

Is there a cover-up on BEP data? Some evidence indicates there is

By Stephen G. Esrati

Do you remember the 1981 commemorative marking the centenary of the American Red Cross?

It was an 18¢ stamp which Scott lists as Number 1910.

The denomination on the stamp was printed from a black plate. But at the time the stamp was being prepared for printing, a rate change was pending before the Postal Rate Commission, and so three plates were made, one for the 18¢ rate and one each for 19¢ and 20¢. No stamps were ever printed from the last two plates.

Similarly, a 19¢ red plate and a blue 20¢ plate were made for the Savings and Loan Association stamp

PNC collectors once learned from Linn's that a precancel existed on the 20¢ Flag. The information came off the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's plate-activity reports. But it has been a long time since collectors were alerted to what may exist by these reports. Usually the reports are too late to be useful.

There are other problems—and these may include a cover-up, the purposeful concealment of what is going on.

For PNC collectors, this may spell the end of a useful research tool.

Research projects, such as the one on the 2¢ Locomotive on Page 60, are imperiled if the BEP reports cannot be depended upon.

A new BEP report, six months old, may be found on Pages 72-73.

(Scott 1911).

We learned of these plates in 1983 when they were canceled by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP).

In August 1984, we found

out that the Deserts Plants miniature sheet (Scott 1945a) had supposedly been printed in large quantities as an "undesignated" sheet. The sheet was, in fact, made up of

four 20¢ stamps. But this was another case where BEP did not know what the rate would be. Intaglio plates, which printed the denomination, were made for 18¢ and 20¢ stamps. The offset plates could be used with either of these. Then, when it got time to cancel the plates, someone goofed and called them "undesignated."

In the first *Plate Number Coil Catalog*, we listed six Cottrell and two B Press coils for the "D" stamp. Earlier, a 684-subject gravure plate was canceled without having any "D" stamps printed from it.

In November 1984, we learned about plates that were

Please turn to Page 59

12.5¢ Pushcart reprinted for the *Digest*

Dealer complaints cause Postal Service to postpone April 30 withdrawal

Long after the 12.5¢ rate for basic bulk rate had gone out of existence, the Postal

Service ordered it reprinted. What was more surprising was that it was the unprecanceled (philatelic) version that popped up in April.

Collectors learned of the reprinting because a California biker soaked two 12.5¢ stamps off a return envelope sent by the *Reader's Digest*. He then put the stamps on a letter to Dr. William Griffiths in California. Dr. Griffiths, a collector of PNCs and a member of PNC³, told Ken Lawrence of receiving the letter with Plate 2. Lawrence said they must have been precanceled. The physician said no. Until then they had only been known as a precancel.

Dr. Griffiths called his patient in-



quire where he bought them and drew out the admission that the stamps, on a sweepstakes mailing from the *Reader's Digest*, had been soaked and reused. Dr. Griffiths then tried to find out where the stamps were and found out they were not in Pleasantville, N.Y., where the *Digest* is published.

Meanwhile members of the PNC com-

Please turn to Page 67

In this issue

Study Group tackles the mysteries of the 2¢ Locomotive. Page 60.

<i>All the News</i>	75
<i>BEP data</i>	63, 72
<i>Catalog updates</i>	63, 70
<i>Honeybee</i>	72
<i>Paper types</i>	66
<i>Plate size</i>	70
<i>Quotable quotes</i>	76
<i>TPN Average</i>	68
<i>Varieties, 17¢ precancel</i>	65
<i>Varieties, general</i>	71

Paid circulation this issue is 420.

And now there are 3

I, II, and III

Richard Nazar describes all three dry-gum paper types for intaglio printing. Page 66.

An Editorial

Grading becomes an issue

When Scott switched to "Fine-Very Fine" grading for stamps in its 1990 catalogs as the basis for its prices, it provided a definition:

"Stamps may be somewhat off-center on one side, or only slightly off-center on two sides. Imperforate stamps will have two margins at least normal size and the design will not touch the edge. ...Used stamps will not have a cancellation that detracts from the design."

Clearly this does little for PNC collectors.

As long as we had Cottrell joint lines as a guide, things were easy. The position of the line in relation to the perforations was a good guide for horizontal centering. Vertical centering was a bit more difficult. It was never clear whether vertical centering took the plate number into account. Some collectors wanted equal spacing above the design and below the plate number. Others wanted the design perfectly centered and paid no attention to the placement of the plate number.

The Flags were our first exception. Horizontal centering was less exact. What mattered to most people was that the numbered stamp should appear fairly well centered horizontally.

Things began to go awry with multiple plate numbers that were not on line. But the greatest difficulties came with the no-line stamps we have had since the Cottrell presses were retired. It was never difficult to grade a stamp that had clearly defined designs, but on such items as the 20¢ Cable Car, with lots of white space and the design purposely skewed, it became difficult to determine what proper centering should be.

There has been a discernible change on grading among dealers. Pioneer dealers such as Dennis Chamberlain, Vern Kraus, Al Haake and D. John Shultz offered VF strips and also offered Extra Fine (and sometimes Superb). Some also offered Fine, which was then synonymous with "poor."

When the Big League dealers came into the picture, their mainstay was "Fine-Very Fine" and they simply provided surcharges for VF or XF. To these dealers, "Fine" was no longer synonymous to "poor." The old-timers now adopted a new term, "average," as the new synonym for "poor," even though the mathematical meaning of the word would indicate otherwise.

While it is clear that collectors have to make their choice on the basis of price, it is nonetheless a good idea to collect the highest grade one can afford. For that reason the *Plate Number Coil Catalog* continues to price stamps according to a VF grade. It appears that most collectors have long since adopted the premise Scott used to advocate most strongly, that the value of a stamp is tied to condition (no flaws). Collectors simply adapted that rule to grading, as well.

Too bad Scott did not follow through. Incidentally, Scott said it had changed its grading from "Very Fine" to "Fine-Very Fine." But the introductory notes to the 1989 *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* never said the grading was based on VF.

The Plate Number

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The Joy of finding out things

This issue includes a spate of reports on new research. Suddenly, we know what we did not know before. We have clues toward solving problems that we did not believe to be solvable.

Piece by piece we fitted together pieces of one puzzle, running up big bills for postage and telephone. *TPN* provided materials to the researchers to help them continue their work.

Several researchers expressed pleasure that it was all starting to come together.

But we need your help. One reader reported finding a 5.2¢ Sleigh used single from Plate 1 with a line gap. We need confirmation of a Plate 2.

Also needed badly are reports of tagging gaps we have not listed. We also need reports of any stamps found on a paper type not yet listed for that stamp.

We have made great progress in this infant field of PNCs. With your help, we shall continue to do so.

LETTERS: Let's discuss tagging gaps

When I see my name in print relative to tagging, as I did recently in *TPN* in relation to the "new" Minkus Catalog listings, I urge you to keep in mind when the last revision of that was asked by the old Minkus people for luminescent listings.

It had to have been in 1980 or 1981, because the last old catalog was a 1982 edition. It then ceased to be published until last year when—like a phoenix—it seemed to arise from the ashes!

I ordered one and wanted to pay, mentioning to the new people that I was the editor of the luminescent section. I was very anxious to see how the section had been updated and who the editor was now.

Lo and behold, they sent me

a catalog gratis, and asked for my comments on luminescent issues. I got sick when I saw that they had merely lifted the old section by photo-offset from the last catalog. Yeah, sure, as if nothing had taken place in tagging in the last decade!

Was any information ever published on tagging on late rolls of the 5¢ Motorcycle? I think I remember reading about it somewhere, but cannot find it. What I'm talking about is the tagging from poly plates with voids and gaps found on the Cottrell 2¢ Locomotive when they were hastily done for the rate change from 20 cents to 22 cents, only this time it's on

Please turn to Page 64

Is there a cover-up on BEP data?

Continued from Page 57

made for two stamps that never were, the 11¢ and 12¢ Eagle of the Americana Series. The stamp you know is the 13¢ Eagle.

Plates were also made for an 11¢ Liberty Bell and 12¢ and 13¢ Flags, all in the Americana Series. These plates were made for sheet stamps, coils and booklets.

Plates for those non-existent stamps were assigned, judging by their plate numbers, in 1975. They were canceled from 1975 to 1978. But collectors first learned of them at the end of 1984, along with yet another "undenominated" Desert Plants plate when BEP finally reported the cancellation of these plates.

When plates were made for the "E" stamps, we were never told what plates were made or when they were certified.

And that is the reason for this analysis.

In the Stamps Division of the Postal Service, a very helpful woman by the name of Linda Foster used to answer questions from journalists and collectors about the BEP plate-activity reports. She knew the answers because she edited the reports before they were distributed by the Postal Service.

In 1988, Foster was told she could no longer answer questions from philatelic journalists. But before that ban came into effect, I once called to ask questions about a BEP report.

The answer I got seemed strange at the time. "We have the reports from the Bureau and they're almost ready to be mailed out," Foster told me, "but we have to remove the data for the undenominated stamps first."

To me, this was an admission that the reports are not supposed to include all plates

that have been assigned, sent to press, or canceled. They are censored.

When the first reports came out about the Earth stamps in the BEP report for June 1988, we learned that the plates had been assigned in 1986. Yet these were the first reports on any of these plates.

Tardiness in and of itself is unpleasant, but how does one account for this: The "E" coil stamps were printed from four plates, one each for red, yellow, blue and black. From the coil stamps, we know there were a Plate 1 and a Plate 2 of each color. So there were eight coil stamp plates in all—as far as we can tell from the stamps.

But the only coil plates reported were the Blue 2, Red 2 and Black 2. What happened to the other five plates?

In July, the report showed some plate activity for the plates used to print the sheet and booklet versions of the "E" stamps. The data were hard to use because there were two separate plates for Red Sheet 2 (176244-2 and 176288-2), three for Blue Sheet 1 (176241-1, 176323-1, and 176285-1), two for Yellow Sheet 1 (176242-1 and 176286-1), and two for Black Sheet 2 (176247-2 and 176291-2).

The problem in all this is not the tardiness, nor even the flawed data. The problem is that the record-keeping system inside the BEP has changed over the years and is now less than dependable.

If the statistics are wrong the first time around, there is little likelihood that they can be corrected later.

Here's why.

Once the reports are entered into the master plate-activity log, the original slips of paper reporting what each pressman had done on each press are no longer preserved. Thus, once the data are entered into the log, the log becomes the only available record. And by the time we get the data, it may be impossible to correct the mistakes because the key records have been destroyed.

Thus, even though we have had BEP reports of Plate 4 of the 17¢ Electric Auto being sent to press, both as tagged stamps and as precancels, when the plate was canceled, BEP said no stamps had ever been printed off Plate 4.


On one plate of the 11¢ Stutz Bearcat, BEP simply said it lacked any information.

So, on the one hand, we have incomplete data from BEP; on the other we have an intentional withholding of information by the Postal Service. Why the Postal Service should want to withhold information is anyone's guess. It might be for a reason: to cover up costs of plate preparation for stamps that never see the light of day, or for juggling costs from one fiscal year to another, or something we can't even guess.

We do know that in the government's book-keeping, the cost of plate preparation is charged to the Postal Service.

And meantime, we keep holding our breaths. The BEP's data for activity in July 1988 were released late in 1988. When the 1989 PNC Catalog went to the printer April 23, the July data were the last we had.

Now, we finally have data we should have had in time for the catalog. Too late!



**Conestoga
Wagon
Cracks**

"Blazing
Wagon" —
\$25

1st continuation
down
— \$25

2nd continuation down
— \$25

Set of 3 — \$70
Box A
The Plate Number

Yosemite FDCs

Plate 1, Block tag, Artmaster, 5/20/88	\$10
Plate 3, Block tag, Farnam, 5/20/88	\$25
Plate 5, Phosphor, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$15
Plate 5, Phosphor, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$35
Plate 5, Phosphor and block, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$50
Plate 5, Phosphor and block, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$25
Plate 6, Phosphor, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$35
Plate 6, Phosphor, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$15
Plate 7, Phosphor, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$15
Plate 7, Phosphor, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$15
Plate 7, Phosphor and block, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$50
Plate 7, Phosphor and block, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$25
Plate 8, Phosphor, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$15
Plate 8, Phosphor and block, Farnam, 2/14/89	\$50
Plate 8, Phosphor and block, Artmaster, 2/14/89	\$25
18¢ Flag, 1, PS/3, ArtCraft	\$150
18¢ Flag, 5, Pair, Colorano, cancel on #	\$125

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(Subscribers to my FDC new issues service received the Farnam #8 as a PS/3 for \$5. You, too, may subscribe. \$25 deposit required.)

An unsolved philatelic detective story

Unraveling the mystery of the 2¢ Locomotive

By Stephen G. Esrati

Printing totals of the 2¢ Locomotive on the Cottrell presses have always thrown the Plate Number Coil Study Group for a loop. The numbers did not add up correctly. They still don't, but we're closer.

We had given up, believing that we would never get the correct totals because we simply did not trust BEP production figures. Among other things, there was a transposition of dates when the plates were canceled and a host of reports of sending plates to press without a report of their press mates.

The re-examination led to a nearly complete (but theoretical) printing history of the 2¢ Locomotive, but it failed to solve the key problem. The numbers still do not add up.

The re-examination was spurred when Dr. Leon Cheris, the compiler of the tagging section of the pre-1988 *Minkus Catalog*, asked a question that led us to a second look at what may have gone on at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

His question concerned the tagging gaps he found on some strips of the 2¢ Locomotive. It occurred to us in the study group that since some strips had no such gaps this could be a clue to work from.

When we combined our review—of the BEP data, Kim Cuniberti's and Gerald Clark's observations about the occurrence of precancel gaps, Richard Nazar's studies of paper types, and Dr. Cheris' question about the tagging gaps—we found that all of these played a rôle.

The raw BEP data

When the 2¢ Locomotive was first put on sale in Chicago on May 20, 1982, Plates 3 and 4 were available. Plate 3 may have been the first BEP sent to press, on March 20, 1982 (a different date than the one given in the catalog because we had not yet re-transposed the dates). Our earliest date for its press mate, Plate 4, is April 16, 1982.

Some other plate had to be paired with 3 before it was paired with 4. And we don't know which one.

Going by "to press" dates reported in April 1982 alone, the following appears to have been the sequence:

- April 14—Plates 3 and 5.
- April 15—Plates 1 and 2.
- April 16—Plate 4.

BEP production data as released by USPS

PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESSIONS	TOTAL PNC	Max. PNC
39891-1	09/14/81†	04/15/81	09/07/84	4,327	77,386	NONE
39892-2	09/18/81†	04/15/82	01/25/85	92,017	1,656,306	1,656,306
39892-2		01/14/85				
39906-3	09/18/81†	04/14/82	09/26/84	189,339	3,408,102	3,408,102
39906-3		04/14/82				
39906-3		09/10/84				
39907-4	09/18/81†	04/16/82	09/26/84	181,640	3,269,520	3,269,520
39908-5	09/18/81	04/14/82	11/24/86	1,440	25,920	NONE
39909-6	09/18/81	09/12/84	11/24/86	81,840	1,473,120	1,473,120
39909-6		01/14/85				
40207-7	May-82	NEVER	08/02/83	NONE	NONE	NONE
40208-8	05/04/82	09/26/84	11/24/86	296,083	5,329,494	5,329,494
40208-8		01/14/85				
40723-9	Jul-83	NEVER	01/18/85	NONE	NONE	NONE
40734-10	08/03/83	09/10/84	11/24/86	296,083	5,329,494	5,329,494
40734-10		01/14/85				

† Dates transposed in BEP report when plates were canceled. September 1981 is the right month for these assignments.

Since these "to press" dates were reported at the time of the activity, and since they make more sense, we shall disregard the transposed "to press" date for Plate 3 and retain the April 14 date.

Plate 5 was sent to press April 14, 1982, paired with Plate 3. Only 1,440 impressions were printed from it so it must have had problems before being replaced by Plate 4 on the 16th.

We believe all stamps printed from the pairing of Plate 5 with Plate 3 were shredded.

On the next day, April 15, BEP put Plates 1 and 2 on press. Plate 1 also ran into trouble and was probably pulled off the press that very day.

According to USPS, all 4,327 impressions from Plate 1 (and 2) were shredded. Plate 1 was canceled. Plate 2 was put in the vault.

In 1985, collectors found rolls of

stamps in which Plate 2 was paired with Plate 6.

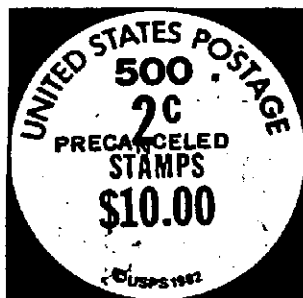
The pairing of these plates was reported on Jan. 14, 1985, when they were both sent to press. But a prior report told of sending Plate 6 to press on Sept. 12, 1984. No press mate was named.

But just two days earlier, on Sept. 10, Plates 3 and 10 were reported sent to press.

By 1984, Plate 3 was badly cracked. We believe no stamps were printed from that 3-10 pairing because the printing totals for the later pairing of Plates 8 and 10 were equal. On Sept. 12, Plate 6 was put on press, possibly to replace Plate 3, which was canceled Sept. 26.

But we do not believe any stamps were printed from that 6-10 pairing, either, because the printing totals for Plates 8 and 10 were equal.

The total printed from Plate 2 was re-



LABEL 1—"PRECANCELED" with low "N." This label was always pasted over by Label 2.



LABEL 2—This label was used to cover the "PRECANCELED" label with the low "N."

A theoretical press history of 2¢ Locomotive

PLATES	TO PRESS	IMPRESS.	Max. PNCs	COMMENT
3 and 5	04/14/82	1,440	NONE	Presumed shredded
1 and 2	04/15/82	4,327	NONE	Shredded
2 and 3	04/15/82???	5,850	NONE	Presumed shredded
3 and 4	04/16/82	181,640	3,269,520	Paper I, no tagging gaps
3 and 10	09/10/84	None	NONE	No stamps printed
6 and 10	09/12/84	None	NONE	No stamps printed
2 and 6	09/12/84	81,840	1,473,120	Total of 2 press runs
2 and 6	09/12/84	Unknown	?	Paper I, no tagging gaps
2 and 6	01/14/85	Unknown	?	Paper I, tagging gaps 4L
8 and 10	1984-85	296,083	5,329,494	Total of 4 press runs
8 and 10	09/26/84	Unknown	?	Paper I, no tagging gaps
8 and 10	1985	Unknown	?	Paper I, tagging gap 2L
8 and 10	1985	Unknown	?	Paper I, tagging gap 3L
8 and 10	1985	Unknown	?	Paper II, tagging gap 3L*
8 and 10	1985	Unknown	?	Paper II, no tagging gaps

*This is probably a paper splice, substituting Type II paper, with no stop of the presses. It is not a new press run.

ported at 92,017 impressions. Plate 6 was reported to have had only 81,840.

Even after we subtract the 4,327 impressions off Plate 1 from the total for Plate 2, we still have 87,690 impressions left, a higher total than that of Plate 6. That leaves 5,850 impressions from Plate 2 unaccounted for.

Knowing (from rolls of stamps) that Plates 3 and 4 were paired, we also notice that Plate 3 had a total of 187,899 (after deducting the 1,440 impressions with Plate 5). Plate 4 only had 181,640

impressions. That leaves 6,259 impressions on Plate 3 unaccounted for.

New hypothesis #1:

A printing of Plates 2 and 3

Does this mean that Plate 3 was paired with Plate 2 after Plate 5 cracked? Could 5,850 impressions have been printed from 2 and 3 on April 15, 1982? That would leave 409 impressions still unaccounted?

We now believe that they were. And those 409 impressions may simply have been lost when BEP later tried to print the cracked Plate 3 with Plate 10.

No one has ever reported a pairing of Plates 2 and 3.

Linda Foster of the USPS Stamps Division told *TPN* some years back that the BEP has standing orders to destroy any stamps of which fewer than 20,000 impressions had been printed.

To add a bit of spice to the mysteries of the 2¢ Locomotive, *Coil Line*, the Journal of PNC³, recently illustrated a wrapper label of a 2¢ Locomotive that was overprinted in black as a precancel. What *Coil Line* did not say was that in most instances where such a label was affixed, it was covered by a second label that was not marked as a precancel.

Edward Gould of Michigan said full rolls of Plates 3 and 4 bearing the "PRE-CANCELED" overprint are still on sale at Saginaw, Mich., and many of these rolls lack the second label.

[The three labels in our illustrations are from the collection of Clark.]

No BEP-printed 2¢ Locomotive precancels are known. Nor were any ever reported by BEP.

The only reason we can think of for printing a 2¢ precancel is as make-up first-class postage to use with the precanceled 20¢ Flag after the rate hike of April 1988 to 22¢, but the Sept. 10, 1984, "to press" date for the pairing of Plates 3 and 10 seems too early for that since the rate was not yet known then.

But perhaps our missing 409 impressions, from plates we cannot identify, were intended to be precancels. BEP would not have printed 2¢ precancel wrapper labels unless it was also printing such stamps

New hypothesis #2:

Two types of tagging

What Dr. Cheris added to all this is a question he had first asked BEP to re-



LABEL 3—This "PRECANCELED" label was found without the low "N" and without being pasted over.

An unsolved philatelic detective story *Continued from Page 61*

solve. The answer he got on May 17, 1985, said:

Dear Dr. Cheris:

This is in response to your letter of March 17, 1985, in which you submitted a coil (26) of 2¢ Locomotive 1870's stamps for examination and a report of our findings. The Locomotive stamp was printed on the Cottrell (monocolor intaglio) press with the phosphor taggant being applied on press. Plates #8 and #10 were used for a recent additional order of these stamps.

The vertical gap in the taggant material every twelve stamps is a result of the gaps formed by the two-piece application cylinder. Formerly, a solid cylinder was used for applying the phosphor taggant. The erratic coating of phosphor taggant on the stamps you submitted probably occurred during press start-up, when the application cylinder was insufficiently charged with taggant material....

Carl V. D'Allessandro
Executive Assistant
to the Director

This was our first confirmation of what we had observed on the stamps: Because the 2¢ Locomotive, 5¢ Motorcycle and 17¢ Electric Auto all showed vertical tagging breaks inside the collectible strip of five, we believed that these stamps were tagged from a mat or plate measuring only 12 stamps in width.

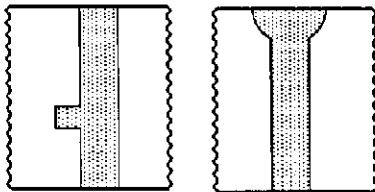
D'Allessandro's letter to Dr. Cheris told us that stamps without vertical tagging breaks come from a mat or plate measuring 24 or 48 stamps in circumference.

We draw this conclusion from the fact that there were no tagging gaps on other Cottrell issues. The one element missing here is that we do not know the circumference of the big tagging cylinder. We believe it to be 24.

Dr. Cheris did write a follow-up letter to D'Allessandro, requesting the dimensions of the two-piece plate, the material it was made from, and how long it was used. He got no reply.

Still, all this brings up some new information, including the importance of the late 1984-early 1985 time frame. Dr. Cheris referred to the two-piece tagging surfaces as "poly plates." Questioned about this, he said: "I believe that in the late 1960s or early 1970s, the plates used to apply the phosphor were made of polyethylene, hardened for such use. I cannot be certain if this was so, but I believe others have used this term before me."

Dr. Cheris then asked: "How do you know that the tagging plate was attached



TAGGING GAPS—The clip, left, and the screw head are seen as untagged areas when viewed under short-wave UV. The white areas are tagged. Only the top or bottom of the screw head are usually seen. For more on tagging gaps, see Page 68.

to the press with clips or screws? Do you have Bureau documentation of that?"

These terms were originally used by collectors who observed these shapes as untagged areas on stamps. Collectors merely called them what they looked like.

Larry G. Haynes confirmed that what we had seen under ultraviolet light was exactly what we thought it was, a screw head and a clip.

Haynes, who had seen the mats used to print the Type AB and BA precancels on the 17¢ Electric Auto when he visited BEP, said they measured 12 x 9.

"They were held down by clips," he said, "and the clips were held in place by screws."

Haynes said the tagging mats he saw were made of the same red, rubber-like material as the precancel mats and could have been made of polyethylene.

What this may mean is that the "two-piece" tagging "cylinders" referred to by D'Allessandro were, in fact, precancel mats that measure 9 x 12. This leads to the suspicion that the "one-piece" cylinder really had a circumference of 24.

New hypothesis #3: Paper types count

Since we have BEP's rundown of press dates and can add to this the fact that only Plates 8 and 10 are known on Type II paper as well as on Type I paper, it proves that Plates 8 and 10 were sent back to press at a much later time, possibly for the 1985 postal-rate change from 20¢ to 22¢. BEP "to press" data on Jan. 14, 1985, confirm this.

We now believe that all stamps that show tagging gaps stem from about that time.

[Cuniberti said this is logical because all plates used for printing stamps on

Type II paper for which we have "to press" dates went to press in January 1985 or later. It may have been December 1984 because Plates 3 and 4 of the 5¢ Motorcycle were sent back to press in December of 1984. Plates 1 and 2 went back in June 1985.]

Thus we know of at least four press runs of Plates 8 and 10. Used in this context, a press run is any occasion where the press is stopped and started again.

We count four press runs for Plate 8 and 10 because of a combination of the two pieces of the puzzle, the paper type and the tagging mat's size.

The "normal" Plates 8 and 10 are on Type I paper and have no gaps in the tagging. That means they were tagged from the one-piece tagging plate in the printing run that began Sept. 10, 1984. This press run was on Type I paper.

Then came two press runs that produced tagging gaps. How do we know there were two press runs? Simple! Tagging gaps have been found at 3L and at 2L.

And now we add the little we know about precancel gap positions

Using Cuniberti's theory about the movement of precancel gaps (see *TPN* May 1989, Page 40), we can assume that a shift in the tagging gap is similar to a shift in a precancel gap, meaning that there was some cessation in the printing and a one-stamp repositioning of the tagging cylinder.

[The two printing cylinders move independently of each other. We do not know why the precancel or tagging mat changes position in relation to the printing cylinder or whether it is always by a one-stamp shift, but we do know that a movement of the precancel or tagging gap cannot occur while the press is running.]

Finally, there is a printing on Type II paper. Only Plates 8 and 10 are known on this paper. Richard Nazar happened to have a roll of Paper II Locomotives and checked for gaps in the tagging. There were none; meaning it again was printed from a 24-stamp-wide tagging mat. Cuniberti, however, found strips on Type II paper that showed tagging gaps at 3L and strips that showed no tagging gaps (which may have come from the 24-stamp-wide tagging cylinder, the same one Nazar had).

The conclusion from this is that the printing with the gap at 3L was the last on Type I paper and, without stopping

Catalog description of tagging mat size is wrong as to stamps from Cottrell presses

Page v of the 1989 PNC Catalog errs in the section on tagging: "Since the process that applied ... precancels ... used the same equipment that was used to apply the tagging..." Earlier, on Page iii, precancel mats were described as being 12 stamps long and 9 rows high. That gave the impression that precancel mats were also 9x12.

That information was the best we had before we began to reassess the 2¢ Locomotive. We now know that the four small mats are an exception, not the rule. We do not know the size of the larger tagging device, but believe it to have a circumference of 24.

The small mats leave a vertical untagged gap. Sometimes a screw head or clip show at this gap.

Thanks to Gerald H. Clark, the following is a preliminary report on what we know about such gaps:

2T2, 2T6—Break 4L. screw head in top and bottom row. Paper I.

2T8, 2T10—Break 2L. "T"-shaped clip. Paper I.

2T8, 2T10—Break 3L. "T"-shaped clip. Paper I.

2T8, 2T10—Break 4L. Strip with "Two lumps of coal" shows no clips or screw head. Paper unknown. (Thanks to Scott Hoppis.)

5T1, 5T2—Break 4R. screw head in top and bottom row. Paper I.

5T3, 5T4—Break 3L. screw head in top and bottom row. Paper I.

5T3, 5T4—Break 2L. Clip in top and bottom row. Paper II.

5.2¢, plates unknown—Break position unknown. screw head on top and bottom row. Paper I.

17T1, 17T2—Break 2L. Clip on top and bottom row. Paper I.

row. Paper I.

17T3, 17T4—Break 3L, other stamps in strip show tagging only as occasional tiny dots, appearing almost untagged. More reports on this "untagged" strip are needed. Paper II.

17T3, 17T4—Break 2L. Clip on top and bottom rows. Paper II.

Since these stamps are tagged from mats measuring only 9 rows deep, many show a horizontal untagged strip across the entire strip. It measures about 2mm.

Kim Cuniberti noticed that all these stamps have a different appearance under short-wave UV. When Steve Esrati tried to confirm Cuniberti's finding, he found it on all these strips except 2T2 and 2T6.

The difference is hard to explain in text. Basically the design of the stamps appears with much heavier, thicker lines than the ordinary stamps (with both examined in short-wave UV). In some cases, the stamp design loses all its detail, becoming a dark blob. Also, the color of the tagging is yellower in UV in most cases.

It is almost certain that other tagging gaps exist but may be found only in rolls or long strips. It is to be hoped that some of this material will be examined and the results reported if more tagging gaps show up.

All reports of new gaps or of gaps at different locations would be appreciated by Clark at 424 Roosevelt St., Midvale, Utah 84047-3622.

Locomotive study causes a review of all BEP data

The Plate Number Coil Study Group had always believed that the only BEP "to press" dates that mattered were about the first time a plate was sent to press.

Unfortunately, we sometimes get more than one "first time to press" date from BEP. We have usually used the earliest. And, where BEP appeared to err in sending a plate back to press and reporting it, we ignored it (except for precancels).

The Locomotive study, however, caused us to go through all BEP reports. We found a dozen or more instances where BEP dutifully reported sending plates back to press—and we found all the tagged plates that show precancel gaps among these.

Future editions of the *PNC Catalog* will present all such data as "Back to press" to enable students to compare paper types, tagging gaps, precancel gaps and other snippets of information found on stamps with the raw BEP data.

This work is tremendously difficult because of internal contradictions in the data. In some instances the data are just plain wrong, as when they show an assigned date later than a date to press. Therefore, as in the previous editions of the catalog, all data we present will be edited as best we can.

It is almost certain that we will make new discoveries from all this.

An unsolved philatelic detective story *Continued from previous page*

the presses, a paper splice took place, substituting Type II paper.

Still later, more stamps were printed on Type II paper, this time without tagging gaps.

The table on Page 61 reflects our current ideas of what may have happened. The lines in the darkened areas represent the plates for which we have printing totals.

What all of the above shows is that every scrap of information we obtain can help us come to an understanding of the stamps we collect. In this instance we used BEP data, paper types, tagging observations, and even the labels. But the clue that put us on the track came from Dr. Cheris.

It may also be useful to repeat something said by Haynes: "I thought you guys knew all that!"

The sad fact is that we in the study group know something only after one member shares his knowledge with the others. Then we can use the knowledge to pass it along. Much of the time we do not even know the right questions to ask, not until someone startles us into rethinking some aspect of PNC collecting, as Dr. Cheris did.

Right now, we need to know a lot more about tagging "cylinders."

This review did not finally solve the printing history of the 2¢ Locomotive down to the last 409 impressions. It would have been nice if it had.

But we did learn a whale of a lot of things about our stamps in its course. As we carry on, maybe we'll figure out the last 409 impressions, as well.

Meanwhile, we've made progress and had fun.

And one last thought:

Why print 2¢ precancels?

Although a 2¢ precancel is not known to exist, why would the Postal Service even print one since Bureau precancels are prepared for specific bulk rates and can only be used alone?

Remember the 20¢ Flag precancel, printed for a FIRST-CLASS rate?

Could it be that the first-class mailer needed them to add to his Flags after the first-class rate went to 22¢?

It is the only explanation we can think of.

We know next to nothing about the real reason for printing the 20¢ precancels. We do not know who the mailer was. But a 2¢ add-on would have made sense.

LETTERS

Continued from Page 58

the 5¢ Motorcycle.

Can you give me any info of that type of tagging on other than the 2¢ Locomotive and where and when it was published?

Leon J. Cheris, DDS
Astoria, N.Y.

In reply: Not only is there no reference to publication of anything about poly tagging plates, I don't even recall seeing the term "poly plates" before. However, Gerald H. Clark did report in TPN for January 1988 how he shows tagging varieties on his album pages for exhibits. In that article, Clark's 5¢ Motorcycle with a screw head was illustrated. Also shown were 17¢ Autos with vertical gaps and gaps with clips.

Dr. Cheris' letter resulted in a complete re-examination of our information about the 2¢ Locomotive. An article detailing the intense efforts of several members of the PNC Study Group to use reason to explain the mysteries of the Locomotive is to be found on Page 60.

Not just bourses

I was kind of disappointed that

you printed in the Dealers' Directory for 1989 that I only did bourses, not mail order.

I don't promote the mail order because I'm too involved with other things, but I wouldn't say I wouldn't do mail order.

Vern Kraus
Kenosha, Wis.

Reader finds new stamps

Back in 1982, my local San Diego post office carried the 20¢ Consumer Education coil, of which I purchased examples for my collection. Although I was scarcely aware of the existence of plate numbers then (as were we all), I did save a couple of line pairs with plate number 3 and 4 because, unlike the usual plate numbers, the numbers were at the top. (Both pairs were from the same roll.)

Close examination shows that the "3" is sliced ever so slightly at the top and a considerable chunk is present at the bottom—much more than is sliced off at the top. The "4," however, has some white above it (grade it at least "A"), and there is no trace of the bottom number at all.

In reply: The information has been forwarded to A.S. Cibulskas, who keeps track of numbers on top.

As I began to investigate PNCs during the mid-1980s, I asked my

mom (in Buffalo, N.Y.) to save junk mail envelopes with plate number singles on them. From this I have a 5.2T1P single on cover that clearly shows a Line gap. Unless I'm misreading it, the table of gap strips in the 1989 PNC Catalog indicates that a line gap is not known for 5.2T1P.

George Olshevsky,
San Diego, Calif.

In reply: Whoopee! This is not the first time that a new gap position was first reported by a collector who spotted it on a used single. If a confirming copy (or a copy from 5.2T2P) is reported, the new precancel gap will be catalogued.

Why no half gaps?

The 1989 catalog does not list half gaps (such as 1 1/2 Right or 2 1/2 Left) for precancels, although spaces for these are provided in the Lighthouse album. Why not?

Is a strip with the gap at 1 1/2 Right a 1 Right or a 2 Right? And what if we never heard of a 2 Right?

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz
Stamford, Conn.

In reply (by Al Haake): I think these are in the nature of EFOs, and don't belong in the catalog. And where would you draw the line? Would you include quarter gaps?

(By Myron Hill): Ideally, the gap should fall on the perfs. If it does not, then it is less desirable. Half gaps are EFOs and should not be included in the catalog.

(By A.S. Cibulskas): I don't collect gaps and don't really know what half gaps are. But if we put them in, those who collect them benefit; if we leave them out, nobody benefits.

(By Steve Estrati): The matter has been submitted to all members of the PNC Study Group. Now it is time for the views from readers.

Mixture facts, please

I would be interested in reading about how commercial mixtures are assembled and sold. Would dealers in this area be willing to share their insights?

Dr. Rabinowitz made a few good points in the last TPN. I agree that we cannot draw any conclusions from the data we have collected. I agree with his reservations on roll size and our mixture findings. Perhaps a few copies of 22F14, 15, and 16 we have found were pulled from a vending machine. The point is that we are making a record of what is found and what is being saved from the trash can.

Thom E. Wheeler
Galion, Ohio

Your 1989 PNC Catalog is my price list

To avoid a conflict of interest or unconsciously trying to undercut other dealers' prices in TPN, I will sell any PNCs, including varieties, in VF at the prices in the 1989 edition of The Plate Number Coil Catalog. These prices are an average of other dealers' prices through April 30, 1989.

The offer does not apply to stamps priced in the catalog in italics. I do not stock imperforates, used PNCs, or paper types.

Premiums and deductions: For XF, add 25%; for Superb, add 40%. For Fine, deduct 10%; for stamps below the grade of Fine (no cut numbers or designs, but with the joint line missing the perfs), you may deduct 25%. I have many strips of 6 at no extra charge.

Discounts: On orders over \$25, deduct 5%; on orders over \$50, deduct 15%; on orders over \$100, deduct 25%. If you are in PNC³, you may deduct another 5%.

This offer remains in force at least until Labor Day. If I am out of stock, you will get a refund and will retain whatever discount you have earned. If I substitute a higher grade, you pay no more; if I substitute a lower grade, you pay less with the right to reject.

If you live in Ohio, please add 7% sales tax.

I offer the same discounts on Lighthouse albums and supplements, Michel catalogs and all Stanley Gibbons catalogs and handbooks. You pay for shipping on these.

I also supply House of Farnam FDCs at \$5 each on a subscription basis. Subscribers are assured of one PNC FDC of each issue. Deposit of \$25 required.

Varieties and gaps: I carry most PNCs with various precancel gaps. I also stock many constant plate varieties, including almost all those listed in the 1989 catalog. In addition, I know where to find many items, so if I cannot supply them, I'll make an effort to find them for you.

Since the catalog is the most complete listing of PNCs available, and since TPN takes a lot of my time, using the catalog as my price list is not only a way out of my ethical quandary, but also saves time—the one commodity I often lack.

Stephen G. Esrati

P.O. Box 20130

Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120-0130

☎ (216) 561-9393

Type C precancel varieties are found to be constant

By Howard A. Moser

I was in error in assuming that there was progressive deterioration in a single mat position of the "A" in the Type C precancel of the 17¢ Electric Auto. (The same precancel mats were used on the 12¢ Stanley Steamer printed on the Cottrell presses.)

I now have so many different examples I must conclude that they are from multiple mat positions.

This is confirmed by a used strip of seven from the 12¢ Steamer, which contains three different varieties of broken "A's."

Most varieties can be divided into four types (A to D) with the amount of erosion charted in Illustration 1, ranging from 1-1 (full left leg of the "A") to 7-1 (more than a 90° gouge out of the left leg of the "A").

The shape of the left leg appears to fall into four groups:

- A. Straight line.
- B. Full concave curve.
- C. Bent straight lines.
- D. Combination of a curve and a straight line.

By using combinations of letters and the start and end positions, I could classify all my copies. I was then able to list my 204 used copies in the accompanying table.

One interesting thing I have noticed is that the line ends at the gaps (I collect only used singles) are usually different, indicating that each variety could be from a different mat position.

The dark backgrounds make these difficult to identify at times, but most can be identified with reasonable accuracy.

It may be possible to

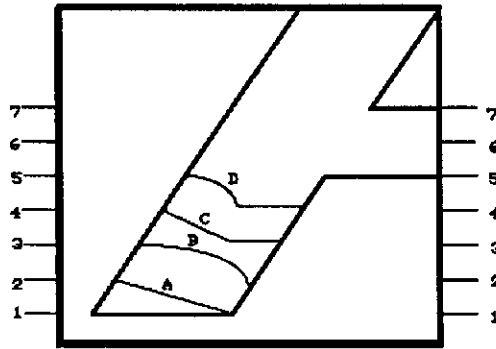


Illustration 1—Four shapes (designated by letters) and 7 positions for missing part of "A."

plate these varieties with the help of collectors and dealers of plate number coils. Collectors with strips showing the Type C precancel should be able to find several of the varieties.

I cannot do the plating with used singles, so I need help from collectors and dealers who collect strips.

I will gladly send copies of Illustration 1 to anyone undertaking such a study. (Send SASE to Moser at 1409 13th St., Highland, Ill. 62249.)

Editor's note: One of Moser's specialties is to observe the shapes of the precancel lines at the gap, and he reports that he has found many variations, especially on the 5.2¢ Sleigh.

Shape	12¢	17¢	Shape	12¢	17¢	Shape	12¢	17¢	Shape	12¢	17¢
A2-1	1	9	B2-1	1	3	C2-1			D2-1	3	1
A3-1		2	B3-1	6	2	C3-1			D3-1	1	1
A4-1			B4-1	7	3	C4-1			D4-1		3
A5-1	2	1	B5-1	13	2	C5-1		1	D5-1	1	2
A6-1			B6-1	4	1	C6-1		1	D6-1		1
A7-1			B7-1			C7-1			D7-1		
A2-2		2	B2-2			C2-2			D2-2		
A3-2	2	7	B3-2		1	C3-2	1		D3-2	1	5
A4-2	1	6	B4-2		4	C4-2			D4-2	1	2
A5-2		4	B5-2	2	3	C5-2		2	D5-2		
A6-2	4	2	B6-2	6	1	C6-2			D6-2	2	
A7-2			B7-2	1	2	C7-2			D7-2		
A3-3			B3-3			C3-3			D3-3		
A4-3		3	B4-3			C4-3		1	D4-3		
A5-3	2	5	B5-3	2	1	C5-3			D5-3		1
A6-3	2	1	B6-3	3	1	C6-3			D6-3		
A7-3			B7-3			C7-3			D7-3		
A4-4	2	2	B4-4		1	C4-4			D4-4		
A5-4	19	3	B5-4	1	2	C5-4			D5-4		2
A6-4	6	6	B6-4			C6-4			D6-4		1
A7-4			B7-4			C7-4			D7-4		
A5-5		1	B5-5			C5-5			D5-5		
A6-5			B6-5			C6-5			D6-5		
A7-5			B7-5			C7-5			D7-5		

A postscript to Moser's finds

After Howard Moser wrote the above on his 74th birthday, he found 100 more broken "A's."

He found two each of Type A5-2 and 3 each of Type A6-2, all Line Gap singles.

But each stamp had a different line end at the gap, indicating that the stamps are from different spots on the mat, although at the precancel gap.

Said Moser: "The more of these I see, the more I am convinced that the mats are worth some study."

You need not come to Texas to buy my PNCs. I sent in the wrong ad for the 1989 PNC Catalog. You may deal with me by mail order with confidence.



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Now there are three dry-gum papers

By Richard J. Nazar

As my research continues into the types of paper used by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to produce coils issued since 1980, clues and confirmations arise slowly. Although the process has been long, more and more pieces of the puzzle have been falling into place and a clearer picture is now apparent.

It has recently become evident that there are three separate companies supplying dry-gummed paper stock to the BEP for intaglio production of coil stamps.

I have previously reported and described two different paper types used for dry-gum intaglio production. Each of these has distinct characteristics, each of which identifies the paper's supplier or manufacturer:

- Gum texture
- Fluorescent qualities

In our context, the fluorescent qualities are the ones noted under long-wave ultraviolet light (a band from 3,000 Ångström to 4,000Å.) The phosphors used to tag the stamps glow under short-wave UV (2,537Å).

I assigned Type I and Type II designations to differentiate papers according to both categories.

Type I paper is supplied by Paper Corp. of the United States (PCUS), a division of Paper Corp. of America, based in New York, N.Y. PCUS is a paper merchant. It buys uncoated paper stock (ungummed) from an outside mill and has the adhesive applied by its gummer, Nashua Corp. in Merrimack, N.H.

When Type I paper is exposed to long-wave UV, it typically appears as a bright purple-white in varying degrees, depending on the amount of chemical brightener in the paper. Some degree of brightener is always present in Type I paper, even if only as small high-bright fibers

on a slightly brightened base.

Type I paper's gum is distinctively marked by diagonal gum ridges that run at an approximate 45-degree angle from the base of the stamp in a SW-NE direction [Figure 1]. These ridges are sometimes faint and difficult to see, but are always present on Type I paper.

To best view the gum ridges, shine an incandescent light source at a low angle across the back of the stamp with the light at its top. Sometimes it helps show the ridges better if one slowly rotates the stamp. Avoid looking for gum texture with fluorescent (overhead tube) lighting because it does not cast shadows well. The shadows formed by light shining across the peaks and valleys of the ridged gum make the texture visible.

PCUS has been a paper supplier to BEP since the 1940s. It was the sole supplier of dry-gum paper from the mid-1970s (when BEP began to use dry gum) until a second, independent supplier had successfully won a public bid and was awarded the contract. This company was Eastern Fine Paper Corp. of Brewer, Maine, the supplier of Type II paper.

Eastern Fine is an integrated mill (one that produces its own paper stock and applies the adhesive to produce a finished product). Eastern Fine is the only mill of this type in the United States.

Unlike Type I, Eastern Fine's Type II paper exhibits no brighteners under long-wave UV. It appears as a homogeneous, dull yellow-brown. It looks "dead" in UV. Type II paper's gum is typically much smoother in appearance, sometimes showing very faint horizontal striations [Figure 2]. This gum is very sensitive to fingerprints. Be sure to use stamp tongs with Type II paper to avoid marking the gum. The first stamp to appear on Type II paper was the 7.4¢ Baby Buggy, issued April 7, 1984.

Beginning with the printing of the redesigned 2¢ Locomotive on the B Press in 1987, a "different" paper appeared. Until recently it was believed that this paper was the result of changes made in the production of Type II paper, which, by then, was becoming less common on newly issued stamps.

We now know that this new paper was introduced because L&CP Corp. of Troy, Ohio, had won a contract to supply paper to BEP. L&CP is a different type of company than the two previously mentioned, L&CP is a paper con-

verter. It buys uncoated and ungummed paper from an outside mill (currently from Glatfelter Co. of Spring Grove, Pa.) and then applies the gum at its own plant.

L&CP's paper has been designated Type III, according to the chronological order in which the papers appeared.

Although it is produced by only one mill, Type III paper has a range of fluorescent qualities. Some examples appear virtually "dead," almost like Type II paper, but Type III typically has a minimally brightened base with high-bright fibers. Type III paper is most easily distinguished by its gum texture, which appears either stippled [Figure 3a] or as a generally horizontal pattern of intersecting waviness [Figure 3b].

Every Transportation coil released in 1987 or later can be found on Type III paper, although some issues exist on more than one supplier's paper, and a few even on all three. Some specific plate numbers and precancel gap locations from this period have not been found on Type III paper.

In review of historic philatelic data, paper differences are eventually recognized by collectors as a differentiating characteristic between two "face-similar" stamps. This usually occurs long after the stamps have ceased to be current. Paper differences often carry very high monetary values. Whether the differences are called "laid," "wove," "bluish," "hard," "soft," or whether it has a double-line, single-line or no watermark, paper is one of the fundamentals of philately.

[Editor's note: Another is the gum. In the case of PNCs, however, we have not yet been able to separate paper type from gum type and, at least until we find

Please turn to Page 76

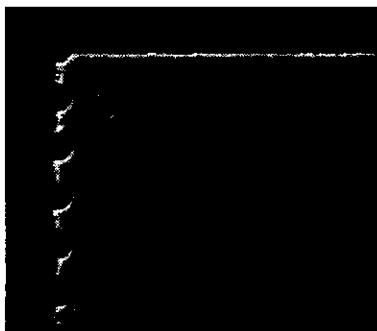


Fig. 1—Type I gum texture.

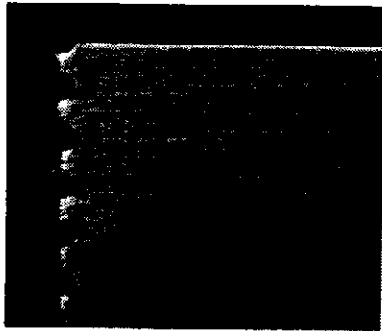


Fig. 2—Type II gum texture.

Dealer complaints cause postponed withdrawal of 12.5¢ Pushcart

Continued from Page 57

munity were attempting to find the stamps. They determined that all the remaining Pushcarts in the Postal Service's vault in Kansas City were from Plate 1. That quantity, which is unknown, apparently was too low to meet the order of the *Reader's Digest*.

The Postal Service said it sent 1,000 rolls of 3,000 stamps—a total of 3 million stamps—to the Hartford, Conn., post office from which the *Digest* does its sweepstakes mailing.

Dr. Rabinowitz makes a find

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, a Connecticut dealer in PNCs, learned this through social contacts and went to nearby Hartford to buy some of the stamps, which he first wholesaled at \$4.50 for a strip of five. Wholesale prices were lower in large quantities, with the price set at \$3 for orders of more than 300 strips.

To collectors, Dr. Rabinowitz offered the stamps at \$4.40 for a "F-VF" strip of three, with the price going to \$6.25 for "VF-S." Strips of five were priced at \$4.50 for "F-VF" and \$6.30 for "VF-S."

Kim Cuniberti later found that the general quality of the Hartford coils was low, with a less than half being VF or better.

Some PNC dealers rejected Dr. Rabinowitz' wholesale offer and, according to Dr. Rabinowitz, complained to the Postal Service. This was confirmed by the Postal Service.

Jon Denney of M&M/Southwest, according to a story by Tom Maeder in *Coil Line*, called Linda Foster of the USPS Stamps Division on April 26 and complained that the stamp was due to go off sale in four days and all known mint copies were in the hands of one dealer. Foster told Denney she would take the matter under advisement.

The next day, Maeder continued, dealer Al Haake called Foster and complained. He was told that the decision had been made to continue sales for an additional 30 days, through the end of May. Later, the Postal Service said sales of the unprecanceled stamps would continue indefinitely, but sale of precancels had ended April 30.

Others deplore whistle-blowing

Several other dealers, some of whom had bought stock from Dr. Rabinowitz, said the calls to Foster by Denney and

Haake were a mistake.

One hang-up in dealers' attitudes toward the Rabinowitz offer was whether the polymer chemist had bought up "all" the strips before they went off sale. They feared that another dealer might have found some and offered the strips at lower prices, making the dealers who bought from Dr. Rabinowitz look like gougers.

USPS confused about withdrawal

Before the discovery by Dr. Griffiths, the *Philatelic Catalog* had said the unprecanceled Pushcart would go off sale April 30.

The Postal Service later said the withdrawal had been intended only for the precancel, not the unprecanceled stamp, and that rolls of 3,000 were to be in stock at the Philatelic Sales Agency and all postiques. They would not be sent out on a general distribution, USPS said, meaning that other post offices could get them only if they ordered them.

There was, however, some confusion about the withdrawal and about its rescission. In *The Postal Bulletin* of April 27, postmasters were told that both the precanceled and the unprecanceled stamp were to go off sale April 30 and that all supplies were to be destroyed by May 1.

By its internal message system, the Postal Service later rescinded the order to destroy remaining stocks, saying "if you have not already destroyed the stamps, please do not do so because the stamps are back on sale."

The rescission applied to both versions of the stamp, tagged and precanceled. It was not clear, therefore, whether the precancels had been withdrawn after all, even though a USPS spokesman later said the precancels were "finished."

On-sale stamps are late

As much as two weeks after the stamps were obtained in Hartford, they were still unavailable at L'Enfant Plaza in Washington, the country's most prominent postique since it is situated in Postal Headquarters. A clerk there told a *TPN* subscriber that rolls of 3,000 were due in shortly.

The stamps finally arrived at the L'Enfant Plaza postique on May 16, almost a month after they had been discovered and more than two weeks after they were put back on sale.

The delay raised the possibility that all

of the initial *Reader's Digest* printing order may have been exhausted and the Postal Service was waiting for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to produce more.

But when the stamps from the Philatelic Sales Division and the postique in Washington were examined, they proved to be the same ones sold in Hartford.

Printing order is large

The *Reader's Digest* told Maeder that it had ample supplies of the stamps for its mailings for the next two years. But since it is unlikely that the magazine would tie up its cash in stamps, which bear no interest, it may have been referring to the size of its printing order.

The Postal Service said the total order was far in excess of the 3 million initial shipment to Hartford. According to the Postal Service, the stamps were to be supplied over a period of time, at least until the current 25¢ first-class rate ends.

The Postal Service acknowledged that the *Digest's* order for unprecanceled stamps had required BEP to go back to press with the obsolete Pushcart. [It did so on Aug. 8, 1988.] That either means that the supplies in Kansas City were less than 3 million stamps or that the *Digest's* order was specifically for rolls of 3,000. Stamp-affixing machines are more efficient with the larger rolls.

[The 12.5T2s are the first fractional tagged stamps known in rolls of 3,000.]

The use of the Pushcarts by *Reader's Digest* resembles the use of multiple 4¢ Stagecoach stamps without precancel by the Disabled American Veterans in 1985. Again the Postal Service had to order a special press run (also in rolls of 3,000) and the results were the first unprecanceled Stagecoaches from Plates 5 and 6, and the B Press version of Plate 1.

Until the introduction of precancel-only stamps in 1988, unprecanceled versions of precanceled stamps were printed primarily for collectors. Thus, precanceled 4¢ Stagecoaches existed on Plates 5 and 6, but there was no need for unprecanceled until the DAV asked for unprecanceled stamps at a time when only Plates 5 and 6 were still available.

This is what happened with the *Digest* stamps. Plate 1, unprecanceled, had met collector needs even though a second plate had been needed to meet the basic bulk rate as a precancel. It was that second plate that was used to print the *Digest* stamps.

TPN Average climbs and gets its first facelift

Publication of the 1989 catalog is the beginning of a new year, as far as the TPN Average is concerned.

For that reason, we have added three stamps to the average:

22F3, Plate 3 of the 22¢ Flag
25F5i, Plate 5 of the 25¢ Flag, block tagged
25F5ii, Plate 5 of the 25¢ Flag, pretagged

We have adjusted the divisors for previous years to keep the average equal for those years.

The 1989 catalog prices used are those that were published. A previous average used tentative prices, prior to the last editorial changes.

Among the average's components that went up in price over that of the catalog are:

18F1, now at \$452.64
9.3T1P1-No, now at \$18.71
17T6Pba, now at \$64.15

Because the average always reflects some dealers' price lists that have not caught up with the market, major changes sometimes take months before being reflected in the average.

This has been especially true of Plate 12 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper, which can now be purchased from some dealers at less than \$7.50 for "F-VF." Almost all dealers charge special premiums for VF and XF.

Although these premiums have been factored into the TPN Average, the 20T12 price declined from the catalog's \$20 to \$16.29. The strip was carried in the 1988 catalog at \$330 in italics.

Because some dealers whose price lists are included in the average have been cutting prices to compete, the average has resumed its decline.

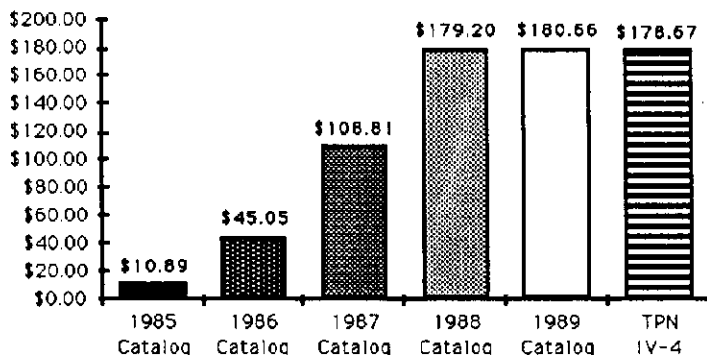
What should be noted, however, is that many dealers now give discounts from their advertised prices. Others offer premiums, such as free catalogs or albums.

That means that the average is less reflective of the actual PNC market than it has ever been.

While it is not possible to calculate the actual effect of these premiums and discounts, the average's real retail price may be near \$150, not the \$178.67 shown.

In any event, the decline in PNC prices which began with the Steve Ivy auction at AMERIPEX 1987, seems to be continuing in fits and starts.

TPN Average



Dealers who are candid say business is no good; others say it's good, but continue to reduce their prices. If business were good, prices would be climbing.

In effect, collectors who are lacking scarce stamps may find it advisable to buy them over the next year. Since some items are truly scarce, and since the supply is unlikely to increase, it may be

smarter to buy one \$500 strip now instead of buying 10 \$50 strips. The latter may be cheaper next year. Maybe!

While price stability seems to have come to PNCs, any prediction would be foolish. The good stuff has stopped going up like a skyrocket. There has been practically no change in Plates 3 and 4 of the 10.9¢ Cab in a year.

21.1¢ Letters Lines on Seven ZIP+4 Strips

I have duplicates of all seven ZIP+4 strips of the 21.1¢ Letters stamps showing the line illustrated on the front cover of the 1989 PNC catalog. These are long strips to include the plate number.

Price \$25 per strip or \$150 for the set of seven.

If you order single strips, please indicate row, using the diagram in the catalog to number the strip.

I am a collector and a member of PNC³.

Box L

c/o The Plate Number

TPN Classified

BUYING PNC FDCS. Write first. Thomas Gift, 19959 Highland Ave., Bronx, NY 10472. (4-90)

BREADWAGON Imperf and Miscut, \$10/pair. Honeybee Imperf, \$20/pair. Send for free list of related items. The Beehive, P.O. Box 9182, Boardman, OH 44512. (4-90)

JOIN PNC³ Get valuable discounts from dealers and Coil Line. Send SASE and \$10 to Eric Russow, P.O. Box 17374, Whitefish Bay, WI 53217. (4-89)

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)

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)

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

5.5¢ weak "Burned Rubber" variety on tagged 5.5¢ Art-master FDC, number cut, \$7.50; Honeybee untagged, and uncanceled on cover, no number, \$10. Steve Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

MICHEL 1988 Specialized U.S. Catalog, in German. \$39.50. Includes 8-page guide in English to its use. Prices all PNCs in PS/3 and PS/5, including all precancels. Also prices U.S. se-tenant issues. Order now, before they sell out again! Steve Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

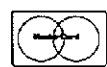
INFORMATION PLEASE! If you have any long strips (beyond strips of 5), of Cottrill issues, the PNC Study Group would like to hear from you for research on tagging gaps. Please contact TPN for information.

PNC VARIETIES

No.	Face	Plate #	Description	Size	Price	No.	Face	Plate #	Description	Size	Price
1	1c	#1	Plate Gouge 2L (upper right corner)	PS5	5.00	83	17c	#1	Auto Axle Break 1L	PS3	20.00
2	1c	#4	Chip 1L bottom between 2d & 4th perf.	PS5	4.00				same	PS3	22.50
3	1c	#4	Chip 1L between 4th & 6th perf.	PS2	3.00	84	17c	#5	Auto Reclining comma 1R	PS5	8.00
4	1c	#6	Crack 1R	PS5	6.00	85	17c	#6	Auto Dot above E 1R (mint)	PS5	30.00
5	2c	#3	Tail on "V" 1L	PS3	8.50	86	17c	#6	Auto Dot above E (P/C) Type A Gap 2L	PS5	10.00
6	2c	#3	Smoking "V" 1L	PS2	5.00	86	17c	#7	Auto Chip on joint line 1R	PS3	10.00
			same	PS3	7.50				same	PS3	12.50
			same	PS5	15.00	89	17c	#1	Mint LOM Dot 1R	PS5	5.00
7	2c	#8	Lump of Coal	PS3	10.00	90	17c	#2	Mint LOM Dot/Dot Line 1L/1R	PS5	5.00
8	3.4c	#1, 2	Chill-Roller Doubling	PS5	15.00	91	17c	#2	Mint LOM Line (bottom) 1R-2R	PS5	5.00
9	3.4c	#1, 2	(Gap 1R) Thin double bar break on top P/C bar	PS6	3.00	92	17c	#3	Mint LOM Dot/Dot Line 1L/1R	PS5	5.00
10	3.4c	#1, 2	(Gap 2R) Missing Period after "Ovg." Mat Variety 1R of gap.	PS6	3.00	93	17c	#4	Mint LOM Dot 1L/1R	PS5	5.00
			(Gap 1R) Missing Period Mat Variety 2R of gap	PS6	3.00	94	17c	#4	Mint LOM Dots 1L/1R	PS5	5.00
11	3.4c	#1, 2	Missing Period Mat Variety on Stamps 2 & 4	Strip 5	1.00	95	17c	#6	Mint LOM Dots 1L/1R	PS3	24.00
12	3.4c	No #	Missing Period Mat Variety on Stamp 1R of gap	Gap Strip 5	1.00	96	18c	#5	Flag Seahell 1L	PS3	10.00
13	3.4c	No #	Multiple Slashes 1R	PS2	4.00	97	18c	#1	Surrey Lightning Bolt 1L	PS2	25.00
14	4c	#1	same	PS3	5.00	98	18c	#5	Surrey Antenna Crack 1L	PS2	12.00
			same	PS5	8.50	99	18c	#9	Surrey Lightning Bolt 1L	PS3	18.00
			same	PS3	6.00	100	18c	#10	Surrey Lightning Bolt 1L	PS2	10.00
15	4c	#2	Multiple Slashes 2L & 1L	PS2	4.00				same	PS3	18.00
16	4c	#2	Quotation Marks 1L	PS5	8.00	101	18c	#1112	Monument Color shift	PS5	12.50
			same	PS3	5.00	102	18c	#33333	Monument (P/C) Pimple on lip 2R	PS5	10.00
17	4c	#2	LOM dots 2 at 1L/1 at 1R	PS5	7.50				same Yellow Chin 2R	PS5	10.00
			same	Strip 5	2.00	103	20c	#2	Pumper Plate Crack 1 1L	PS2	100.00
18	4c	#1B	B Press. Inking Variety "Falling Luggage" Vari-	PS5	3.00				same	PS3	300.00
19	4c	#1B	able	Strip 5	1.50	104	20c	#16	Pumper Chill Roller	PS5	12.50
20			same. Doctor Blade Under Tire	Strip 5	1.50	105	20c	#1	Pumper LOM Dot 1L	PS5	160.00
21			same. Doctor Blade Over Coach	Strip 5	1.50	106	20c	#4	Pumper LOM Dot & Line 1L	PS5	6.50
22	4.9c	#1, 2	Mat variety, double spike in road 1L of gap	Strip 5	4.00	107	20c	#7	Pumper LOM Dot 1L	PS5	70.00
23	4.9c	#1, 2	Mat variety, single spike in road 1L of gap	Strip 5	4.00	108	20c	#9	Pumper LOM Dot & Line 1L	PS5	6.00
24	4.9c	#1, 2	Gap 2R. Double bar break — both bars	PS6	4.00				same	PS3	5.00
25	4.9c	#4	Buggy Whip (mint) short	PS5	12.50				same	PS2	4.00
26	4.9c	#4	Buggy Whip (mint) long	PS5	12.50				same	PS2	4.00
27	4.9c	#4	Buggy Whip (P/C) LG	PS7	16.50	109	20c	#10	Pumper LOM Dot & Line 1L	PS5	6.00
28	4.9c	#3, 4	P/C mat variety Flying Dirt Clod 2R of gap		3.50				same	PS3	5.00
29	4.9c	#5	Dots Rain Crack 1L (Gap 2L)	PS5	20.00	110	20c	#13	Pumper LOM Dot 1L	PS5	6.00
30	5c	#2	Fender Crack 1L	PS5	12.50				same	PS3	5.00
31	5.2c	#1	Dot over "k," dot over "g"; 1L, 1R	PS3	30.00	111	20c	#15	Pumper LOM Dot 1L	PS5	6.00
32	5.2c	#2	Dot over "r" in Nonprofit	PS5	22.50	112	20c	#9	Pumper Hornet #9 1L	PS5	15.00
33	5.5c	#1	Burned Rubber 2R (mint)	PS5	8.00	113	20c	#14	Flag Q-line 1L	PS5	15.00
34	6c	#1	Skid Mark (mint) 2L	PS5	5.00	114	21.1c	111121	Diagonal scratch (mint)	PS5	15.00
35	6c	#1	Ink Blobs (P/C) 1R	PS5	7.00				same. Extension down (mint)	PS5	15.00
36	6c	#1	Flying dirt clod (P/C) 3L	PS5	7.50				same. Diagonal scratch top 2L to bottom 1R	PS7	15.00
37	7.1c	P/C	Dash under 1 of 1920's 1L	PS5	5.00				same. Extension up	PS5	15.00
38	7.1c	P/C	Dot over 9 in 1920's 1L	PS5	5.00				same. Extension Down 1st	PS5	15.00
39	7.1c	P/C	"7:1" 12R	Strip 5	3.50				same. Extension down 2nd	PS9	15.00
40	7.1c	P/C	Rock under rear wheel 13	Strip 5	4.00	115	21.1c	111121	(Mint) LOM dot 1L		8.50
41	8.3c	#1	Whole low shifted #1 (mint)	PS5	35.00	116	21.1c	111121	(P/C) LOM Dot 1L		8.50
42	8.3c	#1	Partial shifted #1 1L (mint)	PS3	4.00	117	22c	#2	Flag Dot over Capitol 3L	PS5	8.00
43	8.3c	#1	Partial shifted #1 on top Whole normal	PS5	5.00	118	22c	#8	Flag. Decapitated 8	PSD 5	8.00
43A	8.3c	#1	# bottom 1L (mint)	PS3	4.00	119	22c	T	Moon in flag inking variety	Strip 3	15.00
44	8.3c	#3 & 4	Mat variety smoking 8 1L of gap	PS5	7.50	120	22c	#11	Flag. Cloudy #11 1L	PS5	10.00
45	8.3c	#3	P/C (Gap 1R) Inking varieties in and around "b" of Ambulance	PS6	9.00	121	E	#1222	Red scratch left of D in Domestic 1L	PS5	10.00
46	8.5c	#1	Crack dot (mint) 1L	PS5	7.50	122	25c	#1	Bee. Full serif on #1	PS5	15.00
47	8.5c	#1	P/C Chain Dot/Rock on Road 1L/2R	PS5	7.50	123	25c	#1	Bee. Out of cage Bee	PS5	7.50
48	8.5c	#1	P/C Dot above roof 1R	PS5	7.50	124	25c	#2	Bee. Hidden #2 (in flowers)	PS5	10.00
49	8.5c	#1	P/C Dot in 8 of 8.5 1L	PS5	7.50	125	#2	#2	Bee. Joint lines	Strip 6	3.00
50	8.5c	#1	P/C Dot under rear tire 6L	Strip 5	3.50				Numbers on top		
51	8.5c	#1	P/C Dot on T/Dot in front of windshield 12R/13R	Strip 6	4.50	71	1c	#1		PS3	7.50
52	8.5c	#1	P/C Rock in Road 24R	Strip 5	3.50	72	1c	#2		PS3	7.50
53	8.5c	#1	P/C Flying Bolt 13L	Strip 5	5.50	73	1c	#6		PS5	9.00
54	8.5c	#1	P/C Handle Dot II 21R	Strip 5	7.50	74	4.9c	#1	P/C Double bar break on top bar 2R	PS6	18.00
55	8.5c	#1	P/C Falling Chain Link	Strip 5	5.50	75	4.9c	#2	P/C Double bar break on top bar 2R	PS6	18.00
56	8.5c	#1	P/C Rock under Truck	Strip 5	5.50	76	5.5c	#1		PS5	7.50
57	8.5c	#2	P/C Circle before N 5R	Strip 5	4.00	77	17c	#1		PS5	20.00
58	9.3c	#1	Weeping W (mint) 1L	PS3	20.00	78	17c	#2		PS5	20.00
59	9.3c	#1	Weeping W (P/C) 1L	PS5	25.00	79	17c	#3		PS2	3.00
60	9.3	#2	Tail on U (mint) 1R	PS2	14.50	T10	17c	#4		PS2	3.00
61	9.3c	#3	Smoking "g" P/C LG 1L	PS5	45.00	T11	17c	#3		PS5	4.00
62	10.1c	#1	Flying Hyphen (mint) 1R	PS5	10.00	T12	17c	#4		PS5	4.00
63	10.1c	#1	Waving W	PS5	10.00	T13	17c	#3	P/C Type A	PS5	7.50
64	10.1c	#1	Bursting Shell (mint) 29R	Strip 5	6.50	T14	17c	#4	P/C Type A	PS5	10.00
65	10.1c	#1	Tail on 0 of 10.1 (mint) 25L	Strip 5	6.50						
66	10.1c	1	Small dot right of A in USA	Strip 5	2.00						
67	10.1c	#7	P/C "Raindrop"	Strip 5	3.00						
68	10.1c	#7	P/C Flying comma	Strip 5	5.00						
69	10.1c	#2	Dot in "O" of 10.1 17R	Strip 5	6.50						
70	10.9c	#2	Dropped Transfer	PS5	75.00						
71	11c	#1	Caboose Brake Shoe (mint)	Strip 5	12.50						
72	11c	#1	Caboose Brake Shoe (P/C)	Strip 5	12.50						
73	11c	#1	Caboose Paw Print (mint) 21L	Strip 5	15.00						
74	11c	#3	Stutz Fender Crack 1L	PS5	12.50						
75	11c	#3	Stutz Fender & # Crack 1L	PS5	12.50						
76	11c	#3	Stutz Chill Roller 1L	PS5	12.50						
77	11c	#3	Stutz Polishing Cloth 1L	PS5	12.50						
78	11c	#3	Stutz Zig Zag on hood 2R	PS5	12.50						
79	12.5c	#1	P/C Falling Nail 2R	PS5	7.50						
80	14c	#4	Triple Joint Line 1L	PS5	7.50						
81	16.7c	#1	Dot over 9/Dot under 2 1L/3L	PS5	12.00						
82	16.7c	#1	Dot above and between 0 & 2 26R	Strip 5	12.00						
82A	16.7c	#1	Lightning Bolt 1L	PS2	7.00						
			same	PS3	12.00						

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Catalog Update

New stamps

7.1T1P—Plate 1 of the 7.1¢ Tractor with a new style of service inscription. Issued May 26. See Data Bank.

12.5T2—Plate 2 of the 12.5¢ Pushcart (previously known only with precancel). Found on letter canceled April 15, 1989. (Dr. Griffiths)

25F9H—Plate 9 of the 25¢ Yosemite Flag on pre-gassed paper. About April 21. (Lipson, Nagy)

Catalog Corrections and Updates

Page III—In the paragraph in the leftmost column after the bold-faced "Type III," the text should read: "Type III paper has a range of fluorescent qualities."

Page 3—The varieties listed for 20F8 should be numbered "20F8V1" and "20F8V2."

Page 32—The withdrawal date for the 12.5¢ Pushcart should read "April 30, 1989 (P/C only)"

Page 35—The pairing line for 17T5 should read: "Paired with Plates 6 and 7. See table."

Page 44—The references to the chart showing the line on 21.1M2 should say Page 47.

Page 46—The withdrawal date for the 25¢ "E" stamps should be June 30, 1989. The catalog incorrectly said they had not been advertised in *The Philatelic Catalog*. They had been.

Page 54—The FDC scarcity table entry for 10.1T2ii, the red service inscription on the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon, should read: June 27, 1988, Washington, DC. The table now gives the data for the 15¢ Tugboat.

TPN Corrections

Page 47—L&CP Corp., maker of Type III paper, is not called "Laminated & Coated Paper Corp." The name belongs to another company.

Page 50—The dates to press of the magenta Plate 3 and the yellow Plate 3 of the Washington Monument were incorrect. The year should have been 1985.

Page 41—Because of editing errors in Kim Cuniber's essay on precancel gaps on Page 41, the sentence starting at the very bottom of Page 40 should have read: "So, perhaps a 2L on Plates 1 and 2 of the 12¢ is only a pipe dream..." And the last sentence of the very next paragraph should have read: "Granted that the B Press with 26 possible gap positions made the odds poorer, but the Corbells with 12 possible gap positions managed to hit it 10 times out of 10 different denominations, including two sets of plate numbers on four denominations (4¢, 4.9¢, 5.9¢ and 10.9¢) and three sets of plate numbers on one (the first six plates of the 17¢ Auto)."

Data bank

7.1¢ Tractor

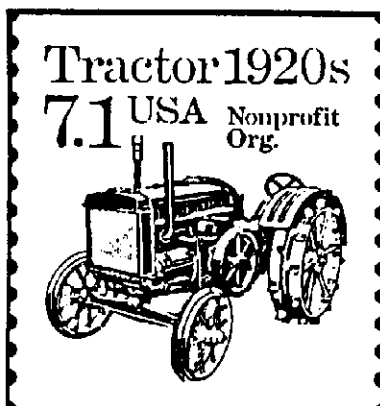
(PNC Catalog number: 7.1T1Pii)

[T]he Tractor stamp makes a reappearance May 26 at COMPEX '89, the Chicago area's largest philatelic exhibition.

The 7.1¢ Transportation Series coil stamp, precanceled "Nonprofit/5-Digit ZIP+4," fulfills the needs of nonprofit mailers who use ZIP+4 and presort to the first five digits....

The original 7.1¢ Tractor stamp, issued Feb. 6, 1987, at SARAPEX [in Sarasota, Fla.], was used primarily by nonprofit mailers who presorted their mail to five digits. It was issued in mint [i.e., unprecanceled] form and precanceled with a "Nonprofit/Org." endorsement. All Philatelic Centers will sell the precanceled Tractor stamp, but as a limited-use item it may not be available at all post offices.

First corrections and new stamps



Old version of 7.1¢ Tractor

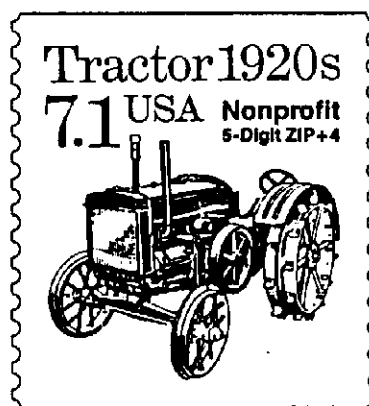
The new Tractor stamp is identical in design except for the deletion of "Org." and the addition of the "5-Digit ZIP+4" endorsement. Also, "Nonprofit" appears in a bold, sans-serif typeface on the newer stamp....

The 5-digit ZIP+4 Tractor stamp will be used on millions of pieces of nonprofit mail presorted for more efficient processing within the mailstream....

First-Day City: Rosemont, IL

Printing Process: Intaglio (B Press, BEP)

Colors: Dark red (picture and type)
Black ("Nonprofit/5-Digit ZIP+4" en-



New version of 7.1¢ Tractor

(endorsement)
Size: 0.71x0.82 inches/ 18.03x20.82mm
(image area)

Plate Number: One single digit on every 52nd stamp

Stamps per Coil: 500 and 3,000

Pushcart still on sale

The precanceled version will be taken off sale [April 30]; the mint version will remain available in coils of 3,000

BEP changes sizes of some plates

Beginning in its report of plate activity for August 1988, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing lists the size of some plates for the C, D and Andreotti presses with two fewer rows than previously.

The reduction from 20 rows of stamps to 18 rows of stamps has to do with the size of the coil being printed, a Bureau spokeswoman said.

BEP replaced its coiling equipment several years ago so that coilers are now 20 rows across, but the old 18-row coilers are still at BEP and are sometimes put to use, she said.

The Plate Number Coil Study Group believes that coiling equipment used to make coils of 100 can handle 20 rows across, but the coilers for rolls of 500 and 3,000 can use only the narrower dimension.

The compatibility of the coilers, incidentally, was one reason why most bulk-rate stamps (usually made only in large rolls) were printed on the B Press, which is only 18 rows wide.

The problem was encountered during the printing of the 25¢ "E" Earth stamps, where two families of plate sizes were used, one measuring 48x20 and one measuring 48x18.

The "E" stamps were printed in rolls of 100, 500 and 3,000. From information we now have, more "E" stamps were printed from the plates measuring 20 rows (for rolls of 100) than from the plates with only 18 rows.

The BEP spokeswoman confirmed that the use of the smaller plates was related to use of the old 18-row coilers.

We still lack full data for the 18-row plates, but do know that there were two red plates, 1

and 2. BEP's data give the same impression totals for one red plate as for the only two other plates for which it gave totals. It gave no totals for a second red plate.

Since the combination that produced rolls of 500 and 3,000 stamps carrying the numbers "1222" and "2222" are believed to have had a much lower printing in the "2222" form, we need data for both red plates to calculate the maximum number of PNCs.

In no case, however, could either of these two stamps have been produced with more than 79.8 million PNCs because if the second red plate had printed less than 20,000 impressions, BEP policy would have required destruction of those stamps.

Based on market prices, we estimate about 60 million PNCs from "1222" and 20 million from "2222."

The change in plate size also forces a different way to calculate the highest number of PNCs. But another variable has crept into that equation.

BEP used to indicate that its impression total was based on the number of subjects, not the total number of stamps in one revolution of the press. It indicated this by a footnote in its reports. Beginning in the report for June 1988, that footnote disappeared. We have not yet ascertained whether the disappearance of the footnote means that the impression total reflects the full number of stamps printed in one revolution. Until those questions are resolved we are uncertain whether our calculations for recently canceled stamps are correct.

BEP has been asked.

Report on constant plate and mat varieties—Part XXII

By A. S. Cibulskas

1¢ Omnibus

- a. Plate 2, B Press. Two dots beneath and left of front wheels of the bus. Constant at 1L. (JHartman)
 b. Plate 2, B Press. Dot above the "2" of "23 ST." Constant at 17L. (JHartman)
 c. Plate 2, B Press. Dot under and centered between the second "8" and the "0" of the date. Constant at 5R. (JHartman)

7.1¢ Tractor

- a. Plate 1, precanceled. Dot over the "9" in "1920s." Constant at 1L. (Maves)
 b. Plate 1, precanceled. Small dash over the "n" in "Nonprofit." Constant at 1L. (Maves)

8.5¢ Tow Truck

- a. Plate 1, tagged. Flying rock. Constant at 11L.
 b. Same. Rock on road. Constant at 24L.
 Note: Varieties a-b are in same row. (Cibulskas).
 c. Plate 1, tagged. Dot above truck. Constant at 1R.
 d. Same. Dot left of "E." Constant at 4L.
 e. Same. Flying pebble. Constant at 26L.
 f. Same. Flying pebbles. Constant at 24R.
 g. Same. Dot over "9." Constant at 22R.
 Note: Varieties c-g are in same row. (Cibulskas).
 h. Plate 1, tagged. Slashed tire. Constant at 15L.
 i. Same. Hook dot. Constant at 5R.
 j. Same. Rock on road. Constant at 6R.
 k. Same. Rock on road. Constant at 17R.
 Note: Varieties h-k are in same row. (Cibulskas).
 l. Plate 1, tagged. Dot right of "A." Constant at 26L.
 m. Same. Rock under front tire. Constant at 22L.
 n. Same. Rock under truck. Constant at 17L.
 o. Same. Rock on road. Constant at 5L.

p. Same. Dot right of hook. Constant at 3R.

q. Same. Dot in "B." Constant at 7R.

r. Same. Dot under "9." Constant at 16R.

Note: Varieties l-r are in same row. (Cibulskas).

10.1¢ Oil Wagon

- a. Plate 1, tagged. Dot under wheel. Constant at 6L. (Eastman)

11¢ Caboose

- a. Plate 1, precanceled. Hoseline II. Previously known only on the tagged version, this variety has now been confirmed on precanceled, as well. Constant at 10L. (Marrelli)
 b. Same. Dot over left coupling. Constant at 4L. (Clark)
 c. Horizontal scratch. Constant at 8R.
 d. Same. Dot under right coupling. Constant at 10L.
 Note: Varieties c-d are in same row. (Clark).

12¢ Steamer

- a. Plate 1, tagged. Dot beneath the right (driver's) wheel. Constant at 3L. (JHartman)
 b. Plates 1 and 2, precanceled (Cottrell press). Constant mat variety. Mat mark just left of the top precancel line results in the appearance of a line break. (Agrodinia)

12.5¢ Pushcart

- a. Plate 1, tagged. Dot right of the cart. Constant at 23R. (Hartman)

15¢ Tugboat

- a. Plate 1. "Tugboat in Storm": haphazard, splatery, multiplicity of ink marks results in appearance of a snowstorm, especially in white areas. Probably a freak rather than a constant plate variety, but multiple plate strips have been found. The effect is so

striking to warrant inclusion here. (SAdams)

16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon

- a. Plate 1. Plate cracks and scratches. Two distinct lines, each about 2mm long, are crossed, resulting in the shape of an "X" at bottom right of the "7." Position and constancy need definition. (Maeder)

18¢ Surrey

- a. Plate 9. Crack starting at the back of the driver's seat continuing vertically upwards for about 1mm at 1L. Needs confirmation. (Moseley)

25¢ Honeybee

- a. Plate 1. Green 1mm square under the denomination. C Press issue, therefore position will vary. (JEmery)

25¢ Yosemite

Numerous reports have been received of inking varieties. These can mostly be subdivided into these categories:

• Trees are off color, ranging from a slight darkening to an olive drab color to an almost black color. Of the items sent or reported to me, this has occurred on Plates 4, 5, and 9.

• Red blobs or blotches in the trees ("Oriole in trees"). The ones submitted appear to be a true red rather than a bleed. Could they be splatters? I have seen this effect on Plates 5, 7, and 9.

• I have received two reports of an ink bleed into the blue mountain area. The one example provided was reminiscent of the brick red variety on the 20¢ Flag from Plate 8 and covers most, but not all of the blue area. Since this was from outside a plate-numbered strip, the plate is not defined.

There have been so many reports on the 25¢ Flag that crediting the individual finders is difficult. I will beg off without even making the attempt.

For the Record...

Sam Houston Philatelics still maintains a large stock of PNC's and PNC FDC's. You might be pleasantly surprised at our prices.

We are buying NOW!!!

Sam Houston Philatelics
P.O. Box 820087
Houston, TX 77282
(713) 493-6386

BEP plate data hint of Honeybee Plate 3

There may be 25¢ Honeybee stamps with the plate number 3. The plate was assigned and was sent to press. It was canceled Nov. 1, 1988, but the Bureau of Engraving and Printing was unable to say how many stamps, if any, had been printed from the plate. None have been reported.

This was one of the items of news to be found in the plate-activity reports for August through December.

The reports added several questions that we shall have to pursue:

- Why were new plates made for the C Press with a configuration of 864 stamps, or 18 strips of 48 instead of the previous 20 strips of 48?

The study group's Alan Malakoff suggests that these were made because the width of 20 was mainly used for rolls of 100, and these plates (including three for the 25¢ Flag) were used to print rolls of 500 or 3,000.

- Why were the offset plates for the Honeybee made for the D Press with a configuration of 18 strips of 48, or 864 stamps? Previous D Press plates were 20x48.

Again, Malakoff suggests that the size of the roll was a factor.

- Why are the plates for the "E" stamps of different sizes, 480 and 432?

The data did answer one question: When did the *Reader's Digest* ask for the printing of the tagged 12¢ Pushcarts? The plate was sent to press Aug. 8, 1988, meaning that earliest use could be much earlier than the cover that brought it to light.

Also, we now know why there are no block tagged Yosemite from Plate 6. The plate only

lasted a week before being canceled with only 7.9 million maximum PNCs.

But we are unsure of the "Max. PNCs" figure because BEP has once again changed its method of reporting. It used to report impression totals based on the number of subjects. It explained this in a footnote. The footnote was gone in the latest BEP report and the impression total may reflect a whole revolution of the press. That would double the "Max. PNCs" figure.

The huge (26-page) report had 68 new Honeybee offset plates. Some of the plates had very low printings while others managed to survive more than a million impressions. These plates, however, cannot be identified by PNC collectors because their plate numbers do not appear on the stamps.

BEP also prepared a new intaglio plate for the Honeybee, Plate 6, which was prepared for the D Press with the current 960-stamp configuration. Offset plates were prepared to go with this plate that measure one-half a revolution, or 480 stamps.

The biggest news in the report was that we finally got a printing total for the service-inscribed Plate 3 of the 18¢ Washington Monument. This total permits us to give accurate printing totals for 18M3, 18M3P and 18M4P. (See table on Page 73.)

Several stamps received multiple dates to press. However, only the first date to press is given in the accompanying chart. The lowest printing total in the report is for the tagged 5.5¢ Star Route Truck, which was printed only for collectors. It can have only 506,610 PNCs (unless we must double all "Max.

PNCs" totals). The precancel from Plate 2 of the same stamp was a runner up with 585,000 maximum PNCs (again, unless we must double this total).

The fact that this BEP report arrived six months after the end of the period about which it reports leaves us with some confusion.

It can only be said that although every effort is made to present these data as accurately as possible, in some instances we are simply left wondering. More recent data, especially on the Honeybee, might have answered some questions.

The table shown below was prepared with the help of Thom E. Wheeler.

Note that we now have the beginning of a breakdown for the 25¢ "E" stamps. We believe one printing, starting July 21, 1986, used plates measuring two numbered strips of 24 by 20 rows for a total of 480 subjects. Since that printing substituted the blue plate, we believe it to have been for 1111 and 1211. We believe the other printing had two numbered strips of 24 by 18 rows.

This gives the following breakdown:

1111: 201,916,000 maximum PNCs.

1211: 43,732,000 maximum PNCs.

We lack data on the smaller yellow plate, but believe that BEP started the suffixes again at 1 (as it did when it changed plate size on the Honeybee). Since there are two red plates, and since BEP gave totals for red plate 2 that matched the other colors, we cannot use BEP data to calculate the maximum PNCs for 1222 and 2222. We are inquiring about this directly to BEP.

CAT	PLATE	SERIES	ASSIGNED	TOPRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESS.	SUBL	Max. PNCs	NOTES
5.3T1P	180652-1	TRANS	07/27/88	09/07/88			936		B PRESS
5.5T1	177272-1	TRANS	09/26/86	10/06/86	09/23/88	56,290	468	506,610	B PRESS, tagged
5.5T2P	177894-2	TRANS	03/09/87	06/12/87	09/23/88	65,000	468	585,000	B PRESS, precanceled
7.6T1P	180571-1	TRANS	07/12/88	08/09/88	11/18/88	429,700	936	3,867,300	B PRESS
7.6T2P	181197-2	TRANS	11/04/88	11/22/88			936		B PRESS
8.3T1RP	176884-1	TRANS	06/23/86	08/04/86	09/15/88	1,118,403	468	10,065,627	B PRESS
8.3T2RP	178919-2	TRANS	09/30/87	11/03/87	09/15/88	409,200	468	3,682,800	B PRESS
8.4T2P	180790-2	TRANS	08/18/88	08/25/88			432		C PRESS; 432 subjects?
8.5T3P	179398-3	TRANS	12/04/87	NEVER	09/09/88	NONE	468	NONE	B PRESS
10.1T2Pii	178808-2	TRANS	09/08/87	10/01/88	10/24/88	2,153,600	468	19,382,400	B PRESS Includes both precancels
10.1T3Pii	181104-3	TRANS	10/19/88	11/22/88			468		B PRESS
12.5T2	177784-2	TRANS	02/12/87	08/08/88			468		B PRESS
13T1P	180849-1	TRANS	09/01/88	10/08/88			468		B PRESS
20T1R	180874-1	TRANS	09/09/88	10/04/88	11/10/88	413,000	432	3,717,000	C PRESS; 432 subjects?
20T2R	181150-2	TRANS	10/26/88	11/04/88			432		C PRESS; 432 subjects?
20.5T1P	180748-1	TRANS	08/10/88	09/13/88			468		B PRESS
21T2P	180844-2	TRANS	08/31/88	09/09/88			432		C PRESS
24.1T1P	180817-1	TRANS	08/25/88	09/28/88			468		B PRESS
25T2	179533-2	TRANS	01/20/88	02/09/88	09/23/88	1,272,000	480	11,448,000	B PRESS
25T3	179696-3	TRANS	02/18/88	02/26/88	11/02/88	2,179,500	480	21,795,000	C PRESS
25T4	179802-4	TRANS	03/04/88	08/29/88			480		C PRESS
25F4	180810-4	FLAG	08/24/88	09/05/88	10/10/88	2,085,100	432	18,765,900	C PRESS; 432 subjects?
25F5	180898-5	FLAG	09/15/88				480		C PRESS
25F6	181177-6	FLAG	11/03/88	11/21/88	11/28/88	843,500	432	7,591,500	C PRESS; 432 subjects?
25F7	181273-7	FLAG	11/22/88				480		C PRESS
25F8	181384-8	FLAG	12/08/88	12/19/88			432		C PRESS; 432 subjects?
18M3P	180935-3	MON	09/23/88	09/29/88	11/01/88	See below	960		C Press; printing total not available
25M3	180936-3	BEE	09/23/88	Unknown	11/01/88	Unknown	480		
25M6	180967-6	BEE	09/29/88				432		D Press
25U1	176636-1	U	05/05/86	07/21/86	08/31/88	6,141,200	480		See article Red Andreotti Press. Used on 1111 and 1211
25U1	176637-1	U	05/05/86	07/21/86	08/31/88	5,047,900	480		See article Blue Andreotti Press. Used on 1111 and 1211
25U1	176638-1	U	05/05/86	07/21/86	08/31/88	6,141,200	480		See article Yellow Andreotti Press. Used on 1111 and 1211
25U1	176639-1	U	05/05/86	07/21/86	08/31/88	6,141,200	480		See article Black Andreotti Press. Used on 1111 and 1211
25U2	177142-2	U	08/12/86	04/20/87	09/06/88	1,093,300	480		See article Blue Andreotti Press. Used on 1111 and 1211
25U2	176329-2	U	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432		Unknown Black Andreotti Press.
25U2	176327-2	U	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432		Unknown Blue Andreotti Press.
25U2	176328-2	U	04/02/86	07/03/86	06/17/88	2,237,000	432		Unknown Red Andreotti Press. Has to be smaller total

How the Honeybee's plate sizes change Grouped by press date and size

PLATE	PLATE#	ASSIGNED	PRESS	SUBL	PRESS DATE	CANCELED	IMPRESS.
Offset plates 18x25, used with C Press							
02 Magenta 18	179975-2	Apr 11, 1988	43	450	Apr 14, 1988	11/15/88	110,000
02 Process Yellow 18	179976-2	Apr 11, 1988	43	450	Apr 14, 1988	11/15/88	110,000
02 PMS Yellow 18	179977-2	Apr 11, 1988	43	450	Apr 14, 1988	11/15/88	110,000
02 Cyan 18	179978-2	Apr 11, 1988	43	450	Apr 14, 1988	11/15/88	110,000
03 Cyan 18	180126-3	May 3, 1988	43	450	May 7, 1988	11/15/88	802,770
03 Magenta 18	180127-3	May 3, 1988	43	450	May 7, 1988	11/15/88	802,770
03 Process Yellow 18	180128-3	May 3, 1988	43	450	May 7, 1988	11/15/88	802,770
03 PMS Yellow 18	180129-3	May 3, 1988	43	450	May 7, 1988	11/15/88	802,770
03 Black 18	180130-3	May 3, 1988	43	450	May 7, 1988	11/15/88	802,770
04 Cyan 18	180307-4	May 31, 1988	43	450	Jun 6, 1988	10/18/88	1,518,710
04 Magenta 18	180308-4	May 31, 1988	43	450	Jun 6, 1988	10/18/88	1,518,710
04 Process Yellow 18	180309-4	May 31, 1988	43	450	Jun 6, 1988	10/18/88	1,874,870
04 PMS Yellow 18	180310-4	May 31, 1988	43	450	Jun 6, 1988	10/18/88	1,136,590
04 Black 18	180311-4	May 31, 1988	43	450	Jun 6, 1988	10/18/88	17,950
05 Black 18	180322-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jun 8, 1988	10/18/88	232,260
06 Black 18	180361-6	Jun 9, 1988	43	450	Jun 10, 1988	10/18/88	511,090
07 Black 18	180362-7	Jun 9, 1988	43	450	Jun 13, 1988	10/18/88	1,113,570
05 PMS Yellow 18	180321-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jun 15, 1988	10/18/88	768,110
05 Cyan 18	180318-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jun 17, 1988	10/18/88	835,670
05 Magenta 18	180319-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jun 17, 1988		
05 Process Yellow 18	180320-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jun 20, 1988		
08 Black 18	180393-8	Jun 14, 1988	43	450	Jun 20, 1988	11/15/88	
06 PMS Yellow 18	180392-6	Jun 14, 1988	43	450	Jun 21, 1988	11/15/88	278,970
07 Cyan 18	180436-7	Jun 20, 1988	43	450	Jun 24, 1988		469,020
Offset plates 20x25, used with C Press							
01 PMS Yellow 20	180536-1	Jul 8, 1988	43	500	Jul 11, 1988	11/15/88	278,940
01 Cyan 20	180533-1	Jul 8, 1988	43	500	Jul 11, 1988	11/15/88	506,970
01 Process Yellow 20	180535-1	Jul 8, 1988	43	500	Jul 11, 1988	11/15/88	278,940
01 Magenta 20	180534-1	Jul 8, 1988	43	500	Jul 11, 1988		
01 Black 20	180537-1	Jul 8, 1988	43	500	Jul 11, 1988	11/15/88	506,970
Offset plates 18x25, used with C Press							
07 PMS Yellow 18	180438-7	Jun 20, 1988	43	450	Jul 18, 1988		
05 Magenta 18	180319-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jul 18, 1988		
05 Process Yellow 18	180320-5	Jun 1, 1988	43	450	Jul 18, 1988		
08 Black 18	180393-8	Jun 14, 1988	43	450	Jul 18, 1988		
08 Cyan 18	180568-8	Jul 11, 1988	43	450	Jul 18, 1988		
09 Black 18	180394-9	Jun 14, 1988	43	450	Jul 20, 1988		
Offset plates 20x25, used with C Press							
03 Process Yellow 20	180632-3	Jul 25, 1988	43	500	Jul 26, 1988		
03 Black 20	180634-3	Jul 25, 1988	43	500	Aug 1, 1988	11/15/88	1,615,839
03 Cyan 20	180630-3	Jul 25, 1988	43	500	Aug 2, 1988		
04 Cyan 20	180664-4	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 3, 1988	11/15/88	859,381
03 Magenta 20	180631-3	Jul 25, 1988	43	500	Aug 5, 1988	11/15/88	NONE
04 Magenta 20	180665-4	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 5, 1988	11/15/88	1,861,780
05 Black 20	180671-5	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 8, 1988	11/15/88	90,589
05 Cyan 20	180668-5	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 10, 1988	11/15/88	398,780
03 PMS Yellow 20	180633-3	Jul 25, 1988	43	500	Aug 15, 1988		
05 Magenta 20	180669-5	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 15, 1988		
05 ? Yellow 20	180670-5	Aug 2, 1988	43	500	Aug 15, 1988		
07 Cyan 20	180755-7	Aug 11, 1988	43	500	Aug 16, 1988	11/15/88	139,130
06 Black 20	180702-6	Aug 8, 1988	43	500	Aug 17, 1988	11/15/88	650,980
08 Cyan 20	180783-8	Aug 16, 1988	43	500	Aug 18, 1988		
07 Black 20	180784-7	Aug 17, 1988	43	500	Aug 23, 1988		
06 Cyan 20	180683-6	Aug 4, 1988	43	500	Sep 19, 1988		
D Press offset plates 18x24							
01 Cyan 18D	180760-1	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 21, 1988		
01 Magenta 18D	180761-1	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 21, 1988		
01 Process Yellow 18D	180762-1	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 21, 1988		
01 PMS Yellow 18D	180763-1	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 21, 1988		
04 Black 18D	180764-1	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 21, 1988		
02 Black 18D	180769-2	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Sep 22, 1988		
03 Process Yellow 18D	180933-3	Sep 23, 1988	902	432	Sep 29, 1988		
04 Black 18D	180935-4	Sep 23, 1988	902	432	Sep 29, 1988		
07 Black 18D	180968-7	Sep 29, 1988	902	432	Sep 29, 1988		
02 Process Yellow 18D	180767-2	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Oct 22, 1988		
02 PMS Yellow 18D	180768-2	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Oct 22, 1988		
02 Magenta 18D	180766-2	Aug 12, 1988	902	432	Oct 25, 1988		
D Press offset plates 20x24							
01 Cyan 20D	181074-1	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 19, 1988		
01 Magenta 20D	181075-1	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 19, 1988		
01 Process yellow 20D	181076-1	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 19, 1988		
01 PMS yellow 20D	181077-1	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 19, 1988		
01 Black 20D	181078-1	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 19, 1988		
02 Black 20D	181083-2	Oct 14, 1988	902	480	Oct 22, 1988		
03 Process yellow 20D	181123-3	Oct 22, 1988	902	480	Oct 24, 1988		
03 Magenta 20D	181122-3	Oct 22, 1988	902	480	Oct 26, 1988		
04 PMS yellow 20D	181126-4	Oct 22, 1988	902	480	Nov 1, 1988		
04 Black 20D	181127-4	Oct 22, 1988	902	480	Nov 1, 1988		
04 Magenta 20D	181140-4	Oct 26, 1988	902	480	Nov 1, 1988		
03 Cyan 20D	181121-3	Oct 22, 1988	902	480	Nov 12, 1988		
06 Magenta 20D	181170-6	Nov 1, 1988	902	480	Nov 12, 1988		
06 Black 20D	181223-6	Nov 14, 1988	902	480	Nov 13, 1988		

L'Enfant postique lays in UV lights for 25¢ Yosemite

If you go to your nearest post-ique to buy Yosemite Flags, you still do not know whether you have block tagging or pretagged stamps. The clerk may know because boxes of the pretagged stamps are supposed to carry a "P."

But at the L'Enfant Plaza post-ique in Washington, there's a wonderful solution. They have installed a UV light at the counter and you are free to check your own stamps.

When Honeybees come off the BEP's presses again, they are likely to be pretagged.

L&CP Corp. of Troy, Ohio, told Richard J. Nazar it has been asked to supply dry-gum "prephosphored" paper.

L&CP said the paper would resemble the British-made prephosphored paper used for the 22¢ Flag Test stamps and would be quite different from the pretagged 25¢ Yosemite, which have a mottled appearance under UV.

L&CP told Nazar it is wrong to call it the Laminated & Coated Paper Corp., because another company uses that name.

For the record, L&CP is about 10 miles from *Lini's*.

It never rains, but it pours. The catalog went to the printer a week late. At the very last minute, Dr. Robert Rabinowitz reported a new find, Plate 2 of the 12.5¢ Pushcart unprecanceled. "Hold the presses!" he said.

A quick check of page proofs showed that at least six pages would have to be redone to make room for the entry, even without prices or printing data.

The catalog could not include the new find.

Lighthouse Publications guessed wrong in January when the company prepared its ad for the catalog and the last issue of *TPN* because of the flood of 25¢ Flag stamps. There are 21 pages in the strip supplement and 7 pages in the singles supplement.

Lighthouse said it would take the loss and not charge more for the larger supplements. The singles supplement will even include a space for the new 12.5¢ Pushcart. But the strip was issued too late for the strip supplement.

The strip supplement includes spaces for precancel gaps on the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon with black inscription as well as Plates 2 and 3

All the PNC news that fits we print

with new red inscription. There are also spaces for the dull-gum version of the 18¢ Monument (18M3PV1) and for both versions of the new 25¢ Flags. Just to be on the safe side, there are blank spaces in case new Yosemite are found.

Lighthouse provides a separate space for Plate 1 of the Honeybee to accommodate the seriffed "1."

PNC3 has been admitted to the American Philatelic Society as Affiliate 185. The requirement that a club exist for two full years was waived because of the large number of members.

Tim Lindemuth won a gold medal, the APS post-1940 award, and the Joseph Agris award for the best coil exhibit at Westpex '89 in San Francisco with his exhibit of the 20¢ Flag. Dr. Frank Shively Jr. won a silver-bronze at the same show with his exhibit of the 8.3¢ Ambulance, an exhibit which concentrated on the low entry of the plate number on Plate 1. The exhibit also won an award from the EFO Collectors' Club.

At Milcopex '89 in Milwaukee, Darrell Ertzberger won a vermeil, the APS research award, the BIA medal and the Collectors Club of Chicago award for the best research of post-World War II material for his exhibit of the Transportation Coils from the Cottrell presses. He won only a silver with that exhibit at Rompex in May.

Artmaster, which makes first-day covers under its name and under the House of Famam logo, supplied its regular dealers with Plates 7 and 8 of the 25¢ Yosemite at the regular price.

"We have gone to great lengths to acquire all four different numbers available," Artmaster said. "We bought these from a wholesaler and paid quite a bit for them. We are sending out your standing order quantities at a price that causes us to take a loss on them."

As a result, restocking cost dealers considerably more.

When Marguerite J. Doney uses precancels on her mail, she hands in the letters at the Allendale, N.J., post office to have

them canceled with a red "ball cancel."

But these cancels are different. The three lines of the date are printed in black (month), blue (date), and red (year).

Doney asked the post office about this and learned that the cancels are made by Shachihata in Japan.

A "ball cancel," in postal terminology, is the two-ring, dated town cancel. In the Shachihata model, Doney reports, "the ink or pad are within the 3-inch tall handle." She says she canceled 40 newsletters for her stamp club at one time without needing to re-ink.

The Postal Service does not announce quantities of stamps destroyed. Many other countries' postal administrations do.

The reason we lack destruction data, ostensibly, is that stamps are shredded locally and the Postal Service needs to know only that so-or-so many 18¢ stamps were shredded, not whether they were Surreys, or Flags, or commemoratives.

U.S. collectors, however, love to ridicule countries that issue postal wallpaper. A major culprit is Hungary, which issues most stamps not only as perforate versions, but also issues a limited quantity of imperforates of almost every issue. Then, it sometimes uses overprinting (even on the backs of stamps) to make rarities.

But in April, Hungary destroyed off-sale items issued since 1947 and gave exact quantities, even using Scott numbers. It also reported the numbers remaining.

It took the disaster of Plates 12 and 14 of the 20¢ Fire Pumper for USPS to tell us what was still in the vaults. And then we were told only about items that had been taken off sale prior to the report. We were told nothing, for example, about tagged 12.5¢ Pushcarts.

Jon Denney of M&M/Southwest has been advertising "Flying Bee" varieties, in which the black (intaglio) Honeybee is dramatically shifted so that its antennae are in the stamp to the right. Denney said the variety came off Plate 1.

Denney also advertised a miss-

ing bee, a color-omitted error in which the black intaglio plate did not print. It would have been impossible to tell which plate this variety was printed by (since the intaglio plate number would not have printed), but Denney said it came off the same roll, thus making it a Plate 1 variety.

Meanwhile, Max Hickox, who deals in used PNCs, has received a "courtesy envelope" sent out by the city of Anaheim, Calif., that was returned bearing a bee that was shifted down about 1.5mm. Hickox' find was a plate number single showing a "2."

Gerald H. Clark has been sifting through used Honeybees and has found an unimaginable number of misregistrations, both of the intaglio plates and of individual offset colors.

What was that again about the BEP awarding a limited-edition card to its employees for holding the bee in the proper position?

David E. Barrie-LaVergne, head of the Label Studies Group, has been persuaded by Clark and Kim Cunibert to start categorizing PNC labels by Pantone colors. Said B.-LaVergne, "Unfortunately, most labels are in tints of colors. Even the super-professional 'Emblem' labels appear with minor tint varieties."

And speaking of "Emblems," he said such labels also exist for the 18¢ Flag.

Volume I of Scott's *Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue* has continued the Scott tradition of stubborn disregard of collector needs that have exemplified this publication for many years.

In listing the 1988 PNCs that were issued solely as service-inscribed stamps, Scott says: "The 5.3¢, 7.6¢, 8.4¢, 13.2¢, 16.7¢, 20.5¢, 21¢ and 24.1¢ are only available precanceled and are untagged."

For each stamp, Scott lists the inscription color as "Bureau precancel in red" or whatever the color. And then it prices these stamps only as used stamps.

There is nothing in the introduction to explain why mint precancels do not exist or why they should only be priced as "used" stamps. Nor does Scott ever bother to inform collectors whether a used precancel may be valued differently than a mint one.

Isn't it odd that Germany's Michel can do what Scott can't?

Now there are 3 dry-gum intaglio papers

Continued from Page 66

the need to do so, our paper types are distinguished by paper as well as gum characteristics.]

In just three years, the scarcity of certain paper types on particular issues of the Transportation Series has been recognized and these varieties are already demanding high premiums. *The Plate Number Coil Catalog* already lists paper types according to the plate number of each stamp, although it does not yet price the paper types. It does indicate scarcity according to a rating system devised by Kim Cuniberti.

Other stamps printed by intaglio with dry gum (sheets, coils, and booklets) are printed on the same paper that is supplied for the Transportation Series and therefore also show these paper varieties.

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[*Editor's note:* This report covers only dry-gum intaglio papers. Nazar is now at work on shiny gum intaglio papers and papers made for the gravure presses.]

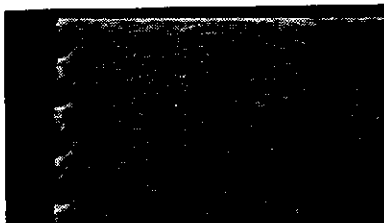


Fig. 3a—Type III texture.



Fig. 3b—Type III texture.

Quotes without comment



When I judge a British Colonies exhibit and stand in front of a 1936 cover franked with a 6-penny stamp and see red, blue, green and yellow dots beneath the cover, I don't walk but run to the exhibit's title page thinking, "Boy, I must have missed something."

There I learn that the red dot refers to the exhibitor's own research, and the blue dot means a scarce cancel. Yellow means "only six cancels known." All I can say is: "Who cares? How important is it?"

The same goes for an exhibit of the United States Transportation coil stamps, with the same colored dots pointing out the exhibitor's research and how scarce some of these elite plate numbers are.

Can't anybody get them at the post office? This stamp series isn't even finished yet, is it? How important is it philatelically?

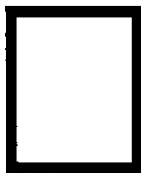
I don't mean to discourage these collectors, but aren't we overdoing it? Are we losing sight of classic exhibits?

Werner Gruenebaum
Linn's, May 29, 1989

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