused it.

Plate 4 slate blue stamps, which Esrati calls the real "Erie blue," have been found in at least nine other places. Must we now have an album space for each of these cities and towns?

Nonsense!  
Ken Lawrence  
Jackson, Miss.

*In reply:* The study group did not name them as Erie blues. The name originated from the headline placed by *Linn's* on the article noting the discovery. The catalog calls them slate-blue. The term "Erie blues" should not be used.

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