

Mysteries of the Bee

By the Plate Number Coil Study Group

The jigsaw puzzle that is the 25¢ Honeybee is slowly coming together, although it is still not possible to be certain about many things.

Helping solve the puzzle are:

☛ The finding by Anthony Maves and Jerry Koepp of strips from Plate 1 in which the plate number had not been truncated. (An earlier report of such a find, reported here in November 1988, was in error. That was, in fact, a report of the finding of one row of the truncated "1," in which there was a full serif.)

☛ Studies of the seam lines.

Our studies show the Honeybee to be amazingly intricate. Our conclusions, of course, are tentative, pending added information from new data or official information.

Perhaps it would be best to start by saying what we do not know as

this issue of *The Plate Number* is being prepared:

☛ We are not sure which offset plates were used with the two intaglio plates.

☛ We don't know what caused tagging on some stamps to differ from others.

☛ We cannot estimate scarcities because we have incomplete impression totals.

Mystery #1 Which intaglio press?

Honeybee stamps are known from two intaglio plates, 1 and 2.

Plate 1 was made for the C Press, according to reports by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), and was 18 rows wide and 48 stamps around.



Plate 2 was made for the D Press and was 20 rows wide with 48 stamps per revolution. (See diagram on Page 3.)

Each stamp was printed by two printing processes: offset and intaglio.

The intaglio press printed the black body of the bee and the plate number.

The offset press printed the colors. We know of four different offset plate sizes. Those that were 25 stamps around were made for the Goebel Optiforma offset press; those that were 24 stamps around were made for the offset deck of the Goebel D offset/intaglio press.

Plates with the 25-stamp circumference sometimes print seam lines that are 25 stamps apart while the 24-stamp plates have intervals of 24.

Because both intaglio plates can be printed on either the C Press or the D Press, we must prudently assume that all 25-interval strips could have been printed on either press. But it is highly unlikely that the D Press would have been used

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Kim Cuniberti updates his report on double precancel gaps on the 4.9¢ Buckboard. And for once, things get easier. Page 16.

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About this issue

The 25¢ Honeybee has taken up much room in the past year. *The Plate Number* is published under the theory that everything that is known at the time of publication should be published immediately.

Inevitably mistakes creep in.

TPN also believes that the last report should be the most accurate. But it is not always possible to point out that a previous one was in error.

It should be said that some of the errors are not necessarily the fault of *TPN*. But some are. We have sometimes guessed wrong, sometimes found that we used the wrong data, sometimes relied on BEP data that had not yet been analyzed.

So in this issue, with the help of the entire Plate Number Coil Study Group, we are making an effort to pull it all together.

Even here, the information is far from complete. And there is always the possibility that new BEP data may arrive after the early drafts were distributed, making it impossible for everyone to have all the data to work with.

But we believe that as of the publication date, we have done what could be done with the available data. We are well aware that the mysteries remain, but it should be possible to understand what is what. In time, some of our

The Plate Number

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theoretical conclusions will be proven to have been wrong, as they have been in the past.

But this is the way we all learn. Dig it up; work it over, spread the word; get feedback; revise the material; go to work again from scratch.

It may not be the elegant approach, but the elegant approach in much of philately has been to wait many years before starting the research to make sure the data are as complete as possible. We can't wait that long!

LETTERS: *Poppa knows best, but not about PNC FDCs*

I recently had some time to spare in Melbourne, so I went to visit a dealer. Momma was serving and gave me a box of cheap U.S. FDCs to look through.

Her prices were \$1 (Australian) for one stamp on FDC and A\$2.50 for more than one. Suddenly there came a pile of early Transportation Coil FDCs, including these two:

- PS/4 5.9¢ Bicycle, Plate 3, cachet signed "Basil."
- PS/4 5¢ Motorcycle, Plate 4, Art-Craft.

I busily pulled all I could find, planning to research them when I returned home. However, Daddy came to the counter and queried Momma. He screamed blue murder at her prices and raced off to find HIS price list. So the coup did not take place.

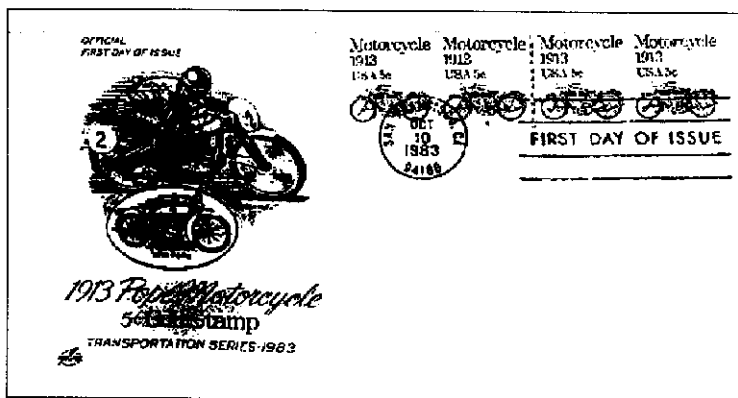
On the run, I bought these two at A\$15 for the Bicycles and A\$3.50 for the Motorbikes.

He priced the others from A\$5 to A\$10 or so. How did I do?

K.W.C. Humphreys
Australia

In reply: You did very well.

In U.S. funds, you paid \$12 and \$2.80, respectively. The Bicycle covers are priced as PS/3 at \$20 in *Denson's Specialized Catalog of PNCs on FDC*. Recent retail prices for a Tudor House ca-



NICE CATCH!—An Australian collector found this Scarcity E first-day cover of Plate 4 of the 5¢ Motorcycle for \$3.50 in Australian currency. That's \$2.80 in U.S. funds.

chet in a strip of four are \$12.50.

But no retail lists offer the rare Motorcycle. Denson estimates it at \$500. Ken Lawrence gave it an "E" scarcity rating in the 1989 *PNC Catalog*.

Scratch or crack?

Page 17 of the catalog lists the "Hand brake" on Plate 1 of the 4.9¢ Buckboard as a crack. I'm not sure that it isn't a scratch. It is very straight and not jagged like most cracks. It runs sideways, not up and down. All the examples I have

seen are the same length and have not grown or started small like most cracks.

Have you seen or heard any other discussion about this?

Gary Davis
Des Moines, Iowa

More thoughts on catalog

Concerning my previous suggestion about the use of i and ii with the 25¢ Flag series, I should have extended the

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Trying to solve the mysteries of the Bee

Continued from Page 1

merely to add the intaglio part by using product from the incompatible Optiforma press.

Therefore, students of seam lines have assumed from the start that all strips in which the lines repeat at the same place (24-stamp interval) in relation to the plate number were printed entirely on the D Press, and those in which the seam lines move across the roll, from rolls with a 25-stamp interval, on the C Press. This is probably correct.

While it is easy to distinguish offset plates by their circumference, the width of these plates has left us puzzled.

What clouds our research is that many Optiforma plates were made with 20 rows of 25 stamps. They are identified in the accompanying tables by the letters "B" and "C."

It is likely that "B" and "C" plates were intended to be used with the 20-row Plate 2 on the C Press.

Because the 18-row intaglio Plate 1 was made for the C Press, students were ready to believe that all 18x25 plates were coupled with the C Press. But again we are not certain because something odd happened to Optiforma 20x25 plates.

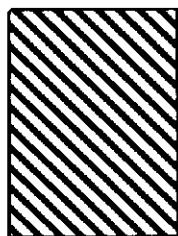
This is indicated by BEP reports that four Optiforma plates ("B") that were made 20x25 were sent to press as 20-row plates but were canceled as 18-row plates. (The fifth "B" plate had not been canceled at TPN's press time, so we lack data on its size at cancellation.)

The product of these "B" plates presumably was 20 rows wide and would have been printed on the 20-row Plate 1 on the C Press.

"C" Optiforma plates were made 20 rows wide, but BEP reported that they were sent to press as 18-row plates. The "C" plates apparently printed 18-row product, if BEP reports are accurate.

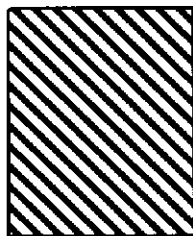
We assume that the printing with the "B" plates cannot have been more than 278,940 impressions because the process yellow and PMS yellow plates were

**18 rows
Optiforma
25 around**



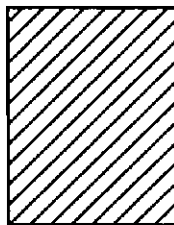
48X18
Intaglio
C Press
PLATE 1
(Unlikely
on D)

**20 rows
Optiforma
25 around**



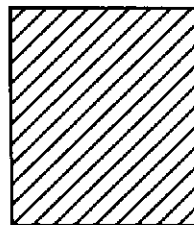
48X20
Intaglio
C or D
Press
PLATE 2

**18 rows
D Press
24 around**



48X18
Intaglio
D Press
PLATE 1
or 3 or 6
on D
(No stamps
known)

**20 rows
D Press
24 around**



48X20
Intaglio
C or D Press
PLATE 2
or 4 on D
(No stamps
known)

PLATE PAIRING—Optiforma offset plates shaded to northwest; D offset plates to northeast. Many 20x25 Optiforma plates were sent to press as 18x25 plates. They may have been printed on the C Press.

canceled with those impression totals. But the cyan and black plates were canceled with 506,970 impressions, leaving a remainder we cannot account for.

Does this mean that the "B" remainder was printed only 18 rows wide, making it usable with Plate 1? Does it mean that all "C" plates could print only 18 rows wide? We simply do not know, assuming that BEP data are accurate.

Several other theories exist as to the change in reported plate size on the 20-row plates.

☞ The 20-row offset plates could have been used to print on 18-row paper on the Optiforma and then sent to the intaglio press for use with an 18-row intaglio plate.

☞ The 20-row offset plates could have been printed as 20-row product on the Optiforma and then with a 20-row intaglio plate on which the last two rows were not inked.

(This theory was advanced when Honeybees without black intaglio printing were first reported. The missing intaglio ink would have been from the two unprinted rows. The theory, however, fell by the wayside when Jon Denney of M&M/Southwest reported that such strips came from rolls in which some stamps

don't believe that happened.

Mystery #2 Which intaglio plate?

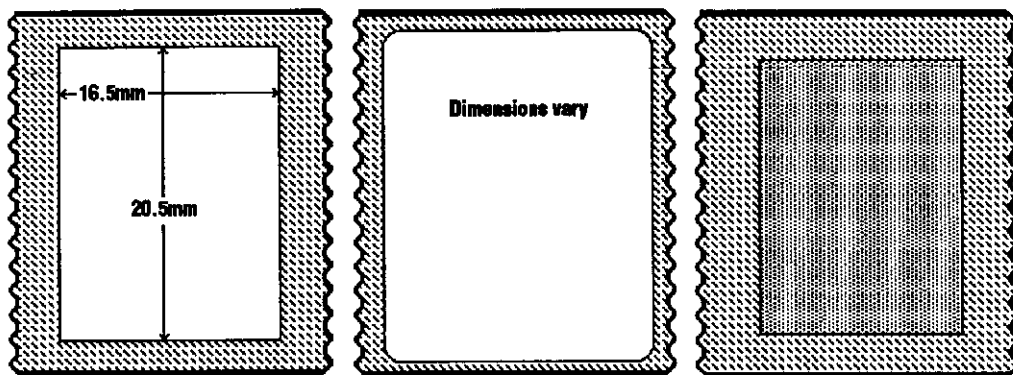
It is likely that all 18-row Optiforma product had to be printed by intaglio Plate 1. Strengthening that likelihood is the fact that all rolls of 3,000 were perforated on the 18-row Huck rotary perforator and all rolls of 3,000 reported so far have shown the plate number 1. (The 20-row Goebel stroke perforator was used on coils of 100.)

Because of the seam lines, we know Plate 1 was used on both presses.

Plate 1 was assigned on April 14, 1988; Plate 2 much later: on July 6, 1988. And here we run into the production problems BEP had with the Honeybee.

The Honeybee was first put on sale in Omaha on Sept. 2, 1988. In Omaha and almost everywhere else, only Plate 1 was available on the next day, when general sale began.

But not everywhere! In Cleveland, Plate 2 popped up



TAGGING—Rectangular tagging, left, has been found off the C Press for Plate 1. Tagging with rounded corners is from both presses off both plates. The C Press version is larger. A late version, right, so far only off the D Press, has rectangular corners and screened, or textured, tagging. Diagonally shaded areas represent untagged parts of the stamps.

were printed in full, with plate number 1.)

☞ BEP's plate-activity reports could have been in error. BEP has been asked for an explanation of this. (The reply failed to answer our questions.)

☞ The 20-row plates were cut down. What makes this unlikely is that offset plates are thin sheets of alloy and are not worth the bother.

Whatever actually happened, the belief that all stamps showing an interval of 25 were printed on the C Press is probably correct. We shall continue this discussion with that assumption and call the plates in question "cut down" (in quotation marks) even though we

on the first day of sale. This allowed the speedy to prepare FDCs with both plate numbers.

We are handicapped in reconstructing a printing history of the Honeybee because BEP has not reported when it sent the intaglio plates to press.

Because stamps from the 20-row Plate 2 existed on the day of issue, we know that several 20x25 Optiforma plates must have been sent to press before the issue date.

BEP plate-activity reports tell us that 20x25 ("B") offset plates were sent to press starting July 11, 1988.

Steve Esrati had first believed and reported here that because four of the 20x25 plates were retired as 18-row plates that the four, therefore, had to be printed with Plate 1. But it now appears more likely that they were first printed on July 11, with intaglio Plate 2, as 20-row coils to produce Plate 2 Honeybees on the C Press. This would have made possible the existence of Plate 2 Bees in rolls of 100 on the day of issue.

The existence of strips from intaglio Plate 2 in which the seam lines move (indicating that they used 25-row Optiforma plates) also proves that those stamps were printed on the C Press. That means Plate 2 was sometimes printed on the C Press with Optiforma product.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that the first set of 20-row Optiforma plates were made July 8, 1988, and all sent to press on July 11.

Within nine days of July 11, all but three remaining 18x25 ("A") plates (Magenta 5, Process Yellow 5 and Cyan 7) had also been sent to press for the first time.

If BEP contemplated using any more 18-row Optiforma plates, it may have felt it prudent to make some by "cutting down" 20-row "C" plates (even though we realize that this is unlikely, but we use the expression to indicate any of the 18-row possibilities). We simply do not know.

What we do know is that BEP reported making a new 18-row intaglio plate, Plate 6, on Sept. 23, 1988. (This plate was made before Plate 4 and was out of numerical sequence. We have asked BEP why. Again, the reply was not helpful. Ken Lawrence believes that Plate 6 was either not a Honeybee plate at all or that it carried a different suffix.)

If there is a Plate 6, like Plate 2 it was intended for the D Press. Either of these plates could also have been mounted on the C Press for use with 18-row Goebel product. Perhaps the "cut-down" plates were intended for Plate 6. (No stamps bearing plate number 6 have ever been reported by collectors.)

Mystery #3 Why the delay?

The Honeybee was originally scheduled to be released in July 1988 in Corpus Christi, Tex. The first set of Optiforma plates was made in April and went to press April 14. We were told that because of technical problems, the issue date had to be postponed.

From the sparse BEP production data, which omit "to

press" dates for the intaglio plates, we now think it possible that the very first printing was the one for the "A" set we are calling "A1." There is no "to press" date for "A1." That run used all six stations on the Optiforma, while all later printings used only five.

The sixth station applied the tagging.

We have been told that this printing was entirely destroyed. We were never told exactly why by BEP, but we were told by USPS of much difficulty in keeping the product of the two presses in register, and BEP even printed a limited-distribution souvenir card (see Page 10) to congratulate itself and employees who worked on the Honeybee for managing to keep the black Bee inside the frame.

In the fall of 1989 we were told by BEP that a press run using phosphored paper had been destroyed because the tagging did not suffice to activate facer-cancelers (see *TPN* September 1989). No other details about these destroyed stamps were made available.

To this time, we do not know what plates were used for this second destroyed run, nor what intaglio plate was coupled with it. But the destruction of the phosphored-paper Honeybees leads us to a suspicion that the first run may not have been destroyed because it was so hard to keep the stamps in register.

The reason may have been because it was difficult to activate the facer-cancelers with tagging that was hidden under the black intaglio printing. (A.S. Cibulskas doesn't believe this possibility because so little of the stamp's surface is covered by the black intaglio printing.)

There may, however, have been an entirely different reason. All Honeybees have a glossy lacquer coating over the printing to prevent re-use. The lacquer is applied during tagging, with the phosphors suspended in the lacquer.

In that first (destroyed) run, the black intaglio ink (the Honeybee itself and the plate number) was supposed to print on top of the tagging and the lacquer. The possibility exists that the black intaglio printing could not bond to the lacquer below, making it flake off, or making it possible to create "varieties" by scraping off all the intaglio black with a razor blade.

A similar occurrence took place with the 18¢ Washington Monument, resulting in a change of papers, from Rolland paper made in Canada to Slater paper made in England, according to BEP.

Making this second possibility more likely as the reason for destruction of the first printing run was the

Honeybee intaglio plates

CATALOG	PLATE	ASSIGNED	PRESS	SUBJECTS	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESSIONS	NOTES
25M1	180014-1	Apr 14, 88	C	432				18 rows (Subjects from George Amick, BEP said 450)
25M2	180527-2	Jul 6, 88	D	480				20 rows
25M3	180935-3	Sep 23, 88	D	432	Sep 29, 88	Nov 1, 88		SEE TEXT. Printing total n/a, BEP said.
25M4	182479-4	Apr 4, 1989	D	480				20 rows
25M6	180967-6	Sep 29, 88	D	432				18 rows

find of the untruncated "1"s by Maves and Koepf.

[Unfortunately we are unable to determine (until we get "to press" dates for Set "A1") whether the untruncated "1"s are from Set "A2" or "A3," so we do not know whether there were 110,000 impressions or 802,770.]

But the Maves-Koepf find proves that the plate numbers were not truncated right after the destroyed first press run. This strengthens the theory that it was not difficulty in maintaining register that led to the first destruction.

[Ken Lawrence notes that BEP also ran into other difficulties which have not been made public. In one case, BEP apparently attempted to tag paper on press before starting to print.]

The huge printing order for Honeybees from the Postal Service (110 million rolls of 100 and 100,000 rolls of 3,000) placed a burden on BEP. Making things worse was the desire of Don McDowell, manager of the Stamps Division, to print more definitive stamps by offset because they are more attractive and are known to sell well.

Apparently McDowell knew little of the printing difficulties inherent in offset printing [He did know, however, that BEP's objection to printing on phosphored paper—because of the high cost in broken perforator pins—did not stand up. The cost to USPS of the re-use of washed stamps was believed to surpass BEP's cost for pins so heavily that USPS offered to reimburse BEP for broken pins.]

We believe that Honeybee spoilage was high. Ken Lawrence estimates that a staggering 60% of the Optiforma/C Press product was spoiled (See "Honeybee plate production easy to figure out," *TPN* November 1989).

Then, too, there was a problem of press availability. Just as the Honeybee fiasco began, much production had to be shifted from the B Press to the C because the B Press was overburdened. We noticed this

A. Optiforma plates, 18 rows wide

COLOR SUFFIX PLATE ASSIGNED TO PRESS CANCELED IMPRESS. NOTES

Set A1. No "to press" date announced. Possibly the destroyed printing.

Magenta	01	179940-1	Apr 5, 88			
Process Yellow	01	179941-1	Apr 5, 88			
PMS Yellow	01	179942-1	Apr 5, 88			
Cyan	01	179943-1	Apr 5, 88			
Black	01	179944-1	Apr 5, 88			

Set A2. Possibly the destroyed printing or the run with untruncated numbers. 110,000 impressions.

Magenta	02	179975-2	Apr 11, 88	Apr 14, 88	Nov 15, 88	110,000
Process Yellow	02	179976-2	Apr 11, 88	Apr 14, 88	Nov 15, 88	110,000
PMS Yellow	02	179977-2	Apr 11, 88	Apr 14, 88	Nov 15, 88	110,000
Cyan	02	179978-2	Apr 11, 88	Apr 14, 88	Nov 15, 88	110,000
Black	02	179979-2	Apr 11, 88	Apr 14, 88	Nov 15, 88	110,000

Set A3. Possibly the run with untruncated numbers. 802,770 impressions.

Cyan	03	180126-3	May 3, 88	May 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	802,770
Magenta	03	180127-3	May 3, 88	May 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	802,770
Process Yellow	03	180128-3	May 3, 88	May 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	802,770
PMS Yellow	03	180129-3	May 3, 88	May 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	802,770
Black	03	180130-3	May 3, 88	May 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	802,770

Set A4. Calculated press run of 1,518,710 impressions.

Cyan	04	180307-4	May 31, 88	Jun 6, 88	Oct 18, 88	1,518,710
Magenta	04	180308-4	May 31, 88	Jun 6, 88	Oct 18, 88	1,518,710
Process Yellow	04	180309-4	May 31, 88	Jun 6, 88	Oct 18, 88	1,518,710 (356,160 impressions later)
PMS Yellow	04	180310-4	May 31, 88	Jun 6, 88	Oct 18, 88	1,136,590
PMS Yellow	05	180321-5	Jun 1, 88	Jun 15, 88	Oct 18, 88	382,120 (768,110 impressions later)
Black	04	180311-4	May 31, 88	Jun 6, 88	Oct 18, 88	17,950
Black	05	180322-5	Jun 1, 88	Jun 8, 88	Oct 18, 88	232,260
Black	06	180361-6	Jun 9, 88	Jun 10, 88	Oct 18, 88	511,090
Black	07	180362-7	Jun 9, 88	Jun 13, 88	Oct 18, 88	757,410 (356,160 impressions later)

Set A5. Calculated press run of 356,160 impressions.

Cyan	05	180318-5	Jun 1, 88	Jun 17, 88	Oct 18, 88	356,160 (479,550 impressions later)
Magenta	05	180319-5	Jun 1, 88	Jun 17, 88	Oct 18, 88	356,160 (2d press run, calculated)
Process Yellow	04	180309-4	May 31, 88	Unknown	Oct 18, 88	356,160 (2d press run, calculated)
PMS Yellow	05	180321-5	Jun 1, 88	Unknown	Oct 18, 88	356,160 (471,950 impressions later)
Black	07	180362-7	Jun 9, 88	Unknown	Oct 18, 88	356,160 (2d press run, calculated)

Data too sketchy to calculate press runs or impressions. May have been printed together with plates from B or C.

Cyan	05	180389-6	Jun 14, 88			
Cyan	07	180436-7	Jun 20, 88	Jun 24, 88		
Cyan	08	180568-8	Jul 11, 88	Jul 18, 88		
Cyan	09	180594-9	Jul 18, 88			
Cyan	10	181110-10	Oct 20, 88			
Magenta	05	180319-5	Jun 1, 88	Jul 18, 88		2d press run (BEP data)
Magenta	06	180390-6	Jun 14, 88			
Magenta	07	180437-7	Jun 20, 88			
Magenta	08	180569-8	Jul 11, 88			
Process Yellow	05	180320-5	Jun 1, 88	Jun 20, 88		
Process Yellow	05	180320-5	Jun 1, 88	Jul 18, 88		2d press run (BEP data)
Process Yellow	06	180391-6	Jun 14, 88			
PMS Yellow	05	180321-5	Jun 1, 88	Unknown	Oct 18, 88	411,950 3d press run (Calculated)
PMS Yellow	06	180392-6	Jun 14, 88	Jun 21, 88	Nov 15, 88	469,020
PMS Yellow	07	180438-7	Jun 20, 88	Jul 18, 88		
PMS Yellow	08	180570-9	Jul 11, 88			
Black	08	180393-8	Jun 14, 88	Jun 20, 88	Nov 15, 88	279,970
Black	08	180393-8	Jun 14, 88	Jul 18, 88	Nov 15, 88	2d press run (BEP data)
Black	09	180394-9	Jun 14, 88	Jul 20, 88		
Black	10	180440-10	Jun 21, 88			
Black	11	181109-11	Oct 20, 88			
?? Yellow	08	180446-8	Jun 22, 88			
?? Yellow	09	180439-10	Jun 21, 88			

B. Optiforma plates, 20 rows wide, to press as 20-rows

COLOR SUFFIX PLATE ASSIGNED TO PRESS CANCELED IMPRESS. NOTES

Set B1. 278,940 impressions in this size. (Remainder believed printed 18 rows wide.)

Cyan	01	180533-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	278,940 (Canceled as 18 rows) (228,030 impressions later)
Magenta	01	180534-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88		
Process Yellow	01	180535-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	278,940 (Canceled as 18 rows)
PMS Yellow	01	180536-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	278,940 (Canceled as 18 rows)
Black	01	180537-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	278,940 (Canceled as 18 rows) (228,030 impressions later)

C. Optiforma plates, 20 rows wide, to press as 18 rows

COLOR	SUFFIX	PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESS.	NOTES
Cyan	01	180533-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	228,030	Remainder from B.
Black	01	180537-1	Jul 8, 88	Jul 11, 88	Nov 15, 88	228,030	Remainder from B.
Cyan	03	180630-3	Jul 25, 88	Aug 2, 88	Nov 15, 88	97,529	
Magenta	03	180631-3	Jul 25, 88	Aug 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	0	
PMS Yellow	03	180633-3	Jul 25, 88	Aug 15, 88			
Black	03	180634-3	Jul 25, 88	Aug 1, 88	Nov 15, 88	1,615,839	
Cyan	04	180664-4	Aug 2, 88	Aug 3, 88	Nov 15, 88	859,381	
Magenta	04	180665-4	Aug 2, 88	Aug 5, 88	Nov 15, 88	1,861,780	(Press date from canc. data)
Magenta	05	180669-5	Aug 2, 88	Aug 15, 88			
?? Yellow	05	180670-5	Aug 2, 88	Aug 15, 88			
Black	05	180671-5	Aug 2, 88	Aug 8, 88	Nov 15, 88	90,589	
Black	06	180702-6	Aug 8, 88	Aug 17, 88	Nov 15, 88	650,980	
Cyan	07	180755-7	Aug 11, 88	Aug 16, 88	Nov 15, 88	139,130	
Cyan	08	180783-8	Aug 16, 88	Aug 18, 88			
Black	07	180784-7	Aug 17, 88	Aug 23, 88			
Cyan	05	180668-5	Aug 2, 88	Aug 10, 88	Nov 15, 88	398,780	Canceled as Plate 9
Process Yellow	03	180632-3	Jul 25, 88	Jul 26, 88			
Cyan	06	180683-6	Aug 4, 88	Sep 19, 88			

D. D offset plates, 18 rows wide

COLOR	SUFFIX	PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESS.	NOTES
Cyan	01	180760-1	Aug 12, 88	Sep 21, 88			
Magenta	01	180761-1	Aug 12, 88	Sep 21, 88			
Process Yellow	01	180762-1	Aug 12, 88	Sep 21, 88			
PMS Yellow	01	180763-1	Aug 12, 88	Sep 21, 88			
Black	01	180764-1	Aug 12, 88	Sep 21, 88			1st black plate this suffix
Cyan	02	180765-2	Aug 12, 88				
Magenta	02	180766-2	Aug 12, 88				
Process Yellow	02	180767-2	Aug 12, 88				
PMS Yellow	02	180768-2	Aug 12, 88				
Black	02	180769-2	Aug 12, 88	Sep 22, 88			
Cyan	03	180930-3	Sep 23, 88				
Magenta	03	180931-3	Sep 23, 88				
Process Yellow	03	180933-3	Sep 23, 88	Sep 29, 88			
Black	03	180934-3	Sep 23, 88				
Black	04	180935-4	Sep 23, 88	Sep 29, 88			2nd black plate this suffix
Cyan	04	180941-4	Sep 24, 88				
Magenta	04	180942-4	Sep 24, 88				
PMS Yellow	04	180943-4	Sep 24, 88				
PMS Yellow	04	180944-4	Sep 24, 88				
Black	05	180945-5	Sep 24, 88				
Black	07	180968-7	Sep 29, 88	Sep 29, 88			

in the shift of the 8.4¢ Wheel Chair and 21¢ Railway Mail Car to the C Press and the printing of the 20¢ Cable Car exclusively on that press.

This shift of presses also required using smaller plates for the 25¢ Flag stamp and the undenominated "E" stamps (see *TPN* September 1989).

Ideally, a combination offset/intaglio stamp like the Honeybee should have gone straight to the combination offset/intaglio D Press, but the D was booked up for the Madonna and Child Christmas stamps. Printing of these began July 13, just two days after the first reported press run of the Honeybee.

Consequently, BEP did what a desperate football team must do. It punted. It called a time out. It argued with the linesmen. It did everything it could to put off the

Honeybee problem.

In September 1988, printing of Honeybees was halted in favor of Christmas stamps. BEP stopped printing again early last year, saying Honeybees would become available again in May. But in many places, they did not reap-

Mystery #4 What's with Plate 3?

When intaglio Plate 3 was canceled on Nov. 1, 1988, BEP said it did not know how many stamps, if any, were printed from it. It said it did not even know if the plate had ever been sent to press.

There was also confusion about its plate number and its size.

When assigned, as Plate 180935-3, the plate was said to have 20 rows

and was termed a C Press sleeve. When sent to press, as Plate 180932-3, the size was given as 18x48 and the sleeve was said to be for the D Press.

As has been demonstrated here in the past (see "Is there a cover-up on BEP data?" *TPN* July 1989) BEP reports often delay information that is vitally important to collectors.

At a time where BEP closes down at year's end for two weeks to reduce costs, it would not be politic for the Bureau to tell of a printing that produced who knows how many million stamps that had to be destroyed, partly by spoilage, partly because of the use of techniques that did not work.

We do not know whose fault such goofs were. It could as easily have been USPS, which had asked BEP to experiment with new techniques.

The goof with the phosphored Bee may well have been a failure to foresee if it was possible to print five offset colors over phosphored paper and still have enough phosphorescence left to activate postal machinery.

When this was attempted, as we now know, all the stamps had to be destroyed.

While we cannot tell which offset plates were used for this flop, or how many stamps were printed, we can be certain that the run would have been costly. Giving us impression totals on Plate 3 (if it was the one used for printing the phosphored Bees) would have allowed us to calculate how many stamps were wasted.

This may also account for the lack of any information on the printing of any Honeybees from the end of November 1988 through April 1989.

Surely something is missing in BEP reports. We know (from BEP reports) that Plate 3 was sent to press on Sept. 29, 1988. Several 18-row, D Press offset plates were sent to press on the same day.

If Plate 3 was for the D Press,

these would have been the plates used.

If Plate 3 was a C Press plate, a set of 20-row Optiforma plates would have had to be sent to press in September. We have no reports that this happened.

Therefore, if the data given by BEP when it sent Plate 3 to press was accurate and Plate 3 was for the D Press and was used to print stamps together with the three 18-row "D" plates that went to press on that day, it is possible that the "D" plates were printed with Plate 3 on the C Press.

Adding to the mystery is that we are missing a "to press" date for two offset colors: cyan and PMS yellow.

If we ever get impression totals for the "D" plates that went to press Sept. 29, we may be able to calculate the total printing from Plate 3.

On the other hand, we may be too harsh on BEP. One member of the PNC Study Group, who did not wish his name used, heard by way of the grapevine that Plate 3 was simply a bad plate and had to be destroyed. He believes no stamps were ever printed from it.

Mystery #5 Lacking D Press data

Our first confirmation that Honeybees were being printed on the D Press came almost six months before BEP reported making the first offset plates for the D Press (See A.S. Cibulskas, *TPN*, March 1989).

What Al Cibulskas had noticed in late 1988 was that seam lines on stamps off both intaglio plates had been reported that did not move in relation to the plate number. These had to come from offset plates measuring 24 around, producing two seam lines in the same place on each 48-stamp strip off the D Press.

(Al also noticed from the start that C Press seam lines were not found as often as D Press seam lines.)

E. D offset plates, 20 rows wide

COLOR	SUFFIX	PLATE	ASSIGNED	TO PRESS	CANCELED	IMPRESS. NOTES
Cyan	01	181074-1	Oct 14, 88	Oct 19, 88		
Magenta	01	181075-1	Oct 14, 88	Oct 19, 88		
Process Yellow	01	181076-1	Oct 14, 88	Oct 19, 88		
PMS Yellow	01	181077-1	Oct 14, 88	Oct 19, 88		
Black	01	181078-1	Oct 14, 88	Oct 19, 88		
Cyan	02	181079-2	Oct 14, 88			
Magenta	02	181080-2	Oct 14, 88	Oct 25, 88		
Process Yellow	02	181081-2	Oct 14, 88	Oct 22, 88		
PMS Yellow	02	181082-2	Oct 14, 88	Oct 22, 88		
Black	02	181083-2	Oct 14, 88	Oct 22, 88		
Magenta	03	181122-3	Oct 14, 88	Oct 26, 88		
Cyan	03	181121-3	Oct 22, 88	Nov 12, 88		
Process Yellow	03	181123-3	Oct 22, 88	Oct 24, 88		
PMS Yellow	03	181124-3	Oct 22, 88			
Black	03	181125-3	Oct 22, 88			
PMS Yellow	04	181126-4	Oct 14, 88	Nov 1, 88		
Black	04	181127-4	Oct 14, 88	Nov 1, 88		
Process Yellow	04	181139-4	Oct 26, 88			
Magenta	04	181140-4	Oct 26, 88	Nov 1, 88		
Process Yellow	05	181141-5	Oct 26, 88			
Magenta	05	181169-5	Nov 1, 88			
Magenta	06	181170-6	Nov 1, 88	Nov 12, 88		To press as Plate 1
Cyan	04	181219-4	Nov 14, 88			
Cyan	05	181220-5	Nov 14, 88			
Black	05	181221-5	Nov 14, 88			
PMS Yellow	05	181222-5	Nov 14, 88			
Black	06	181223-6	Nov 14, 88	Nov 13, 88		
PMS Yellow	06	181224-6	Nov 14, 88			
Magenta	07	181225-7	Nov 14, 88			
Cyan	06	181254-6	Nov 21, 88			
Black	07	181265-7	Nov 21, 88			
Magenta	08	181454-8	Dec 16, 88			
Process Yellow	06	181455-6	Dec 16, 88			
PMS Yellow	06	181456-6	Dec 16, 88			2d plate with same suffix
Black	10	182440-10	Mar 28, 89			
Black	11	182452-11	Mar 31, 89			
Black	12	182453-12	Mar 31, 89			
Black	13	182493-13	Apr 5, 89			
Black	14	182494-14	Apr 5, 89			
Black	15	182526-15	Apr 8, 89			
Black	16	182642-16	Apr 25, 89			
Black	17	182643-17	Apr 25, 89			
Cyan	10	182669-10	Apr 27, 89			
Magenta	12	182670-12	Apr 27, 89			
Process yellow	10	182671-10	Apr 27, 89			
PMS yellow	10	182672-10	Apr 27, 89			
Black	18	182673-18	Apr 27, 89			
Cyan	11	182674-11	Apr 27, 89			
Magenta	13	182675-13	Apr 27, 89			
Process yellow	11	182676-11	Apr 27, 89			
PMS yellow	11	182677-11	Apr 27, 89			
Black	19	182678-19	Apr 27, 89			
Cyan	07	182403-7	Mar 27, 89			
Magenta	09	182404-9	Mar 27, 89			
Process yellow	07	182405-7	Mar 27, 89			
PMS yellow	07	182406-7	Mar 27, 89			
Black	08	182407-8	Mar 27, 89			
Cyan	08	182408-8	Mar 27, 89			
Magenta	10	182409-10	Mar 27, 89			
Process yellow	08	182410-8	Mar 27, 89			
PMS yellow	08	182411-8	Mar 27, 89			
Black	09	182412-9	Mar 27, 89			
Cyan	09	182436-9	Mar 28, 89			
Magenta	11	182437-11	Mar 28, 89			
Process yellow	09	182438-9	Mar 28, 89			
PMS yellow	09	182439-9	Mar 28, 89			

In August and September 1988, BEP made several sets of offset plates for the D Press, all 18 rows wide. These would appear to have been intended for use with intaglio Plates 1, 3, or 6 (which was assigned on Sept. 29).

BEP's report for plate activity in August and September 1988, became available for use in the July 1989 *TPN*. Thus, Al had a scoop by half a year.

In October 1988, BEP began making 20-row D Press offset plates. It reported making them as late as April 27, 1989. These could have been for Plates 2 or 4 (assigned April 4, 1989).

From the end of November 1988 until the last reported plate made (in April 1989), BEP reported no Honeybee offset plates sent to press. Nor did it ever indicate the "to press" dates for any intaglio

plates other than Plate 3.

It would not be likely for BEP to make hundreds of offset plates between November 1988 and April 1989 (plus at least two intaglio plates, 4 and 6) if it had no intention of printing from them. Lack of plate-activity reports for the offset plates made for the D Press, therefore, is another of the many open questions about the Honeybee.

Mystery # 6 The tagging

We noticed almost from the start that there were two types of tagging on the Honeybee.

The tagging on early Plate 1 was narrow, short, and rectangular (see diagrams on Page 4). Early stamps from Plate 2 showed wider, taller tagging with rounded corners.

From the seam lines we know that the rectangular tagging was off the C Press and the rounded off the D. Later, D Press (rounded) tagging was found on Plate 1.

The size of the Plate 2 tagging grew when it was printed on the C Press.

Thus, it seems, tagging is specific to each press and allows single stamps to be identified as to press. As you may see on Page 12, some of these differences have now been spotted as well on the 25¢ Yosemite, which would tend to confirm that tagging is specific to presses, not plate numbers.

A later tagging on Plate 2 was spotted in August 1989. It, too, is rectangular but has texture, as if the printers had applied a screen to print it only as a series of dots. It has not yet been found on Plate 1 and, according to the seam lines, is found only on D Press stamps.

Thom E. Wheeler has gone through mixtures bought before May 1989 and has examined more than 300 used Honeybees. None had screened tagging, strengthening the belief that screened tagging occurred later and was not something overlooked by collectors.

As yet, we cannot explain it.

It is known that USPS would like to print all definitive stamps on pretagged paper, thus what we have found on the Honeybee (and the Yosemite) may be in the nature of experiments to overcome technical problems.

Mystery #7 The labels

Most Honeybees were sold in plastic bubble packs of 100, which have no paper labels. An inscription on the plastic identifies only the face value.

On paper labels from rolls of 3,000, the PNC Label Study Group has only seen labels from rolls of Plate 1, probably because this size roll could only be finished on the 18-row Huck perforator. Only minor variations have been reported, mainly in the color of the label ink, pale gray ranging to near black or slate with a touch of violet.

The label from the Maves-Koepp find of untruncated "1"s differs in no way from labels with truncated "1"s.

Mystery #8 The seam lines

Seam lines exist from both intaglio presses. They may show one or more colors used to print the offset portion of the Bee and may be single or double lines.

The hypothesis of the Study Group

for their origin differs somewhat from the official BEP explanation (see *TPN* January 1989).

BEP's Polikoff said the lines are the result of a lifting of the offset plates. He also traced their origin to the offset plates as well as the transfer blanket.

Ken Lawrence pointed out that the blanket cannot create images; it can only transfer them from the plates. As to the "raised" edges of the plates, Ken said this would mangle the presses.

Ken traces the origin of the seam lines to wear at the edges of the offset plates.

Mystery #9 The imperforates

Dr. John P. Greenwood reports the existence of imperforates from both intaglio plates.

John has confirmed the existence of Plate 2 imperfs with seam lines at 6L, 7L, and 10R, but believes there may be other positions. He said Plate 2 also comes with a mis-cut, and a mis-cut with a tan masking-tape splice.

Plate 1 is known imperforate only with the seam line at 10R. It is also known with a splice, but this time it is transparent cellophane tape, not masking tape.

Ed Denson knows of at least one first-day cover bearing an imperforate strip of three of Plate 1 on a House of Farnam cover. Other imperforates on FDC may exist.

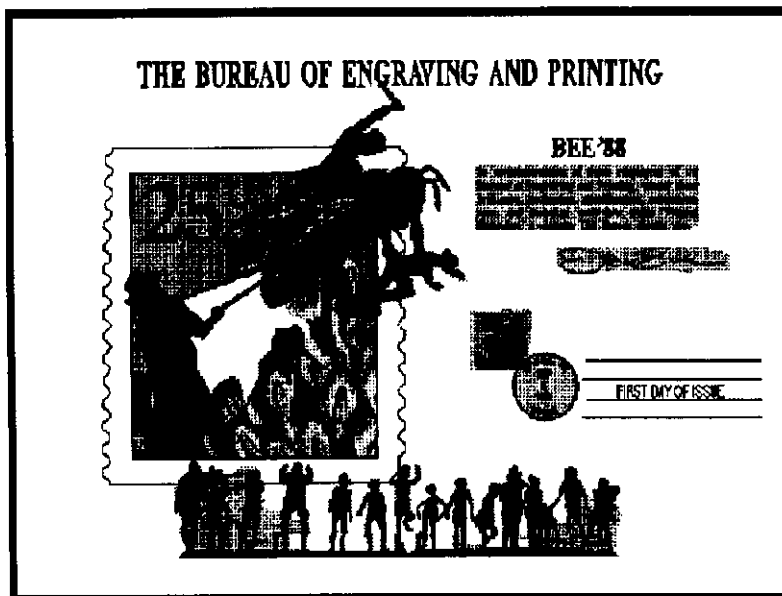
Confirmed Honeybee seam lines

The following seam line positions are confirmed on Honeybees printed on the D Press (lines repeat at an interval of 24):

Plate 1 (All have block tagging with rounded corners)—12L/R, 11L, 10L, 9L, 8L, 7R, 9R, 10R, 11R.

Plate 2 (Block tagging with rounded corners)—12L/R, 11L, 10L, 9L, 8L, 7L, 6L, 5L, 4L, 3L, 2L, 1L, 1R, 2R, 3R, 6R, 7R, 8R, 11R.

Plate 2 (Screened block tagging, square corners)—11L, 10L, 9L, 8L, 7L, 6L, 5L, 4L, 3L, 2L, 1L, Zero, 9R, 10R, 11R.



THANK-YOU NOTE—A BEP employee was sent to Omaha to get these limited-edition cards canceled on the first day. The text at the right reads: "In commemoration of those employees of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, whose shear (*sic*) brilliance, dedication, steadfastness, innovativeness, and technical know-how made 'Project Honeybee' a success. The Bureau salutes you." The design on the left shows three BEP employees trying to reign in the errant Bee, to return it to its frame. On the line below, BEP employees cheer them on.

No FDCs have been reported with imperforates from Plate 2.

Mystery # 10 The first-day Covers

The vast majority of FDCs serviced by the major FDC houses bear Plate 1. Ken Lawrence gave them a B scarcity rating in the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog*, meaning that he estimated that between 2,000 and 9,999 FDCs were prepared.

It should, however, be remembered that many collectors prepare their own FDCs, sometimes using blank envelopes from the major houses. So the envelope does not necessarily mean the FDC was prepared by the large company.

When Plate 2 was found on sale in Cleveland on the first day of sale, several people bought strips so that they could create FDCs with that number. The total of such covers,

however, may be quite small. Ken rated them in Category C, meaning that 500 to 1,999 covers were believed to have been serviced.

Hand-painted FDCs by A. O. Henry are known bearing Plates 1 and 2 as singles, strips of three and strips of five. Other hand-painted Plate 1 covers are known from Pugh, Anagram, Olde Well, Fogt, Tossman, Ellis, Lytel. These all have Plate 1.

Also known with Plate 2 are cachets by Key Kachets, Larry Gasen, Gill, Glen, Artmaster, Art-Craft, 10 Springs, Aristocrat, and House of Farnam. It is not known whether these were prepared by the firms or by collectors who bought blank envelopes.

Gill and House of Farnam cachets are the only ones reported on covers bearing stamps with both plate numbers.

TPN welcomes reports of any FDCs not mentioned above.

Conclusions

We may never get answers to some of our questions. *TPN's* letter to BEP in October was answered in November, but not received by mid-December.

On the telephone, answers were given to our questions that neither answered our questions nor explained anything. To two technical questions on printing, we were told to ask USPS (which had earlier told us to ask BEP).

Meanwhile, we hope future plate reports will fill in some voids.

This TPN special is based on reporting by David E. Barrie-LaVergne, A.S. Cibulskas, Kim Cuniberti, Ed Denson, Stephen G. Esrati, Dr. John P. Greenwood, Ken Lawrence, Richard J. Nazar and Thom E. Wheeler. It was written by Esrati.

The article has also depended on data published by George Amick in Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1989.

Felt-tip pens fake more PNCs

Several new forgeries have turned up recently. All were readily detectable by the use of UV or a good magnifier.

The most spectacular case occurred at World Stamp Expo where Dr. Pedro Ortegon bought a previously unknown strip of the 5.9¢ precancel from Plate 3 with the gap at 1R. The price was \$100.

"The following day, I showed the strip to Dr. Rabinowitz and he suggested that the find be reported," Dr. Ortegon said.

At the meeting of the Plate Number Coil Collectors Club (PNC³), Dr. Ortegon showed his "find" to Kim Cuniberti, who immediately noticed that the precancel lines appeared spaced too closely together. Further, he noticed that there was ink in the perforation holes.

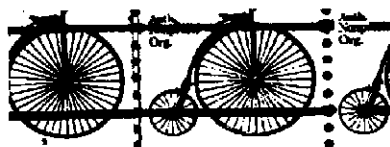
When *TPN* was lent the strip by Dr. Ortegon, a measurement showed that the precancel lines were 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ mm apart, measured from the bottom of the top line to the top of the bottom line. A genuine strip is 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ mm for the same measurement.

"One thing we have noticed," said Cuniberti, "is that the distance between the lines has been absolutely constant."

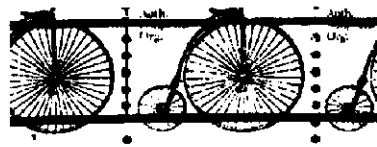
But that alone was not enough. Fortunately, Richard Nazar had brought his two Lighthouse UV lamps along (one for long wave to examine paper types, one for short wave to examine tagging). Nazar saw that the "precancel" was on a tagged stamp, indicating it was a forgery.

Dr. Ortegon showed the dealer (Jerry Koepp of Stamps 'n' Stuff) the strip on the following day. "He said it did not appear to him that it was a fake," Dr. Ortegon said.

Koepp offered a full refund, but Dr.



FAKE—Section from a strip of five showing the joint line and the forged precancel lines. Note the shortness of the upper line on the right stamp.



REAL—Section from a genuine strip also showing the joint line and the precancel lines. Note that the lines are spaced farther apart and are thicker.

Ortegon decided to keep the strip "even if it is not genuine, because it will be a specimen full of memories."

Another forged precancel was found recently by Al Haake, who was offered 20¢ Flag precancels, also on tagged stamps.

In both instances, the forger had used a felt-tip pen.

Meanwhile, Ed Denson tells of a 17¢ Electric Auto on a USPS Souvenir Page. The FDOI cancel on the stamps did not quite match the cancel on the page and the gaps had been filled in with a felt-tip pen, too.

In this instance someone mounted a used, numbered 17¢ Auto pair on a souvenir page from which unnumbered stamps had been removed. The numbered stamps may have come from an FDC.

Gerald Blankenship reported just such shenanigans in the May issue of *TPN*.

The moral of all this is to be

wary. On any strip costing \$50 or more, it may be wise to seek expertizing.

The American Philatelic Expertizing Service of the American Philatelic Society (P.O. Box 8000, State College, PA 16803), the Philatelic Foundation (21 E. 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016) and the American First Day Cover Society Expertizing Committee (Box 29544, Columbus, OH, 43229) will all check PNCs for authenticity.

It may be smarter to pay small sums for expertizing than to spend large sums on worthless material.

That was the point Ken Lawrence was making in the very first issues of *TPN* when he foresaw that high prices would inevitably lead some unscrupulous people to fakery. □

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TPN update

New stamps

13.2T2P—Plate 2 of the 13.2¢ Coal Car. November. Rolls of 500 and 3,000. (Haake)

25F2II—Plate 2 of the 25¢ Flag on pre-tagged, phosphored paper. Rolls of 500 and 3,000. About Dec. 1. (Koenig)

25F13II—Plate 13 of the 25¢ Flag on pre-tagged paper. Dec. 1. Rolls of 100. (Haake)

TPN corrections

Page 80—The *TPN* correction for the earliest usage on 4T3P should have said Dec. 4, 1984, not 1987.

Page 99—The seam line on Plate 2 at 10R should have been listed as having tagging with square corners, not rounded corners.

Catalog corrections

Page 5—The footnote under 22F16 should say "468" not "480" stamps. The "Max. PNCs" figure is correct.

Page 17—4.9T5PV2, the "Buggy rein," should be listed as 4.9T6PV3 because it appears on Plate 6, not Plate 5.

Imperforates

By Dr. John P. Greenwood

The 25¢ Flag is now known imperforate from all plates (through 11) except the block-tagged Plates 1 and 8. This is a correction from the previous report, in which the block-tagged Plate 8 was reported as existing.

New are 25F10 and 25F11.

Transportation coils used 2 papers, BEP says, citing own specifications

The Transportation Series coil stamps were printed on LP-40 and LP-53 paper, according to Ira Polikoff of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing in answering questions from Richard J. Nazar.

BEP classifies LP-40 as an 18½-inch, unphosphored paper for the B, C and D presses. It has dry gum.

LP-53, made only for the C and D presses, is 22-inch, unphosphored paper, also with dry gum.

Analysis of this information leads to the conclusion that LP-40 was used to print Transportation coils that were 18 rows wide while LP-53 was for stamps printed 20 rows wide.

The only coils that fit the description of LP-53 appear to be 7.6T2P, 8.4T2P, 21T2P, 25T2, 25T3, and 25T4. All others would be LP-40.

The significance of this information to PNC collectors is almost nil because the BEP's paper designations are broad enough to include papers showing various amounts of luminescence and different methods of gumming as long as the gum is dry.

It is possible that LP-40 and LP-53 could be the same paper cut in different widths. But of the stamps that could have been printed on LP-53, the 7.6-, 8.4-, and 21-cent stamps are on Paper III; the 25-cent stamps on Paper II.

BEP also confirmed what we knew about the 18¢ Washington Monument:

The original printing of the ... stamp was done on two coated papers with shiny adhesive/gum. These papers ... were supplied by Rolland Co. of Canada and by Henry and Leigh Slater of England.

The Rolland paper presented some problems ...

This refers to that paper's tendency to let the ink flake off in chlorinated water.

... and ... Slater paper was subsequently used for the production of this stamp. Rolland paper and ... Slater paper were designated as LP-56.

In 1986, circa May or June, paper for the printing of the 18¢ George Washington stamp was procured from Paper Corp. of America, a paper merchant. This paper was manufactured by the Mead Co. and subsequently delivered to Nashua [Corp.], a paper converter, for application of the adhesive prior to delivery to the Bureau. The adhesive for this paper was dry-gum. Therefore, since 1986, the paper used for print-

ing the 18¢ George Washington stamp ... was designated as LP-58.

LP-58 is known to us as an Andreotti Press paper that is 20 inches wide and has dry gum. While we do not have specifications for LP-56, we believe it is also 20 inches wide, differing from LP-58 only in its shiny gum.

According to Polikoff, all 18¢, 20¢ and 22¢ Flag stamps were printed on LP-37 paper, which BEP calls uncoated, with shiny adhesive. This shiny gum is referred to as resin-dextrin. It is 18½ inches wide.

The gum is applied in a water solution and is then dried in ovens. During drying, the gum gets cracked by breaker bars to minimize paper curl on the press.

Polikoff said it is impossible to identify paper manufacturers of the Flag stamps by the gum because they all use the same technique to apply gum.

Coated papers, he said, are usually used for commemoratives, which may be printed by gravure, gravure/intaglio, or offset/intaglio.

We do have one problem with the LP-37 designation. Since all the Flag stamps mentioned except the 18s were printed in two widths, another paper, probably LP-52, would have been the paper used in Flag stamps printed 20 rows wide. This conclusion is reached because Polikoff included the 18¢ Flag stamps in his list for LP-37. The 18s were printed only on the 18-row B Press.

BEP could not be drawn into the discussion of paper differences found by PNC collectors. Polikoff said:

Distinctions such as Type I and Type II [papers] are philatelic constructs, used to identify perceived differences in stamps that have no meaning, and thus are unaccountable, to Bureau operations.

What this means is that BEP's paper types refer only to coating, width, gum type, and whether phosphored. PNC collectors have added what Polikoff calls "philatelic constructs," by determining that dull-gum, B Press paper comes in more than one type. Obviously, as long as the paper fits BEP's criteria, BEP doesn't care about differences collectors may find.

BEP's records refer only to its own paper specifications.

The 1990 *PNC Catalog* will include a table on stamps found on varying paper types, using our designations. □

Tagging blocks on Yosemite also in 2 shapes

Acting on a tip from a *Linn's* reader, Wayne L. Youngblood of the PNC Study Group has put the block-tagged 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite stamps under his trusty ultraviolet lamp and found that the stamps have some similarity to the tagging we have found on the 25¢ Honeybee.

He found that the rectangular tagging shape similar to one first noted on Plate 1 of the Bee could also be found on Plates 1, 2, and 3 of the Yosemite.

All three Flag plates were printed on the B Press, which is 18 rows wide.

Youngblood found no other tagging shapes on stamps from these three plates.

Youngblood found larger tagging with rounded corners on Plates 4, 5, 7, and 9. All of these plates were made for use on the C or D Press. Plates 4 and 9 were made 18 rows wide and 5, 7, and 8 were 20 rows wide. □

USPS 'wipes out' find by destruction order

Diane Thompson, one of the most diligent hunters for off-sale PNCs, learned the hard way recently that we may not always have a friend at USPS.

Having found supplies of the tagged 7.1¢ Tractor and the 21.1¢ Letters, as well as some 17¢ precancels, Thompson suddenly found she could not buy them.

The stamps had been "wiped out."

Here is how it works. The Stamps Division assigns each stamp a computer item number. Accountable paper clerks regularly print out a computer report of what item numbers they have in stock. Postal clerks may then order those items.

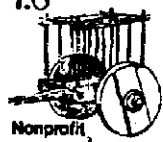
Thompson had found a clerk who reported finding the desired items on his accountable paper report. But by the time she arrived, the Stamps Division had decided to take them off sale.

It does this by simply wiping out the item number. If a stamp has no item number, it cannot be ordered and is tagged for destruction.

Said Thompson, "You have to realize that those accountable paper clerks, who have huge stocks, are always glad to get rid of something." □

7.6T3P elusive before supplies are finally located

Carreta 1770s
7.6 USA



When Plate 3 of the 7.6¢ Carreta was spotted for the first time last summer, it was on mail from the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Ill. That's the hometown of George Godin and close to Germantown, home of dealer Al Haake. Neither could lay in supplies from the Belleville post office.

The pictured copy above was received by magician Ronald E. Maifeld of Cincinnati. It bears a script inscription on the front of the envelope: "Time almost ran out on Jose..." (The perfs don't show up because Maifeld's stamp was scanned on cover.)

Some dealers advertised the stamps, possibly on the assumption that they would be able to get them wholesale from Haake. But when Haake tried to get the stamps, the shrine had used up all but a partial roll from the first shipment, and the post office had been resupplied with Plate 2.

That means collectors of commercial covers will prize the mailing from the shrine with a plate number. They should be quite hard to find.

When World Stamp Expo opened, nobody had the stamp, except Maifeld, who identified himself at the PNC³ meeting by adding: "I want to say that Plate 3 of the 7.6¢ Carreta is alive and living in Cincinnati."

A week later, D. John Shultz, found an available supply. His source told him the rolls of 3,000 had been on hand since summer.

At STAmPsHOW, word got out that the "F" stamps would be named for flowers, as the "E" stamps were for Earth.

According to reports from the show, a BEP employee said the stamp would show a tulip.

Not so! Richard Nazar has seen pressmen's reports of all printing activity at BEP for one week in September. Those reports call the stamps "F" orchid stamps.

Feeling "like a T/5 in a first sergeants'

All the news of PNCs

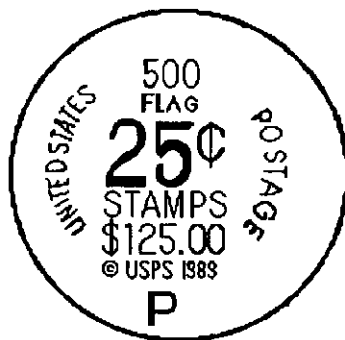
meeting," Bob Effinger, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, served as chief judge at Houplex last year when his fellow judges (not PNC collectors) turned out to be VIPs in U.S. philately.

But when a problem arose, he was told, "You're the chief judge. You call the shots."

Effinger, a veteran PNC collector, will continue to judge, with several stints due this year.

Effinger won a gold and two other prizes at Sescal with his Ryukyu exhibit—he is president of the Ryukyu Philatelic Specialist Society—and a silver at Calcopex, his local show in Alabama, for an exhibit of PNCs of the Transportation Series alone.

Labels on rolls of 500 of the pretagged 25¢ Yosemite now have a conspicuous



"P" under the copyright line, David E. Barrie-LaVergne, chairman of the PNC Label Study Group, reports.

(Such a label has been found on a roll from Plate 8 in Cleveland. Reports of other numbers are welcome at TPN.)

B-LaVergne also has noted a new policy of marking precancels on boxes of 50 rolls of 500. In the past, these have had a rubber stamp, usually applied to the cardboard. But recently, these have been showing up with a computer-printed three-line label in red, like this:

13.2 CTS.
PC-500'S-PC PRECANCELLED
50 COILS

Another new twist is that Gerald Clark has found 25¢ Yosemite cartons with "C PRESS" labels similarly printed out by computer.

B-LaVergne has also come up with a new term for "paper types," neatly sidestepping the controversy about whether they are paper types or just variations in the gum texture. B-LaVergne terms the stuff coils are printed on "coil stock."

Added to the Label Study Group's list of labels for the 2¢ Locomotive are



leftover labels for the 2¢ Jefferson used from 1954 to 1984 by adding a rubber-stamped "1982" to the label in various shades of red and purple and in several typefaces. The hand stamp is often just above the "\$10.00."

A relationship between plate number and the recycled labels has not yet been established.

Whoever set up and ran World Stamp Expo for the Postal Service did not know much about what collectors want at a stamp show.

There was no place to sit down except the few tables in the lunch area. That was fine until lunch time, but then some Happy Hunters were shooshed off by indignant people who wanted a place to sit and eat.

The officers of the Plate Number Coil Collectors Club (PNC³) ended up sitting on the steps outside the main entrance to the Washington Convention Center to get ready for the PNC³ meeting.

When the show opened, to the stirring rhythms of the Marine Band, John Sununu, chief of staff at the White House, allowed himself to say World Stamp Expo was the largest "stamp show" ever held in the United States.

Several philatelic VIPs winced. It wasn't. Not even close! Except for a court of honor, made up of selected pages from exhibits that had won grand awards, the only other stamps on show were the professionally mounted one-frame exhibits in back of the APS booth.

Said Bernard (Bud) Hennig, who set

up the court of honor, "Maybe he meant 'largest' in terms of the number of countries participating. But that's only because there are so many new ones."

PNC³'s one-frame exhibit was not the only one that showed PNCs. The Plate Number Singles Society had a few 20¢ Fire Pumpers, all used, in its frame. Oddly for a society that collects singles, it showed a single, a pair, a strip of three and a strip of five.

One final note about the show: The only coils available from the USPS sales stand were Honeybees and Yosemite, at least on the first weekend.

Jerry Koepf has found two more strips of the "Black Forest" variety (see *TPN* May 1989). Each entire strip of five is identical to the original find by Conrad Keydel.

They are from the block-tagged Plate 5, have black (not green) trees, and show the "ski slope" through the trees. Keydel



BLACK FOREST—Unlike this rendition, all "Black Forest" varieties are cut low. They all show the "ski slope" through the trees. All are from Plate 5.

said all Black Forest strips he has seen have been cut low. The "ski slope" is present on every stamp in the roll.

The variety will be included in the 1990 *PNC Catalog*.

Coil Line will continue to be the journal of PNC³, directors of the club agreed in Washington. (Incidentally, it was not a proposal by Steve Esrati to make *TPN* the journal of PNC³. The idea was to save on the cost of *Coil Line*.)

The decision resulted from a survey of members, which showed overwhelming response in favor of keeping a monthly publishing schedule.

Rob Washburn plans to put out second editions this month of his two

books: *PNC Varieties* and *PNCs on Cover*. He said the 1990 editions will be illustrated and updated.

Dr. Joseph Agris was told at World Stamp Expo by a high Postal Service official that the Transportation Series will be continued beyond the next hike in postal rates.

Books reviewed

2 from Amos Press: 1 is useful, 1 is not

Linn's World Stamp Almanac, Fifth Edition, Linn's Stamp News, Sidney, OH. \$30 hard cover; \$19.95 soft cover.

Did you ever go leafing through a Scott catalog looking for the Scott number of a PNC? Maddening, wasn't it? PNCs are spread through several places in the book.

Now there's a handy way to find the number (if one exists). Under "Transportation Coils," the fifth edition of *Linn's Almanac* lists them by face value and gives the Scott number. And, unlike Scott, it tells you that the reissued 14¢ Iceboat has block tagging and the original is overall tagged. It cannot give the Scott number of the reissue because Scott refused to give it a number, not even a lettered one.

The almanac also includes the table *Linn's* runs with its PNC column, listing every known plate number.

Another useful feature is a compendium of postal regulations collectors may wish to look up. Unfortunately, *Linn's* did not date the regulations. They may not be the most current.

The list of national stamp clubs omits the Plate Number Coil Collectors Club, probably because PNC³ did not register itself with *Linn's*.

This is a handy book. *sgc* □

1990 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps, Scott Publishing Co., Sidney, OH. \$39.95 hard cover; \$25 soft cover.

What new developments took place in PNCs since the 1989 edition of this catalog was published in 1988? And, more important, how does the catalog deal with them?

• The 25¢ Flag stamp came out with a new type of tagging, which USPS calls prephosphored. Scott has given it an unlettered mention. It is not, according to Scott, a stamp distinct from the block-

Agris said he would wait until the rate hike before updating his PNC book.

TPN now owns a scanner, to put pictures into the computer. The illustrations are not photographs; they are always computer revised. In the past, *TPN* paid \$50 an hour for scanning. □

tagged ones.

• The 7.1¢ Tractor has had a change in the service inscription. Scott spells out the two separate inscriptions, but uses the same number for both.

There has been no change in Scott policy regarding the B Press re-issues of the 12¢ Stanley Steamer precancel or the 14¢ Iceboat. They are still not numbered, listed without a letter only as having no joint lines. This does not reflect the policy on the 8.3¢ Ambulance, where Scott assigned a separate number for the B Press version.

There has been no change in the way Scott lists precancel-only coils, such as the 5.3¢ Elevator, 7.6¢ Carreta, 8.4¢ Wheel Chair, 13¢ Patrol Wagon, 13.2¢ Coal Car, 16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon, 20.5¢ Fire Engine, 21¢ Railroad Mail Car, or 24.1¢ Tandem Bicycle. These, in Scott, are priced only as used stamps. A footnote explains that they were issued only as precancels.

This Scott practice flies in the face of how these precancels are collected.

But Scott has changed some prices (Scott only prices strips of three). Plate 1 of the 18¢ Flag declined from \$140 to \$130. Plate 3 went up from \$300 to \$350. Plate 6 is no longer priced.

Nothing has been done with the listing of FDCs. They are priced irrespective of plate number, all very cheap.

An anomaly in pricing occurs with the 2¢ Locomotive. Plate 8 is priced at 55 cents; Plate 10, at 65 cents. The plates were paired.

Another anomaly is in the pricing of the 22¢ Flag. Plate 3, which is being re-tailed around \$50, is priced at \$14.

Last year's errors in the listing of 1988 official stamps have been corrected.

All in all, this catalog will not make PNCs more understandable to the many U.S. collectors for whom it is the primary source of information. *sgc* □

Prices up sharply for Yosemite 6

Prices have been skyrocketing of late for Plate 6 of the 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite.

Many wholesalers are out of them. A wholesaler who has some was charging \$3.50 to dealers in November, then stopped all sales.

Stamps 'n' Stuff raised its retail price in November to \$15.

In addition, dealers have been deluged by orders from collectors for as many as 100 strips at a time, indicating that some hoarding may be going on.

At the ASDA show in New York in mid-November, the stamp was in great demand, as it was at World Stap Expo.

The reason for the price explosion is not so simple. The stamps had a very limited press run of less than a week, producing 843,500 impressions.

In calculating the maximum number of PNCs that could have been produced, we are faced by an inconsistency in BEP data. When this plate was assigned on Nov. 3, 1988, and again when it was sent to press on Nov. 21, 1988, BEP said the plate was 18 rows wide with 864 stamps per revolution. When the plate was canceled, on Nov. 28, BEP said the plate had 20 rows and 960 stamps per revolution.

We have calculated "Max. PNCs" for the 1990 *Plate Number Coil Catalog* on the basis of the smaller size, if only because it was reported twice.

That would mean the largest number of numbered strips could be only 7,591,500. (If the larger plate were used as the basis of computation, the "Max. PNC" would total 8,435,000.)

What is of consequence in these numbers is that 7.6 or 8.4 million strips is a very large printing for PNCs. By contrast, Plate 6 of the 22¢ Flag had only 504,324 maximum PNC strips possible.

In addition to 22F6, the other strips making up the dozen with the lowest number of strips that could be available are:

21.11T2	430,000†
5.5T1	506,610
7.1T1	521,262
5.5T2P	585,000
4.9T1P	901,350
4.9T2P	901,350
20T12	1,065,186
20T14	1,065,186
3T3	1,100,808
3T4	1,100,808
9.3T8P	1,220,994
8.5T1P	1,282,500

† indicates an estimate

The most costly of these is Plate 8 of



GETTING SCARCE—Prices climb on 25F6ii, although total printing was large.

the 9.3¢ Mail Wagon, which exists only as a precancel and of which many strips may have been used up in commercial mailings. The current average dealer's price on Plate 6 of the 22¢ Flag is \$7.92; on Plate 1 of the 5.5¢ Star Route Truck tagged it is \$1.52.

It is too early to say what the value of Plate 6 of the 25¢ Yosemite should be, but indications are that some speculation is going on.

According to Al Haake, several other values of the 25¢ Flag are becoming more difficult to find. He listed 25F5 and 25F10 phosphored and 25F9 block tagged. Dealers' price lists monitored by *TPN* do not reflect these shortages.

An electronic never-never land makes putting out *TPN* difficult

Several readers have asked how *TPN* is produced. While the first issues were produced on an obsolete Osborne computer and printed out on a daisy-wheel printer, *TPN* has been published on an Apple Macintosh since Issue 2 of Volume II.

Printing of one copy is done on an Apple LaserWriter Plus. That printout is then taken to a commercial printer for final printing and stapling.

Illustrations had us stumped at first, especially when the printer inserted a picture in the wrong place and got everyone totally confused. Originally, they were photocopies that were glued into place by the printer.

More recently, they have been electronically scanned renditions. We have to con-

Here are recent average prices from dealers' price lists:

Catalog	P8/3	P/55
25F1i	\$3.90	\$4.52
25F2i	4.00	4.63
25F2ii	N/A	5.50
25F3i	3.99	4.60
25F4i	3.79	4.39
25F5i	4.05	4.65
25F5ii	4.31	4.89
25F6ii	5.39	6.23
25F7i	4.12	4.69
25F8i	4.24	4.76
25F8ii	4.30	4.88
25F9i	4.31	4.69
25F9ii	4.56	5.16
25F10ii	3.99	4.65
25F11ii	3.99	4.44
25F13ii	3.99	4.44

Those averages of dealers' prices, however, must be viewed with some caution because there is a two- to three-week time lag between the preparation of advertising copy and its appearance in stamp journals. Further, some dealers do not update their prices very often and some of the average prices may reflect lists as old as six months.

Also, advertised prices are subject to volume discounts and dealer specials.

The only Yosemite stamps included in the *TPN Average* are 25F5i and 25F5ii.

Two new items appear on this list of prices. Plate 2 has been found on pre-tagged (phosphored) paper. Plate 13 has, too.

Many of the Plate 2 strips show only the top quarter of the plate number. Kim Cuniberti of Contemporary Coils is retailing VF strips of this variety at \$16.50. The variety will be listed in the 1990 *PNC Catalog*. □

less that all this technological change takes a lot of getting used to, not to mention that one has to learn how to use them. The ads tell you how easy to use all the programs are, but it ain't necessarily so.

And computers are not foolproof. In putting this issue together, for example, the computer went on the fritz after the first half was printed. We could not, therefore, update the table of contents on Page 1 because Page 1 had disappeared into the electronic never-never land.

So please be advised that the "Varieties" column appears on Page 22, not Page 20 as the index would have you believe.

We try to improve all the time, but sometimes the technology is beyond us. □

4.9¢ Buckboard

Double Gaps get an update

By Kim Cuniberti

This is the first update of my original article (see *TPN* January 1988) on Double Gaps in the precancel of the 4.9¢ Buckboard. I can only apologize for taking so long and leaving so many of you waiting with questions.

Part of the problem was gathering the information that would finally settle each type's relationship. We can thank Rocco Caponi for doing almost all the work himself by finally plating the first four rows and establishing the correct order of occurrence.

His work enabled me to do away with the previous Types IIa, IIb, etc. We now have the simplicity of Rows 1 through 4, which is their original position on the 18-row Cottrell plate.

The variety is generally agreed to be the result of a well-developed area of cracks at the right end of one of the precancel mats that exhibits itself in the top four rows, and only in those rows.

It is interesting to note that the mat did not show up in rows 10 to 13, where it would have been found if it were the lower left or right of the four 12x9 precancel mats that were linked together to precancel the 24x48-subject plates used on the Cottrell presses. The mats were never aligned so that Double Gaps occurred at the "off gap," the one not near the plate number.

On plates 1 and 2, we find the variety on all known gap positions: 1R, 2R, and 3R.

On plates 5 and 6, we find it on four of the seven known positions: Line, 1R, 2R, and 3R. It should be noted that it is seen on all copies of the Rain Crack and Rain Crack continuation that is found in the first two rows of Plate 5 on Gap 2R.

Scarcity is an interesting subject for these varieties, as it is influenced by reasons other than the scarcity of plate numbers. Many philatelic clerks simply rejected rolls that looked as if they were printed low enough to yield cut numbers. These were never seen by collectors. Even collectors who spotted rolls with low numbers, especially at non-philatelic windows, passed them up. Who wanted cut numbers?

Really bad rolls, which guaranteed a number on top often yielded two surprises: no plate number at all and a Double

Gap on both precancel bars. Why was this?

On a number of the Cottrell issues when large rolls from the presses were sliced, the knives were not spaced exactly the same distance apart as the printed rows. The earliest and best example of this that I recall seeing was Tom Maeder's plating of the 17¢ Electric Auto from Plates 3 and 4 using the BA precancel mat. Maeder's work clearly showed that when the knives were set only the slightest bit more closely together than the printed rows, the cuts encroached steadily on the plate numbers in each successive row until they began to split the numbers. Some examples were from rolls that were first rejected because they were too low until the efforts to plate all the BA mat rows moved collectors to check all rolls.

With the 4.9¢, it was common for the blades to show their first miscoordination at the top of the plate in the first three or four rows. So once it was established that the Double Gaps occurred on the top four rows, a great deal more attention was suddenly paid to these poorly centered rolls.

In the interim, however, many rolls were lost forever. The row that probably has survived the most often is Row 4, since it is farthest from the top and, hence, farthest from the worst "cut number" area. In second place may be Row 1 since it is most likely to be a candidate for number on top (in this case, no number at all).

Rows 3 and 4 may have been the rows most often rejected because they were in the middle. They probably just did not look good enough for whole numbers or bad enough for numbers on top.

It should be noted that although it was common to find the Double Gap rows with cut numbers, they did occur with perfectly normal numbers, too; sometimes on gap positions that were often found only with cut numbers.

Another reason for scarcity is gap position. Some gap positions that had Double Gaps were quite common. Plates 5 and 6, Gap 2R¹, for example, I believe were printed at least two times. I had examples from Row 1 well before the discovery of the Rain Crack and mine do not have the Rain Crack. It may certain-

ly be possible that mine were printed in a single press run before the Rain Crack developed, but where are the examples that show an early or a developing Rain Crack such as the ones known on the Buggy Whip crack on Plate 4? To date, there are no "early" Rain Cracks, even though the crack has been found in several places geographically.

Because of this and the time lapse, I interpret this information to indicate two separate printings with the gap at 2R. I would guess this to be one of the gaps most commonly represented in any example of Double Gaps. At the other extreme would be the 3R positions of Plates 1 and 2 and of 5 and 6.

In fact, with the current scarcity of 5 and 6 with the 3R gap, I suspect that many Double Gaps may have ended up as generic examples of Gap 3R in gap collections.

In the illustrations, the rows are arranged as they appear, with Row 1 on top. The Buckboard image has been lightened and neutralized in the areas of the bar breaks. In these examples the true gaps fall on the right stamp of each pair, the bar breaks on the left. It should be remembered that the overall lateral positioning relative to the stamps can and does fluctuate. The width of the gap itself can also be narrower (the examples pictured have a particularly wide gap spacing). The bar breaks, however, are relatively constant in width.

Here is what to look for.

Close attention should be paid to Rows 1 and 4 because both have breaks in both precancel lines. The best way to tell them apart is by paying close attention to the left end of the short line that is right of the break.

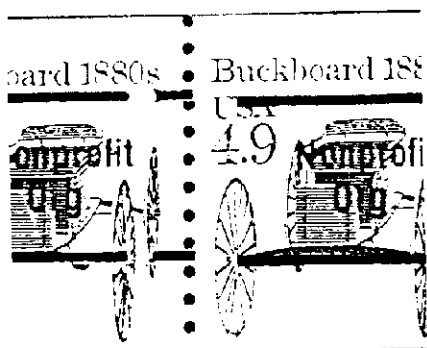
On Row 1, the left end of each piece has a pronounced tail trailing from the

Old system New system

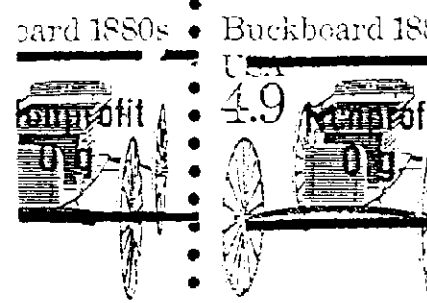
Type 1a	Row 1
Type 1c	Row 2
Type 1b	Row 3
Type 1a	Row 4
Type 1c*	
Type 1b**	

* Was erroneously thought to be different than 1c. It was the same.

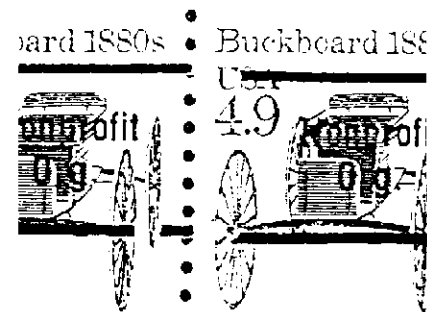
** This is a bar break, probably from the other set of mats. It is not part of this group.



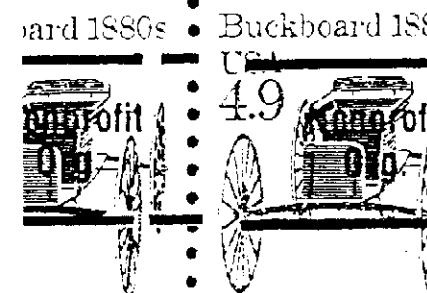
Row 1



Row 2



Row 3



Row 4

bottom left corner. On Row 4, the left end is a straight vertical. This is a subtle difference, but it differentiates two distinctly different examples.

I have seen this difference go unnoticed in more than one collection, so re-examine your examples carefully and note the new labeling system that now recognizes each variety by the row in which it is found.

It should also be noted that there are at least two other, but minor broken mat varieties. These are apparently from one or the other of the four mats because

Constant varieties found on same mats

It now appears almost certain that precancel mats used on Plates 1 and 2 and Plates 5 and 6 of the 4.9¢ Buckboard can be easily distinguished from those used for Plates 3 and 4.

As can be seen from Kim Cuniberti's adjoining article, the Double Gaps are known only on those plates. The four plates were sent to press in August 1985; Plates 3 and 4 went to press earlier.

The mats could still have been the same ones, with the Double Gaps occurring after Plates 3 and 4 were printed. A second set of mat varieties researched by Gary Davis again fails to find these on Plates 3 and 4, although they are present on the other four plates.

Davis' varieties occur just to the left of the off-gap precancel gap. Thus, on plates with the precancel gap at 1R, the varieties occur at 12L; with the gap at 2R, at 11L.

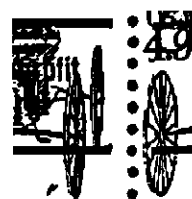
The varieties are quite similar, and may be the same. Davis calls one the "Tool on the Road." He terms the other a "Cat Scratch."

The "Tool" has been found only on Plates 1

they have been found on the "on gap" as well as the "off gap" position. By not including them here I am not trying to give them less importance. I am only trying to isolate the Double Gaps as a related group of varieties. At a later date, I plan to add them to an expanded list of 4.9¢ mat varieties.

[The four Double Gaps will be illustrated but not priced in the 1990 PNC Catalog.

Readers interested in Double Gaps are invited to write Cuniberti at P.O. Box 3654, Danbury, CT 06813-3654.] □



CAT SCRATCH—Gary Davis has circled the hole in the top line right of the gap.

and 2; the "Cat Scratch" on all four plates.

Said Davis: "Could it be that the Tool is a precursor of the Cat Scratch?" He believes this is the case. The "Tool" lacks the second short line at the top right.

In both varieties he notes a small hole in the top precancel line in the stamp to the right, about 5mm right of the gap.

Both marks are in a constant position in relation to the ends of the precancel lines. □

5 experts ponder iffy FDCs, but solve nothing

The December 1989 issue of *The United States Specialist* had a special section on the problem of FDCs with plate numbers issued after the grace period for servicing FDCs.

Contributors included George W. Brett, research philatelist of the Bureau Issue Association; Allison W. Cusick, a member of the expertizing committee of the American First Day Cover Society; Ed Denson, a dealer in PNC FDCs; Ken Lawrence, the PNC columnist for *Linn's*, and Dr. Robert Rabinowitz, a PNC dealer.

Unfortunately, the five articles solve nothing because U.S. FDCs are collected three ways:

- As first-day covers mailed on the day of issue. This is done by a tiny minority.
- As cacheted "souvenirs" (Brett's term) showing the stamp and cancel as an appendage to the cachet. These never go through the mail, show no addressee, and are the subject of the current controversy. Most AFDCS members collect only these, the covers usually referred to in the United States as FDCs.

- As unofficial FDCs, bearing the stamp issued on the day of issue with a cancel to indicate that it was actually canceled that day.

This cancel never reads "First Day of Issue." Such covers also lack an addressee and are usually created by hand-back service.

Most disappointing is the lack of guidance from AFDCS. Cusick said the following tests should determine whether an FDC is "unreal."

- Whether the stamp was on sale in the first-day city on the day of the cancel.

- Whether the stamp was available to collectors during the USPS grace period for submission of FDCs.

In the case of the precanceled 6¢ Bicycle, AFDCS determined that the precancels were not on sale at Childs, Md., based on a letter from the postmistress. On that basis, the committee declined to sign such a cover as genuine. But it did not rule the cover fraudulent.

Denson said any FDC, fraudulent or not, is collectible. He abhors the idea that the government or anyone else should tell collectors what is genuine or not and bristles at the very idea of USPS setting rules on what a collector should collect.

Dr. Rabinowitz said the new USPS rules would be difficult to enforce if white-out or paste-overs were used. □

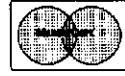
PNC VARIETIES

Table with columns: No., Face, Plate #, Description, Size, Price. Lists various stamp varieties and their prices.

Table with columns: No., Face, Plate #, Description, Size, Price. Continuation of stamp varieties and their prices.

Untruncated "1"
Honeybee First Printing: PS/5 \$20.
Free with \$75 purchase
Same, Bee out of frame, PS/5 \$30.

STAMPS 'N' STUFF
2700 University, Suite 204,
W. Des Moines, IA 50265
Jerry & Barb Koeppe
(515) 224-1737 or 1-800-899-1869
Phone Orders Call Collect
LOWEST PRICES AVAILABLE
Please order by number in this ad. Payment with order, please. Prices subject to change without notice. Deduct 10% on orders over \$150.



Letters: This is Happy Hunting at its best

Continued from Page 2

same suggestion to the 10.1¢ Oil Wagon. The precancels with lines don't need a suffix. A single "i" for the overprint in red would suffice.

Alan Thomson
Northwood, N.H.

In reply: Several readers gave their ideas about how to handle this situation. The first draft of the catalog will show an "R" for all re-issued or revised stamps (such as the B press versions of Cottrell stamps) and reserve the "i" for changes in tagging or the precancel.

Also, several readers have urged that the *PNC Catalog*, since it is an "encyclopedia" of PNCs (their words), should at least mention the existence of half-gap precancels. Since this is the catalog that listens, that's the way it will be done. The half gaps will not be priced.

TPN an 'encyclopedia'

I don't know how you could possibly make a profit on *TPN*. Considering the work involved, you must be very dedicated to the study of PNCs. Whatever the reason, please do not stop publishing *TPN*. It has been my PNC "encyclopedia." I have bound them together by years and several articles resemble a text book with highlighting across dates and needed data. Thank you!

On a similar topic, have you considered printing a hard-bound issue of the *PNC Catalog*? I find it hard to keep mine from falling apart for a full year. Just thought I'd ask.

Edward Gould
Roscommon, Mich.

In reply: I've thought of it, but that's

all. The cost of so doing would be beyond my means. But here is a possible way out: Why not buy two catalogs, keeping one posted and up to date and leaving a second on the book shelf to keep it intact?

...and a letter in absentia

Ken Lawrence has submitted an eight-page letter to answer letters in the last issue.

In brief, he charged that words he never said were attributed to him and that views he does not hold were also.

Lawrence said that he does not deny the existence of paper types and that he believes Type I paper shows more than one subtype. He broke down stamps with PVA (polyvinyl acetate, or dull) gum into four types.

TPN will reopen the discussion of paper types when new research reports are received; but personal attacks will be edited out.

As Karen Maddox said at World Stamp Expo: "This negativity has got to stop because new people are coming in and are subscribing to everything. They are asking, 'Why is this guy so mad at that guy?'"

In light of the above, TPN reserves the right to edit letters. Space limitations may result in condensation. All letters are welcome. Share your discoveries; voice your views. Write.

Kim Cuniberti

5 new lists available:

- Cottrell gaps
- B Press gaps
- Paper types
- 4.9¢ double gaps
- Honeybee D Press plate number strips with seam lines

Contemporary Coils
P.O. Box 3654
Danbury, CT 06813

Yosemite Flags from Plate 2 show up on pretagged paper

Plate 2 of the 25¢ Yosemite has been found on rolls of 500 and 3,000 on pretagged paper. The plate had been known previously on block-tagged paper.

Said Kim Cuniberti, who reported the find, "This is obviously an indication that this plate was sent back to press."

Cuniberti also found a variety on Plate 2 in which two-thirds to three quarters of the bottom of the plate number is missing, leaving only the top loop of the "2."

Also reported recently were Plate 2 of the 13.2¢ Coal Car and Plate 13 (pretagged) of the Yosemite.

The Yosemite 13s are apparently printed on the C Press or D Press because they are in rolls of 100.

Plate 1 of the Coal Car was printed on the B Press. No data yet on Plate 2. The rolls are 500 and 3,000, but they could be from 18-row C Press plates. □

ADLETS

Classified ads are 15 cents a word. There is no charge for your address. Members of PNC³ are entitled to one 25-word free ad-let each year.

HONEYBEE COIL official cacheted show card. Waterbury Fancy Cancel "Large Bee" franked with Honeybee Coil PMS5, \$5 each. Available 01/28/90. Send order to: Waterbury Stamp Club, P.O. B. 581, Waterbury, CT 06720. (1-90)

UNTAGGED ERRORS: Breadwagon, Yosemite, others for trade or sale. Untagged coils on commercial covers on approval. Buying tag varieties. TAG SHIFT HARRY Muegggenburg, 3525 Bluff Court, Carmichael, CA 95608. (5-90)

PNC FDCC: Hand-colored, numbered, 50 or less of each made; list for SASE to Anagram, 6301 Poindexter, Rockville, MD 20852. (2-90)

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. (5-90)

JOIN PNC! Get valuable discounts from dealers and Coil Line. Send SASE and \$10 to Eric Russow, P.O. Box 7386, Des Moines IA 50309. (1-90)

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

FULL WEIGHT, original serif #1, 25¢ Honeybee, C Press. F-VF PS/5 \$18 (PNC discount \$17.50) XF PS/5 \$20. Send SASE. Richard J. Nazar, 34 Nottingham Way, Somerset, NJ 08873. (1-90)

MICHEL 1989 Specialized U.S. Catalog, in German. \$39.50. Special to *TPN* readers: \$30.00. Includes 8-page guide in English to its use. Prices all PNCs in PS/3 and PS/5, including all precancels. Also prices U.S. se-tenant issues. Order now, before they sell out again! Complete Lighthouse PNC album in 2 binders, \$300. Steve Esrail, P.O. Box 20130, Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

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Back to basics: Why so much data?

Is it possible to make the information about the production of PNCs more digestible? That's the tall order from reader David Hendricks in Dallas.

Let's consider the reasons why the information is of any concern to PNC collectors in the first place.

The assigned size of a plate helps us to know what the interval between plate numbers should be. That information later comes in handy when we are trying to gauge how many PNCs might exist (knowing that any figure we calculate is a maximum because printers' waste is included in the total).

That brings up a question. What is printer's waste?

Let's assume, for the sake of discussion, that BEP wants to test the printed color of an ink. To get a sample to the laboratory, a stamp in that color needs to be printed, and not just one stamp, either.

To check properly on printing color, a full-speed run is needed because inking is usually imperfect at the start of a press run. That means that if a royal blue color is wanted, the pressmen may put any plate on the press, put royal blue ink in the well, and run it. It matters not whether the printed stamp is a royal blue 25¢ Bread Wagon or a 20.5¢ Fire Engine.

But when the impression totals are reported, the figure may include that royal blue run of Bread Wagons or Fire Engines, even though the stamps never go outside the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Strictly speaking, though, this is not printers' waste.

True waste is the result of a startup in which the colors have not quite taken, or when the perforators are not on line, or when the tagging compound has yet to be placed on the press, or when the paper tears, or when any other unforeseen happening occurs that causes spoilage.

All those impressions are also included in the totals, even though the stamps are usually shredded at the Bureau.

The date of plate assignment is not of great consequence to us as collectors. But it does act as a check against later information. It should also tell us (if our information is accurate) which press will be used for that plate.

Theoretically, it is impossible for a press run to start if the plate or sleeve has not even been assigned yet. Similarly, a press run cannot take place after a sleeve or plate has been canceled.

The assignment date also gives us another important clue to help us analyze BEP's reports of plate activity. It gives the full plate number. This is now reported as a six-digit number followed by a suffix: 179934-1 identifying Plate 1 of the 25¢ Flag Over Yosemite.

The suffix appears on the stamp as what we incorrectly call a "plate number." It is the suffixes that now appear on sheet stamps and booklets, not full plate numbers.

The most important component of BEP information is the date a plate is sent to press. This helps us search for and confirm the correctness of earliest usages and also provides clues as to paper type and tagging gaps.

We now know that certain papers were used no earlier than a certain date and not later than another date. Similarly, we know when BEP used smaller tagging mats that resulted in vertical tagging gaps.

In some cases, both characteristics can help check whether a used strip or cover is genuine. The cancel cannot be before our earliest known dates for these phenomena. This may help spot some FDCs that are under a cloud as to their legitimacy.

Having the "to press" information also points out stamps we should re-examine in the hope of finding new papers or new tagging gaps.

Finally, we get an impression total at the time BEP cancels a plate. This is not always a clue to rarity, but it helps.

An example where it is not useful is the 10.9¢ Hanson Cab, where printings of Plates 3 and 4 were much, much larger than the combined printing of tagged and precanceled stamps from Plates 1 and 2. Yet the market prices Plates 3 and 4 among the rarities and relegates Plates 1 and 2 to the relatively common.

We do not believe that the Plate 3 and 4 totals are inflated by huge runs of waste. What is more probable is that large quantities of these stamps saw actual use by large mailers, and few mint strips were spared for collectors. This also leads us to suspect that there may be some precancel gaps we have never seen.

Another facet that can also distort the price from the expectation we may get from the impression total is whether dealers were able to lay in large stores at the time the stamps were on sale.

Several stamps issued since 1985 have had quite limited production, but stocks on hand have been adequate to meet all collector needs, so the prices are modest despite the low printing.

An example of this is the tagged 21.1¢ Letters strip bearing the numbers 111121. It saw limited production, but one major wholesaler still has adequate stocks of them on hand. We estimate the maximum number of PNCs available at 430,000.

Another is Plate 6 of the 22¢ Flag, with an impression total of only 56,036, or a maximum of 504,324 strips. These stamps had very limited geographic distribution, but dealers were able to stash away hoards of rolls of 3,000.

Of course, BEP statistics are not for everyone. Many collectors are probably happy to ignore them and hope that the information we have obtained from them is accurate.

But for the student, every snippet of information helps us to know more about our stamps. Sometimes, as the information is absorbed, someone can say "Eureka!" because he has just put two and two together and come up with a startling four.

Thus it was when Lee Warzala pursued Kim Curberti's challenge on papers, colors and precancel gaps of the 12.5¢ Pushcart. He found two distinct precancel mats and they are now going to be catalogued. □

SPECIALS

18F1	PS/3	\$125
18F1	PS/5	400
20F2	Footprints	
	Strip of 5	20
20F14	Q line,	15
22F3	PS/5	40
22F6	Saucer	25
1T6	Crack 1R,	6
2T3	Smoking t	15
2T3	Continuation	15
2T3	Tail on t	10
2T8	2 lumps	15
2T1R	Spike, 5, no #	12.50
3T1R	Blazing	25
3T1R	1st cont up	25
3T1R	2d cont up	25
4T2	Quotes	4
4.9T4	Whip (long)	12.50
4.9T4	Whip, gap 2L	16.50
4.9T4	Whip, gap 1L	16.50
4.9T4	Whip, Ln gap	17.50
4.9T4	Whip, No gap	17.50
4.9T5	Rain, matching pair, gap 2R, cut #	100
4.9T6	Rein, gap 2R	50
5.2T2	Whip 1, No gap	75
5.2T4	Gap 3 1/2 XF	25
same	VF	19
same	average	12
5.2T6	Gap 3 1/2 XF	25
same	VF	19
same	average	12
5.2T4	Hash mark slight stain, PS/9	35
6T1	Blobs	6
7.4T2	Blown tire, no #	50
8.3T1	Whole low #	35
8.3T1	PC, Ln gap, No # (low)	35
8.3T1	PC, gap 1R, whole low #	35
9.3T5	PS/4 VF	175
9.3T6	PS/4 VF	175
9.3T5	Hash mark, gap 3L, PS/10	50
9.3T6	Hash mark, gap 3L, PS/10	50
10.1T	Hyphen	15
10.1T	Shell I	22.50
10.1T	Dot over OIL	12.50
10.1T	Hyphen PC	15
10.1T	Shell I PC	22.50
10.1T	Shell III PC	25
10.1T	Parrot PC	22
10.1T	Sprouting 1	15
10.9T	#2 P/C low transfer PS/8	80
10.9T	#3 PS/3 VF, Ln	400
10.9T	#4 PS/3 XF, Ln	475
11T1	Brake shoe	12.50
11T1	same, PC	12.50
11T1	Hoseline I PC	25
11T1	Hoseline II, PS/3	25
16.7T	Spilled corn	15
18T1	Lightning	125
18T9	Lightning	25
18T10	Lightning	25
20T15	Wounded P	25

All are strips of 5 unless other is stated. Condition is VF or better. Many other varieties in stock. Ask.

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After you've shopped the rest, Shop with the best.

Since this slogan came out in the 1989 *Plate Number Coil Catalog*, I was swamped. So, another slogan. I need a good leader: FDC Artcraft PS/5, Scott O135, \$25.00.

Same, but Scott O139, pair, \$20.00. KMC cover with PS/3, no plate number, \$6.00.

Rare find: Scott 1908, Fire Pumper, Numbers 1-16 complete on #7 cover addressed to the Gas Service Co. Postmarked in 1982. \$250.00. (1/2 of catalog price.)

22¢ Flag, #7 or #14, PS/5, VF-XF, \$12.00.

Yosemite Phosphored #6, very hard to find, probably a sleeper, \$12.50. (2 to a customer).

Scott 1903a, precanceled, PS/5, VF+, Number 8, \$95.00.

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Order by lot number. No 'Rain checks.' Send check or money order to: Lee Warzala, 10 St. Mary's Court, Springfield, IL 62702. (217) 753-4045 to check availability.

LOT	DESCRIPTION
1.	20¢ Pumper #2, PS-5, F-VF. \$450 ⁰⁰
2.	18¢ Flag #1, PS-7, F-FV, No gum, damaged. \$80 ⁰⁰
3.	12.5¢ Pushcart #1, Type I paper, PS-5, F-VF, 100 copies. \$125 ⁰⁰
4.	12.5¢ Pushcart #1, Type I paper, XF, PS-5, 25 copies. \$40 ⁰⁰
5.	12.5¢ Pushcart #1, Type II paper, PS-5, F-VF, 30 copies. \$30 ⁰⁰
6.	11¢ Stutz #1, PS-5, F-VF, 50 copies. \$50 ⁰⁰
7.	11¢ Stutz #1, PS-5, XF, 10 copies. \$15 ⁰⁰
8.	11¢ Stutz #2, PS-5, F-VF, 50 copies. \$50 ⁰⁰
9.	11¢ Stutz #2, PS-5, XF, 15 copies. \$20 ⁰⁰
10.	18¢ Flag #2, PS-3, Average. \$7 ⁰⁰
11.	20¢ Pumper #8, PS-2, F-VF, gum disturbed. \$7 ⁰⁰
12.	17¢ Auto P/C Type A #3 & #4, F-VF, Line gap, PS-6, 3 sets. \$16 ⁰⁰
13.	17¢ Auto P/C Type B #3, PS-5, Ave.-Fine, 2 copies, \$20 ⁰⁰
14.	20¢ Flag #14, PS-5, VF, 3 copies. \$4.50
15.	4¢ Stagecoach P/C #3 & #4, PS-8, Line gap, XF-S. \$10 ⁰⁰
16.	4¢ Stagecoach P/C #3, PS-5, 2L gap, F-VF, 3 copies. \$3 ⁰⁰
17.	4¢ Stagecoach P/C #5 PS-5, 1L gap, F-VF, 3 copies. \$6 ⁰⁰
18.	4¢ Stagecoach P/C #6 PS-5, Line gap, F-VF. \$2 ⁰⁰
19.	Used 10.9¢ P/C #3 & #4, singles, Machine cut. \$40 ⁰⁰
20.	Used 5.2¢ Sleigh P/C #5, singles, Line gap, 2 copies. \$30 ⁰⁰
21.	Used 5.2¢ Sleigh P/C #3, single, 1L gap. \$15 ⁰⁰
22.	4.9¢ #3 & #4, PS-3, F-VF, Venture FD covers. \$12 ⁰⁰
23.	4.9¢ #3, PS-3, and #4, PS-2, on one Artmaster FDC, VF-XF. \$15 ⁰⁰
24.	Wandering Bee on Reg. cover, no plate number, 11-14-88. \$3 ⁰⁰

Constant plate and mat varieties—Part XXV

By A.S. Cibulskas

2¢ Locomotive (B Press)

- a. Scratch off bottom loop of the "8" in "1870s." Constant at 24L.
 - b. Dot under first "L" in "Locomotive." Constant at 11L.
 - c. Dot under "A" of "USA." Constant at 7L.
 - d. Dot under first "o" of "Locomotive." Constant at 5L.
 - e. Dot under "e" of "Locomotive." Constant at 3L.
 - f. Dot over "t" of "Locomotive." Constant at 2L.
 - g. Dot to right of "s" in "1870s." Constant at 9R.
 - h. Scratch off top loop of the "2." Constant at 18R.
 - i. Dot to the right of the "2." Constant at 24R.
- NOTE: All of the above are in the same row of Plate 1. (SAdams)
- j. Dot over and between the "o" and "c" of "Locomotive." Constant at 2L. (Nazar)

Greenwood loses imperf duplicates

Dr. John P. Greenwood took his collection to show friends at STaMpsHOW.

An envelope containing imperforate strips of six, all trading material, disappeared. Dr. Greenwood does not know if it was stolen.

Among the missing were four strips of 13.2T1P; one strip of 16.7T1P, and six strips of 22F1. □

5.2¢ Sleigh

- a. Plate 2 tagged. Crack at the joint line and parallel to it. Extends through about the middle third of the stamp. Constant at 1L. (Courtney)
- b. Plate 2 precancel. Crack by the "h" of "Sleigh." Constant at 1L.

13¢ Police Wagon

- a. Plate 1. Dot under the right wheel. Constant at 11L. (Koepp)

13.2¢ Coal Car

- a. Plate 1. Inking variety. Approximately 3mm of left end of the track is missing. Constant at 3L. (DThompson)

16.7¢ Popcorn Wagon

- a. Dot over wheel. Constant at 26L.
 - b. Dot under large wheel. Constant at 20L.
 - c. Slash over the "2" in "1902." Constant at 15L.
 - d. Slash over "n" in "Popcorn." Constant at 5L.
 - e. Dot over wagon. Constant at 10R.
 - f. Dot over the "0" in "1902." Constant at 23R.
 - g. Gouge in the "1" of "1902." Constant at 24R.
- NOTE: All of the above are in the same row of Plate 1. Some of them had been reported previously as separate varieties. (SAdams)

20¢ Fire Pumper

- a. Plate 15. Crack parallel to the joint line at 1L. Starts at the top edge and continues for about 20% of the way down. Constant. (Nazar)

20¢ Flag

- a. Plate 2. Multiple ink splatters at 2L and 1R, mainly around the "USA" and "20¢" on both positions. Also, along the flagpole and through the Supreme Court building on 1R. Constant. (Nazar)

20¢ Cable Car

- a. Plate 1. Blister on the stem of the "1" of "1880s." Constant at 15L.

22¢ Flag

- a. Blue plate numbers. In addition to previous plate numbers noted for this inking variety, the following numbers have also been confirmed: 8, 18, 19, and 22. (Koepp)

25¢ Honeybee

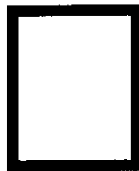
- a. "Blade of Grass" variety. Several very recent reports have been received of a vertical green line, parallel to double seam lines on Honeybee issues. To date, these lines have all been reported at 1R relative to the seam lines. When found, they are constant in the roll next to all seam line positions. Also to date, they have been reported in the following seam line positions on Plate 2: 8L, 10L, 9R, Line. Of the copies examined, the green lines are between 8mm and 12mm long (Hence, they are readily obvious) and vary, but very minimally, in their vertical position. As more reports and examples are received, a more detailed report may evolve (Multiple reports) □

Stephen G. Esrati
P. O. Box 20130
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