

Pre-tagging of Yosemite paper laid to prevention of stamp re-use

The 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite stamp on "prephosphored" paper may not look like it, but it really is on paper that was tagged during manufacture.

Also, USPS revealed that the real reason for putting stamps on phosphored paper was to prevent the washing off of cancelations.

A spokesman for the paper manufacturer, Paper Corp. of the United States

(PCUS), told Richard J. Nazar that the phosphor tagging was being done by a new technology, but would not spell that out.

PCUS, of New York, also made the gravure paper seen on the dry-gum versions of the 18¢ Washington Monument and for the "E" Earth stamps.

Nazar, the Plate Number Coil Study Group's researcher into paper types, was also told:

- Tagging in the paper mash was too expensive.
- PCUS had won a firm, two-year con-

Please turn to Page 42

BEP clears up confusion over Honeybee plate

The 25¢ Honeybee is a complex stamp. It comes off variously sized plates, off two press systems, and with several tagging styles.

Now—while the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is taking a breather from the herculean printing order for Honeybees—is a good time to reflect on what we know. Until recently, we knew more from the stamps themselves than from official BEP information.

The huge Honeybee printing order was

Please turn to Page 39

In this issue

Rich Nazar discovers third paper type, tracks down 'dry-gum' Monument stamps. Page 47.

<i>All the News</i>	54
<i>BEP data corrected</i>	50
<i>Back to Basics</i>	43
<i>Catalog updates</i>	43
<i>Colors, research begun</i>	44
<i>Forgeries</i>	53
<i>Labels, how to remove</i>	47
<i>Letters</i>	38
<i>Mailer's postmarks</i>	52
<i>Mixture counting</i>	46
<i>PNC Catalog</i>	41
<i>Varieties</i>	48
<i>Yosemite varieties</i>	45

Paid circulation this issue is 429.



NOW WE KNOW—The test sought to prevent revenue loss and had nothing to do with mail-handling machinery.

Tagging found on all ZIP+4 Letters from Plates 111121

By Stephen G. Esrati

When draft copies of the 1989 *PNC Catalog* were sent out to members of the PNC Study Group, Kim Cuniberti added a comment about 21.1M2P, the ZIP+4 version of Plates 111121 of the 21.1¢ Letters:

"Copies of this precanceled stamp exhibiting tagging are very common. Those exhibiting no tagging may be rare."

All this was news to me although Cuniberti said it had appeared in his price list and in Lee Warzala's.

In a casual look at one of Cuniberti's "tagged" 21.1M2Ps, it appeared not to be tagged at all. But the pink color (in the topmost envelope) is fluorescent, glowing slightly in short-wave ultraviolet light, and strongly in long-wave UV.

This was also true on 21.1M1P and both unprecanceled stamps.



Computer-enhanced drawing by Wayne L. Youngblood

But a look—in the total darkness of a windowless bathroom—showed that Cuniberti was indeed correct. The 21.1M2P he submitted was tagged. So were the ones in my albums.

The tagging was in the shape of a rectangle slightly shifted away from the vignette. It appeared whitish under short-wave UV and was not found on the 21.1M1P.

Cuniberti, who has checked with other dealers, has yet to find an untagged copy.

Readers are urged to examine their copies of the precancels to see if any untagged copies exist.

Do Cottrell precancel gaps run in series? What's the secret of those that do?

Contributing editor Kim Cuniberti explores what we know about gaps. His conclusion: Not much! See Page 40.

An Editorial

Sowing Confusion

Conflict of interest is an unpleasant charge to face. A.S. Cibulskas, who is a dealer, avoids any hint of it by not dealing in varieties. We did him a disservice in the last issue by saying he is a varieties dealer in our Dealer Directory. The only varieties in which he deals are numbers on top, not the constant plate varieties he reports here. He leans over backward not to have a conflict.

The charge has also been laid against Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, who is a dealer in precancel gaps and who volunteered to help the Gap Committee of the Plate Number Coil Study Group ascertain scarcity.

It was charged that some gaps are only available from Dr. Rabinowitz and the quantities held are unknown to others. It was felt, therefore, that Dr. Rabinowitz would be able to claim scarcity for gaps that only he has, thus making those gaps costly.

Collectors' need to know was deemed important. Dr. Rabinowitz' knowledge has been added to what we knew. His withdrawal from the Gap Committee after being criticized was regretted by a majority of the committee.

Of course, the conflict-of-interest game works both ways. Safeguards are built into the system used to assess gap scarcity to try to avoid exactly what the critics feared.

It would be nice if every aspect of our hobby were free of all controversy. Unfortunately, that is not how things are. So we try to act honorably and trust others to do likewise.

Sometimes, we have no recourse but to believe one set of facts above another. It is not because we are pushing one viewpoint. But in the case of "phosphor-coated" paper vs. "pre-tagged" paper, we even devoted space in this issue to the other version. We did so because we felt it was the right thing to do.

We don't look for controversy; but we can't avoid it.

A specialized catalog?

The 1989 Michel *USA-Spezial* Catalog has PNCs on its cover. That is only the beginning.

Every PNC is priced by plate number as a mint single, used single, pair and strips of three and five, even as precancels. There is no breakdown by gap or precancel style.

But the stamps are in straight chronological order. There is no attempt to keep them together as sets.

One stamp America's Scott leaves out, the B Press version of the 14¢ Iceboat, is included, differentiated by its tagging style. But the B Press versions of the 8.3¢ Ambulance and the 12¢ Stanley Steamer, are nowhere to be found.

While the German-language catalog may not be of much use to English-speaking collectors, its very existence should spur Scott Publishing Co. to do more than price precancels as used stamps and to list all PNCs only as strips of three.

If Michel can do it, why can't Scott?

The Plate Number

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Letters: *Linn's* collector totals true; *PNC Catalog* numbers still need a fix

I believe the *Linn's* data on the number of PNC collectors—with a qualification.

I believe that there are collectors who collect them if they happen upon them. The number of serious collectors may be 1,000 to 2,000 in the United States.

A serious collector is one who specializes and studies the stamps. Some of us have developed a serious trading network for information and for strips. Because of the poor geographic distribution of stamps by the Postal Service, these informal networks are necessary.

A further comment on the catalog numbering system. You are going through the same problems I predicted when you introduced the numbers. I know Scott numbers are terrible. Your system is better, but still not perfect. The "Miscellaneous" category is not good because it may be too wide open. What happens when the 25¢ Bread Wagon (25T) is replaced by a new design this year?

In reply: If it is in the *Transportation Series*, it would be 25TxR, with the "x" standing for the plate number.

Or the Honeybee (25M)?

In reply: We'll have to cross that bridge when we get to it.

I think that between now

and the 1990-91 rate increase, the sequence may be perfected, but I still do not use the new numbers. However, Scott licensing aside, it is important that you establish your own numbering system and identity.

Frank Norulak
Torrance, Calif.

In reply: Led by such dealers as Jon Denney of M&M! Southwest, a trend may be shaping up to list all PNCs simply in order of denomination, with the 18¢ Flags between the 17.5¢ Racing Car and the 18¢ Surrey, for example. That system could be adapted for catalog use by simply overlooking the series completely.

The numbering system is not a question of identity, but of versatility; not of licensing, but of completeness. Scott still does not list many PNCs. Scott numbers change. Once our system is perfected, there should be no need to change, and all new issues will instantly possess a number.

Honeybee problem

I am sending you two used pairs of Honeybee Plate 1. You will notice that the plate number on one pair is centered. The other is 1.5mm left of center.

Please turn to Page 44

BEP clarifies Honeybee plate confusion

Continued from Page 37

for 11.3 billion stamps. According to a spokesman for the Postal Service, that number is still the order. When printing of Honeybees resumes this month, BEP will attempt to complete the order. We may see new plate numbers and new press configurations.

Here is a summation of what we knew about the Honeybee before BEP suspended printing:

Presses—The Honeybee was first printed on a combination of the Goebel Optiforma offset press and the intaglio C Press. The offset plates for this were 18 rows across the sleeve with a circumference of 25 stamps.

We did not, at first, know what size the intaglio plate was. In the BEP plate-activity report for April 1988, the intaglio sleeve for Plate 1 was reported as being for the C Press and with 900 stamps per revolution. That last figure had to be in error since the C Press has a circumference of 48 and 48 cannot be divided into 900.

The Plate Number assumed wrongly that the sleeve was 18x48. BEP has now confirmed that the plate was, in fact, 20x48, for a total of 960 stamps per revolution.

We had come to this conclusion before calling BEP because the stamps had told us that we were wrong in assuming an 18x48 size.

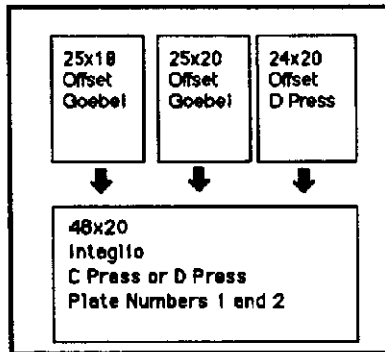
The last two rows were simply not printed because the paper was only 18 rows wide, Ken Lawrence believes.

The July plate-activity report gave us data for Plate 2, also for the C Press. That report gave the size as 960 stamps per revolution, or 20x48.

That report also indicated that new plates had been made for the Goebel Optiforma Press that were 20 stamps wide. It is fortunate for us that there are no plate numbers on the offset portion. The new 20-row offset plates have the same plate-number suffixes as the older 18-row plates, although the full plate numbers are different.

When seam lines (usually called "joint lines") were first spotted on the Honeybee, we expected the lines to move around in relation to the plate number because they would recur at an interval of 25.

Up to the printing of the March issue of *TPN*, the July BEP report was the latest available from BEP. There was no in-



Three offset plates were used with two intaglio plates on the Bee.

dication of any offset sleeves with a circumference other than 25.

But collectors soon noted that all seam lines did not move around in relation to the plate number as they would on the Optiforma-C Press combination where the circumference of 25 hits randomly on the circumference of 48.

What had happened was that BEP tried to use its heavily booked D Press, which has a built-in offset system. The intaglio plates used on the C Press can be used on the D Press without modification because they are interchangeable.

But on the D Press, the circumference of the offset units is 24. That would produce seam lines that stayed in the same place in relation to the plate number.

Since strips with C Press seam lines have been found with both plate numbers, and since the width of Plate 2 was known to have been 20, this proved even before BEP confirmation that the size of intaglio Plate 1 was also 20 rows wide.

What we still lacked up to the March issue of *TPN* was any indication that offset plates had been made for the D Press.

However, we can deduce that such plates were made and had to be 24x20.

That would give us four families of plates:

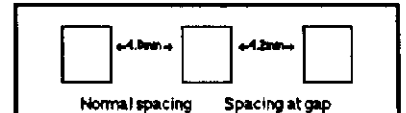
1. Goebel Optiforma offset plates measuring 25x18.
2. Goebel Optiforma offset plates measuring 25x20
3. D Press offset plates measuring 24x20.
4. Intaglio plates for either the C or the D Press measuring 48x20.

Seam lines—It has been relatively difficult to find seam lines that occur inside the collectible strip of five; even more so at the preferred spot, just to the right of the plate number. In fact, lines from the

C Press are much harder to find than lines from the D Press.

Lawrence believes this to be the result of the greater ability of pressmen to monitor the two separate presses used in the C Press operation than in watching all the many components of the D Press. "They paid more attention on the Goebel press," he said.

Lawrence has also found a neat way to differentiate C Press Honeybees from D Press Honeybees. On the C Press there is a slight increase in the vertical space be-



tween stamps that repeats every 25 stamps. Lawrence's measurements show that the normal distance between stamps is 4.0mm, but at the seams, the distance is 4.2mm. Once found, the wider gap repeats at every 25th stamp. On the D Press, the distance is 4.0 all along the roll.

Lawrence, incidentally, is quite insistent on not calling the seam lines "joint lines."

"The joint lines on the Cottrell presses were supposed to be there," he said. "These lines are freaks and are not supposed to be there. Let's not use terms incorrectly."

What we know about 'F' stamps

The next postal rate increase will introduce the "F" as the letter gracing the undenominated stamps.

The "F" stamps will be printed by gravure, on "pre-phosphored" paper, and will have shiny (dextrin) gum, according to requests for bids put out by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

This would indicate that the "F" stamps may again be multicolored, as the "E" stamps were.

The specification for "pre-phosphored" paper is in line with the determination of the Postal Service to have all stamps printed on pre-tagged paper.

No information on the eventual design of the "F" stamps was known to *The Plate Number's* source for the above information.

What do we really know about gaps?

By Kim Cuniberti

Steve Esarati has been asking me for some time if I would contribute something to *TPN* following my previous article on 4.9¢ double gaps. I've been putting him off because I don't feel I had the time to research anything as thoroughly as I'd like to present something that sounded reasonably competent. But if it is true that good literature should raise our consciousness not by the questions that we answer, but by the questions that we raise, then an off-the-cuff article on gaps ought to be the perfect subject matter.

The key piece of research information that I've been lacking is about a week's worth of intensive one-on-one cross-examination with a Cottrell and B Press pressman. Perhaps this possibly misguided probe might end up in the hands of one of those lucky individuals (I say lucky since he knows many things that I currently hold as mysteries of the universe, and he probably holds as one more lingering memory of a bad day on the presses).

My perpetual preoccupation with the philatelically obscure can't be readily explained. I'll leave that to my therapist. Putting that particular motivation aside, it struck me early on that gaps were a sort of PNC hieroglyphics that, if one could decipher them, would offer a glimpse of some of the brief history behind some of our most beloved items. Certainly, virtually all of us are familiar with the tagged versions of plate number coils. Aside from the varieties, they all look the same. But a number of the items were merely philatelic versions of stamps that existed for precanceled uses. That's where the fun begins.

In only trying to round out my collection to include these items in their intended state, I was soon confronted with gaps. I think what initially bothered me was that I ended up with a set of paired plate numbers, but they didn't match because the gaps were not in the same place on each of the strips. I was striving for consistency. Little did I know that I was about to open Pandora's box! I did continue to get matched pairs of strips

Not much!

with matched gaps, but I also kept the duplicates with different gap positions. As my duplicates grew so did my difficulties in matching some items I had gotten in trade as single strips. Why was that? Were the possible positions endless? If not, what were the limitations and why?

At some point I got a list of known positions and the rest is history as far as my involvement is concerned. But as much as I know about these footsteps through the recent history of PNCs, there is still much left unanswered.

Observation and Mystery Number One: Why is it that so many of the known gaps occur in sequence?

This question has nagged me for more than a year. One glance at the table of known gaps that appears in each edition of the *Plate Number Coil Catalog* paints a vivid picture right from the top of the chart:

- 3.4¢ School Bus, Plates 1 and 2: Line Gap, 1R, 2R, 3R.
- 4¢ Stagecoach, Plates 3 and 4 and 5 and 6: 2L, 1L, Line Gap.
- 4.9¢ Buckboard, Plates 1 and 2: 1R, 2R, 3R.

This continuum goes on right down the chart. On Plates 3 and 5 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh it goes from 6L to the joint line, seven different gaps in a row.

It cannot be a coincidence. The same type of sequence can be seen on the less familiar B Press gaps, too. It has to be an indication of some aspect of the printing procedure. My best guess at this point is that a periodic cleaning of the flexographic mats or some other part of the presses causes a disengagement of one or more of the parts. When they are re-engaged, the mats have rotated one position over from the previous one.

Is it always one position? A very key question. The answer is probably no. If it were yes, where is Gap 1L on the 4.9¢ Plates 5 and 6, which now reads 4L, 3L, 2L, Line, 1R, 2R, 3R?

Or where are Gaps 1R and 2R on Plates 3 and 5 of the 5.2¢ Sleigh, which would then go across 10 positions?

Or, more recently, where is Gap 2L on the 12¢ Stanley Steamer which now reads 5L, 4L, 3L, 1L, Line?

Even if the answer is no, the existence

of these and other gaps is, no doubt, still a valid question. Where the sequence of what is known is broken by lack of one position, I believe, we should not be surprised if it shows up.

Within the past year, Gaps 5L and 3L have both been found on the 12¢ Stanley Steamer. Where have they been? Granted there are not hoards of gap collectors out there sampling every roll. Perhaps rolls of these positions have come and gone, filling the needs of regular collectors of strips of three and five. But I sit here looking at that glaring space in the chart at 2L and say to myself: "It's out there! If I or someone else could only find it!" I definitely believe that there are missing positions in some of the older precancels. There were too many of us, including myself, who were just not looking for or saving these gems, and every day that goes by unfortunately means that it is a bit less likely that they will be found.

A Related Question: Do the printing totals give any indication as to how many gaps might have been printed for any given issue? This is a bit more difficult to begin to analyze since we are not given separate totals for tagged and precanceled stamps on issues with both. But what about those items that were only issued as precancels?

Face	Plates	Gaps	Quantity
4.9	1, 2	4	901,350 max. PNCs
4.9	5, 6	7	3,458,826 max. PNCs
5.2	4, 6	3	3,002,040 max. PNCs
5.9	5, 6	1	1,363,320 max. PNCs
8.3	3, 4	2	2,319,084 max. PNCs
9.3	8	1	1,220,994 max. PNCs
10.9	3, 4	5	5,142,708 max. PNCs

I had to leave out five B Press items for lack of printing totals, but there appears to be a loose ratio in the Cottrells except for the 4.9¢: about one gap per million maximum PNCs. The only other item that doesn't fit is Plates 1 and 2 of the 10.9¢ that, with the tagged stamps included in the total, managed to produce five gaps with only 1,944,000 maximum PNCs.

What does all this prove? Only that there does not appear to be an unusually large maximum PNC total with a low number of gaps indicating that there might be undiscovered positions. So,

perhaps a 1L on Plates 1 and 2 of the 12¢ is only a pipe dream, but it should not stop us from looking.

Another Mystery: Line Gaps. Why is it that every Cottrell issue managed to generate one item with the gap at the joint line, whereas on the B Press only two items ever managed to make it into a strip of five (10.1¢, black service indicator, Plate 2, Line Gap and 1R)? Granted that the B Press with 26 possible gap positions made the odds poorer, but the Cottrells with 12 possible gap positions managed to hit it 10 times out of 10 different denominations, including two different sets of plate numbers (5 and 6 and 5 and 7) on one (the 17¢ Electric Auto).

Even more astounding is the fact that two items that managed to be printed with only one gap (5.9¢ Bicycle Plates 5 and 6 and 17¢ Electric Auto Plates 1 and 2, Type C) were both line gaps. Chance? As my son would say: "Come on, Dad, gimme a break!"

It just can't be coincidence. But what

is it? A pressman with an eye for symmetry? If so, then why not all of them? Or is this yet another clue to what we have missed?

I wish I had the proverbial time machine. I'm afraid it is the only way that we may ever get answers to some of these questions. I also would love to use it to get an example of each of the positions that ever left the presses. I feel as though I have a portion of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and I'll have to be content to

speculate about what else may have existed. I have, however, managed to put together a rich cross-section of what millions of revolutions of those presses managed to create with some sort of chronologic code. Is anyone out there able to read it?

I would welcome any comments, thoughts, ideas, and especially concrete answers. Please drop me a line at P.O. Box 3654, Danbury CT 06877.

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...and here's a Gap mystery for you to puzzle over

Here are some data that present a mystery.

The 12.5¢ Pushcart exists on Plate 1 in a pale green color variety. This variety is found on twopaper types and two gaps thusly:

Gap 10R Type III paper

Gap 10R Type I paper

Gap 11R Type I paper

Is there a sequence in the printing process that these items hold?

Readers are invited to speculate.

Kim Cuniberti

1989 catalog charts new guide to gaps

By Stephen G. Esrati

Publishing a catalog involves a series of compromises and requires many judgment calls. Since *The Plate Number Coin Catalog* is a much more constricted work than any general catalog, I do not know if my experiences can be related to what may also happen on larger-scale catalogs, but I suppose they are.

Two new difficulties faced us this year more than in any prior year in the five-year history of the endeavor:

- Gap scarcity.
- Varieties.

The main hurdle, however, continued to be pricing.

After all price lists had been entered into the Macintosh computer, averages for those prices were printed. That posed the first problem. What does one do if the price of a used single is higher than the price for a mint single, mint pair or mint strip of three? In the first draft, an attempt was made to keep all these in relation to each other and by lowering used-singles prices to the level of a mint single.

The draft was then sent out to members of the PNC Study Group. At this point, Ken Lawrence entered his estimates for prices of used singles. Lawrence's prices were often higher than those for mint singles.

Lawrence observed that the prices for used singles move in a separate market from mint stamps and said there was no reason a used single could not be priced higher than a mint strip.

But both Al Haake and Ed Denson said they have often had mint stamps canceled to make them into used stamps and could not justify a premium for used.

"I can get anything canceled," Denson said, "probably even the officials."

"I have taken hundreds of mint stamps to be canceled," said Haake. "And one thing's for sure. You can cancel a mint stamp but you can't make it go the other way."

The upshot is that where Lawrence's used prices are higher than the mint price, they will appear in the catalog at the same price as for a mint single. But, Lawrence warns, collectors may find prices on used singles higher at dealers in that field than are given in the catalog.

Other drafts came back with many new varieties added. Most of these had to be ignored, partly because it was no longer possible to add anything to the body of the catalog, and partly because of the conscious reduction in the 1989 edition of the number of varieties that could be included for cost and space reasons.

The varieties suggested for inclusion by the study group are enumerated in a

separate article on Page 48.

But the most difficult problem of all was gap scarcity. Dr. Robert Rabinowitz had volunteered to share his knowledge of gap collecting with us. He proposed a revision of the gap scarcity table.

His revision was then sent out to members of the Gap Committee.

They, in turn, revised his revisions. Out of all these changes, a compromise was determined by Larry G. Haynes, the committee chairman, and me. It is hoped that the revised table will be more helpful than it was in the past.

It needs to be noted that no single person's opinions on scarcity was adopted. If anything, it is a consensus.

Dr. Rabinowitz' tenure on the Gap Committee, however, was short-lived. Another member of the study group, who is not a member of the Gap Committee, expressed misgivings about Dr. Rabinowitz' rôle, stating that Dr. Rabinowitz is the sole source on some gaps and the quantities he holds are a closely guarded secret.

This view was not shared by Haynes or most members of the Gap Committee; but Dr. Rabinowitz withdrew from the committee.

A philosophical argument crept into

Please turn to Page 55

Pre-tagged Yosemite to counter re-use

Continued from Page 37

tract by its low bid. Pre-tagging was not begun to shrink the foreign-trade deficit.

• Tagging was not done by a two-step process.

A two-step process would mean that the paper is manufactured first and is then tagged. A spokesman for the Postal Service had said the paper was tagged after manufacture by running it through a bath.

Asked why that did not produce tagging on both sides of the paper, the spokesman said he did not know. "I was given to understand that's how it was done," he said.

PCUS told Nazar that this USPS explanation was not wholly correct, but would not elaborate on the actual method.

On the 22¢ Test Coil, also called "pre-phosphored" by the Postal Service, the tagging was in the paper sizing. That paper was made by a British firm, Harrison & Sons, Ltd.

The 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog* will call the paper seen on the Test stamps "phosphored paper" and the paper seen thus far on the Yosemite "pre-tagged paper." That's to keep a distinction between the two tagging styles.

Other PNC enthusiasts are terming the two papers "phosphored paper" (Test Coils) and "phosphor-coated" to keep the same distinction.

On the Test Coils, the tagging, seen under short-wave ultraviolet light, is absolutely even. The tagging on the Yosemite looks like a mistake: splotches of tagging unevenly spread across the stamp. Both stamps have overall tagging and are printed over the tagging.

The Yosemite look like the Cottrell Press taggings, which were applied over the printing in a varnish suspension.

The reason for putting the stamps on pre-tagged paper, according to the USPS spokesman, is slightly different from the original reasons given for printing the Test Coil.

At that time, USPS said it was making the stamps "to test the compatibility of pre-phosphored stamp paper with U.S. mail processing equipment." But even then, in May, 1987, USPS said:

"The Postal Service said that the use of pre-phosphored paper across the board would minimize the risk of revenue losses caused by re-use of stamps after cancellation ink is removed. In current U.S. stamp production, phosphor is suspended

in a layer of varnish which is applied over a stamp's printed surface. The varnish, a barrier which prevents cancellation ink from penetrating into a stamp, is not present when pre-phosphored paper is used....

"A critical objective of the test is to determine if stamp perforating machines will be damaged by pre-phosphored paper."

Now, it turns out, the key to the test had little or nothing to do with perforating machines or mail-handling machinery. Perhaps for that reason, when USPS announced that the test on the Test Coil had been a success, it never spelled out just what had been tested or where.

The real reason, according to the USPS spokesman, for phosphored stamps is revenue protection—reducing the huge revenue losses suffered by USPS from the washing off of cancels.

Without the varnish in the tagging, cancels soak into the stamps, making them harder to remove.

According to the USPS spokesman, BEP opposed the idea of phosphored paper, saying it damaged its machinery. But, the spokesman said, "it isn't their machinery, and we have to pay to repair it. What we found out in the experiments with the Test Coils was that the cost of repairing perforator pins was a small fraction of what we lose from stamp-washing operations."

The following Yosemite stamps have now been found on pre-tagged paper: Plates 5, 6, 7, and 8. Plates 7, 8 and 9 have been found with block tagging.

Plate 5, which existed before introduction of pre-tagged paper, thus exists in two forms: surface (block) tagged and pre-tagged at the paper plant (overall tagged). Plates 7 and 8, so far, have also been found in both taggings.

The two taggings are cataloged in the 1989 *PNC Catalog* as 25FXi (surface tagged) and 25FXii (pre-tagged). ("X" represents the plate number.)

Plate 8 was found with block tagging by Al Haake. Haake provided a dozen copies to Ed Denson, who prepared covers with the block-tagged stamps in the hope of getting them canceled with the Feb. 14, 1989, FDOI cancel for the pre-tagged stamps.

Block-tagged stamps with plate number 7 (25F7i), reported to Nazar at the ASDA show in New York on March 19, may also have been sent in for "first-

day" treatment. Ken Lawrence notes that any such covers are only FDCs if they also bear a pre-tagged stamp.

Stamps from Plate 6 with block tagging had not been found at TPN press time.

The Postal Service spokesman said other stamps would be coming out on "prephosphored" paper, but did not know which ones.

It had been the intention of USPS to issue the 25¢ Honeybee on phosphored paper, he said. But BEP had trouble getting offset colors to adhere to such paper, he said. Thus another difficulty was added to the many faced by BEP in printing the Honeybee.

No such difficulty exists in the case of stamps printed by gravure, he added. This leads to the possibility that the next pre-tagged stamp may be one printed by gravure, as were the 18¢ Monument and 21.1¢ Letters.

Asked what stamps might be coming out in the near future, the spokesman said he was not sure. But he indicated that a replacement would be needed shortly for the \$1 Eugene O'Neill stamp, depending on when supplies run out or if there were an order from a large mailer for such a denomination.

If one were to speculate, a \$1 coil stamp would appear to be a good candidate for the next new stamp to appear on pre-tagged paper. But an old design may turn up on the paper even before that happens.

The existence of Yosemite on both papers was caused, a USPS spokesman said, because BEP ran out of the newer paper.

Michel Specialized U.S. to list dry-gum 18M3P

Schwaneberger Verlag, publisher of the Michel catalogs, will list the dry-gum versions of the 18¢ Monument (18M3P and 18M4P) as distinct subtypes. The stamps will carry the Michel number 1780x.

The former listing of the tagged 18M3P (as Michel 1780yaV) has been dropped because the tagging was found to be a freak.

The 528-page 1989 Michel prices singles, pairs and strips of three and five for each plate number. Prices, of course, are in German marks.

Back to Basics**It's not secret code, it's how PNC collectors talk**

Several readers have asked what some of the abbreviations, shortcuts and specialized terms used in *TPN* mean.

One reader asked, "What does PS/5 mean?" The abbreviation stands for a Plate (Number) Strip of five. This is defined as a strip of that length with the plate number on the center stamp.

Another reader asked for an explanation of the numbering system. This, of course, is explained in full in the introduction to the *PNC Catalog*, but here is a thumbnail.

The first part of the number refers to the face value of the stamp. It is followed by a letter that defines the series. This is followed by a number designating the plate.

Thus, 20F1, is the 20¢ Flag from Plate 1 while 20T1 is the 20¢ Transportation from Plate 1.

This brings us to the first hurdle. The Transportation Series includes the 20¢ Fire Pumper and the 20¢ Cable Car.

In our system, the Pumper is 20T1; the Cable Car is 20T1R. The "R" means it is from a re-engraving (such as the 1¢ and 2¢, which used the same design but changed the designator for "cents"); a re-issue (such as the 5¢ Milk Wagon or 20¢ Cable Car which changed the design), or a re-issue (such as the 4¢ Stagecoach from the B Press and other stamps that had a press change but are catalogued as unique stamps).

In that last group, in addition to the Stagecoach are the 8.3¢ and 12¢ precancels from the B Press and the 14¢ Iceboat from the B Press.

Other letters designating series are "M" for miscellaneous, "U" for Undenominated, and "o" for Official.

A "P" after all this indicates that we are talking about a precanceled or service-inscribed stamp.

In the case of the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon and the new phosphored 25¢ Flag over Yosemite, a new wrinkle has had to be introduced. It is a "ii" added after the entire number.



No Gap



Gap 2 Left (2L)*



Gap 1 Left (1L)



Line Gap (Ln)



Gap 1 Right (1R)*

GAPS Gaps are called after the perforation row on which they fall. Starred items do not appear in strips of three.

It means that this is a second major type of a previous stamp. In the case of the 10.1¢, it is a change in the precancel from two-line and black to one-line and red. On the Yosemite it means the stamp is on pre-tagged paper.

Other terms used by PNC collectors are intended to get around the problem of differentiating between mint and used stamps. A stamp that has been used is called "used," not "canceled." The term "canceled" refers to the end of use by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing of a particular plate. Usually, a canceled plate is destroyed and no more stamps can be printed from it.

An unused stamp, whether precanceled or not, is called "mint."

To distinguish between a precanceled and unprecanceled stamp, many PNC collectors say "precanceled" and "tagged." Some, however, refer to unprecanceled stamps as "mint." Since this causes confusion, *TPN* tries to be consistent.

When we say mint it always means unused. We know that precancels can also be mint, which is the way most PNC collectors collect them.

The final problem concerns precancel gaps. In a strip from the Cottrell presses, which had a joint line, we count right or left from that line to position the gap. On strips from other presses, that do not

have such a line we pretend that there is a line to the right of the numbered stamp and count from there.

A stamp called 1R means it is one stamp to the right of the joint line or imaginary joint line. This is the stamp directly to the right of the numbered stamp.

A stamp called 1L is the stamp with the number, which is the first stamp left of the line.

In counting gaps, we actually count perforation rows. So 1R is at the right of the stamp called 1R. A gap on the line is called a line gap.

TPN is edited for all PNC collectors. It includes articles of interest to all levels of advancement, from novice to super-duper specialist.

Questions are always welcome and will be answered.

If questions are in the specialized field of one of *TPN's* contributors, they will be referred to them for replies. The experts are:

Varieties: A.S. Cibulakus
Imperforates: Dr. John Greenwood
FDCs: Glenn A. Ertus and Ken Lawrence
Mixtures: Thom E. Wheeler
Postal rates and rules: Alan Malakoff
BEP data: George V.H. Godin

They are backed up by other members of the Plate Number Coil Study Group, which puts out the *PNC Catalog*.

Catalog updates**New Stamps**

25F5ii, 25F6ii and 25F7ii—Plates 5, 6 and 7 of the 25¢ Flag over Yosemite, on pre-tagged paper, C Press, about March 5. (Dr. Rabinowitz, Thomson)

25F7i—Plate 7 of the 25¢ Flag over Yosemite, on block-tagged paper, C Press, about March 20. (Nazar)

25F8i—Plate 8 of the 25¢ Flag over Yosemite, on block-tagged paper, C Press, about March 12. (Haake)

25F9i—Plate 9 of the 25¢ Flag over Yosemite, on block-tagged paper, C Press, about March 30. (Carruberti, Marrelli)

Withdrawals

12.5T—Tagged version only, 12.5¢ Pushcart, April 30, 1989.

25T—25¢ Bread Wagon, April 30, 1989.

First day cover totals

5.3¢ Elevator—142,705; 7.6¢ Carrels—140,024; 8.4¢ Wheel Chair—136,337; 13¢ Police Patrol Wagon—132,928; 20¢ Cable Car—150,068; 20.5¢ Fire Engine—123,043; 21¢ Railroad Mail Car—124,430; 24.1¢ Tandem Bicycle—138,593; 25¢ Honeybee—122,853.

Dr. Rabinowitz defends high prices for Bee's seam lines

Continued from Page 38

Is this abnormal or is it something I have not noticed before and is common?

Max D. Hickox
Denver, Colo.

In reply: Not only the plate number is shifted to the left; so is the bee itself, which protrudes out of the frame by 0.5mm at the left. This means that we are looking at stamps in which the black intaglio printing was not in register with the colored offset printing. This was the problem that BEP tried to express when it sent its "Well Done!" card to employees who worked on the Honeybee. But the employees did not always succeed. The bee (and the plate number) have been reported shifted by others. It is too early to tell how common this was. A preliminary guess is that it is not too common.

Bee lines not scarce?

John D. Galu's letter complains of "high priced" numbered joint line strips of the 25¢ Honeybee. Mr. Galu believes that because the post offices in his area (presumably all from the same case) have joint line Bees, they are common and overpriced.

The fact is that many post offices in the United States never ever saw any Honeybees. And a significant fraction that did, had only the C Press variety.

Some, like Mr. Galu's post office, did

have rolls with joint lines. But an extremely small number of offices had two or more different joint lines.

Along came a few dealers, myself included, who decided to make a market in these lines. When you consider that lines have appeared on Plates 1 and 2 and a total of close to 20 different exist, it is no small task assembling them.

Think about the phone calls, the sample orders from philatelic boutiques, the roll stripping, the trading, the false leads, the investment, the sale of scrap, the damaged strips, the time involved in packing up long strips that cannot be folded, etc. For a collector, it is a pastime. For a dealer, time and investment must be equated with a financial return.

Mr. Galu might have taken exception to someone (including me) asking \$18 for something he had available to him at \$3.50 face. But how do you price these? There was no way of telling which numbers and positions would ultimately be rare and which would be common. Therefore, most of us put a fixed price on the strips, regardless of line position or plate number. Maybe the prices were a bit too high (or too low), but they were fair. I am certain that some of those I sold at \$18 to \$22 each I'd be happy to buy back some time from now at a substantial profit to the owner.

Is Mr. Galu one of those who thought the 18¢ Flag, Plate 6, was too high priced in 1982? Why pay 10 times face

for something that a dealer found in his own post office? We know why now.

I accept Mr. Galu's comments as naïve, lacking a basic understanding of how a specialty PNC dealer operates. However, I am surprised that TPN would give such an unjustified criticism visibility. Do you, Steve Esrati, believe dealers are gouging? How many different Bee joint lines can you assemble?

Naïve and unjustified criticism helps fill pages, but it does not add to the credibility of a publication or underscore the quality of editorial comment.

Steve Esrati understands the distribution situation of the Honeybees and the cost factors in making a market in a subspecialty. It was his responsibility to reply to Mr. Galu. Instead, he left Mr. Galu's naïve version hang out there and unjustifiably berate hard-working dealers.

Dr. Robert Rabinowitz
Stamford, Conn.

In reply: Mr. Galu is entitled to express his opinion. He wrote the same letter to Linn's and Linn's published it.

As stated here before, this is an open forum. All views are welcome. Steve Esrati refrains from commenting on opinions, but does reply to questions or asks others to do so. Mr. Galu did not ask a question, he stated his opinion. TPN welcomes Dr. Rabinowitz' reply. That is his opinion. There is no comment to it, either. And there should not be.

Study Group begins to classify PNCs by Pantone System colors

The first PNC for which USPS reported a color with a Pantone Matching System (PMS) number was the 15¢ Tugboat.

The color was purple (PMS 267). TPN bought a Pantone Color Products Selector and tried to match the color.

The lighting under which this is done is critical as is the method.

What you need to do is to hold the stamp under the color and bring a section of the stamp containing the color right up against the selector. And you have to do it in daylight. Fluorescent light does not work; incandescent light does, but not as well as daylight.

Using a magnifier makes things easier.

After succeeding with Purple 267, we tried the Dark Green 330 of the 13.2¢ Coal Car. That worked; so we tried the Red 185 of its service indicator. Again it matched. But we had been curious about

the Red 186 service indicator announced for the 21¢ Railroad Mail Car. Was this a typographical error or was it truly a different red?

And this time the colors did not match. The inscription was Red 185. Another BEP mistake?

So we checked the supposed Red 186 of the 7.6¢ Carreta. Again, it turned out to be Red 185.

When USPS reported colors for the Honeybee, it listed offset colors as magenta, light yellow, cyan and black. When BEP reported production of Bee offset plates, it gave two yellow colors: process yellow and PMS yellow.

Process colors, including magenta and cyan, are used to produce other colors. Green is made from process yellow and process cyan. Under magnification one can see the dots of each color.

The Bee's background, a yellow con-

taining some brownish tint, is printed as a solid color. This is the "Pantone Yellow" referred to in the BEP reports. But the stamp's color does not match Pantone yellow. Pantone 134U (an orange) matches it perfectly.

The Plate Number Coil Study Group has begun research to identify Pantone colors of all PNCs. Phil Rose has volunteered to do the work.

If the Study Group's attempt to classify all PNCs by PMS color works out, we'll have a standard reference for colors. That will permit PNC collectors who are miles apart to compare colors, provided both have a Pantone Color Products Selector.

The selector is sold at most graphic arts stores and costs around \$8.

Anyone wishing to join the effort may contact Rose at 38 Royalston Lane, Centereach, N.Y. 11720.

Yosemite yields oriole, 'Black Forest' and 'ski slope'

Several readers have found all sorts of strange colors in the trees on the 25¢ Yosemite stamp. In several examples all the trees were red. In one example, a red oriole was sitting atop a tree.

Another reader found blue trees. A *Linn's* reader found gray trees.

Conrad Keydel of Detroit found the most unusual example of all. His trees were dark blue, almost black, but in addition, the stamps sported a "ski slope." Here's how Keydel describes the find:

"Just before heading down to Cleveland for the Garfield-Perry show, I picked up a small group of PNC commercial covers that a local dealer had been holding for me. When I got home from the show and had a chance to sit down and examine the covers, I noticed that the tree portion of one of the Yosemite stamps from the block-tagged Plate 5 was almost black, rather than a nice piny green.

"Then the real fun began. Without going into details of the subsequent hunt, I will tell you that I did manage to locate about half of the roll of 100 from which the original PNC cover had come. The remaining stamps on the roll include a



SKI SLOPE—Tops of trees are cut in the 'Black Forest' above the 'ski slope.' (From block tagged Plate 5.)

numbered stamp.

"Another feature constant to all stamps of this 'Black Forest' is the ski slope of missing ink that runs down through the tops of the trees."

If you remember that these stamps are printed by intaglio, you will realize that such curiosities are one of two things. They can be ink contamination (as in the 22¢ Flag stamps where the Capitol was blue or the 20¢ Flag stamp where the Supreme Court was brick red) or they can be wiper-blade flaws, caused when the

blades do not remove ink they are supposed to remove.

But that brings us to another surprise. One strip from a reader had red trees on all of one stamp and red trees at the left third of the stamp to its right. This was repeated (with slight differences in the size of the red area on the right stamp) 25 stamps along the roll.

And the "oriole in the trees," actually a blob of red in the trees at the right sometimes down near the "USA," also repeated in an interval of 25. Again, the shape was different 25 stamps away, but there was still red.

A repeat interval of 25 would indicate that some part of the press has a circumference of 25 and can cause such color varieties.

Ken Lawrence said the interval of 25 would indicate that the color varieties are caused by the inking-in roller. If this is the case, he said, they are not constant plate varieties and would disappear with time.

In time, we shall know whether red, gray or black trees or orioles in the trees are scarce freaks or common ones. But we can say nothing about ski slopes.



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Of course, as from July 1, 1989, the complete sets of album pages, too, are up-dated to include the aforesaid supplements and are thereafter supplied as follows:

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Careful! Mixture results can mislead you

By Dr. Robert Rabinowitz

A continuum of well-meaning used singles surveys have been published in *TPN* as well as in *PNC's Coil Line*.

While they may be fun to do, the data are terribly misleading.

The surveys have generally been based on the examination of mixtures, largely made up from envelopes received by a local firm over a specific period of time. Obviously, the results of counting PNCs from such mixtures reflect the plate numbers common in the region where the mixture maker has sources of supply.

We all know that certain plate numbers have shown up abundantly in one place while collectors elsewhere have had great difficulty acquiring them.

If a diligent mixture-maker accumulated every envelope received at his local utility company in all of 1987 and sold the clips to one of these mixture surveyors, here is what would happen. If the buyer separated out the 22¢ Flags, any conclusion relative to the scarcity of

lower plate numbers as against higher plate numbers would be erroneous.

For a more meaningful survey, one needs mixtures from national companies or charities, such as *Reader's Digest*, *TV Guide*, American Cancer Society, etc. And it would be necessary to survey the resulting mixtures on a monthly basis. This would provide valid data regarding the relative availability of used singles.

However, I've seen attempts at extrapolation from mixtures to mint PNC material. In addition, several correlations have been attempted in terms of printing impression totals.

While on the surface one could argue that such mathematical exercises are legitimate, the fact is that they are not. One has to examine the mixture-maker's sources of envelopes and the buying patterns of the individuals who mail those envelopes to understand the fallacy of any such conclusions.

Thus, the large majority of the originating source of the material in the mix-

tures are individuals. (Business-to-business mail is mainly metered.) Most individuals who use coils buy them in rolls of 100. Thus a serious bias exists in the statistics relative to plate numbers that are in rolls of 100 against those that occur only in rolls of 500 and 3,000.

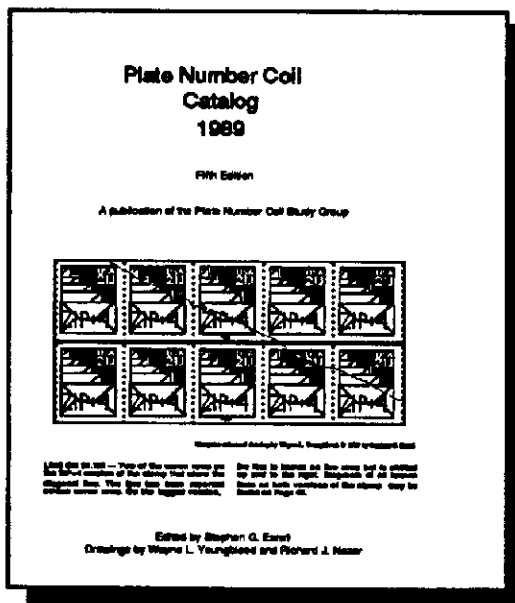
Look at the 22¢ Flag. The surveys show only small quantities of 14, 15, 16 and 21 since they appeared only in larger rolls. You would think, based on the surveys, that they were scarce or rare, but in most cases, PNC dealers have quantities of them.

Yes, some do show up in limited quantities in mixtures since some individuals find the convenience of a large roll attractive while others use stamps purchased for their offices on their personal mail.

Examine any statistics you are presented very carefully. Don't draw conclusions until you thoroughly understand any biases associated with the accumulation of the data.

The Plate Number Coil Catalog Fifth Edition

(Magnifying glass no longer required)



Upgraded for 1989

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If you are serious about collecting PNCs, this is the bible.

2 ways to remove coil labels cleanly

With lots of patience...

...or with none at all

By Edward Kroll

It is no great secret how I keep the original gum on coil labels. But I recommend my method only to people who have lots of time on their hands. Long fingernails are a definite help.

- The label must be fairly fresh and at room temperature.
- Trim off the cellophane, leaving a 1/4-inch edge around the entire label.
- Get comfortable and make sure you have a lot of patience and time.
- Peel it off very, very slowly.
- Smooth the label onto a glassine envelope with a clean but blunt rounded piece of plastic. I use a large ballpoint pen that has three corners.

All in all I've done 100 to 200 labels in this manner. Of course, many were repeats. I find it calms the nerves and helps pass time.

By Richard J. Nazar

If you don't have lots of time and patience, here's another method for clean, safe removal of labels.

This method requires adequate ventilation because of hazardous vapors and must be done away from flames, sparks or burning cigarettes because the solvent is flammable.

The solvent is Bestine, a thinner for rubber cement manufactured by Union Rubber Co., which should be available at any art-supply store.

To use it, follow these easy steps:

- Trim as much cellophane as possible off the labels.
- Place them in a plastic container of the type used at delicatessen counters. Pour the Bestine over the labels.
- Soak for two to three minutes. The labels will float away. Remove the labels from the container and let them dry. The solvent evaporates.

Cause of dry-gum Monument traced; new paper types to be listed

Richard J. Nazar, the paper researcher of the Plate Number Coil Study Group, who made the pioneer discoveries that the Transportation Series came with two paper types, has struck gold, paper gold.

He has learned why there are dry-gum versions of the 18¢ Washington Monument stamps showing the plate numbers 33333 and 44434.

That was not what Nazar sought to learn when he began. He was trying to track down the papers used for the "pre-phosphored" Flag over Yosemite stamps, which the Postal Service had said were printed on paper made by Paper Corp. of America in New York.

The Yosemite paper is actually made by Paper Corp. of the United States (PCUS), a subsidiary of Paper Corp. of America. PCUS is a supplier of paper to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Two other companies that were formerly subsidiaries, have been spun off, but still supply paper to BEP.

Nazar asked PCUS if it ever supplied gravure paper to BEP for printing the 18¢ Monuments.

"No," was the reply. "We have not supplied any gravure paper to BEP for 18 months, but the paper could be left over from the paper we supplied to print the 'E' stamps." BEP over-ordered paper for the 25¢ Earth stamp, Nazar was told.

Nazar checked. The dry-gum Monuments were on paper identical to the "E" stamps.

The study group, as yet, does not know when the "E" stamps were printed.

Nazar also learned that all current supplies of dry-gum gravure paper come from Laminated & Coated Paper Corp. (L&CP) of Troy, Ohio, once a subsidiary of Paper Corp. of America. L&CP only gums paper made by other firms.

The spin-off of L&CP took place just before the printing of the first intaglio stamps found on what has been Type II paper, the B Press 2¢ Locomotive.

Nazar quickly scanned *The Plate Number Coil Catalog* for "to press" dates of other stamps found on "Type II" paper and now believes they all stem from paper gummed by L&CP. So far, all L&CP paper is from the same manufacturer. That paper now becomes intaglio Type III.

The gummer for Type I intaglio paper, Nazar learned, is a division of Nashua Corp. in New Hampshire.

Type II paper for intaglio printing is gummed and manufactured by Eastern Fine Paper Corp. of Maine.

Nazar's research was continuing as this edition of *TPN* was being prepared and will be reported in full in future.

With great effort, Nazar and Kim Cuni-berti revised all paper data for the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog*. Nazar now lists three dry-gum intaglio papers:

Type I—Paper Corp. of United States.

Type II—Eastern Fine Paper Corp. of Brewer, Maine.

Type III—L&CP.

All stamps previously designated as being on Type I paper are still Type I. Stamps previously designated Type II

will be Type II or Type III. Type IIIa stays the same.

Type II paper from Eastern Fine has horizontal gum ridges. Type III from L&CP has wavy horizontal gum. It was first seen on the B Press 2T1R and is also found on the 7.1¢ Tractor.

Nazar and Cuni-berti have found that some stamps exist on all three papers.

Here's a dissent on phosphored paper

Ken Lawrence was immediately notified when Richard Nazar learned from Paper Corp. of the United States that the Yosemite paper was not surface coated.

Lawrence said he would stick to the term "surface coated" on the basis of a report published by Charles Yeager in *The United States Specialist* for April.

In the article, Yeager confirmed the opinion of USPS that the paper was, indeed, surface coated.

According to that version, employees at BEP had protested going home covered with tagging, which they feared to be toxic. This supposedly led to the tagging at the paper mill instead of at BEP.

This concept was totally denied by two USPS spokesmen. One spokesman was the source of our front-page story that stamp washing was the motive for pre-tagging stamp paper; another spokesman quickly changed the subject when this issue was raised.

Varieties you won't find in the 1989 PNC Catalog

The following varieties and additions, suggested by members of the Plate Number Coil Study Group for inclusion in the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog* will not be included for one reason or another. In some cases there simply was not enough information to list them; in others, space considerations played a role. But it was thought useful to have them appear in one place.

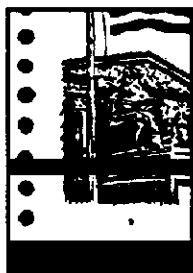
They appear here in the same order as the stamps on which they appear are listed in the catalog. Initials are those of study group members making the suggestion: ACS (A.C. Cibulskas), KC (Kim Cuniberti), RJN (Richard J. Nazar).

20F3V2—Small diagonal nick at bottom edge of numbered stamp below and to the right of the plate number (KC).

20F3V2c—Continuation down into top of next row probably exists, although not confirmed (KC).

20F10V1—"Cat scratch," three diagonal scratches in bottom margin right of plate number (KC).

20F11V1—Pale black mark running vertically where a joint line should be through the lower four or five perforation holes. XF-S centering causes this mark to be obscured by the perforations (KC).



© Nazar, '89

20F14PV2—Black dot on bottom margin of 3R, below and to the right of the flag pole and vertically aligned with statue's head (KC, RJN).

22F1PV1—"Plane over Capitol" at 1R. See *Linn's*, May 27, 1985, and (illustration) *The Plate Number*, March 1989, Page 25. (RJN).

4T1V2—Same diagonal slashes that are found at 2L on 4T2V3 (ASC).

4T1V3—Gouge at 1R. See *TPN* Sep-

tember 1988 (ASC).

5T2V2—Crack at 1L from bottom of rear fender to bottom of stamp. See *TPN* January 1989 (ASC).

5.9T3V1—Plate gouge at 1L. See *TPN* September 1988 (ASC).

6T2PV2—"Floating rock" spot above and right of front wheel at 2L (KC).

8.5T—You may want to note multitude of minor plate varieties (dots, gouges, scratches, etc.) being found on this issue tagged and precanceled (ASC).

9.3T4PV1—Multiple cracks around footrest and wheels on numbered stamp. Known on all strips with gap at 4L (KC).

10.1T—You may want to note multitude of minor plate varieties (dots, gouges, scratches, etc.) being found on this issue tagged and precanceled (ASC).

10.1T2PHV1—Cracks and scratches at 5L. See *TPN* November 1988 (ASC).

11T1PV2—"Hoseline II" (which is listed in 1989 catalog with a \$25.00 price estimate): "I feel this is scarcest of 1½ Caboose varieties except for the "Sitting Duck" (ASC).

11T1PV4—Dot on left platform at 9L. (Delisted from 1988 edition where it was cited as 9L)

11T1PV5—Dot below left coupling at 20L in same row as 11T1PV4 although absent on some printings. (Delisted from 1988 edition)

11T1PV6—Dot below left coupling at 5L in same row as 11T1PV4 (KC).

14T4V2—Crack or triple joint line. See *TPN* September 1988 (ASC).

15T1V1—"Fish hook" at 9R See *TPN* November 1988 (ASC).

15T1V2—Gouges at 1R. See *TPN* November 1988 (ASC, RJN).

16.7T1P—Many other varieties, some as obvious as the one that is being listed. Many of these have been described in recent issues of *TPN* (ASC).

17T1V1—"Broken axle" on numbered stamp. See *TPN* September 1988 (ASC).

17T7V1 and **17T7PV1**—Same blue dot over "E" of "Electric" at 1R as in 17T6V1 and 17T6PV1 (KC).

17T7V2—Chipped plate at 1L (ASC).

20T9V1 and **20T10V1**—Chill-roller doubling. See *TPN* November 1988 (ASC).

20T15V2—Gouge between wheels at 5R from Alan Rosenberg (RJN).

25U1222V1—Strips with deep royal blue known. The blue color varieties are known on all other plate number combinations, but not as dramatic (KC).

Variety Report —Part XV

By A.S. Cibulskas

2¢ Locomotive (Cottrell)

a. LOMs. Plate 2, constant at 1L. Dot above and between the "l" and "o" of "Locomotive"; line horizontal through dot. (Maves)

b. LOMs. Plate 6, constant at 1R. Dot above and left of the "L" in "Locomotive"; line horizontal through the dot and essentially the length of the stamp. (Maves)

2¢ Locomotive (B Press)

a. Plate 1. Dot above and between the first "o" and the "c" of "Locomotive." Constant at 2L. This variety is in the same row as the rail crack. (Nazar)

8.5¢ Tow Truck

a. Dot right of "A" in "USA." Constant at 26L.

b. Rock under front tire. Constant at 22L.

c. Rock under truck. Constant at 17L.

d. Rock on road. Constant at 5L.

e. Dot right of hook. Constant at 3R.

f. Dot in upper loop of "8." Constant at 7R.

g. Dot under "9." Constant at 16R.

NOTE: All of the above are constant on precancel Plate 1 and are in the same row. (Maves)

h. Flying pebble. Constant at 19L.

i. Colon in "B." Constant at 18L.

j. Axle dot. Constant at 13L.

k. Chain dot. Constant at 1L.

l. Rock on road. Constant at 2R.

NOTE: Varieties "h" through "l" are constant on precancel Plate 1 and are in the same row. (Maves)

m. Slashed tire. Constant at 15L.

n. Hook dot. Constant at 5R.

o. Rock on road. Constant at 6R.

p. Rock on road. Constant at 6R.

NOTE: Varieties "m" through "p" are constant on precancel Plate 1 and are in the same row. (Maves)

q. Chain links. Constant at 7L.

r. Rock under left rear tire. Constant at 6L.

s. Axle dot. Constant at 3R.

t. Dot under "T." Constant at 6R.

u. Dot under roof. Constant at 13R.

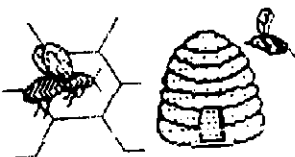
v. Rock on road. Constant at 24R.

NOTE: Varieties "q" through "v" are constant on precancel Plate 1 and are in the same row. (Maves)

w. Dot above truck. Constant at 1R.

x. Flying rock. Constant at 20L.

Please turn to Page 56



THE BEEHIVE



A.P.S.
PNC³

Post Office Box 9192 Boardman, Ohio 44512



NEW HONEYBEE IMPERF ERROR WITH COTTRELL LINES

IMPERFS: ALL VF+ CONDITION

Pair	\$ 20.00	Cottrell Line Pair	\$ 175.00
Plate Strip of Five (#1)	\$ 275.00	Line Strip of Four	\$ 225.00
Plate Strip of Seven (#1)	\$ 325.00	Line Strip of Six	\$ 275.00
15L (Strip of 20 w/ #1)	\$ 795.00	9R (Strip of 14 w/ #1)	\$ 595.00

OTHER HONEYBEE ITEMS OF INTEREST: (Non-Imperfs F-VF)

13L (Strip of 17 #1)	\$ 17.00	Strip of six w/ line	\$ 4.00
14L (Strip of 18 #1)	\$ 18.00	Strip of six w/ line used	\$ 4.00
15L (Strip of 19 #1)	\$ 19.00	Plate Strip of Five (#1 or 2)	\$ 3.00
9R (Strip of 14 #1)	\$ 14.00	Used Single (#1 or 2)	\$ 1.00
10R (Strip of 15 #1)	\$ 15.00	Line Pair	\$ 2.00
11R (Strip of 16 #1)	\$ 16.00	Line Pair Used	\$ 2.00

FULL SERIF #1 STRIPS (VF-S)

PS3	\$ 13.00	PSS	\$ 22.00
9R (Strip of 14)	\$ 60.00	11R (Strip of 16)	\$ 68.00
13L (Strip of 17)	\$ 73.00	15L (Strip of 19)	\$ 81.00

"The Bee Keeper"

BEP makes minor fixes in 18M and 21.1M statistics

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Postal Service have supplied some corrected plate-activity data for the 18¢ Washington Monument and 21.1¢ Letters stamps.

Unfortunately, the key ingredient that has been missing is still missing.

TPN noted that on the 18M1 and 18M1P the total number of impressions on the sleeve used to print the black type, which printed the service indicator, had to be fewer than the total number of impressions for the four colored sleeves that were used to print the tagged stamp.

Simple logic demonstrates that if the colored plates printed 320,000 impressions, including all tagged and inscribed stamps, the number of tagged plus inscribed impressions would be 320,000.

But since the sleeve printing the black type printed only the inscribed stamps, fewer impressions from that sleeve—or more from all the others—would be needed.

BEP's comment to this was: "No change to total."

BEP did, however, acknowledge that no stamps were ever printed from Sleeve 1 with black tone, a sleeve for which it had previously reported 320,000 impres-

sions. It said those impression figures should have been reported for Sleeve 2 instead. Previously, BEP had said that no stamps had been printed from Sleeve 2.

Sleeve 2 was the sleeve that created the "2" in the "1121" and "11211" plate numbers we see at the bottom of the numbered stamps.

BEP also corrected a few other details in our plate-activity summary, but most of these were minor changes in dates.

In sum, it is still impossible to estimate the maximum number of PNCs that may exist for stamps with the plate numbers 1121, 11211, 3333, and 33333.

We may, one day, be able to calculate the totals for stamps printed on the sleeves carrying the number "3." That depends on accurate totals from BEP for the black type sleeve 3. So far, that sleeve has not been canceled.

We observed the same problem with Sleeve 4 that printed the inscription on stamps we know as 44434. Again, the impression total is the same as for other plates with a "4." But here, no tagged stamps exist, so we know that the impression total for 18M4P is 170,120.

On the Letters stamps, we have been

able to make some estimates of total production because BEP had released an impression total for the ZIP+4 sleeve that was lower than the totals for other sleeves with which it was printed. However, it did not correct the total for the blue Sleeve 1, which it originally gave as 545,340, the same total as for other sleeves. We were able to make a downward adjustment, however, because BEP did provide a separate total for blue Sleeve 2.

We calculated estimated totals for other Letters stamps by subtracting the 95,840 impressions from blue Sleeve 2 from the 545,340 impressions reported for blue sleeve 1. Then we applied the percentage of inscribed-to-tagged stamps to the two blue plates.

The results indicate that tagged stamps with the numbers 111121 had the smallest printing of all Letters stamps, a maximum 430,000 PNCs. By comparison, we estimate that there are 1.20 million inscribed PNCs with those plate numbers.

This gave us an educated guess, not real totals.

All in all, we did not learn much. The table below brings us up to date on the Washington Monument.

Corrected BEP data for 18¢ Washington Monument stamps

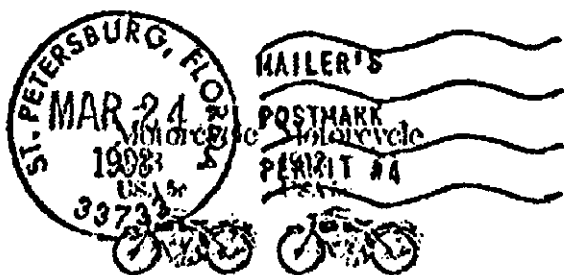
COLOR	PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESSIONS	TOTAL
Black tone	174563-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	NONE	NONE
	174568-2	07/01/85	07/24/85	03/31/87	320,000*	5,440,000*
	175343-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	07/27/88	2,831,400	48,133,800
	179121-4	11/04/87	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040
Black type	174564-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174569-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	03/31/87	NONE	NONE
	175344-3	09/11/85	10/24/85			
	179141-4	11/05/87	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040
Cyan (blue)	174561-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174566-2	07/01/85	07/25/85	05/13/86	NONE	NONE
	175341-3	09/11/85	10/23/85	07/27/88	3,001,520	51,025,840
	180329-4	06/03/88				
Magenta (red)	174560-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174565-2	07/01/85	NEVER			
	175340-3	09/11/85	10/23/88	05/24/88	2,831,400	48,133,800
	180328-4	06/03/88	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040
Yellow	174562-1	07/01/85	07/22/85	04/23/86	320,000*	5,440,000*
	174567-2	07/01/85	NEVER	05/13/86	NONE	NONE
	175342-3	09/11/85	10/23/88	05/24/88	2,831,400	48,133,800
	180330-4	06/03/88	06/10/88	07/27/88	170,120	2,892,040

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

Max. PNCs:	All Plate 1	18M1	18M1P	All Plate 3	18M3	18M3P	All Plate 4
	5.44 million	Unknown	Unknown	48.13 million	Unknown	Unknown	2.89 million

What they are: how to use them

Mailer's postmarks are often redundant



Ill. 1—Dated permit postmark used on first class.

By Ken Lawrence

Here's a little guide to mailer's postmarks with illustrations from my collection.

Illustration 1 is a first-class cover used by a collector. It carries unprecanceled stamps and includes a date in the obliteration device.

The others are from bulk mail, and carry no dates. They use 12.5¢ Pushcart precanceled stamps. One (Ill. 2) has a

redundant. They could have been legally applied to tagged stamps and mailed at bulk rates, since the use process is technically a method of precancellation, presumably for the purpose of increasing the probability that the recipient will open it and read the mailings.

To coin a philatelic phrase, therefore, these are "double precancels."

By Stephen G. Esrati

To obtain a permit to use mailer's precancel postmarks, one must file Form 3620, *Permit to Use Precanceled Stamps or Government Precanceled Envelopes Application* at the post office where the mailing will be done.

This is the same form used to get permission to use precanceled stamps on single-piece mailings.

Pertinent sections of the most recent (Issue 30) of *The Domestic Mail Manual* give these rules.

143.121 Precanceling by the Mailer. Mailers who meet the requirements of 143.2 may precancel adhesive stamps, postal cards, and stamped envelopes by using a mailer's precancel mark. Postal cards are precanceled at the time of printing and do not require a mailer's precancel postmark unless desired by the mailer.

143.231 ...The precanceling imprint must include:

a. The city, state, and 5-digit ZIP Code of the post office where the precancel permit is held and the mailings will be deposited.

b. The date of mailing.

c. The permit number, preceded by the words "Mailer's Postmark," and sufficient cancellation lines to fully deface the postage.

d. In lieu of printing the city, State and 5-digit ZIP Code of the post office where the precancel permit is held, the precanceling imprint may show the endorsement "Mailed from ZIP Code," followed by

the 5-digit ZIP Code assigned to the postmaster at the office of mailing.

Note: Only the postmaster's ZIP Code listed in Publication 65, National Five-Digit ZIP Code and Post Office Directory, may be printed in the permit imprint.

143.232 The permit number must not be obscured. Black ink must be used for the cancellation and must provide adequate indelibility and sufficient contrast to prevent reuse of the stamp.

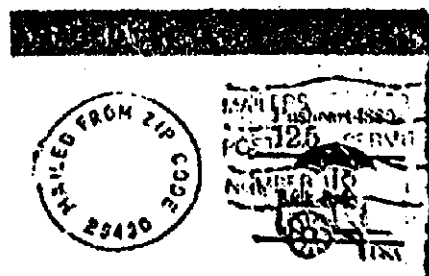
143.233 Mailers are authorized to use either design shown under Format A for their precanceled postmark.

Format A consists of a postmark resembling the dated one shown in Illustration 1. The two designs mentioned consist of either a city-and-state circular die or one with a text reading: "Mailed from ZIP Code 12345."

143.234 Format B may be used by mailers who presently have the die. New dies should not be made for Format B.

Format B features a two-ring circular die with a date in the middle and a rectangular killer consisting of a clear part with "Mailer's/Postmark/Permit 000" and a part with heavy diagonal killer bars.

143.235 No other format of a mailer's precancel postmark may be authorized.



Ill. 2—Pitney-Bowes type postmark.



Ill. 3—Letterpress imprint.

Pitney-Bowes type imprint, the other (Ill. 3) was printed by letterpress after the stamp was affixed.

Both bulk-mail mailer's postmarks are

ADLETS

Classified ads are 15 cents a word. There is no charge for your address. Members of PNC² are entitled to one free adlet a year up to 25 words.

BUYING PNC FDCS. Write first. Thomas Gift, 19959 Haviland Ave., Bronx, NY 10472. (4-80)

JOIN PNC3! Get valuable discounts from dealers and *Call Line*. Send SASE and \$10 to Eric Rusow, P.O. Box 17374, Whitefish Bay, WI 53217. (3-80)

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 (5-80)

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. (5-80)

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

25¢ FLAG, Plate 3, on House of Farnam FDC. \$25.00; weak "Burned Rubber" variety on tagged 5.5¢ Artmaster FDC, number cut, \$7.50; untagged, (also uncanceled) Honeybee 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. Order now, before they sell out again! Steve Esrati, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

Felt pen 'creates' PNC Souvenir Pages

By Gerald Blankenship
American Society for Philatelic Pages and Panels

There is always someone out there who wants to make a fast buck and our hobby is not exempt. When PNCs became a hot collecting field, prices soared for USPS pages with plate numbers. Prices rose from \$5 in 1985 to more than \$100 on some pages today. When demand outstripped supply, someone decided to make some fast money.

How could you fake a souvenir page? This individual went about it in several ways.

- He bought coil pages, then bought covers to match the pages.

- He removed the stamps from the covers, put them on the pages and tried to match the cancel lines.

- Finally, he filled in the gaps with a black felt-tip pen, and was ready to sell the bogus pages.

The forger also bought mint stamps, put them on the pages and used the pen to "cancel" the stamps.

How can you tell before you buy? Here are a few hints:

Caution: Forgeries!

1. Check the thickness of the killer bars on the stamps to make sure they match the killer bars on the page.

2. Check the darkness of the killer bars on the stamps and on the page. They must be the same shade of black.

3. Look for gaps in the killer bars between the stamps and the page.

4. Check to make sure the killer bars are straight.

5. Beware of anyone offering a number of pages for sale.

I became aware of the bogus pages in November after buying three large shipments from the same individual. I became suspicious when he had all the the plate positions I needed in my collection. I had bought 36 forged pages, paying \$25 each for them.

When I informed the seller, he denied making the pages or knowing that they were forgeries.

Eleven of the pages were sent to the

Postal Inspection Service in Washington. The others were returned to the seller for examination. He came to the same conclusion I had. All were forgeries. The following are altered USPS Souvenir Pages with plate numbers:

20¢	Flag, pair
3¢	Handcar, pair
1¢	Omnibus, pair
4¢	Stagecoach, pair
7.4¢	Baby Buggy, strip of three
8.3¢	Ambulance, pair
10.1¢	Oil Wagon, pair
10.9¢	Hansom Cab, pair
12¢	Stanley Steamer, pair
15¢	Tugboat, pair
17¢	Electric Auto, pair
18¢	Surrey, pair
20¢	Consumer Education, pair
21.1¢	Letters, ZIP+4, pair

If anyone thinks he or she has any Souvenir Pages that may have been altered, I would be glad to examine them if you pay the postage. My address is 539 North Gum Gully, Crosby, Texas 77532-3704.

Lighthouse albums

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

PS3, PS5, PS7

Cottrell issues to 1985	\$159.00
Other presses from 1981	94.00
1988 Supplement only	44.50

Singles

Cottrell issues to 1985	\$36.50
same, not hingeless	\$19.00
Other presses from 1981	39.50
same, not hingeless	\$20.00
1988 Supplement only	19.50
same, not hingeless	9.00

Binders

Perfect (2 post)	\$51.00
Excellent (13 ring)	52.00
Slip case	24.00

My usual discount of 10% applies to purchases over \$100. 5% more off to members of PNC³. (In Ohio, please add 7% tax.)

Stephen G. Esrati

P.O. Box 20130
Shaker Heights, OH 44120-0130
☎ (216) 561-9393

New Calif. subscriber wins 3 free years of TPN

Richard E. Blakeley of Oceanside, Calif., who took advantage of TPN's drawing for a free subscription with an early order for the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog*, is the grand winner of a three-year free subscription.

Blakeley sent in \$27.50 for the catalog and his subscription. He now gets a refund of \$15, making his cost for the catalog \$12.50.

Blakeley's name was drawn because it was the 132nd in an unsorted, purposely randomized pile of entry coupons and facsimiles. The number "132" was chosen because it was the exchange rate for the yen on the day of the drawing.

The two runners-up were Douglas Landon of Riverview, Fla., who renewed his subscription, and Joseph M. Clary of San Francisco, who has never subscribed.

Landon and Clary win a one-year free subscription. Landon also gets a \$15 refund.

Landon and Clary were, respectively, the 68th and 32nd names in the pile. Those numbers were chosen because they were the numbers found elsewhere on the financial pages of *The New York Times* on the day of the drawing.

In all, almost 200 catalogs were sold through the drawing. The mailing soliciting the coupons went to 1,350 known PNC collectors.

One California collector cost TPN 69 cents because he refused the flyer and it was returned.

Several of the flyers, all of which bore a 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon, were given killer cancels by mailmen.

Ivy auction includes imperfs, miscuts, color freaks

The Steve Ivy auction held at Interpex, the New York ASDA show in March, included several items of interest to PNC collectors. Many of the lots were imperforates and imperforate miscuts. But these items were newsworthy:

18¢ Washington Monument, no plate number, a pair with most of the red and yellow colors missing, making the stamps appear almost totally green. The estimate was \$150 to \$200.

4¢ Stagecoach House of Farnam Aug. 15, 1986, cover bearing a strip of three of Plate 1 from the Cotrell Press and a strip of three of Plate 1 from the B Press. This is an earliest-known-use cover, not an FDC. It was canceled at the Washington, D.C., post-queue with a fancy cancel bearing the ZIP code 20260. A similar cover was signed as genuine by the expertizing committee of the American First Day Cover Society. The estimate was \$400 to \$500.

8.3¢ Ambulance House of Farnam cover bearing a tagged pair without plate number from the Cotrell Press and a precanceled pair without plate number from the B Press. This is an earliest-known-use cover, not an FDC. It was canceled at the Washington, D.C., post-queue with a fancy cancel bearing the ZIP code 20260. The expertizing committee of the American First Day Cover Society had declined to sign a similar cover as genuine. The estimate was \$400 to \$500.

Rocco Caponi is beginning to research proper use of the 17¢ Electric Auto. What he is looking for are usages of this value to pay for additional ounces on first-class mail during the periods of validity of the 18¢, 20¢ and 22¢ first-class rates as well as on priority mail, express mail, third-class mail, special delivery, parcel post, plate singles of all seven plates used to pay the first additional ounce between June 1981 and April 1987, properly used precanceled plate singles, rejected usages of precancels.

Caponi welcomes mail at 1033 Portage Trail, Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221.

Michael Laurence, publisher and editor of *Linn's* won a silver at Aripex '89 for his exhibit: "Transportation Coils, The First Five Years."

The Feb. 28th sale at Sam Houston Philatelics included a large selection of imperforate PNCs. Tom Maeder sent in the results with the comment that prices for used strips were remarkably strong.

As an example, a used pair of 20T7, the 20¢ Fire Pumper from Plate 7, with a light cancel sold for \$50.

Dr. John P. Greenwood, the PNC Study Group's researcher on imperforates, said there are only one or two strips of five known of Plate 6 of the 1¢ Omnibus. He estimated the value of a strip of five at \$4,000. A pair sold in this auction at \$1,050.

All the PNC news

Prices realized on imperfs were:

20F3, PS/6, NH, F, \$300.
20F8, PS/6, NH, VF, \$160.
20F9, PS/5, NH, VF, \$160.
22F1, PS/5, NH, VF, \$250.
22F2, PS/6, NH, VF, \$150.
22F7, PS/6, NH, VF, \$370.
22F8, PS/6, NH, VF, \$210.
22F18, PS/6, NH, VF, \$320.
22F19, PS/6, NH, VF, \$400.
1T6, PS/2, NH, VF, \$1,050.
2T3, PS/6, NH, VF, \$340.
2T4, PS/6, NH, VF, \$340.
2T8, PS/6, NH, VF, \$400.
2T10, PS/6, NH, VF, \$400.
22F7, PS/6, NH, VF, \$370.
6T2P, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,250.
9.3T2P, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,300.
10.9T1P, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,350.
10.9T2P, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,350.
12.5T1P, PS/6, NH, VF, \$350.
14T1, PS/6, NH, VF, \$525.
14T2, PS/6, NH, VF, \$500.
17T2R (Sled), PS/5, NH, VF, \$3,600.
20T9, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,050.
20T10, PS/6, NH, VF, \$1,050.
20M1, PS/6, NH, VF, \$600.
20M2, PS/6, NH, VF, \$600.
22U1, PS/5, NH, VF, \$440.

The owner of the firm, Bob Dumaine, said the 17T2R Dog Sled strip was very rare because only four strips are known, two of which are badly centered.

Dealer Al Haake, who has always been able to estimate which strips would be good to hold as investments, says he cannot do that anymore.

"In today's market," he wrote to his customers, "there are people who are hoarding strips in very large quantities." Getting "what others don't have" today is inappropriate, he added.

Members of the Plate Number Coil Collectors Club were polled recently on their views of PNCs. Here are some of the key results, with a score of 166 being the highest attained by any stamp:

Worthiest subject: 2¢ Locomotive (166)
Silliest subject: 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon (132); 5.3¢ Elevator (127)
Most appealing color: 5.2¢ Sleigh (86)
Least appealing color: 25¢ Bread Wagon (58)
Most handsome design: 2¢ Locomotive (102)
Worst design: 20¢ Cable Car (77)
Favorite coil: 5.9¢ Bicycle (67); 5.2¢ Sleigh (66); 2¢ Locomotive (62)
Least favorite coil: 5.3¢ Elevator (66); 8.4¢ Wheel Chair (62); 7.6¢ Carrots (58)

The February 1989 issue of *Yushu* (Philately), the monthly magazine of the Japan Philatelic Society, has a two-page spread on our favorite stamps, in Japanese of course. But a few words appear in English: "Ed Denson," "Esrafi" and

"Linn's Stamp News."

The illustrations include two English-language album pages, one with the 14¢ Iceboat, the other with the 20¢ Fire Pumper, both including imperfs.

Says the author: "I read *Linn's* and can get almost anything by mail order through its ads. U.S. stamp dealers are honest and if I order something that doesn't please me, I can return it. I use both the guide to PNCs issued by Ed Denson and the Esrafi *PNC Catalog* for reference. The latter is very convenient because it includes all varieties."

It goes to show you that a sharp eye pays off. Until now, "Hoseline II" on the 11¢ Caboose had only been known as a tagged stamp. But just recently, Frank Marrelli found the variety on precancels. The flaw shows up on 10L as a line right of the left set of wheels.

The finding by Richard Nazar that the dry-gum Washington Monument stamps are on different paper than the previous glossy gum stamps should come as no surprise to readers of *TPN*.

As soon as the dry-gum stamps were seen by Wolfgang Schön of the Plate Number Coil Study Group, he measured their thickness and found the new stamps to be thicker (0.12mm) than the earlier versions (0.10). Of course, it was reported here.

The first day of the pre-tagged Yosemite Flag stamps at Yosemite, Calif., in the middle of winter, brought only four collectors to the snowbound national park, according to Ed Denson. A *TPN* reader who made it was Bruce Alves. Denson's amusing and informative account of the proceedings may be found in *The Point*, Denson's \$1 newsletter, available from him at P.O. Box 158, Alderpoint, Calif. 95411.

Denson doesn't think much of covers bearing block-tagged Yosemite stamps sent in for Feb. 14 "FDC" treatment, not unless they are on the same cover as a pre-tagged stamp deserving first-day treatment. That makes a legitimate FDC that also happens to include an older stamp. Otherwise, he said, they're just curiosities, without much or any value.

Denson did make several combination covers, he said.

1989 PNC catalog charts new paths on precancel gaps

Continued from Page 41

this, too. What is the scarcity of one gap of Plates 3 and 4 of the 10.9¢ Hansom Cab in relation to another gap on the same plates?

Are they all to be considered scarce or rare because all strips from Plates 3 and 4 carry price tags of \$350 or more? Or is one to be considered the "common" one among strips from those plates.

Kim Cuniberti put it this way: "Scarcity of gaps is only important to gap collectors. In this light, scarcity should not be distorted by the underlying scarcity of the strip as a non-gap item. This is particularly evident in the 10.9s from Plates 3 and 4. Line Gap of this item—as gaps go—is 'low' and 4R is 'medium' at best."

The decision was made to change the system. The Line Gap is the most common gap on these plates and is now ranked as a scarcity "C," (medium scarcity) while the Gap at 4L gets an "E" (rare). This seems more logical than attempting to call them all various shades of "rare."

The system was also changed to use the letter scarcity system that had previously been used by Lawrence in assessing scarcity of first-day covers. That same system was also incorporated into a scarcity rating for paper types, accord-

ing to data furnished by Cuniberti.

Dr. Rabinowitz suggested doing away with such comments as "Only two finds," since these do not reveal much about how many strips may be around.

He noted that the collecting of precancels by gaps showed increased interest after the publication of Lighthouse's PNC album. He said that while the album concentrated on collectors who seek gaps in the width of a strip of five, it has also encouraged some to go "beyond the album" to collect all gaps.

Cuniberti said much the same thing.

Why am I reporting all this? No, it is not an attempt to sell the 1989 catalog. No, it is not a way of praising my co-workers.

It is being done to pull aside the veil of secretiveness that usually accompanies publication of catalogs. We plan no surprises; nor do we wish any challenge to the ethical standards underlying the production of the catalog. The hope is that we have put out the most authoritative and most comprehensive work about PNCs that we could.

Our methods try to prevent any conflict of interest from affecting the catalog. The views of no one individual outweigh the views of any other.

We had other problems, too. We ran into a problem with the *PNC Catalog Numbers* (which are not copyright and

may be adopted by anyone, but are capitalized because Scott Publishing Co. does that with its numbers). As previously reported, we had to change the system because the next undesignated stamp would be an "F" stamp and that letter was already taken by the Flag Series.

We improvised on the two paper varieties found so far on the Yosemite Flag stamps by giving the pre-tagged stamps an "ii" after the number. Soon Plates 5, 7, and 8 were found on both papers, so they got an "i" on the block-tagged version.

As we were sending the catalog to press, Scott Publishing Co. announced yet another change in the way it prices stamps. According to its announcement, "Scott's 1990 values will be retail values, what collectors could expect to pay for a stamp of fine-very fine grade in the marketplace. In prior years, catalogue values were established to include a factor above actual retail prices."

Net pricing, of course is what our catalog has done right along. But we did not grade for F-VF, the lowest grade in some dealers' lists and the most commonly advertised one. Instead, we priced by VF, the way most collectors collect. We factored in the surcharges dealers ask for that grade.

Again, all blame for the catalog's faults should rest on my shoulders. But more than ever, credit for its positive attributes should be shared by all those who labored over it. That is why I don't like to see it called the "Esrafi Catalog." It is, simply, *The Plate Number Coil Catalog* and the title page continues to say, with pride, "A publication of the Plate Number Coil Study Group." It truly is.

'Emblem' labels found on 20¢ Flag stamps

Move over, Surrey and Pumper. You are no longer unique.

David E. Barrie-LaVergne, head of the Label Study Group, reports that 20¢ Flag stamps have been found with "Emblem" wrapper labels.

Two colors have been found so far, blue and black-blue. Geography appears to determine what stamps are in which. So far, the "Emblems" have been found with Plates 1 through 3.

Joining the chase for them has been Don Eastman, president of the Plate Number Coil Collectors Club (PNC³).

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Report on plate varieties—Part XV

Continued from Page 48

y. Dash above "k." Constant at 26L.

NOTE: Varieties "w" through "y" are constant on precancel Plate 1 and are in the same row. (Maves)

10.1e Oil Wagon

a. Slash below left leg of the "W" in "Wagon." Black precancel. Position and plate number need to be defined. (Nazar)

b. "Arrow with feathers," on tagged Plate 1, previously reported constant at 21L has now been confirmed to be at 20L. (Cibulakas)

c. Rock on road. Constant at 3R on tagged Plate 1. (Maves)

d. Rock on road. Constant at 3R on tagged Plate 1. (Maves)

10.9e Hansom Cab

a. The joint line is split on tagged Plate 2. Lines perpendicular to the joint line extend about 5-6mm into the design area. (Nazar)

NOTE: This may be the Plate 2 variety that was listed in the 1988 catalog. In that variety, a perpendicular, smeared line extends from the joint line to the wheel on the left stamp. In addition, there are vertical cracks on the left stamp 3.75mm left of the joint line at the bottom edge of the stamp; from the seat of the left stamp to the "r" of "1890s," from the "H" of "Hansom" to the "U" of "USA" on the right stamp, and through the footrest on the right stamp upward to "u" of "Bulk."

11e Caboose

a. "Paw print," four red dots above the "U" and "S" of "USA" resembling an animal's paw impres-

sion. Constant at 21L on the tagged stamp. (Maves)

12.5e Pushcart

a. Dot under left side of umbrella. Constant at 2R on the tagged stamp. (SAdams)

16.7e Popcorn Wagon

a. Apparent plate gouges. 2mm slash perpendicular to and left of the base of the "1" in "16.7" at 1L. A gouge of the same shape at 1R about one-third of the way (from the bottom) of the "1" to the base of the "6." Additional downward gouge from the bottom left of the "9" in the date well into the white area. Confirmation of constancy needed. (Nazar)

b. Apparent plate gouges below and left of the "1" in the shape of two curved lines making the form of a roof. Longer diagonal line from the decimal point, running left and down. Found in waste, position and constancy unknown. (Meador)

20e Flag

a. Plate gouge over "A" in "USA" on Plate 9. Position needs definition. (Nazar)

21.1e Letters

a. Report received showing example of mangled/distorted third digit of the plate number on Plates 111111 tagged. On this stamp, the numbers look like "113111." I (Cibulakas) believe this is similar to earlier reports of mangled plate numbers on the undesignated "D" stamps. Any comment? (Swart)

25e Flag

a. Tops of trees missing on Plate 4. Identical examples found on multiple strips. About 1mm of the tops of the trees are missing in green ink. This is most noticeable on the right side of the stamps.

(Cibulakas)

b. Portions of trees printed in various shades, varying from reddish brown to blackish green. Found on several rolls of Plate 6 (pre-tagged) and Plate 7 (pre-tagged). (Knight)

25e Honeybee

a. Seam lines at 11L on Plate 2, D Press. Constant plate crack or scratch results in additional marking just left of the seam lines that are essentially parallel to the seam line at the bottom third of the stamp. Also, an additional line, about 1mm long, at the top. (Cibulakas)

b. Another example of a phantom image caused by a dirty blanket has been received from Plate 1. Unlike the earlier yellow example, this one is magenta. Though this is a more obvious color, the example is a fainter impression, otherwise similar to the yellow phantom in most respects. (Anon.)

c. "Bee stinger" constant plate variety 2R of the seam lines in the full serifed "1" row off the D Press that normally has seam lines at 10L. The flaw consists of a black horizontal line about 2mm long below the left rear of the bee, resembling a stinger that might have fallen off. (Maves)

d. Yellow "L" in the perforations about a third of the way from the top edge. Plate number and position need definition. (Nazar)

Honeybee seam line update

C Press: A single yellow line has been confirmed (SAdams). This is a new addition to the cyan, magenta and black lines previously reported.

D Press: Additional reports of new positions. Double lines have been reported at 11R on Plate 2 (Clark) and at 7R on Plate 2 (Rabinowitz).

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