

Unsorted mixtures give indications of scarcity

By James P. Griffin

Over the past three years, I have searched through approximately 250 pounds of mixtures from several sources.

Using the 1988 *PNC Catalog* for "Maximum PNCs," I have figured probable percentages available in unsearched mixtures for the 18¢, 20¢, 22¢, and 25¢ eras against what was actually found.

Most of the time, I did this in an effort to determine whether these were truly unsearched mixtures. But the numbers were interesting, so I have made the effort and kept close track of all finds.

With incomplete data for the 22¢ Flag, I have not been able to complete that study.

Please look at the table below.

What do those numbers mean?

As we already know, Plate 7 was not

used much while it was the first-class rate, and has become available only since it became an obsolete rate.

Of interest—and this may be true only because the sample is too small—is the low number of Plate 3 found. When comparing catalog values of Plate 3 and Plate 6 used singles, there is a 45-fold difference, while strips of three and strips of five mint show a 5-fold and 3-fold difference, respectively. I realize that due to interest and availability there cannot be a straight-line correlation between prices in different categories, but with time, if the lower number of finds of Plate 3 used proves accurate, then there needs to be an adjustment in catalog values.

Now look at the breakdown for the 20¢

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Diane Thompson hunts for PNCs at mailers, postiques

Diane Thompson has been one of the more successful sleuths in finding stamps no one else could turn up.

Asked how she did it at STAMPSHOW 87 in Boston, she said it was her affair and nobody else's business.

It is known, however, that she sent mailings to almost all bulk mailers in the United States and to philatelic clerks at post offices. In those letters she sought specific stamps.

In at least one of her letters to bulk mailers, in which she sought specific 17¢ Electric Auto plate numbers or pre-cancel gap positions, she included photocopies of the labels, indicating what to look for.

When Thompson sent a letter to *TPN's* printer, one of her methods became clear.

Asked about it, Thompson stressed that she does this mainly as a collector and that she rarely makes any profit on her mailings.

Here's the text of her July 1988 letter to *TPN's* printer:

Dear President:

I PAY CASH FOR OLD STAMPS

With the recent change in postage rates, I am sure your firm would like the opportunity to dispose of some "old denomination" postage stamps for either cash or rolls of "current denomination" postage stamps. I am a

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18¢ Flag, 105 used PNCs found by Griffin

Plate	Catalog Value	Expected Percentage	Expected in 105	Actual No. Found	Actual Percentage
1	\$2.50	8.65%	9	13	12.38%
2	1.00	29.72%	31	37	35.24%
3	11.00	14.45%	15	6	5.71%
4	0.60	16.01%	17	29	27.62%
5	0.60	14.06%	15	16	15.24%
6	500.00	4.98%	5	4	3.81%
7	12.50	12.13%	13	0	0.00%
Totals		100.00%	105	105	100.00%

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Paid circulation this issue is 429.

Scott alters numbers, so does PNC Catalog

By Stephen G. Esrati

Scott Publishing Co. has again renumbered the Transportation Series, the second time in two years. This forces dealers to redo their price lists and collectors to update their inventories and want lists.

It also means that collectors must buy the new Scott to find out what the new

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The Plate Number

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BEP updates data through July

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing issued a plate-activity report for July around the beginning of November.

The 25¢ Honeybee took up a lot of the attention, in view of the change from plates measuring 18 rows across to plates measuring 20.

In making new offset plates, the BEP repeated some of the plate-number suffixes for the 20s that it had already used for the 18s; but fortunately for PNC collectors, plate numbers do not appear on the offset plates.

However, since the numbers must appear somewhere on the uncut sheet, the possibility of finding matching numbers from totally different plates is possible on extreme miscuts.

The biggest surprise was the relatively low printing of Plate 14 of the 22¢ Flag, a maximum possible of 2.45 million PNCs. Reports on Plates 15, 20 and 21 showed no surprises, with relatively high maximum figures. But BEP now says

Plate 20 was printed on the B, not C/D presses, although the plate-number interval is 48, proving it was a C Press issue.

A comparison of recent dealer prices on Plates 7, 13, 14, and 15 did raise an eyebrow at TPN.

22F7	\$8.67	18.4 million
22F13	\$7.85	2.09 million
22F14	\$8.62	2.45 million
22F15	\$4.67	8.30 million

An Arizona collector has been desperately buying up 22F7 in the hope that the price would rise. In the meantime, his buying caused the price to do just that as he depleted dealer inventories. The printing totals, however, would tend to indicate that the price of 22F7 should be close to that of 22F15.

Another feature of the BEP report is a continuation of the previously faulty data on the 18¢ Washington Monument.

This includes a transposed figure for the number of impressions of the black tone Plate 3, given as 2,813,400. Other

plates that ran with it were given as 2,831,400. The catalog will ignore the error.

Another feature is the report on totals printed of Plate 4 of the Monument. The "Maximum PNCs" for Plates showing "43444" is 2,892,040. The "3" is the blue plate. A total of 51,025,840 PNCs with a blue "3" was reported.

We still cannot break down strips with the numbers "3333" and "33333" because we lack data on the black type plate with the suffix "3."

Preanceled stamps with the plate numbers "33333" are very plentiful, with possible PNCs exceeding 45 million.

Preanceled stamps showing the combination "11121" are common, probably with around 5 million PNCs in existence.

It is not possible to judge the quantities

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Numbers to change slightly in 1989 Plate Number Coil Catalog

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numbers used by Scott are.

The *PNC Catalog* numbers were designed to prevent just that because they describe the stamps. But even those numbers have to be slightly changed.

"You're going to get into trouble," said Alan Malakoff, a member of the Plate Number Coil Study Group about the PNC numbering system.

Malakoff's objection was to the letters used to designate the series.

In the 1988 catalog, 20F1 meant that a stamp was the 20¢ Flag from Plate 1 and 25E1111 meant Plate 1111 of the 25¢ undenominated Earth stamps.

"You're going to run out of letters, especially on the next rate change," Malakoff said. "The F stamp cannot be an 'F' because that's a Flag. What are you going to call the F stamp? You're also going to get into more and more trouble as BEP switches more and more from the B to the C and D presses."

"B" was reserved for any press other than the Cottrell. But with plates now being shifted from the B Press to the C and/or D presses (8.4T2P and 21T2P have made the transition), the chance exists that we may have two collectible stamps with the same plate number but off two presses that will need separate catalog numbers.

So far, BEP has given the C Press stamps a different plate number, so we can just continue as we have, but there are no guarantees. BEP has already used identical plate numbers on some different Honeybee offset plates.

Another possibility is that BEP may convert to what it calls "prephosphored" paper, used to print the 22¢ Flag test stamps. We cannot identify it by a "P" because that letter is for precancels.

"As I said, you're going to run out of letters," said Malakoff. "It may not happen right away; but down the pike, it could. You better think of something."

So I thought of something. The series are relatively easy. The 1989 catalog will use only five series letters:

- T Transportation Series
- F Flag Series
- M All other postage series
- U Undenominated stamps
- o Official stamps

That makes for this lineup: 18M1 (Washington Monument); 20M1 (Consumer); 21.1M1 (Letters); 22U1 (undenominated Eagle); 25U1111 (Earth); 25M1 (Honeybee).

On the question of press designators, we'll try to follow the present system until it breaks down. It worked fine on the Flag stamps, which came off several presses. The stamps ran 20F1, 20F2, etc. and we spelled out the press (and the in-

terval between plate numbers) with text.

But Thom E. Wheeler, also a member of the study group, has come up with a nifty idea on how to make things easier. In the past, when a stamp was switched from the Cottrell presses to the B Press, we had to add a "C" for Cottrell to the original number and a "B" for the new press.

Wheeler suggests a better idea: "Use an 'R' to replace the letter 'B' in the numbering system. 'R' would represent Redesigned, Reissued, Revised, Re-engraved or Replacement. 5T1R would identify the Milk Wagon, Plate 1, and the Motorcycle would be simply 5T1. No need to add a 'C.' Then, if the need arises, we could add letters for presses."

We have already been forced to add a suffix for the new precancel on 10.1T2P by using "i" on the black precancel and "ii" on the red, we may end up with such suffixes on other stamps as well.

As to phosphored paper, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

Thanks to Alan Malakoff for pointing out the problems and to Wheeler for coming up with a solution.

A personal note: I have stored several million items of information in my computer about PNCs. It has been a huge relief to use the PNC numbers as opposed

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Additions to BEP plate-activity reports through July 1988

Cat	Plate	Series	Face	Assigned	To Press	Canceled	Impressions	Subjects	Total	Notes
22F14	177371-14	FLAG	22.0	10/24/86	11/05/86	07/11/88	272,624	468	2,453,616	B PRESS
22F15	177550-15	FLAG	22.0	12/05/86	02/20/87	07/11/88	922,108	468	8,298,972	B PRESS
22F20	177997-20	FLAG	22.0	03/27/87	04/05/87	07/11/88	1,102,808	480	11,028,080	C PRESS (error by BEP)
22F21	178054-21	FLAG	22.0	04/08/87	05/01/87	07/11/88	1,495,922	468	13,463,298	B PRESS
251102	180527-2	HONEYBEE	25.0	07/06/88				480		C PRESS
53T1P	180652-1	TRANS	5.3	07/27/88				468		B PRESS
7.6T1P	180571-1	TRANS	7.6	07/12/88				468		B PRESS
8.4T1P	180445-1	TRANS	8.4	06/22/88	07/13/88			468		B PRESS
21T1P	180499-1	TRANS	21.0	06/30/88	07/28/88			468		B PRESS

BEP data on 25¢ Honeybee

Cat	Plate	Assigned	To Press
1 Black 18	179944-1	04/05/88	
1 Black 20	180537-1	07/08/88	07/11/88††
1 Cyan 18	179943-1	04/05/88	
1 Cyan 20	180533-1	07/08/88	07/11/88††
1 Magenta 18	179940-1	04/05/88	
1 Magenta 20	180534-1	07/08/88	07/11/88††
1 PMS Yellow 18	179942-1	04/05/88	
1 PMS Yellow 20	180536-1	07/08/88	07/11/88††
1 Proc. Yellow 18	179941-1	04/05/88	
1 Proc. Yellow 20	180535-1	07/08/88	07/11/88††
2 Black 20	180542-2	07/08/88††	
2 Cyan 18	179978-2	04/11/88	
2 Cyan 20	180538-2	07/08/88††	
2 Magenta 18	179975-2	04/11/88	
2 Magenta 20	180539-2	07/08/88††	
2 PMS Yellow 18	179977-2	04/11/88	
2 PMS Yellow 20	180541-2	07/08/88††	
2 Proc. Yellow 18	179976-2	04/11/88	
2 Proc. Yellow 20	180540-2	07/08/88††	
3 Black 18	180130-3	05/03/88	05/07/88
3 Black 20	180634-3	07/25/88††	
3 Cyan 18	180126-3	05/03/88	05/07/88
3 Cyan 20	180630-3	07/25/88††	
3 Magenta 18	180127-3	05/03/88	05/07/88
3 Magenta 20	180631-3	07/25/88††	
3 PMS Yellow 20	180633-3	07/25/88††	
3 PMS Yellow 18	180129-3	05/03/88	05/07/88
3 Proc. Yellow 18	180128-3	05/03/88	05/07/88
3 Proc. Yellow 20	180632-3	07/25/88††	07/28/88††
4 Black 18	180311-4	05/31/88	06/06/88
4 Cyan 18	180307-4	05/31/88	06/06/88
4 Magenta 18	180308-4	05/31/88	06/06/88
4 PMS Yellow 18	180310-4	05/31/88	06/06/88
4 Proc. Yellow 18	180309-4	05/31/88	06/06/88
5 Black 18	180322-5	06/01/88	06/06/88
5 Cyan 18	180318-5	06/01/88	06/17/88
5 Magenta 18	180319-5	06/01/88	07/18/88††
5 PMS Yellow 18	180321-5	06/01/88	06/15/88
5 Proc. Yellow 18	180320-5	06/01/88	06/20/88
5 Proc. Yellow 20	180325-5	06/01/88	07/18/88††
6 Black 18	180361-6	06/09/88	06/10/88
6 Cyan 18	180359-6	06/14/88	
6 Magenta 18	180390-6	06/14/88	
6 PMS Yellow 18	180392-6	06/14/88	06/21/88
6 Proc. Yellow 18	180391-6	06/14/88	
7 Black 18	180362-7	06/09/88	06/13/88
7 Cyan 18	180436-7	06/20/88	06/24/88
7 Magenta 18	180437-7	06/20/88	
7 PMS Yellow 18	180438-7	06/20/88	07/18/88††
8 Black 18	180393-8	06/14/88	06/20/88
8 Black 20	180393-8	06/14/88	07/18/88††
8 Cyan 18	180562-8	07/11/88	07/18/88††
8 Magenta 18	180569-8	07/11/88††	
8 Yellow 18	180446-8	06/22/88	
9 Black 18	180394-9	06/14/88	07/20/88††
9 Cyan 18	180594-9	07/18/88††	
9 PMS Yellow 18	180570-9	07/11/88††	
9 Proc. Yellow 18	180439-9†	06/21/88	
10 Black 18	180440-10	06/21/88	
25H01	180014-1	04/14/88	
25H02	180527-2	07/06/88††	

† Incorrectly reported in last issue of TPN.
†† New data

Imperf Honeybees found

Thom E. Wheeler has found an imperforate Honeybee as a used single on piece while checking through mixtures.

Judging by the tagging, TPN believes the imperf is from Plate 2.

Linn's said Tom Hut, a California dealer, had made FDCs with imperf Bees.

BEP data on 18¢ Washington Monument

Plate	Assigned	To Press	Canceled	Impressions	Total	Notes
BLACK TONE						
174563-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000††	5,440,000††	No stamps known ☆
174568-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	03/31/87	NONE	NONE	Stamps exist ☆
175343-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	07/27/88	2,831,400†	48,133,800†	Data corrected
179121-4	11/04/87	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040	
BLACK TYPE						
174564-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000††	5,440,000††	
174569-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	03/31/87	NONE	NONE	
175344-3	09/11/85	10/24/85				
179141-4	11/05/87	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040	
CYAN						
174561-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000††	5,440,000††	
174566-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	05/13/86	NONE	NONE	
175341-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	07/27/88	3,001,520	51,025,840	
180329-4	06/03/88					
MAGENTA						
174560-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	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	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040	
YELLOW						
174562-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	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	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040	

†† BEP data in error. Numbers do not add up. † Data corrected for Plate 175343-3.
Data for Plate 174563-1 are believed to refer to Plate 174568-2.

BEP data on Monument still faulty

Continued from Page 2

on unprecanceled stamps of "1112" because the data are useless. Dealers' prices, however, are beginning to show a slight increase in price on Plate "1112" over the price for "3333."

Linn's bars Youngblood from work on PNC catalog

Wayne L. Youngblood, who has drawn the illustrations for *The Plate Number Coil Catalog*, has been told by Linn's that he may no longer profit from philatelic activity outside his job.

The tightening of conflict-of-interest rules at Linn's may be a result of the furor that ended with a ruling by the American Stamp Dealers' Association that Linn's publisher and editor, Michael Laurence, had not broken ASDA rules when he allegedly offered a cover to Marc Rouso for half a million dollars. Laurence was also cleared by the American Philatelic Society. The cover was later deemed to be bogus by the Philatelic Foundation.

What this means is that Youngblood may not in future draw the illustrations, for which he received royalties.

A request for information from BEP about the 18¢ Monument was sent off in September, after STaMpsHOW. An answer has not yet been forthcoming.

To illustrate the poor quality of the BEP reports, George V.H. Godin ran into a problem with sheet stamps of the 25¢ undenominated Earth series when he found three separate blue gravure plates all with the suffix for Plate 1.

Said Godin, "You tend not to believe any of it."

PNC Collectors

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Mixtures hint at what is scarce

Continued from Page 1

Flag below [Editor's note: Carl Ditsch's finds, which increase the sample but do not affect the outcome, have been added.]

Of note here is the low number of Plate 4 found compared to what was expected. The catalog price, however, reflects this. Also, although they are expected to have the most, Plates 8 and 9 have even greater actual finds than expected. Plates 12, 13, and 14 are down from the expected totals, which, I think, is indicative of becoming available late in the period of first-class use for this issue.

Of the 26 Plate 14 finds, there are no precancels and three have the "Q line" variety.

We come now to the chart for the 22¢ Flag.

It will be interesting to see "Maximum PNC" figures for Plates 14, 15, and 21, which will probably be in the low range of Plates 13 and 16.

[Editor's note: Since BEP data for these stamps have now been released, TPN has worked up a Griffin-like table for 22F as well. To make it more complete, finds by Ditsch and Thom E. Wheeler have been added.]

I know of no Plate 6 used that is not of philatelic origin.

As to the test stamp, only one PNC was found by me out of a total of 130, a rate of only 0.76%.

I believe the information I am compiling is very important in determining availability and value of used PNCs.

18¢ Surrey, 323 Used Found by Ditsch and Griffin

Plate	Expected Among 323	Actually Among 323	Actual Percentage
1	10	12	3.72%
2	39	35	10.84%
3	6	8	2.48%
4	6	10	3.10%
5	38	51	15.79%
6	38	50	15.48%
7	10	17	5.26%
8	40	29	8.98%
9	24	32	9.91%
10	24	25	8.05%
11	13	10	3.10%
12	13	14	4.33%
13	17	10	3.10%
14	17	11	3.41%
15	9	4	1.24%
16	9	4	1.24%
17	5*	0	0.00%
18	5*	0	0.00%

*This is a statistical expectation. In fact, no used singles were expected since stamps were not on sale during rate period.

20¢ Pumper, 393 Used Found by Ditsch and Griffin

Plate	Expected Among 393	Actually Among 393	Actual Percentage
1	34	43	10.94%
2	13	17	4.33%
3	35	41	10.43%
4	35	43	10.94%
5	51	72	18.32%
6	23	14	3.56%
7	30	33	8.40%
8	31	22	5.60%
9	29	22	5.60%
10	29	17	4.33%
11	21	17	4.33%
12	3	2	0.51%
13	28	22	5.60%
14	3	1	0.25%
15	14	10	2.54%
16	14	17	4.33%

20¢ Flag, 1,795 Used PNCs Found by Griffin and Ditsch

Plate	Catalog Value	Expected Percentage	Expected in 1,795	Actual No. Found	Actual Percentage
1	\$0.40	3.04%	55	92	5.13%
2	0.20	7.84%	141	193	10.75%
3	0.25	7.61%	137	168	9.36%
4	0.50	7.81%	140	74	4.12%
5	0.15	12.70%	228	183	10.19%
6	0.50	2.48%	44	47	2.62%
8	0.10	19.40%	348	441	24.57%
9	0.10	16.05%	288	370	20.61%
10	0.15	4.46%	80	94	5.24%
11	1.50	1.72%	31	19	1.06%
12	0.10	8.64%	155	38	2.12%
13	0.40	4.86%	87	49	2.73%
14	0.40	3.39%	61	27	1.50%
Total		100.00%	1795	1795	100.00%

22¢ Flag, 1,702 Used PNCs Found by Griffin, Ditsch and Wheeler

Plate	Catalog Value	Expected Percentage	Expected in 1,702	Actual No. Found	Actual Percentage
1	\$0.25	7.50%	128	123	7.23%
2	0.25	14.00%	238	137	8.05%
3	0.25	2.51%	43	108	6.35%
4	0.25	4.16%	71	45	2.64%
5	0.25	9.61%	164	144	8.46%
6	4.75	0.07%	1	0	0.00%
7	0.35	2.60%	44	99	5.82%
8	0.35	12.93%	220	285	16.75%
10	0.35	4.52%	77	82	4.82%
11	0.50	4.43%	75	50	2.94%
12	0.50	11.58%	197	184	10.81%
13	0.25	0.29%	5	10	0.59%
14	0.25	0.35%	6	2	0.12%
15	0.35	1.17%	20	23	1.35%
16	0.25	1.40%	24	14	0.82%
17	0.25	3.04%	52	42	2.47%
18	0.25	4.31%	73	64	3.76%
19	0.35	5.12%	87	100	5.88%
20	0.35	1.55%	26	68	4.00%
21	0.35	1.90%	32	11	0.65%
22	0.35	6.66%	113	109	6.40%
1T	0.25	0.30%	5	2	0.12%
Total		100.00%	1702	1702	100.00%

Notes on the data for 22¢ Flag finds

Three things immediately stand out in examining data for the 22¢ Flag.

- The actual finds of Plate 2, which should have been 14%, were only a little more than half of that. Why?

- Thom E. Wheeler points out that all our samples are too small and subject to geographic disparity, especially on Plate 6, available only in Florida and Texas.

"The next mixture," Wheeler said, "might yield a handful if it was collected in the right place at the right time."

- The incidence of the Test stamp again raises questions: Where did USPS test the stamps through large mailers? How many were used? Or, were stamp collectors the "large mailers" on whom this stamp was experimentally used?

We simply do not know. USPS has not said.

Findings in mixtures reopen row on BEP totals

By Stephen G. Esrati

James P. Griffin's data do more than indicate relative value. They raise the question once again whether BEP's impression data should be adjusted as the *PNC Catalog* has been doing because BEP first reported impression totals for a full revolution of the printing sleeve, then switched to a half turn. BEP data for all plates of 18F except Plates 4 and 5, therefore, are based on 936 stamps per impression of a 936-subject sleeve.

By the time Plates 4 and 5 were canceled in 1984, BEP had changed its reporting system, going instead to an impression total for 468 subjects per revolution—or only half a sleeve. But since there are plate numbers only once in each strip of 52 stamps, we had to adjust those reports to come up with "Maximum PNCs."

Note that Griffin's expected percentage of 18F5 (14.06%) is close to the actual percentage (15.24%). That expectation was based on the catalog's adjusted figure. The expectation for 18F4 (16.01%), however, fell far short of the actual percentage found (27.62%).

That, however, could be explained by elementary statistics. Griffin's sample (105 PNCs) is minuscule in relation to the universe (177.8 million PNCs). That makes for a huge margin of error.

No sooner had Griffin's article and tables arrived at *TPN*, than Carl R. Ditsch reported on his search through 78 pounds of unsorted mixtures, yielding another 74 PNCs from the 18¢ Flag.

But when Ditsch's totals were added to the tables, the results changed dramatically because Ditsch found 26 stamps from Plate 4 and only 14 from Plate 5. His Plate 4 results brought the actual percentages found almost to a 2:1 ratio of Plate 4 over Plate 5.

The problem is this: The "Maximum PNC" figure for Plate 5 is also an adjusted figure, divided by 2. So we tried to set up a table (see above right) in which the BEP impression totals were not adjusted for that half revolution. The results were still absolutely out of line with the actual results, even after adding in Ditsch's findings. Look at the table.

What we have now is that the three most common plates, 2, 4, and 5, represent 80.44% of all 18F PNCs, a percentage that much more closely resembles the actual state of things than the 59.79% of the revised BEP data. More-

over, by dropping the revision, the scarcities of Plates 1, 3, and 6 are increased.

But look at Plates 4 and 5. Plate 4 now comes out with actual finds slightly

other way. It confirms what we already knew about the scarce used singles of these two values.

Plates 17 and 18 of the Surrey, which

18¢ Flag, 179 used PNCs found by Griffin and Ditsch

Plate	Catalog Value	(BEP figures not revised)			
		Expected Percentage	Expected In 179	Actual No. Found	Actual Percentage
1	\$2.50	6.65%	12	18	10.06%
2	1.00	22.85%	41	59	32.96%
3	11.00	11.11%	20	12	6.70%
4	0.60	24.61%	44	55	30.73%
5	.060	21.62%	39	30	16.76%
6	500.00	3.83%	7	5	2.73%
7	12.50	9.33%	17	0	0.00%
Totals		100.00%	179	179	100.00%

higher than the expected total; but Plate 5, which was right on target in Griffin's example, is now far short of what was expected.

This leads one to speculate that perhaps the totals for Plate 5 should not have been adjusted while Plate 4's should have been.

But we really don't know. First of all, our experience has shown that BEP reports contain many errors. How can we assume then that this particular set of numbers is correct?

Secondly, we have no idea how many of the stamps printed were destroyed as printer's waste or as surplus stock.

Thirdly, despite Ditsch's added data, our sample is still too small.

Another problem with unadjusted totals is that the incidence of Plate 2 declines from what Griffin calculated as the expected total. Griffin's find of 37 exceeded the total expected by only six stamps, a reasonable margin of error. But without the revisions, the combined Ditsch and Griffin finds of 59 Plate 2 stamps were far in excess of the 41 stamps expected. The finds are now far too frequent.

It would be nice if BEP data for the 20¢ or 22¢ Flags allowed us to make a similar comparison. Unfortunately, that is not possible because all data for them had to be adjusted since all plates were canceled after the change in reporting.

It appears that revising BEP totals was the right approach, even if this means that the data for Plate 5 of the 18¢ Flag are out of whack, especially since we don't know why.

The 1989 catalog will continue to use revised data.

Ditsch's breakdown on the 18¢ Surrey and 20¢ Fire Pumper is helpful in yet an-

other way. It confirms what we already knew about the scarce used singles of these two values.

Plate 1 comes out with more copies found than expected. This shows once again that the occurrence of used singles is not in the same proportion as of mint strips and the catalog assigns a \$5.00 value to it and to Plate 7, which had as many finds.

On the 20¢ Pumper, Ditsch found one copy of Plate 12, exactly on target prior to the re-release of the stamps after the 1988 rate hike. And the odds were 50-50 that Ditsch would not find a Plate 14 after he had found a Plate 12. He found none.

We have added Thom E. Wheeler's breakdown of his search through mixtures for the 22¢ Flag to raise the totals in our sample.

Readers who collect used singles and have taken the time to make breakdowns of their findings in mixtures are invited to send them to *TPN*. They will be included in later compilations of these data.

One comment should be made here. The frequency with which Griffin, Wheeler and Ditsch found these stamps among used singles shows that catalog prices need adjustment in 1989.

And a word of caution: These results do not in any way influence the valuation of mint strips. While an averaging of dealer prices may bring in some unwanted market forces, these are more accurate than statistical breakdowns for determining what mint strips are worth.

In all, however, the finds do confirm that the Study Group's efforts to assess BEP data have resulted in numbers close to what they should have been.

Plate-activity data on 21.1¢ Letters stamps

COLOR	PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESSIONS	TOTAL
Yellow	175361-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	9,270,780
Pink	175362-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	9,270,780
Green	175364-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	9,270,780
Black (ZIP + 4)	175367-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	07/02/87	403,0000	6,851,0000
Blue	175365-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	449,500☆	7,641,500☆
Blue	175584-2	10/28/85	10/28/85	09/16/87	95,840	1,629,280
Red	175363-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	9,270,780
Black (Tone)	175366-1	09/16/85	10/02/85	05/06/88	545,340	9,270,780

☆ Figures adjusted, BEP reported 545,340 impressions.

◇ Includes both blue plates. Estimates below assume same proportion of precancels on both blue plates.

Max. PNCs:	All Plate 1	21.1M1	21.1M1P	All Plate 2	21.1M2	21.1M2P
†=Estimates	7.64 million	1.99 million†	5.65 million†	1.63 million	430,000†	1.20 million†

Blue Plate 2 shown to be scarce, although inexpensive

One can, at last, break down printing totals of the 21.1¢ Letters stamps.

In the plate-activity report for May, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing released unusable figures because the totals for the blue Plate 1 were the same as all other colored plates.

But we subtracted the total for the blue Plate 2 from that impossible total to arrive at a possible real total for the blue Plate 1.

This still left a dilemma. The total for the black ZIP+4 plate included all pre-

cancels, with both blue plates. We made a guess—possibly wrong—that the same percentage of precancels was printed with each blue plate as the percentage of precancels of all Letters stamps.

The table above, made for the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog*, is the result of that mathematical game playing.

The conclusion to be drawn is that stamps off the blue Plate 2 have a low possible total of PNCs, an estimated 1.63 million strips, and that the tagged version, the one showing the numbers

"11121," are scarce, with an estimate of 430,000 strips.

Price may not be affected by this apparent scarcity because it is believed that dealers have large supplies of these stamps, which actually saw little postal use.

The most recent averages of dealers' price lists put 21.1L1 at \$3.83 for PS/5 and \$4.39 for 21.1L2. But prices for used singles are reversed with 21.1L1 at \$2.13 and 21.1L2 at \$1.38.

Honeybee Joint Lines



Trading, buying and selling list shows positions known to date. Prices and trade list for SASE.

A.S. Cibulskas
 28 Westwood Road,
 Stamford, CT 06902

Your Maine Connection

Something old!

Something new!

- ◇ Private vending coils
- ◇ Prexie plate number strips of 6
- ◇ Line strips of older coils
- ◇ New Issue Service

A 45¢ SASE will bring an illustrated price list that will open your eyes.

Elmer F. Degon

Plate Blocks, Line Pairs, PNC Strips

5 South Belfast Ave.
 Augusta, Maine 04330

MR. JOE R. LANE

Professional Philatelist
P.O. Box 31021, Houston, TX 77035
(713) 774-3970

MAIL SALE ENDS: Feb. 7, 1989

This is the first in a series of auctions for PNC and PNC FDC. In future auctions I will have some very nice material such as 18¢ Flag PN 1, 2, 3, in PN3 on cover, also a 5.2¢ both regular and precanceled, 6¢ Tricycle both regular and precanceled. Usual auction terms prevail, submit bids on any paper or postal card also phone. Successful bidder will be notified and must REMIT payment before lots can be mailed, including postage and insurance. Of course any cover can be returned for full refund.

Cachet maker abbreviations: ARI Aristocat, ARC Artcraft, AMC Artmaster, BAZ Bazaar, COL Colorano, FLW Fleetwood, HF House of Farnam. Send SASE for other FDC and PNC on sale. Good luck!

PNC FDC Mail Sale

Lot	Scott	Cachet	P#	Est.	Lot	Scott	Cachet	P#	Est.	Lot	Scott	Cachet	P#	Est.			
1	1891	ARC	1	PS3	\$200	47	2124	KMC	3	PS3	\$9	94	1906	ARC	1	PS2	\$10
2	1891	ARM	1	PS1	\$75	48	2124a	COL	3	PS3	\$12	95	1908	FLW	1	PS2	\$10
3	1891	ARM	1	PS1	\$75	49	2124a	COL	4	PS3	\$12	96	1908	ARC	1	PS2	\$10
4	1891	FLW	1	PS2	\$75	50	2124a	ARC	4	PS2	\$12	97	2134	ARC	2	PS2	\$10
5	1891	HF	2	PS1	\$400	51	1899	ARC	1	PS4	\$11	98	1907	ARC	1	PS2	\$30
6	1891	COL	5	PS2	\$110	52	1899	ARC	2	PS4	\$10	99	1907	COL	8	PS2	\$100
7	1895	COL	1	PS2	\$18	53	1899	GAMM	2	PS4	\$10	100	1907	ARM	6	PS2	\$100
8	1895	ARI	1	PS2	\$18	54	1899	COL	1	PS4	\$10	101	1907	FLW	6	PS2	\$100
9	1895	ARC	1	PS2	\$18	55	1899	COL	2	PS4	\$10	102	1907	HF	6	PS2	\$100
10	1895	FLW	2	PS2	\$100	56	1899	BAZ	1	PS4	\$10	103	1908	ARI	1	PS3	\$75
11	1895	GAMM	1	PS2	\$18	57	1900	GAMM	1	PS4	\$8	104	1908	ARM	3	PS2	\$20
12	2115	FLW	2	PS2	\$15	58	1900	GAMM	2	PS4	\$18	105	1908	GAMM	4	PS2	\$15
13	2115	COL	2	PS2	\$15	59	1900	FLW	1&2	PS2	ea \$20	106	1908	ARM	3	PS2	\$15
14	2115T	KMC	T1	PS3	\$15	60	1900	GAMM	2	PS4	\$18	107	1908	GILL	3	PS2	\$15
15	2115T	GILL	T1	PS3	\$15	61	1901	ARC	4	PS4	\$20	108	1908	ARC	5	PS2	\$100
16	1897	ARM	2	PS3	\$7	62	1901	ARM	3	PS4	\$20	109	1908	ARM	4	PS2	\$15
17	1897	GILL	2	PS5	\$7	63	1901	ARM	4	PS4	\$20	110	2150	FLW	1111	PS2	\$40
18	1897	HF	1	PS3	\$7	64	1901	GAMM	3	PS4	\$20	111	2150a	FLW	1111	PS2	\$40
19	2225	ARC	1	PS4	\$7	65	1901	FLW	3&4	PS2	ea \$30	112	2149	FLW	3333	PS2	\$40
20	1897A	ARC	3	PS4	\$70	66	1901	FLW	2&3	PS2	ea \$30	113	2149a	FLW	1112	PS2	\$40
21	1897A	ARC	4	PS4	\$10	67	1901	FLW	4&4	PS2	ea \$30	114	2149	FLW	3333	PS3	\$25
22	1897A	ARM	3&4	PS5	ea \$24	68	2126	KMC	1	PS3	\$9	115	2005	FLW	1	PS2	\$20
23	1897A	HF	4	PS3	\$10	69	2126	FLW	1	PS2	\$9	116	2005	FLW	1	PS2	\$20
24	2226	ARM	1	PS5	\$10	70	1902	HF	2	PS3	\$15	117	2112	ARC	1	PS2	\$20
25	2226	ARC	1	PS5	\$10	71	1902	FLW	2	PS2	\$12	118	0135	ARC	1	PS3	\$70
26	1898	HF	3	PS2	\$12.50	72	1902	Eagle	2	PS3	\$15	119	0135	FLW	1	PS2	\$25
27	1898	FLW	3	PS2	\$12.50	73	2128	ARI	1	PS3	\$10	120	0139	FLW	1	PS3	\$50
28	1898	FLW	4	PS2	\$12.50	74	2128	KMC	1	PS3	\$10	121	—A collection of 32 unaddressed Colorano FDCs, including 18¢ Flag 1, 4 and 5; 21.1¢ regular and precanceled on one cover; 5.2¢, 5.9¢, 10.9¢, and 18¢ Surrey 1 and 2, "D" official, etc. Estimated value: \$1,000.				
29	1898	GAMM	1	PS2	\$12.50	75	2128	FLW	2	PS3	\$10	122	—Another collection of FDCs with mixed cachets, mostly complete from Scott 1891 through 0135, all plate numbers to the issue. Very exciting collection of most of the above and more. Estimate \$750.				
30	1898	GAMM	2	PS4	\$12.50	76	2128	ARM	2	PS3	\$10	Consignments wanted for future auctions.					
31	1898	KMC	1	PS3	\$8	77	2128	ARC	2	PS3	\$10	Prices realized: \$1 & SASE					
32	2123	KMC	2	PS3	\$8	78	1903	ARC	2	PS2	\$15	Send SASE for my mint/used PNC list.					
33	2123	GILL	1	PS3	\$8	79	1903	FLW	1	PS2	\$18						
34	2123	COL	1	PS4	\$8	80	1903	FLW	2	PS2	\$15						
35	2134	COL	2	PS4	\$8	81	1903	ARC	1	PS4	\$20						
36	2134	ARC	1&2	PS4	\$8	82	1903	ARC	2	PS4	\$20						
37	2134	GAMM	2	PS3	\$8	83	A904	ARC	1	PS3	\$20						
38	1898a	GAMM	1	PS3	\$10	84	1904	ARC	2	PS3	\$20						
39	1898a	GAMM	2	PS2	\$10	85	1904	FLW	1	PS2	\$15						
40	1898a	ARM	1	PS2	\$10	86	1904	FLW	2	PS2	\$15						
41	1898a	ARM	3	PS3	\$10	87	1905	HF	1	PS3	\$14						
42	1898a	ARC	3	PS3	\$10	88	1905	ARM	1	PS3	\$14						
43	1898a	ARC	4	PS2	\$90	89	2131	COL	3	PS2	\$10						
44	1898a	HF	3	PS3	\$10	90	2132	COL	1	PS2	\$10						
45	1898a	HF	4	PS2	\$9	91	2132	COL	2	PS2	\$10						
46	1898a	COL	2	PS2	\$9	92	2132	ARC	1	PS2	\$10						
						93	2132	ARC	2	PS2	\$10						

Discouraged collector gives up on PNCs, goes to state ducks

[The following comes from a collector who had completed a collection of strips of 6 in XF or Superb condition, including all precancel gaps.]

When the 20¢ Pumper was issued again and numbers 12 and 14 dropped so much, I got discouraged. I had paid \$150 each for these when I first started col-

Letters to TPN

lecting PNCs.

Also, USPS came out with so many new ones, it was hard for me to keep up.

And, it seems that the market dropped for PNCs, and buying prices in *Linn's* dropped. I saw the 20¢ Fire Pumper Plate 1 buying price for a strip of five at \$20 and, yet, dealers are selling it for \$150 to \$200.

I do collect as a hobby, but since I am retired, I also collect as an investment.

I traded a lot of my PNCs for state ducks and got almost nothing for them; so I lost a lot of money on them. Most were superb PS/6.

Name withheld
Miami, Fla.

VF Honeybee 2s

The 25¢ Honeybee Plate 2 was located just outside the Houston area. All the rolls I have obtained showed the "2" to be clear of the design and well centered. Maybe I was lucky, but it has been a rare example where Plate 2 has been in the design from the lot that I secured.

In contrast, almost all of Plate 1 had a portion of the number in the design. I have found very few that are clear of the design in this area.

Joseph Agris, M.D.
Houston, Tex.

Precancel trouble

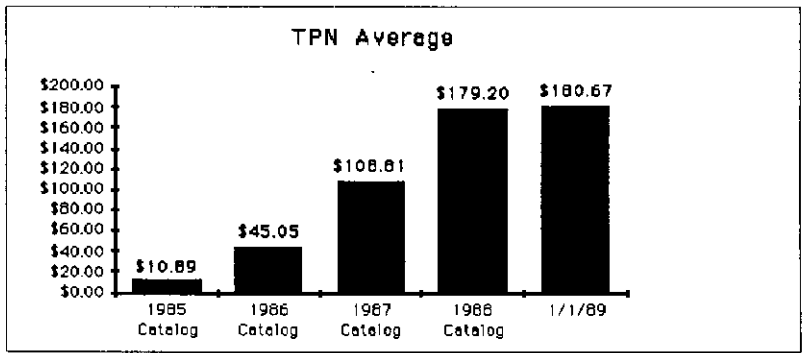
I'm still having a "discussion" with the local post office about getting a precancel-use permit. The fact that the new postmaster here billed himself as an avid stamp collector may help. I think the biggest problem is that the window help changes constantly.

Harold Brown
Bowling Green, Ohio

Gibbons expanding PNC listing

The next edition of Part 22 (U.S.A.) of the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue will expand its treatment of PNCs, the second foreign catalog to do so.

Germany's Michel catalog of U.S. stamps did it some years ago.



TPN Average halts its decline

The *TPN Average* ended its decline of the last six months and showed a slight gain. But the price of PNCs in general continued to go down.

What has been happening is that dealers have competed with each other on price, shaving a nickel here, a dime there on many common strips. That was a price increase.

Several dealers (including the editor of *TPN*) instituted larger discounts. Dale Enterprises offered as much as a 50% discount on selected items. Others gave the discounts right across the board.

But there's a rub in all this. Prices on the better strips, many of which are represented in the *TPN Average*, have started to regain the upward price momentum that was common in the past. Among Transportation tagged stamps that have been edging steadily upward are: 5.2T3, 5.2T5, 5.9T3, 5.9T4, 10.9T1, 10.9T2, 7.4T2, 17T6, 18T3, 18T4, 20T7, 20T8, and 20T11. Many precancels also moved up. Among these were 5.2T4P, 5.2T6P, 5.9T5P, 5.9T6P, 6T2P, 9.3T8P, 10.9T1P, 10.9T2P, 17T3Pb, 17T4Pb, 17T5Pb, 17T5Pc and 17T7Pc.

The increase in the Style B 17s from Plates 4 and 5 is simply explained. The stamps exist only if removed from a se-tenant BA strip. Dealers are having difficulty restocking.

Showing up for the first time among rising

precancels is Plate 2 of the 6¢ Tricycle, although some dealers have continued to discount it and it is still quite cheap.

Among stamps from other series, the undominated 22¢ Official has taken back all that it recently lost and has started to move beyond its previous highs.

A few strips have declined in price, including 18F6 and 20F11.

Plate 1 and 2 Consumer Education stamps from started edging upward again while the more difficult strips from the three obsolete Flag series have shown slight rises. The biggest mover of all these has been Plate 3 of the 22¢ Flag, which is now priced by several dealers at \$50. This is the only 22¢ Flag on which Dale Enterprises does not offer its 50% discount as strips of three and five. (Dale also exempts strips of five of Plate 1 from its discount.)

Overhanging the market is a USPS report on stamps in its vaults, a report promised more than eight months ago. Collectors may be putting off buying some expensive strips on the premise that USPS has ample stocks stashed away. This results from the re-release of 20T12 and 20T14 last year. Prices for those two strips, incidentally, continue to decline, but condition is a factor. XF strips often command a much larger premium on these two strips than is usual.

TPN Data Bank of official information

20¢ Cable Car

Stamp News USA, No. 74, listed the color of the 20¢ Cable Car stamp as purple (PMS 276). However, difficulties in production necessitated a color change to dark blue (PMS 532).

The Cable Car stamp was issued in San Francisco on Oct. 28.

First Day Cover totals

E stamps (all formats)	363,639
Conestoga Wagon	155,203
Flag over Yosemite	144,339
Oil Wagon (red precancel)	136,428
Tugboat	134,926
Coal Car	123,965
Popcorn Wagon	117,908

First-day ceremony programs

In a response to numerous requests, the Postal Service has decided to make (first day of issue programs) available by mail.

Starting this January, subscribers can begin receiving a full set of souvenir programs. Ceremony guests will continue to receive a complimentary copy, but programs will not be sold at the ceremony site....

Production will still be limited, possibly to about 10,000....

The programs will be sold by subscription, with the subscription price based on a per-program cost of approximately \$5.95, except when the face value of the postage affixed exceeds this amount. A subscription can be established for \$75, and members who submit an advance deposit of more than \$100 get their first program free.

[There appears to be no way to request special handling of programs, for plate numbers for example.]

If your mailing label says "1-89," this is the last issue you will receive unless you renew now.

How Thompson finds PNCs

Continued from Page 1

small mail-order stamp dealer and would be interested in acquiring any full or partial rolls of the following stamps, precanceled (but not with city overprints) or unprecanceled, at the designated percentage of face value:

100%		85%	
5.2¢ Sleigh	3.1¢ Guitar	12¢ Stanley Steamer	
5.9¢ Bicycle	3.5¢ Violin	17¢ Auto	
9.3¢ Mail Wagon	4.9¢ Buckboard	(22¢) D (Eagle)	
10.9¢ Hansom Cab	7.4¢ Baby Buggy	80%	
18¢ Flag	7.7¢ Saxhorn	18¢ Surrey	3.4¢ School Bus
20¢ Consumer	7.9¢ Drum	20¢ Flag	5.5¢ Truck
Education	8.4¢ Piano	20¢ Fire Pumper	6.0¢ Tricycle
			8.3¢ Ambulance
			8.5¢ Tow Truck
			10.1¢ Oil Wagon
			11¢ Caboose
			11¢ Stutz Bearcat
			12.5¢ Pushcart
			14¢ Iceboat
			17.5¢ Racing Car
			18¢ Washington
			21.1¢ Letters
			22¢ Flag

If you have any of the above items, please indicate the approximate quantity available and their condition. If you have not written on the top of the rolls or folded the stamps flat, as many mailers do, please do not do so. If the stamps are flattened, creased, marked or in strips, the above percentages will be reduced 5%.

I would consider purchasing any other stamps at 75% of face value. If you do not presently possess any stamps you wish to sell, please keep this letter for future reference.

When Thompson was informed that *TPN* would publish her letter, she objected, citing trade secrets, copyright law, and trademark law. Her chief objection was to the publication of the percentages which, she said, could lead readers to believe that she makes a large profit when she turns up better material.

In fact, she said, sending out thousands of letters costs a small fortune and she often ends up merely as a postage broker, selling stamps at a small markup from what she paid. Only occasionally, she said, have her efforts struck gold among PNCs. More often, she loses money on the deal, she said.

"But I'm a hunter," she said, adding that some mailing lists she bought as current turned up with many bad addresses and defunct businesses.

So *TPN* asked Thompson to write an

article about her experiences for the November issue. She did not respond.

Shortly after the November issue was mailed out, a letter from Thompson to philatelic clerks in sectional post offices across the United States reached *TPN*. It was dated October 1988 and reads as follows:

Dear Philatelic Clerk:

I write to you periodically as my needs for various coil, sheet, and booklet stamps change. I have chosen to write to you because (1) I know that as a philatelic clerk you will search for the plate numbers on the coil stamps and (2) your post office is a sectional center. Would you please check both your stock and that of your accountable paper custodian for the items. Where known, the item number is provided [*These numbers are omitted here, Ed.*] I particularly need the * items at this time.

Coil Stamps

- 25¢ E (Earth), plate #1211 (rolls of 100 only)
- 22¢ D (Eagle)
- 20¢ Flag, precanceled
- 20¢ Fire Pumper
- 18¢ Flag
- 18¢ Surrey
- 17¢ Electric Auto, precanceled
- 17¢ Electric Auto, mint
- 11¢ Railroad Caboose, mint
- 10.9¢ Hansom Cab
- 8.5¢ Tow Truck, precanceled, plate #2
- 7.4¢ Baby Buggy
- 6¢ Tricycle, precanceled, plate #2
- 5.5¢ Truck, precanceled, plate #2
- 5.9¢ Bicycle
- 5.2¢ Sleigh
- 4¢ Stagecoach, precanceled (3000)

[*There followed a list of sheet stamps and booklets*]

If you have any of the above items, please indicate your telephone number, the quantity, whether precanceled (for rolls) and, if known, the plate number (for rolls). The quantity is particularly important because I seek large quantities of some items. I would appreciate a response even if you have none of the items I seek.

Thompson has been hunting for elusive coils for several years. She said she did find some 10.9¢ Hansom Cab precanceleds from Plates 3 and 4.

That was a victory. But often, she finds rolls that have been written on to indicate how many stamps were left. She has also ended up with creased stamps and other items that could be used only as postage.

All in all, she said she has not made much profit on any of her hunting. Still, several dealers credit her for finding supplies of some items no one else could.

WARNING:
Short-wave UV can be hazardous to your eyes!

The use of UV to inspect the tagging on stamps can cause permanent damage to the cornea, the thin layer in front of the eye. The effect is the same as a severe sunburn, and can lead to blindness.

Ordinarily, merely wearing eyeglasses or otherwise interposing glass between the light and the eye is sufficient protection. Those who do not wear glasses, can use the cheap magnifying glasses sold in many five-and-ten-cent stores. It's the glass that prevents the sunburn.

But a new problem has come up in connection with the 25¢ Honeybee. Measuring the width of the tagging rectangle requires getting quite close to the stamp. Even with glasses, this can result in UV striking the cornea because of the gap between glasses and the eye.

D. John Shultz, a member of the Plate Number Coil Study Group, has an easy solution:

Lay the stamp on a flat surface and shine the UV light down on it to make the tagging glow. Lay a three-by-five-inch index card across part of the stamp. Now mark the edges of the tagging you wish to measure with ticks on the white card.

After you turn off the UV, you can measure the distance between your ticks on the card to get the exact measurement of the tagging.

TPN has a second solution. The tagging block on the Honeybee can often be seen in daylight, although its shape (rounded or square corners) cannot be easily distinguished.

To determine the shape, take a look under UV. Then, using magnification of 8- or 10-power in daylight or incandescent (not fluorescent) light, you should be able to measure the tagging block without any recourse to UV.

The tagging shows up as a shiny area that can be spotted under the varnish. Its vertical edges are usually easy to spot.

Warzala stops dealing

Lee Warzala, who has been a PNC dealer for two years or so, has given up the business. He will continue to collect superb mint singles.

"I've decided I'd rather do something else," he said. "It just takes too much time."

Warzala was one of the few dealers who specialized in paper types.

Double impression found on Honeybee

A. S. Cibulskas got a shock recently when he took a close look at a strip of Honeybees. All around the rectangle of the design, there were squiggly yellow lines in the same color as the solid back-

TPN research report

ground of a normal stamp. They looked somewhat like the illustration on the right.

The squiggly lines were not of the same shape or configuration from stamp to stamp.

"Any explanation?" he asked.

A preliminary guess is that he has found a double printing from the blanket roll. All of the following is conjecture or speculation. It is hoped that Cibulskas will send a stamp to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for an explanation.

To understand what a doubling on the blanket roll means, we go into the technology of offset lithography by explaining the schematic illustration of an offset press which is shown below. Unfortunately, the illustration refers to a one-



Honeybee double printing

light table and is masked to fit the plate. This would be a negative of 450 process yellow stamps on Plate 1. (The stamp in question was from Plate 1.)

Third, that negative is laid on a light-sensitive thin metal plate and exposed to an arc lamp to "burn" the image into the metal.

Finally, the image is chemically fixed on the plate, preparing it for the press.

Unlike typography, which has a mirror-image on the plate, the offset plate is right-reading because it does not print directly onto the paper. Instead, the image is transferred from the plate to a blanket cylinder which, before the wonderful age of plastics, used to have a rubber blanket stretched around it, giving it its name, blanket cylinder.

The blanket cylinder (which again has a negative image) then transfers that image to the paper. In other words, the image is offset from the plate to a blanket cylinder before reaching the paper. Thus the term "offset."

Now, in the age of plastics, rubber is no longer used. But there is still a blanket cylinder.

Assume that the paper web has broken while the press is still running. The plate will hit the blanket cylinder, which now has no paper to transfer the image to. What happens instead is that the image goes onto the impression cylinder which keeps revolving. After each revolution, the impression cylinder will put some ink back on the blanket cylinder.

When paper is finally fed back into the press, the result is a double print off the blanket cylinder.

Obviously, something like this in a more striking color than yellow would have quickly been spotted. But yellow?

We couldn't even see the yellow plate numbers on the 21.1¢ Letters or 25¢ Earth stamps.

So, what Cibulskas found is a true double printing of the yellow. As such, it will be listed in the 1989 PNC Catalog. Other than doublings off the chill roller of the Cottrell presses, this is the first double print of any PNC.

The schematic drawing of the stamp cannot exactly duplicate the mess around the rectangle of the vignette. But one thing is certain. Nowhere in the margins is there a horizontal or vertical white gap that would correspond to the white areas that the yellow plate should have left for the margins around the design. This leads one to suspect that there was more than one impression on the blanket cylinder before the web was repaired.

Adding to this line of reasoning is a new development at BEP in regard to the paper web. In the past, when one roll of paper was exhausted and a new roll was started "on the fly," ugly red tape was applied on the splice. This was supposed to be highly visible and stamps showing such splices were supposed to be rejected. (Many were not.)

In no case would the press have been stopped to make the splice. "On the fly" means the new roll of paper is revolved to get it up to speed and is then spliced to the end of the exhausted roll.

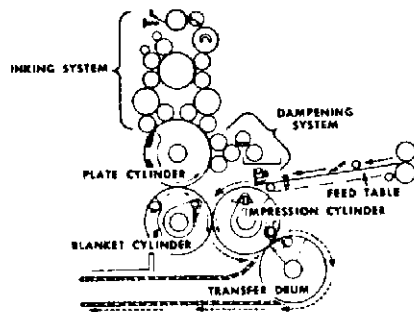
Under a new policy, BEP is no longer rejecting splices and has also stopped using the red tape exclusively, turning instead to transparent cellotape.

If the Honeybee doubling occurred at a break in the web, not the end of a roll, there would be no tape. New paper is spliced up and fed in. Printers are supposed to tear off the waste if they notice it.

But, as said before, all of the above is theoretical. It remains to be seen exactly what did happen. For the time being, however, you should be alert to stamps with a lot of color in the margins.

PNC's *Coil Line* recently showed a splice of 22F19 with plate numbers only two stamps apart.

Dr. John Greenwood of the PNC Study Group said most splices are imperforate and have been found on many recent stamps including the 25¢ Flag, 25¢ Bread Wagon and the Honeybee.



color web press of approximately 1960 vintage.

In the Optiforma press used to print the Honeybee, there are six stations, each capable of printing one color. This sketch, then, would be one station, and since it is the process yellow we are concerned with, we'll assume it to be the station that prints the offset yellow.

First, let's talk about normal offset printing. An offset plate is made through a three-step process: First, the copy to be reproduced is photographed and the result is a negative film.

(That means that what should be black is now white and vice-versa and that everything is in mirror image. We say black because at this stage, only black and white count. The eventual color is produced by ink, not the original art.)

Second, the negative is processed on a

Honeybee update: Joint lines explained

Much has been learned about the Honeybee since the reports in the last *TPN*.

- Offset plates for the D offset/intaglio press have a different configuration than the offset plates for the Optiforma Press.

- There are now four known widths of tagging.

- Stamps with a serif on the plate number "1" are **not** from the experimental printing. No stamps from that printing have yet been reported by collectors.

- Joint lines are not supposed to occur, but do. They may be 24 or 25 stamps apart.

- The paper has never before been used to print coils.

Plate makeup

Plates for the Optiforma press were 18 rows of 25 stamps. Later, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing widened that to 20 rows to use the entire width of the intaglio presses.

All of Plate 1 was 18x25 on the offset press and 18x48 on the intaglio press. Then, BEP widened the intaglio sleeve to 20x25 for Plate 2.

And here we made a bad assumption. We assumed that the offset plates would grow to 20x25. Some did, but not all.

The first hint came from Harold Potkewitz, who found the first joint lines. He was told by *TPN* that the lines should move along the roll in relation to the plate numbers; all he found stayed put in relation to the plate number.

"Maybe I'm miscounting," he said, "but I have not been able to find any that are even close to the plate number."

Obviously, something was wrong.

Then, A.S. Cibulskas, *TPN*'s contributing editor for varieties, found a roll of 100 from Plate 2 with four joint lines.

"Unless I'm counting wrong," Cibulskas said, "the lines repeat every 24 and are constant relative to plate numbers."

Cibulskas had previously found a red joint line on a roll from Plate 1 that moved as it was supposed to, including one strip in which the line was smack between 1L and 1R, just where it used to be on the Cottrells.

So Cibulskas realized that we had to deal with two different offset intervals.

A letter to *TPN* from the BEP's Ira Polikoff confirmed yet another offset-plate configuration: 24x20.

According to Polikoff, offset plates made for the combination D Press have a repeat length of 24 stamps.

Since Cibulskas had found stamps

Offset plates come in three sizes, 18x25, 20x25, 20x24

from Plate 2 with an offset interval of 24 as well as of 25, this may mean that the same intaglio sleeve (2) is being used on both the C and D presses

Undercutting this assumption is the possibility that there may be more than one intaglio sleeve with the plate number "2." What makes us suspicious is the fact that BEP has given the same plate-number suffix to several Honeybee offset plates (see article on Page 2).

An offset plate with an interval of 24, of course, will yield constant plate varieties for both offset and intaglio with an offset variety occurring in exactly the same spot twice between every two plate numbers.

Tagging

In the last *TPN*, two tagging widths were reported: 16.5mm in a rectangular block and 20.5mm with curved corners.

The narrow tagging was off Plate 1; the wide off Plate 2.

Immediately after *TPN* was printed, the tagging was measured on strips of Plate 1 that had a downward serif on the plate number. That tagging turned out to be 17.5mm wide with rounded corners.

Before those stamps were measured, it was believed that they were from an experimental printing in which the tagging was applied by the sixth station of the Goebel Optiforma offset press (under the black intaglio printing).

But it turned out that the stamps with the serified "1" were clearly tagged on the intaglio press, over the black printing. So they were not experimental.

Meanwhile, D. John Shultz of the Plate Number Coil Study Group learned that the Honeybee rolls that had yielded the serified "1" were rolls of 3,000, not the rolls of 100s in bubble packs that most collectors had seen. When Shultz checked on this, he found that all rolls of 3,000 had tagging 17.5mm wide.

TPN knows no reason why the tagging should be different for rolls of different length. This leads to another speculation.

Since the intaglio portion of all of Plate 1 was printed on the C Press, the tagging on Plate 1 came from that press as well. It may be assumed that when printing of rolls of 3,000 was begun, the

tagging plates may have been those used on the stamps printed on the C Press before the Honeybee was put back on.

Just to add to the confusion, Shultz found a fourth tagging: 19mm wide with rounded corners from a roll of 100 of Plate 1.

This forces one to conclude that tagging plates are being changed frequently and are not of uniform manufacture.

This makes for three known tagging widths on Plate 1. There may be other tagging widths on Plate 2 than the 20.5mm found so far. Reports are requested. A relationship between tagging width and plate makeup on Plate 2 has yet to be established, although the 20.5mm width is known to come from Optiforma/C Press printings with an offset interval of 25 as well as the D Press printings with an interval of 24.

Experimental printing

When Al Haake of the study group found the first rolls with a serified "1," it was believed to be from the experimental printing. That was an error.

The study group's Ken Lawrence visited a display at Postal Headquarters that showed full, uncut sheets of the Honeybee. Lawrence said the serified "1," which is shorter than normal "1s" seen on other (non-Honeybee) PNCs, occurred once in 18 rows on that sheet.

He reported in *Linn's* that all numbers had been manually shortened for Plate 1. Because it was done by hand, the result varies from row to row. The serified "1" is merely one of 18 rows of that plate.

The manual shortening was apparently done because the plate numbers kept running into the design in the experimental printing. The effort was not wholly successful, because the shortened plate numbers also did that.

Joint lines

BEP's Polikoff explained how joint lines got on the Honeybee.

The key finding is that the lines can come from two sources:

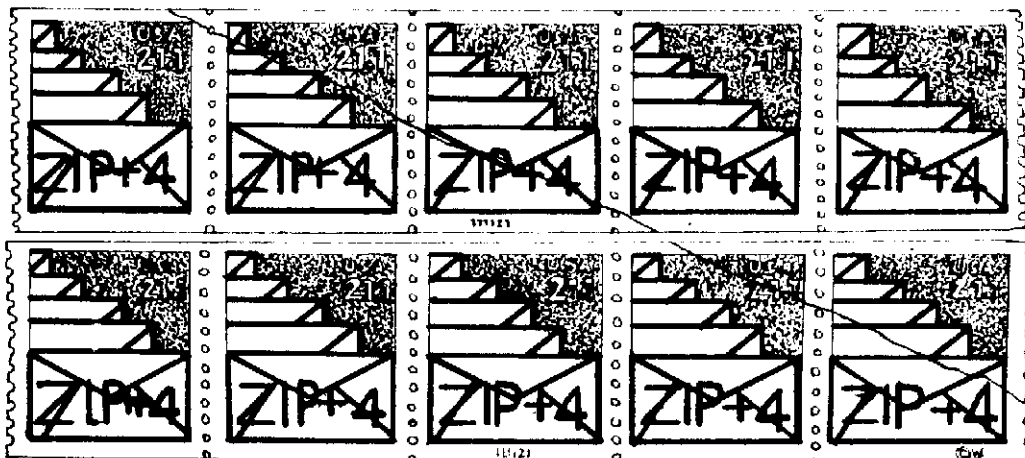
- The edge of the offset plates.
- The edge of the blanket (see illustration on Page 10).

Offset plates on the Goebel Optiforma press are magnetically attached to the plate cylinders. The blankets are stuck to the blanket cylinder by adhesive.

"If for any reason," Polikoff said, "the

Please turn to Page 13

'Cracks' aren't cracks; but what are they?



By A.S. Cibulskas

Tony Maves has found something on the 21.1¢ Letters issue. But we don't know what it is. This report is written in the hope that you will search your stock and report additional finds.

[Send reports, together with

photocopies (emphasized by felt-tip pen, if necessary) to me at 28 Westwood Rd., Stamford, Conn. 06902.]

What Maves found is a constant black diagonal line on the precanceled strip showing the plate number 111121. It starts at the upper right cor-

ner of 3L, goes through 2L and the numbered stamp and ends in the lower left corner of 1R.

Maves found it only on precancels. Then I began looking at the tagged stamps.

Neither Maves nor I know whether this is a plate crack.

Since Maves's original find, a continuation has been found on the precanceled row below. The line begins at the upper left corner of 1R and ends at the right edge of 2R.

An upward continuation has also been found, but because I have not seen it, I cannot describe it. I would guess that it continues through additional rows as well.

After the find on the precancels, similar but fainter markings were found on the tagged stamps. The line there is considerably shorter.

Again, the line on the upper strip begins in the upper right corner of 3L and continues into 2L and then into the numbered stamp, but it ends on the edge of the third envelope from the top.

On the lower continuation, the line starts at the top margin of 1R and goes into 2R. Its shape is identical to the continuation on the precancel, but is displaced upward and to the right by about a quarter of an inch in each direction. To my knowledge,

no upward continuation has yet been found on the tagged stamps.

It needs to be said: All these lines are constant. Because they were printed on the Andreotti press, we have no experience to help us define what caused the lines.

It was suggested that the lines result from doctor or wiper blades. (We don't even know if the Andreotti press has doctor or wiper blades.) In my opinion, the line is far too irregular (zig-zag, not a straight line) to be compared to other blade examples seen.

The shift on the tagged version means that we are not looking at a plate crack in any of the six plates used to print the precanceled or tagged stamps. A crack would be identical as to location on both versions.

In essence then, this is a progress report seeking assistance in determining just what we are looking at and to encourage you to search your stock for any similar strips and to describe them. I welcome your letters.

While you are looking, you may also look for the LOMs (see my variety report in the September issue of *The Plate Number*) that are found at 1L on the tagged version. The LOMs are a constant dot and line.

FDCs for sale

5.3¢ Elevator 1	PS/5	Key Kachet.....	\$5.50
5.3¢ Elevator 1	PS/5	Gill Craft	\$6.00
8.4¢ Wheel Chair 1	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
8.4¢ Wheel Chair 1	PS/3	Artmaster	\$4.00
10.1¢ Oil Wagon red 2	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
13.2¢ Coal Car 1	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
13.2¢ Coal Car 1	PS/3	Artmaster	\$4.25
15¢ Tugboat 1	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
15¢ Tugboat 1	PS/3	Artmaster	\$4.50
16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon 1	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon 1	PS/3	Artmaster	\$4.50
20.5¢ Fire Engine 1	PS/5	Key Kachet.....	\$5.75
20.5¢ Fire Engine 1	PS/5	Gill Craft	\$6.25
21¢ RR Mail Car 1	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
21¢ RR Mail Car 1	PS/3	Artmaster	\$4.75
25¢ Flag 2	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25
25¢ Earth 1222	PS/3	Colorano	\$5.25

And, the much-sought Plate 2 of the Honeybee:

25¢ Honeybee PS/5 2 Gill Craft

\$6.50
We will be glad to execute your standing order for Colorano "silk" FDCs of new issues. We have provided this service to collectors for 10 years. No deposit required.

Many older issues also in stock. Write us today for information.

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How many collect PNCs?

How many people collect PNCs?

Michael Laurence, editor of *Linn's*, said 32.6% of *Linn's* readers do.

"We were aware that plate number coils were popular among our readers, and the great success of the recent Scott PNC albums confirmed this, but we had no idea just how popular they were," Laurence wrote in the issue of Oct. 24, 1988.

The column by Laurence was not news to readers of *The Plate Number*. The result appeared here in July.

The significance of the figure is that almost a third of the 75,000 or so *Linn's* readers collect PNCs. That's 25,000 or so collectors just among *Linn's* readers.

But now let's look at some of the collectors who answered the survey, done for *Linn's* by Don Bowdren Associates of Huntington, Conn.

69.1% store their collections in printed albums; 25.1% collect in hingeless albums; 53.1% use stock books; 31.2%

use blank pages. (The sum is more than 100% because of multiple answers.)

Since we know that PNC collectors have varying tastes in length of strip and also that there are many degrees of precancel PNC collecting, we can make absolutely nothing out of these figures.

We don't know how collectors of long strips collect. So we may have to include the 22.5% of *Linn's* readers who keep their stamps in cigar boxes and the 29.0% who keep them in file drawers. And yet another 21.7% have "other" ways of storing their stamps, which could include safety deposit boxes, shoe boxes filled with partial rolls, or, perhaps, those plastic containers in which photographic film is sold.

Nor do we know from *Linn's* data what constitutes a collector of PNCs. *TPN* readers include collectors of strips of varying length from a pair to a strip from plate number to plate number, mint and used singles, FDCs, and varieties.

We assume that *TPN* readers want completeness, but we cannot define it. One of each plate number, perhaps? One of each stamp that was issued with a plate number? One of each plate number in a given length with all precancels included, with or without concern for where the precancel gap falls?

So, to make sense of *Linn's* results, we probably should assume that "PNC collectors" include a little of each group, some of whom collect on special PNC pages. But none of this helps us to guess how many actually take PNCs seriously.

The *TPN* subscription list includes many professional people, including physicians, dentists, accountants, lawyers, judges. It also includes a large number of retired military personnel. Yet meetings with readers indicate a large number of young (under 40) people.

The *Linn's* survey indicated that 26.9% of its readers were retired. Can we transpose that figure to the number of PNC collectors in *Linn's* results? The chance is that PNC collectors may be younger than the cross-section of *Linn's* readers, whose median age was 55. Of the 20 members in the PNC study group, only two are above 55, the rest considerably younger.

On this basis alone, one must be cautious in applying the *Linn's* statistics to attempt to break down its PNC collectors. Even if one out of every 11.6 *Linn's* respondents is worth \$1 million or more, we cannot say that 11.6% of PNC collectors are.

Furthermore, we must be aware of one of the key mysteries in philately. We do not know how many Americans really collect stamps seriously. Those who subscribe to a periodical such as *Linn's* are merely a more active section of the total number of collectors. Since that total is an unknown, it is futile to take the USPS estimate of 25 million and say that a third of them also collect PNCs (although it would be music to our ears).

Thus, very sadly, the answer to the question posed at the top of this article is: "Nobody knows."

But here are a few statistics about serious PNC collectors. Fewer than 250 belong to PNC³. Barely over 400 subscribe to *TPN*. Only 800 bought the 1987 catalog and even fewer did last year.

It's hard to believe there are 25,000 people we all missed.

BEP explains joint lines on the Honeybee

Continued from Page 11

edges of either the plate or the blanket begin to lift away from their cylinders, they begin to print lines on the paper. These seam lines are always between stamps, and the length of the seam line would depend on how much edge had lifted from the cylinder."

To explain our violet-black joint line, Polikoff said if one line were overprinted by another, a mixture of colors could result. He said the violet-black line we found would be the result of having both edges in registration. "The violet-black line would thus be a combination of the blue and red lines. This is confirmed by microscopic examination of the 'violet' line on the submitted stamps."

The gray lines "would be faint lines from the offset black plate or blanket," Polikoff said, "and the shorter line would mark where the edge lift stopped."

Joint lines are not supposed to happen, Polikoff said. "When these lines are detected, the offset pressman takes corrective action to eliminate them, usually by cleaning the seams and resticking the plate or blanket. The submitted stamps do not meet the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's quality standards and should have been rejected during production or the examination process."

Paper

According to an article in *Stamp Collector* by Kyle Jansson, LP57 paper was used to print the Honeybee.

Jansson attributed this information to Don McDowell, manager of the Stamps Division, who said the paper had been used previously only to print commemoratives.

A characteristic of this paper, reported in *TPN*, is that the paper does not bend easily to allow creasing on the perfs.

The future

The Postal Service placed a huge order with BEP for the Honeybee: 110 million rolls of 100 and 100,000 rolls of 3,000.

This puts a huge load on BEP, which has had to shift stamps from the B to the C Press because the B was booked up.

Obviously, BEP would prefer to print Honeybees on the D Press, which does not require rewinding the offset printing for the intaglio press. But even the D Press is busy. The Honeybee had to be taken off the D Press to print Christmas stamps.

We can, therefore, expect a lot of change in the Honeybee caused by switches from press to press.

We probably can also expect new intaglio plate numbers. Rumor is that Plate 3 was prepared long ago. It had not been found when this was written.

BEP gives a free plug to USPS nemesis

Who's in charge here? While the United Parcel Service continues to make inroads into USPS business, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is giving UPS a free plug.

On the coil wrappers for the 13.2¢ Coal Car, 8.4¢ Wheel Chair and 7.6¢ Carretta, the initials "USPS" are rendered as "UPSP."

Does that mean "United Parcel Service Postage"?

Don McDowell, manager of the Stamps Division, told *Stamp Collector's* Kyle Jansson that the D Press cannot print coil stamps. He was denying a report by Steve Esrati that BEP was printing 25¢ Honeybees on the D Press.

Jansson was told by *TPN* that McDowell was wrong, that many 22¢ Flags were printed on the D Press.

Later, McDowell reversed course. "The Bureau," he told Jansson, "has obviously found a way to have the D Press produce coils."

The sad thing is that it took the Stamps Division chief more than a year to learn what George V.H. Godin reported here.

The Scott catalogs will price for F-VF in 1990, not as in the past, according to Richard L. Sine, editorial director.

If you received mail in November from Tom Maeder, editor of *PNC's Coil Line*, you may have an untagged 25¢ Honeybee on cover.

The covers were not canceled by the facer-canceler because of the lack of tagging.

When informed, Maeder checked his remaining Honeybees. No more were untagged.

David E. Barrie-Lavergne, whose comprehensive publication on how to collect coil labels is a landmark in research, had to invent a whole world of new terminology, including "splits," "arches" and "emblems." Barrie-Lavergne has been inducted into the PNC Study Group, which is limited to 20 members, each with specialized knowledge or ability. The group does much of the work reflected in *TPN* and *The Plate Number Coil Catalog*.

The label key is a superb piece of work, and it's free for a 45-cent SASE from him at 27 Braddock Park, Boston,



United Parcel Service Postage?

Mass. 02116-5816. Readers interested in labels may wish to join his label study group, too.

George E. Kuhn, vice president of PNC³, has resigned from the PNC Study Group, citing the biblical saying about being the "servant of two masters." Kuhn, a critical customer of the Philatelic Sales Agency, has kept us abreast of what is available there and the poor quality of the material being sent out.

Kuhn exhibited 48 pages of PNCs in three frames at FLOREX. His exhibit, he said, "received a flat nothing—not even an honorable mention."

Kim Cuniberti has been asked to take Kuhn's place.

Edward Kroll has been collecting labels for some time. He saves them with what he calls "full original gum." To prove it, he sent *TPN* two labels, beautifully separated from the cellophane that is so annoying. Kroll had attached the labels to glassine envelopes, making the "original" gum do double duty.

TPN asked him to explain his technique, since many collectors have asked how to remove the cellophane.

The September issue of *Coil Line*, the journal of PNC³, mentioned the "famous se-tenant of Flag stamps on one side of the red tape and the 17¢ Electric Auto on the other."

The "se-tenant" of course is no such thing. If genuine, it is a splice; more probably it is a fabrication to defraud collectors.

According to Dr. John Greenwood, the purported strip has a 20¢ Flag splice

to a 17¢ Auto.

The rub is that no Flags were printed on the Cottrell presses and no Autos on the B, C or D presses. Therefore, a splice is an impossibility.

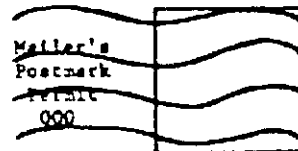
An aspect of philately that has always caused difficulty is that old-timers know something while others do not. Then the newcomers "discover" it and the old-timers say: "Oh, everybody knows that!"

So here is the Study Group's Thom E. Wheeler, an experienced collector:

"I am sending along a few stamps I found in a mixture. This shows a non-profit usage of tagged stamps with a 4-line mailer's postmark permit. The cancel reads 'MAILERS/POSTMARK PERMIT/NUMBER 1/ NON-PROFIT.' Is this a common practice? It's new to me!"

According to *The Domestic Mail Manual* (\$143.331) this is a mailer's precancel. It requires a circular date stamp, the permit number, enough wavy lines to de-

.333 Format A is the authorized design of mailer's precancel postmark. *Format A:*



face the stamp, and must be black.

But what's it for? Readers' views are solicited.

Wayne Chevery, the dealer who found the first rolls of the 20¢ Fire Pumper from Plates 12 and 14 in Baltimore, says he is out of the coil business. He said he sold his 10,000 strips but remains in the tagging error business.

Lee Warzala's List 11 has an offer for Crack II on Plate 2 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper, which was illustrated on Page 34 of the 1988 *PNC Catalog*. Warzala estimates its value at \$1,400 and is willing to sell it for \$1,100, calling it "simply the most valuable constant plate variety known."

How come USPS will not permit us to order 25F, 8.4T and 21T by press? It did allow "by press" orders on 20F and 22F.

What others say about PNCs



With due respects to Ken Lawrence, who edits the "earliest use" data for Steve Esrati's catalog, I wonder if the members agree with the practice of listing "first day of issue" as the earliest use in all cases.

Eight of the 16 Pumper numbers, 10 of the 18 Surreys, and 5 of the 7 18¢ Flags all are known on FDC, even though many of the numbers had not gone to press until months after the first day of issue.

Tom Maeder
Coil Line,
Journal of PNC³



In response to a specific request made in this column (May 16), Assistant Postmaster General Gordon C. Morison agreed to release a full listing detailing just what off-sale definitive stamps remain in USPS inventories.

There may be more here than meets the eye, because as these words are written, six months after Morison's promise, the listing has still not been released.

Quotes without comment

USPS officials say we can expect it any day now. Don't wait up.

Michael Laurence
"Editor's Choice"
Linn's



One of the biggest problems in the new [Scott Specialized] catalog is the listing and pricing of used plate number coils. The price difference between the used 9.3¢ [tagged] Plate 6 stamp and a used Plate 1 single is more than \$100. ...

In a related problem, Scott now needs to face the fact that modern overprinted and service-inscribed stamps, which the USPS still refers to as precancels, are primarily sold as mint stamps. ...

In addition, since there are no longer collector versions of service inscribed stamps being produced, there are no longer "mint" stamps as Scott has previously defined the word. It's time to update. ...

Another problem with the 1989 catalog

is the continuing practice of substituting dashes for high priced items.

Scott has claimed in the past that this is done when pricing information is not available, or in cases where an item is rare and is not traded often enough to warrant pricing.

This is happening, however, with items that are still actively bought and sold. This is most apparent in the case of the 1981 18¢ Flag stamp, Scott 1891, Plate 6.

This stamp, which was listed in the 1988 catalog at \$600 for a mint strip of three, now sells for about \$1,500. Its price has simply been deleted.

Wayne L. Youngblood
Linn's



"E" stamps were used extensively on mail to Europe this summer (contrary to UPU regulations). A pair of "E's" was the most common design seen on hotel counters.

Tom Maeder
Coil Line,
Journal of PNC³

The way to buy FDCs with PNCs is by subscription. No hunting at shows. No search at dealers' stores.

Each new PNC brings you an FDC with a House of Farnam cachet. You may also order Artmaster or ArtCraft.

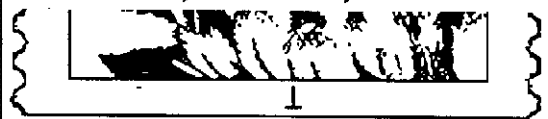
Farnam covers are \$5 each for VF. XF is \$7.50. Artcraft and Artmaster covers are \$4 each for VF. Minimum deposit \$25.

Specials

- 5.5T1P, Artmaster, burned rubber 2R, \$15.
- 18¢ Flag #5, Colorano, pair, number on right stamp, \$150.
- 20¢ Official, Colorano, pair, \$25.
- 22¢ Official, Americana, single, \$17.50.
- Same, Artmaster, PS/3, \$13.75.
- 25F3, Farnam, PS/3, \$10.
- 25¢ Honeybee #1, Farnam, PS/3, \$5.
- 20¢ Consumer #1, PS/4, Farnam, \$40.
- B Press 2¢ Locomotive PS/5 with PS/5 of any Cottrell number (2T2, 2T3, 2T4, 2T6, 2T8 or 2T10) \$14 each, all six for \$75.
- B Press 1¢ Omnibus, PS/5, Shue, \$20.
- 7.1T1P, KMC, PS/3 with unnumbered tagged stamps, \$20.

Stephen G. Esrati
P.O. Box 20130
Shaker Heights, OH 44120
(216) 561-9393

Buzz, buzz, buzz!



Normal 1



Serified 1

25¢ Honeybee #1—Full serif in PS/5:
\$17.50 F-VF; \$25.00 VF-XF; \$35 VF-S.

25¢ Honeybee #1 and #2 with joint line:

- Have # 1 at 12L and 12R
- Have #2 at 6L, 6R, 8R and others coming
- Want rolls or strips of others
- Buying, selling, trading

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz

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

Scott renumbers again, so do we

Continued from Page 2

to Scott Catalog numbers. I hated having to look up Scott numbers.

Also, when others used Scott numbers, I was never sure which year's numbers they had used.

Scott still leaves out stamps (10T2Pii, 12T1PB, 14T2B). This is unconscionable. Either a catalog lists all stamps, or it is not a catalog.

Changing the numbers constantly is costly to collectors. Further, Scott now has three sections in which it lists the Transportation Series. It's time to renumber again, from the beginning right to the end—and to include every PNC, not a hodgepodge listing only some of them.

And then there's the hang-up about pricing precancels. Scott continues blithely to price them only as "used" stamps, a reflection on days when it was illegal to own

mint precancels. But what does a collector of postally used precancels do to price his gems? Scott will not help him.

Sadly, I notice that no other dealer but me is using the PNC Catalog numbers. But, then, it took more than 10 years before the 1948 Tucker's seat belts were introduced in the Studebaker.

The 1989 *PNC Catalog* will price mint and used singles. It will also add several features not heretofore available, including earliest usages on most stamps.

Users of the catalog who used the 1988 numbers for their own purposes will be able to convert quite easily, and using either the old or the new numbers should be fully understandable to anyone.

Full information about the 1989 catalog will be in the next issue of *TPN*.

**** Two new PNC booklets for sale ****

PNC Varieties

A compilation/checklist of all known PNC varieties including plate flaws, imperfs, color and inking varieties, mat varieties, numbers on top and tagging varieties. This booklet is an indispensable tool for checking varieties on used or mint strips or stamps on cover. With the price of PNC varieties being what they are, it just might be worth your while to know what you are looking for. Contains approximately 40 pages with well over 1,000 listings.

\$11.00 Postpaid

PNCs on Cover

A compilation of all known earliest usage dates of PNCs on cover. Emphasis is on commercially used covers with scarcity ratings for each plate number. Also includes separate listings of plate numbers known on FDCs.

\$7.00 Postpaid

**** SPECIAL ** Both Booklets for \$16.00**

Rob Washburn

P.O. Box 840

Skowhegan, Maine 04976

A new year? Most assuredly!

A new President? Absolutely!

A new Super Bowl champ? You bet!

A new area of collector interest? Who knows?

(But I'm trying to find out!)

PLATE NUMBER BOOKLETS

Concurrent with the printing of plate numbers directly on the design area of coils, plate numbers were also intentionally printed on tabs of booklet panes. My show exposure leads me to conclude that there may be a growing number of collectors saving complete booklets by plate number. Is this limited to a few "diehards" or is it wider spread? Responses to this and similar ads should help define interests. Newsletter/Price List available. SASE a must!

**A.S. Cibulskas
28 Westwood Road,
Stamford, CT 06902**

Variety Report—Part XIII

By A.S. Cibulskas

2¢ Locomotive

- a. Plate 3. High transfer at 3L in the same row as the "Smoking L." (Beschornor)

3¢ Conestoga

- a. Plate cracks at 12L. Though numerous rumors exist that this is a five-row crack, no more than two ("Blazing Conestoga" and a continuation into the row above) had been confirmed by me. An additional upward continuation into a third row has now been confirmed. As with the first continuation, the crack in the third row (second upward continuation) runs vertically from the bottom of the stamp to the top. (McKenna)

5¢ Motorcycle

- a. Plate crack or scratch constant at 1L on Plate 2. Extends from the bottom edge of the stamp upward to the bottom right rear of the fender. Readily obvious as it is about 5mm long. (Anon.)

10.1¢ Oil Wagon

- a. "Bursting shell"-like constant plate variety at 25L on Plate 2 with red inscription. (Maves)
b. Red dot over first "r" in "Carrier" constant at 23L in the same row as in "a." (Maves)

11¢ Stutz

- a. L-shaped scratch on hood of car at 2R. Constant on Plate 3. (JAdams)

12.5¢ Pushcart

- a. Dot about 40% up from bottom and at right perfs at 23R on tagged Plate 1. (Hartman)

16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon

- a. Dot at about 8 o'clock outside right wheel. Constant at 8R on Plate 1. (Cibulskas)
b. Dot near bottom edge at about 7:30 o'clock in relation to front (larger) wheel. Constant at 2L, Plate 1. (Cibulskas)
c. Crack or scratch from the bottom of the wagon base to the edge of the stamp. Constant at 10R on Plate 1. (Schauinger)

17¢ Electric Auto

- a. Constant mat variety dubbed "Crescent moon" in Style A precancel. [Editor's note: This was described by finder as being at 2L and called a "semicircular line between 't' and 'o' of 'Auto.'" But because the gap was not stated, this is not a constant.] (Warzala)

17.5¢ Racing Car

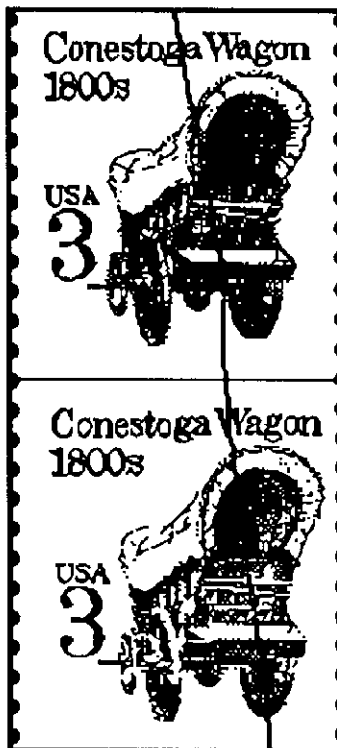
- a. Dot over "c" of "car" and dash to the right of the "5" at 1L. One copy submitted. Any confirmation? (JAdams)

20¢ Flag

- a. Dot in base of statue (front white area). Constant at 5L on Plate 2. (Hartman)
b. Dot at upper right top of "A" in "USA." Constant at 3R on Plate 3. (Saadi)
c. Dot under right side of Supreme Court. Constant at 17L on Plate 3. (Saadi)
d. "Pac Man" in the zero of the denomination. Constant at 22R of Plate 3. (Saadi)

22¢ Flag

- a. "Flying debris" on left side of Capitol dome. Constant at 9L on Plate 8. (Saadi)
b. Blue plate number, Plate 8. (Koepp)
c. High entry of plate number. Plate 13. (various)



CONTINUATIONS?—E.H. Cutler of Key Philatelic Publishing Co., submitted this photo of two rows of the crack. TPN was not aware if these were the same rows confirmed by Mr. McKenna.

25¢ Honeybee

- a. "Bee droppings"—black dots in the bottom white margin. As it has been confirmed as constant at 1L, origin has to be from the black intaglio plate. (Marrelli)
b. "Splattered yellow"—Numerous yellow splotches most noticeable in the white margins. [See article on Page 10 of this issue.] (Cibulskas)
c. Joint lines on Plate 2. Found on both C and D press stamps. Additional information in current and previous issue of TPN. (Potkewitz, Cibulskas, Warzala)

Honeybee doubling on Yule card

People on Walter Esparza's Christmas list received cards franked with a double impression of the 25¢ Honeybee (see Page 10). Nice present!

Catalog Update

New stamps

- 7.6T2P—Plate 2 of the 7.6¢ Carreta, plate number appears every 48th stamp. About Dec. 10. (Rabinowitz)
13T1P—Plate 1 of the 13¢ Police Patrol Wagon, red precancel, issued Oct. 29, 1988.
21T2P—Plate 2 of the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car, plate number appears every 48th stamp. About Oct. 29. (Marrelli, Rabinowitz)
20T1R—Plate 1 of the 20¢ Cable Car, issued Oct. 28, 1988.
20T2R—Plate 2 of the 20¢ Cable Car, mid-December in rolls of 500. (Rabinowitz)
24.1T1P—Plate 1 of the 24.¢ Tandem Bicycle, red precancel, issued Oct. 26, 1988.

Imperforates

- By Dr. John Greenwood
25F4—Plate 4, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite
25F5—Plate 5, 25¢ Flag/Yosemite
25T5—Plate 5, 25¢ Bread Wagon
25M1—Plate 1, 25¢ Honeybee
25M2—Plate 2, 25¢ Honeybee

Update corrections

The day of issue was incorrect in the last Update's "New Stamps" section for 5.3T1P (should be Sept. 16, 1988) and 20.5T1P (should be Sept. 28, 1988).

Withdrawals

- 8.5T1—Plate 1, tagged, of the 8.5¢ Tow Truck, Dec. 31, 1988. (The precancel was withdrawn Oct. 31.)
10.1T1—Plate 1, tagged, of the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon, Dec. 31, 1988. (The black precancel was withdrawn Oct. 31.)
6T1P—Plates 1 and 2, precanceled, of the 6¢ Tricycle, Dec. 31, 1988.

ADLETS

Classified ads are 15 cents a word. There is no charge for your address. Members of PNC³ are entitled to one free adlet a year up to 25 words.

USED Transportation plate number singles, pairs and strips. Very challenging, interesting, and inexpensive. Some covers also. Price list for SASE. Max Hickox, Box 21081, Denver, Colo. 80221 (5-89)

HONEYBEE JOINT LINES. Strips showing what isn't supposed to be there, \$5.50 a pair plus face value for added stamps you want in strip. Harold Potkewitz, 7 Susan Lane, Dix Hills, NY 11746. (1-89)

BUYING TAG SHIFTS on coils, with or without plate numbers, in quantity. All U.S. tag varieties wanted in quantity. TAG SHIFT HARRY Mueggenberg, 3525 Bluff Court, Carmichael, CA 95608. (5-89)

JOIN PNC3! Get valuable discounts from dealers and Coil Line. Send SASE and \$10 to Eric Russo, P.O. Box 17374, Whitefish Bay, WI 53217. (1-89)

BUYING PNC FDCS. Write first. Thomas Gift, 19959 Haviland Ave., Bronx, NY 10472. (4-89)

BUYING/TRADING PNC5 gaps imperforates. SASE. A.M.M. Amanullah, 7107 Sunrise Dr., Lanham, MD 20706. (1-89)

ALL BACK ISSUES of TPN available. Please send SASE for order blank. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

TRADE my Honeybee line pair (no number) for any PNC FDC. Have many different lines and varieties. Bob Rowe, Box 150863, Nashville, TN 37215. (1-89)

The original "crazy" of PNC varieties still has the best stock of such varieties. Send a 25¢ SASE for a price list. 22F6 "Flying Saucer" \$15 VF, \$17.50 XF; 8.5¢ "Flashlight" in PS/5, VF, \$10.; 16.7¢ huge slash, in PS/12, \$15. Many others. Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

Scott's 1989 *Specialized Catalogue* continues to show its contempt for PNC collectors

The very first thing a PNC enthusiast notices in Scott's 1989 *Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* is that 18F6 is not priced. It carried a \$600 val-

TPN Book Review

ue for a strip of three in 1988.

The once-rigged 18F7 fell sharply.

Prices for other 18¢ Flag strips, except Plates 4 and 5, climbed sharply.

Cat.	1989	1988
18F1	140.00	85.00
18F2	25.00	12.00
18F3	300.00	250.00
18F4	6.50	6.50
18F5	6.50	6.50
18F7	25.00	65.00

Realizing that this is Scott's only pricing of PNCs, because individual plate numbers are not priced in the general catalog, and knowing the paramount position that this catalog has, Scott's price estimates are of concern to every PNC collector.

Strips of five continue to be ignored, although collector interest appears to be

leaning toward the longer strip. Precancels continue to be priced only as used stamps, whether they are mint or not.

Also ignored are such catalogable items as the brick red 20F8 and the slate blue 22¢ Flag, both major color errors.

Prices rose from \$40 to \$100 on 5.2T3 and 5.2T5 and from \$350 to \$450 for 10.9T3P and 10.9T4P. The price of 20T2 rose only \$25 to \$200.

As in the past, Scott does not assign even a lettered subnumber to 14T2B and, to add to its contempt for PNC collectors, it assigns the same number, 2130a, to both the black and red precancels on the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon. But it continues to list 8.3T1B as a separate item without informing readers that it can easily be differentiated by the diagonal cross-hatching in the lettering.

The most mysterious entries are the plate-number strips of the 15¢, 25¢ and (25¢) officials and a stamp listed by Scott as O138B, a 20¢ official issued in perf. 10. This stamp is listed as engraved (it was printed by offset). None of these had a plate number.

The verdict: No improvement!

PNC Dealers

Coming in the March issue is *TPN's* directory of PNC dealers.

To make it as useful as possible, dealers are asked to submit information on:

- What are your specialties?
- Do you price by VF, or do you use a surcharge?
- Do you give a discount to PNC³ members?

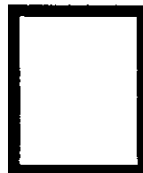
Specialties to be listed are: Mint singles, used singles, mint PS/3, mint PS/5, FDCs, varieties, precancel gaps, coil labels, PNC albums, commercial covers.

Please send information before Feb. 15, 1989, to:

The Plate Number

P. O. Box 20130
Shaker Heights, OH 44120

IF BOX IS CHECKED
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION
HAS EXPIRED



Forwarding and Address
Correction Requested

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

BULK MAIL