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WHOLE NUMBER 1142

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plus

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and

The Great Americans, Part XI— Intentionally Untagged Stamps, Rotary Coil Press Maps Part II, & more.

VOLUME 96, NUMBER 4 APRIL 2025

United States Stamp Society
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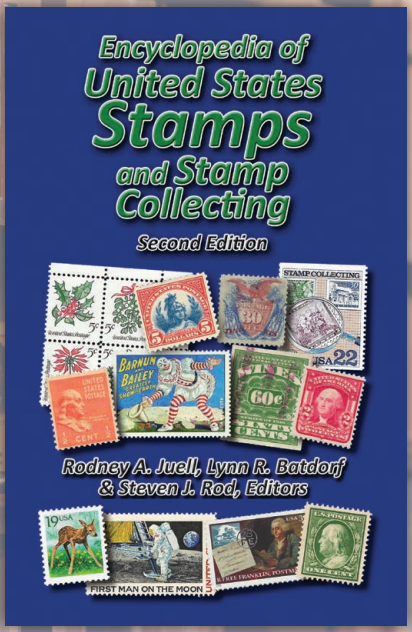

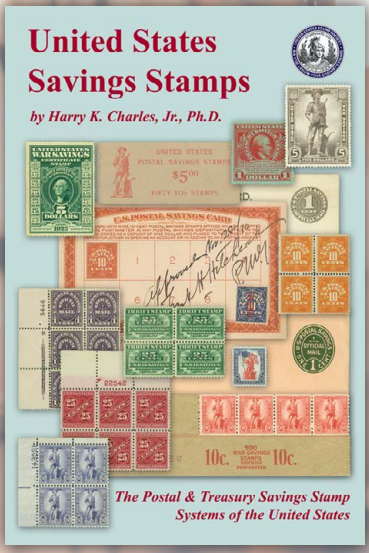

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An association of collectors to promote the study of all postage and revenue stamps and stamped paper of the United States and US-administered areas produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and other contract printers.

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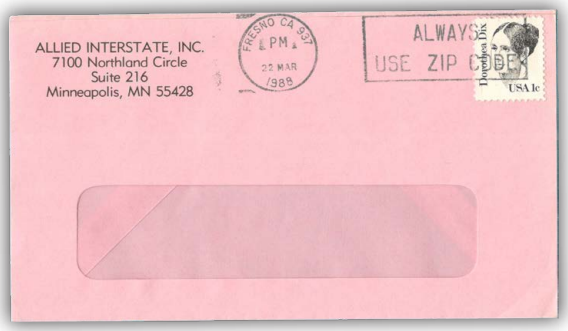

Features

Epilogue

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The following names were inadvertently omitted in the March 2025 issue due to a clerical error by the Executive Secretary. I apologize for the oversight and any resultant disappointment—we sincerely appreciate your contributions! We have now also added donations in February and early March. —Bob Rufe

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Rotary Press Printing at the BEP

New Perspectives on Rotary Coil Stamp Production Via "Press Maps" (BEP Fiscal Years 1914–1925), Part II

by **Nancy Robinson, PhD and James Robinson**
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Part I of this series described the construction of a novel analytical tool called a Press Map. In this second article of the series, Press Maps developed by these authors are analyzed on a macro level to demonstrate what production information can be gleaned through press mapping. For this example-study, all BEP rotary coil stamp production during fiscal years 1919 to 1925 was analyzed. The results confirm many of Cleland's insights while also revealing the following new details regarding production of rotary coil stamps:

I. The rotary coil stamp presses were rarely idle, but breakdowns and repair periods do occur and can be identified.
II. Starting with three rotary coil presses in July 1918, dates can be determined when new coil presses were added to the Postage Stamp Division, until reaching seven presses in operation by 1924.
III. The start and stop dates in Cleland's raw data do not accurately reflect actual production workdays. Overlaps in setup, along with Sundays, holidays, and repair periods, impact actual production workdays.
IV. Multiple attempts to run plates at press with alternative companion plates were sometimes necessary to successfully initiate a capacity print run.
V. Plate pairs were occasionally not returned to the plate vault after a successful print run. The extended period at press could last for months of non-production.
VI. Plates were occasionally sent to press and returned to the plate vault without printing stamps.

These *new perspectives* and findings are detailed below using small portions (called snippets) of the much larger overall maps.

Finding I: The Rotary Coil Stamp Presses Were Rarely Idle

What is meant by idle is that no plate pairs were logged *at press* during the period available for mounting on a press. Figure 6 shows a rare instance during which Press C was idle in FY 1919. Press C may have required repairs during the 20-workday idle period shaded white in Figure 6. Inspection of the print records offers support that Press C was undergoing repairs. 1¢ plate pair 9151 & 9152 had been certified on February 11, 1919, seven calendar days prior to Press C going idle (February 18, 1919). Therefore, if Press C had been functional, this plate set was available for mounting on the press. Instead, this set of plates was mounted on Press C on March 14, 1919, the first day Press C was again in use. Knowing the constant pressure the BEP was under to deliver coil stamps,[8] it is likely that, if functional, Press C would have printed stamps using these certified 1¢ plates. Further proof that Press C was nonfunctional is the fact that there were multiple sets of 2¢ and 3¢ plates also certified and available to be mounted on Press C on February 18, 1919, when it was first idled.

Additional evidence suggesting Press C was undergoing repairs during this idle period comes from analysis of the plate pair mounted on the press just prior to the idle period. Per Cleland's raw data, the first and only *to press period* for plates 9141 & 9142 was February 11, 1919, through February 17, 1919. But the Press Map illustrates more accurately that after the overlap period, the plates were mounted on Press C for only two production days before the press was idled. These two plates, 9141 & 9142, were never *sent to press* again and they were *canceled* on March 19, about one month after being sent back to the vault. It is very unusual for a plate pair to be canceled after such a short run-life unless the plates were damaged. The evidence suggests that a malfunction occurred that damaged both the plates and Press C. The plates were removed and ultimately canceled, and the press required repairs that took 20 workdays to complete.

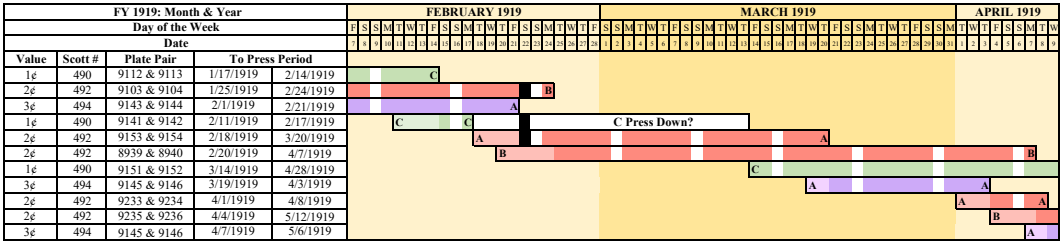


Figure 6. Figure 6. Press Map Snippet for BEP FY 1919 showing Press C idle from February 18 through March 13, losing twenty working days (24 calendar days) during which the press was not making impressions.

Inspection of the full Press Maps spanning the seven years of BEP rotary coil stamp production from FY 1919–FY 1925 reveals there were only five idle periods longer than two working days (Table 3). This observation supports the conclusion that the coil stamp rotary presses were continuously printing material to keep up with increasingly heavy production demands. The short four to five working day idle periods listed in Table 3 most likely represented times that individual presses required repair or maintenance.

Regarding the 24-workday idle period at the beginning of FY 1921 (see Table 3), there is evidence that it may reflect maintenance on all three rotary coil stamp presses instead of just one. The reason for this suggestion is found in a BEP internal departmental

Fiscal Year	Idle Period		Working Days Idle
	Start	End	
1919	2/18/1919	3/13/1919	20
1921	7/9/1920	8/5/1920	24
1922	7/25/1921	7/28/1921	4
	10/5/1921	10/10/1921	5
1923	2/28/1923	3/4/1923	4

Table 3. Summary of rotary coil stamp press idle periods longer than two working days.

memorandum dated March 26, 1920.[9] In the memo, the BEP Assistant Director wrote the following to the attention of the BEP Director:

> … and as I advised you verbally, we are about to put in first class condition the rotary presses printing stamps for coils, which have been running for a long time without adequate repairs…

Despite this assurance given in March, a review of the Press Map covering March through July of 1920 shows no idle period occurred until July 9–August 5. It may be pertinent that July 1, 1920, began the new fiscal year, an opportune time to "get the factory floor into top working order" for the coming year. Considering the announced intention to perform maintenance on all three coil stamp presses, it is possible that during this extended 24-workday period, each of the three presses was idled in turn for approximately one week per press. If so, for production quantity calculations, note that the total production days within the interval do *not* change, simply the presses upon which the production occurred.

To manage this theoretical scenario, after the first eight days, a different press may have been idled, and the pairing indicated for that press was removed and re-mounted on the freshly refurbished machine. In other words, the two plate sets *at press* during this time frame may have been switched back and forth between idled and non-idled presses to allow repairs to all three machines while always maintaining production on two of the presses. But, because the BEP print records do not record which specific press the plates were mounted upon while *at press*, it is not possible to determine the exact scenario in this case. However, in summary, regardless of whether the refurbishing was performed on only one press or all three presses in turn, the plates that were *on press* during this period made impressions on only two of the three total presses.

Finding II: Periodically, New Rotary Coil Presses were added to the Postage Stamp Division

Cleland reported that three rotary coil presses were in operation in April of 1917 (see Table 2 in Part I). The current study confirms that the use of three presses remained unchanged at the end of FY 1918 (through June 30, 1918). The new FY 1919 and FY 1920 Press Maps also show only three presses in operation for both years. Figure 7 shows the period when the fourth coil press, Press D, was finally added during FY 1921, on or about

September 28, 1920. Looking at the end of October in the snippet, a four-bar "stack" of four presses running simultaneously nicely illustrates the production. After Press D was added, all four presses were actively making impressions through the time that the next press was added at the end of August 1921.

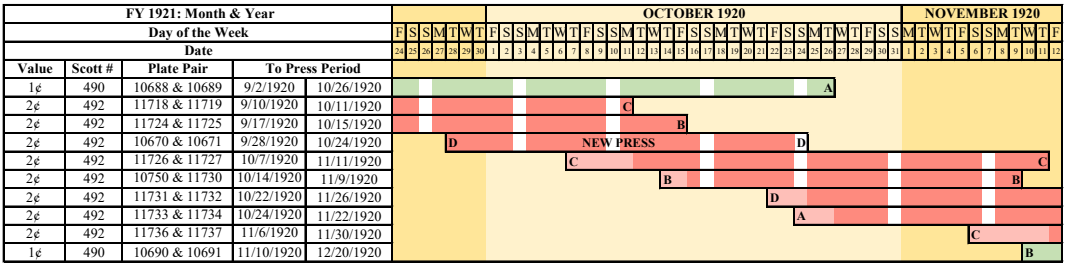


Figure 7. Press Map snippet for BEP FY 1921 showing the addition of Press D on September 28, 1920.

Table 4 presents the installation sequence for the four new coil presses put in operation at the BEP facility during the period studied. Added to Cleland's original three, the total was now seven. Regarding the precise date a new press was added, it is important to understand that there may be minor alternative interpretations of the data (see press assignment parameters section in Part I). Occasionally, two or more plate sets began within a few days of one another and the start-up of a new press. This becomes more likely when five to seven presses are running. In these cases, a choice had to be made regarding which press run best fit the need for the new press, based on the various assignment parameters.

However, what is clear from the Press Maps is that within a very short time range surrounding a designated start-up date (a month or less), a new rotary coil press had to

Fiscal Year	# of Coil Stamp Presses	Start Date	End Date	% of FY	# of Presses in Use during the FY
1919	3	7/1/1918	6/30/1919	100	3
1920	3	7/1/1919	6/30/1920	100	3
1921	3	7/1/1920	9/27/1920	25	3.75
	4	9/28/1920	6/30/1921	75	
1922	4	7/1/1921	8/28/1921	16	4.84
	5	8/29/1921	6/30/1922	84	
1923	5	7/1/1922	9/22/1922	23	5.77
	6	9/23/1922	6/30/1923	77	
1924	6	7/1/1923	2/3/1924	60	6.40
	7	2/4/1924	6/30/1924	40	
1925	7	7/1/1924	6/30/1925	100	7

Table 4. Summary of Rotary Coil Stamp Presses in Use for FY 1919–FY 1925.

be added to the production facility for there to be enough presses to accommodate the plate pairs continually *sent to press* afterward.

Finding III: The Start and Stop Dates in Cleland's Raw Data do not Accurately Reflect Actual Production Workdays

Set-up overlaps, Sundays, holidays, and repairs impact the actual production output. This finding may already be self-evident, but it is worth mentioning. The authors hope that readers are now familiar with the Press Map concept and examples of its analytical power and have been convinced to trust it. If so, it is important to note that many past articles cited Cleland's information in various ways, particularly when delineating press runs for specific plates being studied by each researcher. But if the discussion also claims that the entire period between the "Cleland dates" represents actual continuous production of stamps, it is inaccurate.

Therefore, the broader point of this finding is this: the value of Wallace Cleland's incredible achievement in compiling plate-record and print history data from BEP records cannot be overstated. Now, applying press mapping of overlaps, Sundays, holidays, repair periods, etc., for all the rotary production during this era, Cleland's data is further refined to reflect the actual workdays of production for any rotary plate. When future articles by other authors require detailed discussion of production, the Press Map tool should be applied to the data in question to make an accurate determination.

Finding IV: Sometimes Multiple Attempts Were Required to Successfully Initiate a Capacity Print Run

Cleland noted that unsuccessful attempts to run plate pairs occurred (abortive runs, see bullet point 3 in the Collating Print Histories Chronologically: Working with Cleland's Data section in Part I of this series). This phenomenon continued from FY 1919–1925. Figure 8 illustrates a time where Press C and Press A show multiple short, abortive runs. Analysis of the print records for the plates involved tells the following story:

Press C:

- Figure 8, Press Map line 1 shows Press C finishing a successful run of the 2¢ rotary coil stamp on December 13, 1919.
- Line 4 in the map shows a less than one-day abortive run (December 13, 1919) on Press C. The run is interpreted as less than one day (abortive) because December 12 and December 13 overlapped the previous plate pair mounted and running on Press C. Plate 10385 seems to have caused the aborted run, as this plate was canceled two days later, on December 15, 1919. Sudden cancellation usually indicated either direct damage or a manufacturing defect such as warping during plate bending, which caused the plate to run "out of balance." Its partner plate, 10384, was soon sent to press again and is discussed in the "Press A" section below.
- Line 5 of the map illustrates a successful, but shortish (~two week) run of the 1¢ rotary coil issue. Examination of the print record shows that line 5 was the second at press period for this plate pair. Ultimately, the combined time at press for this plate pair approached the statistical average 20.6 workday life for rotary coil stamp press plates in FY 1920. Thus, as the map confirms, during the second run, the plates

reached their "useful plate life." "Useful plate life" is another term for "production impression capacity."

- Further evidence for the shortened run shown on line 5 is supplied at line 8, where a new pair of 1¢ plates is switched out on the press. If the line 5 pairing had not reached final capacity, there is no justification for its premature removal. Line 8 also shows that the replacement set of 1¢ plates only ran for three workdays (the logged at press time minus the overlap from line 5). Plate 10349 was apparently the problem this time, as this plate was canceled the day it was removed from the press (December 31, 1919). However, the partner plate, 10350, was successfully sent to press later with another plate (10361) in February of 1920 (not shown in Figure 8).
- Line 9 on the map shows that yet another set of 1¢ plates was mounted on Press C, and this set also ran for an abbreviated interval, only about one week, before being destroyed.

Press A:

- Line 2 shows Press A completing a successful press run.
- Line 6 is a three-workday unsuccessful run after which plate **10387** was canceled. Its partner plate **10386** remained at the press and immediately ran again in Line 7 with a new partner.
- Line 7 is a successful press run that paired plate **10384** (from line 4, originally on Press C) with **10386** on Press A.

Press B:

- Finally, for comparison, line 3 shows a more typical press run for the period with one set of plates paired on Press B for a total of 25 workdays. In general, this can be considered a successful "capacity production run."

Finding V: There are Two Instances of Plate Pairs that, after Removal from the Press, were not Immediately *Returned to Vault*

After removal from the press, plate pairs were *returned to the BEP plate vault,* either to be canceled or for secure storage until needed again. Regardless of the removed plates' fate, another plate pair was typically already logged into the press room, ready to be mounted once the previous pair is removed. However, during the seven fiscal years of the coil production period under study, two instances occurred where it proved impossible to mount a new plate pair *sent to press* because there was no press available.

Adding a new theoretical press to the Press Map to accommodate such plates could temporarily resolve the issue. But this decision cannot be made lightly when press mapping a production. For this to occur on the actual BEP factory production floor, a new press had to be previously purchased and installed and be immediately available for production. In addition, by tracing the continued production going forward, "penciling in" a theoretical new press would soon show clearly that there were now too many available presses or not enough plate pairs *sent to press*. The BEP was a factory with multiple production units. Attention to cost and efficiency was a hallmark of their operations. Leaving expensive machinery standing idle was not their practice. Therefore, in such a case as discussed above, the addition of another press to the Press Map was not justified.

Line #	FY 1920: Month & Year / Day of the Week / Date				
	Value	Scott #	Plate Pair	To Press Period	
1	2¢	492	10296 & 10297	11/18/1919	12/13/1919
2	2¢	492	10315 & 10316	11/25/1919	12/19/1919
3	2¢	492	10317 & 10318	12/3/1919	1/7/1920
4	2¢	492	**10384** & **10385**	12/12/1919	12/13/1919
5	1¢	490	10089 & 10203	12/13/1919	12/27/1919
6	2¢	492	**10386** & **10387**	12/19/1919	12/23/1919
7	2¢	492	**10384** & **10386**	12/23/1919	1/16/1920
8	1¢	490	**10349** & **10350**	12/26/1919	12/31/1919
9	1¢	490	10345 & 10346	12/31/1919	1/7/1920

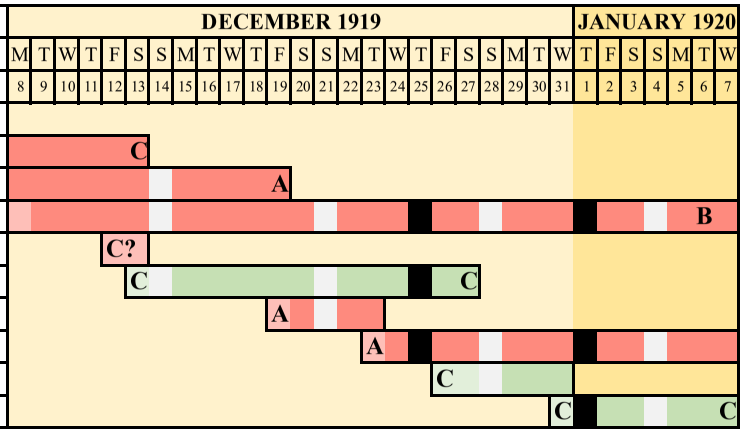


Figure 8. Press Map snippet for BEP FY 1920 showing multiple attempts to run plate pairs on Press C and Press A. Line numbers were added to the Figure to easily identify the plate pair being discussed. When a plate pair is shaded blue, the press run graphed was the last time the plates were sent to press. The plates were canceled after the press run. Plate numbers at press more than once during the period are color coded and bolded to facilitate location of the plate in the Figure. Note: To clearly illustrate the sequence of events, two plate pairs were removed from the figure from late November that did not cross into the December time frame.

It is important to note here that the "Vault Record" dates used in production mapping do not reflect plate repairs and refurbishing. That is, plate repairs and refurbishing do not provide a viable explanation for an over-extended period *at press*. Plates were not either *at press* or logged into the vault at all times. They could be sent from the vault to a different department or Division that was not associated with printing.

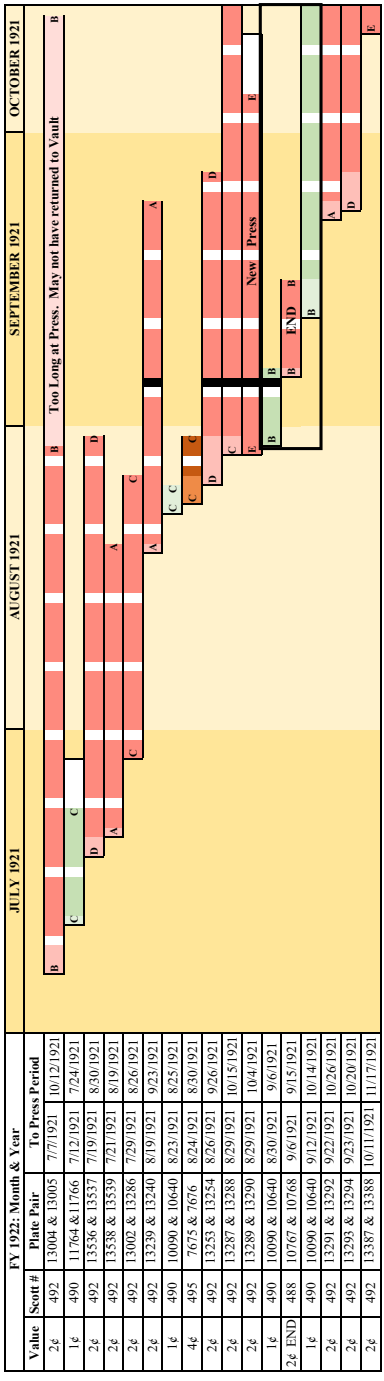
Repairs, re-engraving, refurbishing, and the making of new plates were performed by separate Divisions located elsewhere in the BEP facility. Cleland stated clearly that the vault record *at press* periods used in his compilations were precisely that; the plates were logged into the rotary press printing production department of the BEP Book and Coil Division. If a damaged plate required repairs or reconditioning, it follows that separate vault record data would show the plate logged into the Engraving or Plate Making Divisions.

Readers are reminded that these were engraved printing plates for the production of negotiable government revenue paper. The whereabouts of each individual plate was carefully tracked at all times. Thus, each plate had an associated plate-record card titled "POSTAGE STAMP PLATE" which showed all manufacturing information, including the plate number, stamp series, a description of the stamp type, number of subjects on the plate, hardness and softness test data during tempering, and dates for design transferring, machining, cleaning, engraving, proving, hardening, straightening, and as of mid-1926 chroming and re-chroming.[10] Dates for re-entry and re-certification could also appear, as well as final cancellation and destruction dates when a plate reached its "useful life" as determined by maximum impression production capacity. These myriad activities took place in various Divisions of the Bureau and were not associated with the printing. The many handwritten records of dates and labor hours spent on each activity performed suggest that when each plate traveled to another Division from the plate vault, it was accompanied by its "plate card."

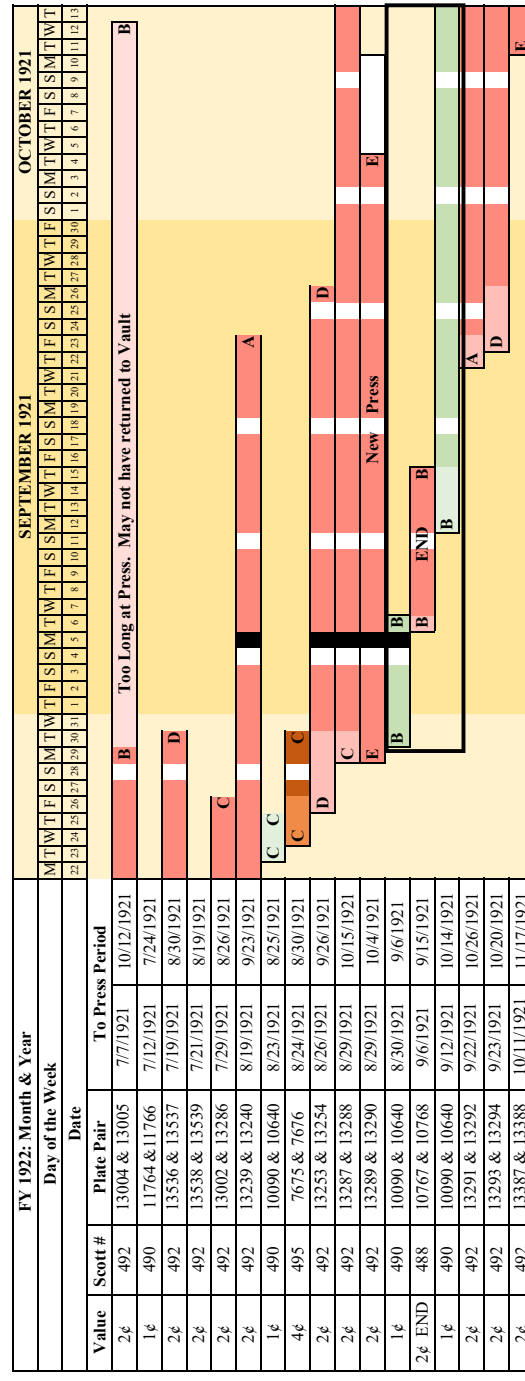
Therefore, when an apparent "temporary press shortage" appears on a Press Map (too many plates appear to be running), it indicates the strong likelihood that a plate pair had been removed from the press but had not been logged out of the production department and back into the plate vault. Figure 9 shows the first instance of such an occurrence during the era in 1921 for plate pair 13004 and 13005 (top plate pair shown in the figure). Panel A shows the full *at press period* for plates 13004 and 13005. Panel B shows the enlarged last portion of the *at press* for plates 13004 and 13005, during which it was interpreted that the plates had been removed from the press but had not been transported back to the plate vault.

Note that this production period is complex, with a new fifth press (E) coming online in the same time frame. This represents an instance where the interpretation, as described below, is not the only one possible. However, it is inarguable that the number of pairings logged *at press* was significantly greater than the number of presses available.

Three pairs are thus shown on the map as running on Press B, coinciding with the suspect time (light red shading) for the top bar in the figure. This apparent conflict suggests that the initial pair on Press B (13004 & 13005) had completed a capacity run, but the plates were not returned to the vault when the first new pair of subsequent plates (10090 & 10640) was mounted onto Press B. During this same period, a fifth rotary coil press (Press E) was in fact added, which also ran a new pair of plates to capacity and then



Value	Scott #	Plate Pair	To Press Period
2¢	492	13004 & 13005	7/7/1921 10/12/1921
1¢	490	11764 &11766	7/12/1921 7/24/1921
2¢	492	13536 & 13537	7/19/1921 8/30/1921
2¢	492	13538 & 13539	7/21/1921 8/19/1921
2¢	492	13002 & 13286	7/29/1921 8/26/1921
2¢	492	13239 & 13240	8/19/1921 9/23/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	8/23/1921 8/25/1921
4¢	495	7675 & 7676	8/24/1921 8/30/1921
2¢	492	13253 & 13254	8/26/1921 9/26/1921
2¢	492	13287 & 13288	8/29/1921 10/15/1921
2¢	492	13289 & 13290	8/29/1921 10/4/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	8/30/1921 9/6/1921
2¢	END	10767 & 10768	9/6/1921 9/15/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	9/12/1921 10/14/1921
2¢	492	13291 & 13292	9/22/1921 10/26/1921
2¢	492	13293 & 13294	9/23/1921 10/20/1921
2¢	492	13387 & 13388	10/11/1921 11/17/1921



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2¢	492	13538 & 13539	7/21/1921 8/19/1921
2¢	492	13002 & 13286	7/29/1921 8/26/1921
2¢	492	13239 & 13240	8/19/1921 9/23/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	8/23/1921 8/25/1921
4¢	495	7675 & 7676	8/24/1921 8/30/1921
2¢	492	13253 & 13254	8/26/1921 9/26/1921
2¢	492	13287 & 13288	8/29/1921 10/15/1921
2¢	492	13289 & 13290	8/29/1921 10/4/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	8/30/1921 9/6/1921
2¢	END	10767 & 10768	9/6/1921 9/15/1921
1¢	490	10090 & 10640	9/12/1921 10/14/1921
2¢	492	13291 & 13292	9/22/1921 10/26/1921
2¢	492	13293 & 13294	9/23/1921 10/20/1921
2¢	492	13387 & 13388	10/11/1921 11/17/1921

Figure 9. Press Map Snippet for BEP FY 1922. Panel A shows Press B with a set of plates recorded as being at press for an unusually long time (over 3 months, top bar). This overlong to press period resulted in three other plate pairs logged as concurrently* at press, *yet without a press available for mounting (area of Press Map enclosed in black box). Panel B is an enlargement, showing the last portion of the at press period.

continued full production afterward. In summary, there is no continuing evidence of a sixth press, which the theoretical scenario would have required.

Eagle-eyed readers may also note in Figure 9 that press C and press B are forced to color-change during this transition period, while a fifth press (E) was brought online. Note the four red bars at the top left of Panel B indicating presses A-D, all running red stamps. An extended snippet for mid-summer 1921 (Panel A) shows that for an entire month from July 25 through August 22, all four coil presses running (A-D) were printing only red 2¢ stamps. But now, as September approached, a run of 4¢ brown coils was required as well as more 1¢ green coils. Ink color changes at this time were inevitable.

Verifying the Conclusion: Statistical Analysis of the Suspected Overlong Working Days on Press *Period*

According to the print record, plate pair 13004 & 13005 was *on press* for 81 workdays. A statistical analysis was performed to determine if 81 *workdays on press* is an "outlier." An outlier is an observation that occurs at an abnormal distance from other values in a data set and, therefore is suspected to be in error. The following describes the statistical analysis steps performed:

1. Plate pairs sent to press once and then canceled in FY 1922 were identified.
2. For each of the 61 plate pairs identified in Step 1, the *workdays on press* were determined from the Press Map.
3. The mean (or average) *working days on press* for the data set, 24.8 workdays, was calculated by adding together the *working days on press* for the 61 plate pairs and dividing the sum by 61.
4. Next, the standard deviation of the data set was calculated in Microsoft Excel using the STDEV function. A standard deviation measures how dispersed the data is in relation to the calculated mean. A low standard deviation indicates the data is clustered tightly around the mean. A large standard deviation indicates that the data is more widely spread around the mean value. The standard deviation for the 61 plate pair data set was 10.7 working days, which is a large value when compared to the mean of 24.8 working days.
5. Another measure of data dispersion is called the range, which is simply the maximum and minimum values in the data set. The range for the 61 plate pairs was 11 to 81 *working days on press*. Note that plate pair 13004 & 10640 is the maximum value of the data set and, therefore, is a potential "outlier."
6. The Z-score method was then used to determine if 81 *working days on press* is an outlier. The Z-score is the number of standard deviations away from the mean that a data point represents. A period of 81 days is 56.2 days higher than the mean value of 24.8 *working days on press* (81–24.8 = 56.2). The number of standard deviations that 56.2 represents is 56.2/10.7 or 5.3. So, the Z-score for the 81 *working days on press* data point is 5.3.
7. According to the Z-score method, an outlier is any data point with a Z-score greater than a set threshold. The typical threshold is 3. With a Z-score of 5.3, a plate pair remaining on press for 81 working days is an outlier and, thus, a suspect data point.

The high Z-score (5.3) for plates 13004/13005 further supports the press utilization conclusion drawn from the Press Map. Plate pairing 13004/13005 was removed from the press, but for an extended period afterward the two plates were not logged out of the production department and transported back to the plate vault.

The second instance in which utilization analysis suggests that plates were not immediately *returned to vault* after removal is for plate numbers 13611 & 13612. According to the *at press period* (May 3, 1922–July 1, 1922) and the BEP FY 1922 and FY 1923 Press Maps, this plate pair would have been *on press* for 46 working days. Statistical analysis (as described above) did not indicate that the data point was an outlier (Z-score = 2.0). However, it is clear from the Press Maps that plate pair 8079 & 8080 was logged *at press* with no available press on which to be mounted. As with the first instance described above, adding a new press was not supported. Thus, even when the data is not statistically an outlier, Press Maps can identify instances where the at press period does not represent the plates' actual production.

Finding VI: Infrequently, Functional Plates *Sent to Press* were not Mounted on a Press

Figure 10 shows an example of a 4¢ plate pair *sent to press* in FY 1921 but not mounted on a press. The pair (7440 & 7452) was *sent to press* on January 18, 1921 and returned to the vault the next day (January 19, 1921). There was no press available on to which the plate pair could be mounted during this short *to press* period. It is interpreted that the 4¢ plate pair was sent either too early, or else the BEP thought that one of the currently running plate pair was close to the end of its usable life. Further, the same 4¢ plate pair was *sent to press* again only five days later. On January 26, 1921, these 4¢ plates were mounted on Press C for a brief run after removal of 2¢ plate pair 11811 & 12465. The removed 2¢ plates (11811 & 12465) were canceled the next day. For a "less in demand" denomination like

FY 1921: Month & Year				
Day of the Week				
Date				
Value	Scott #	Plate Pair	To Press Period	
1¢	490	11740 & 11741	1/3/1921	2/10/1921
2¢	492	11811 & 12465	1/4/1921	1/25/1921
2¢	492	11772 & 11809	1/6/1921	1/31/1921
2¢	492	10738 & 10739	1/8/1921	1/10/1921
2¢	492	12464 & 12466	1/8/1921	2/4/1921
4¢	495	7440 & 7452	1/18/1921	1/19/1921
4¢	495	7440 & 7452	1/24/1921	1/29/1921
2¢	492	12469 & 12470	1/27/1921	3/8/1921
2¢	492	12471 & 12472	1/29/1921	3/14/1921
2¢	492	12473 & 12474	2/2/1921	2/28/1921
1¢	490	10692 &10693	2/9/1921	3/7/1921

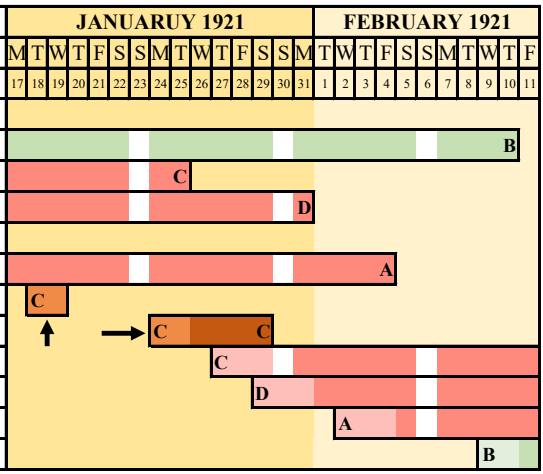

Figure 10. Press Map snippet of BEP FY 1921 showing 4¢ plate pair 7440 & 7452 with a recorded at press from January 18, 1921, to January 19, 1921, (arrow pointing upwards at first orange bar). The plates were not mounted on a press and, instead, were logged back to the vault. The following week, the same plate pairing was sent to press for a short limited-capacity production run January 23, 1921, until January 29, 1921, (arrow pointing at second orange bar).

the 4¢ coil, very brief production runs were not unusual. Note that the Cleland dates indicate seven calendar days logged into the production department, but stamps were produced on only four of those days.

Concluding Statements

By graphing BEP print record data chronologically according to the *to press* data, an easy-to-interpret Press Map technique was developed. An example analysis of the resulting rotary coil Press Maps sheds new light on the printing of coil stamps during BEP FY 1919 through 1925. During this period, four new rotary coil presses were added to the production floor. Even while increasing the number of presses from three to seven, the presses were rarely idle. This interpretation fits with the following remarks made in a letter from the Third Assistant Postmaster General to the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in July of 1922 (start of BEP FY 1923):[11]

> The demand for coiled stamps is increasing rapidly from year to year, the records of this Office showing an increase from 1,234,196,500 stamps issued in this form in the fiscal year 1917, to 2,322,525,410 in the fiscal year 1922, and while the production has been increased, at no time has the Bureau had surplus stock available from which to fill emergency requisitions. This condition has frequently resulted in serious delays and materially inconvenienced the public. At the present time the filling of coiled stamp orders is not current with other varieties.

When this letter was written, there were five rotary coil presses in operation, with the fifth being introduced during FY 1922 (Table 4). The following statements can be made using the "stamps issued" information in the letter quoted above:

- In FY 1917, the production capability was ~411,398,800 stamps per press for the three presses in operation (1,234,196,500 stamps issued/3 presses).
- In FY 1922 with 4.84 presses actively producing coil stamps the production capability was 16.6% higher with ~479,860,600 stamps produced per press (2,322,525,410 stamps issued/4.84 presses).

The analysis above indicates that there may have been changes implemented to increase production efficiency between FY 1917 and FY 1922 by 16.6%. However, while some efficiency increases may have been possible, it is more probable that most of the production increases were due to overtime work. In a letter to the Treasury Secretary dated July 20, 1922, BEP Director Louis A. Hill states,

> …the Bureau anticipates still further increased demand for stamps in coils, and with the present equipment it is impossible to meet their demands without certain branches of this office working overtime in order to produce a sufficient number of coil stamps…[12]

As Hill predicted, the demand for coil stamps continued to increase through the end of the studied production period, and two additional presses were added to the production facility. What is certain from the remarks by the Third Assistant Postmaster

General and the BEP Director is that the BEP was still having a difficult time keeping up with the heavy demand for coil stamps at the July start of FY 1923.

In closing, it should now be clear that the use of the Press Map technique to refine Wallace Cleland's data compilations is only a first step in exploring new perspectives regarding the early evolution of *all* rotary press production at the BEP, for both coil and sheet work. For example, the final calculations above are based on the number of available presses in each period as identified by the corresponding Press Map. Without the map, lack of data makes the calculation impossible.

Additional refinements and methods of calculation are also possible. For specific plates during fixed time periods, the accurate plotting of production workdays via press mapping now provides derivation of a time component for use in new equations to permit the determination of estimated production per press, per plate pair, or per issue within fixed date ranges. In subsequent articles, beginning with data gleaned from the Press Maps, the authors will develop and present several new methods of calculation used to quantify the numbers of rotary sheet and coil stamps produced during various periods for different stamp issues of interest. The total production numbers cited in the BEP Director's annual reports, limited to fixed 365-day fiscal increments that do not correspond to calendar years, will no longer be the "final word" regarding production. Like Cleland's data, the Director's reported numbers are now a brand-new beginning for more detailed study made possible by Press Maps.

☆☆☆

In addition to the series of comprehensive full fiscal year maps introduced in this article for the rotary coil presses, the authors have produced full-scale Press Maps for the "large" rotary sheet-stamp presses from August 1919 through FY 1925. Both sets of maps will be used in forthcoming articles to reveal more new findings and perspectives on the early evolution of BEP rotary stamp production. Upon completion of the studies, the authors intend to provide the full-scale maps to the USSS for inclusion in a downloadable Research Paper for use by future researchers.

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From the Modern Postal History Committee

Thirty Years of *United States Specialist* Mailing Labels Show Postal Evolution and an Unexpected Surprise

by **Douglas B. Quine, PhD**
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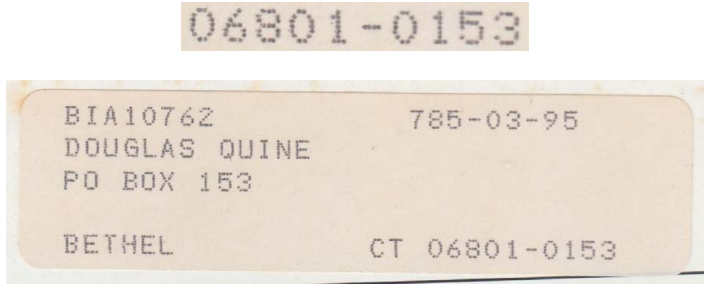

Figure 1. Earliest available* United States Specialist *seven-dot matrix address label July 1994 and detail.

As students of modern postal history, we seek out interesting philatelic items from a variety of venues. Sometimes, the answers are right in front of our face—such as on the back cover of *The United States Specialist*. I've been a member of the United States Stamp Society (USSS), previously the Bureau Issues Association (BIA), for 40 years. My long shelf of back issues, covering 55% of the 31-year span from May 1994 to March 2025, all sent to the same address, tells a story about the timeline of changing technology and postal processes. Over the decades, I have seen the evolution of five different features of the *Specialist* address panel: address labels, precancel bundle stickers, optional endorsement lines, printers, and barcodes. They mark some milestones in postal automation. While I have only two covers from the first six years and nine covers from the last six years, the middle eighteen years, when the most changes occurred, are complete. The label fonts and layouts including placement of the membership number also changed from time to time. However, since these were internal BIA/USSS businesses, such changes will not be discussed in this postal history article.

Address Labels

My oldest retained issue of May 1994 (Figure 1) had my address printed on a 0.9 × 3.5 inch gummed paper address label. Adhesive address labels were used through July 2015, after which my address was printed directly on the back cover (Table 1 "Label," first column).

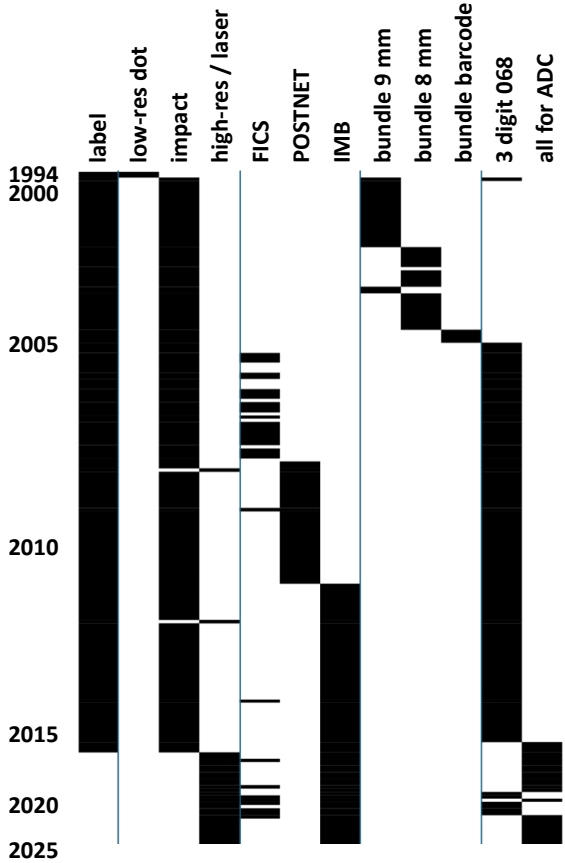

Table 1. Timeline map of the five address features: labels, print, barcodes, presort labels, Optional Endorsement Lines (OEL).

Precancel Bundle Stickers

In July 2000, a green precancel bundle sticker with a 9–9.5 mm tall bold fluorescent "3" (Figure 2) was affixed to my journal, which continued with some shade and boldness variations (Figure 3) through May 2002 (Table 1 "bundle 9 mm" column 8). Bethel, Connecticut, is the lowest-numbered town in the three-digit 068 ZIP code range (the numbers are assigned alphabetically within the Stamford, Connecticut, sectional center facility). Apparently, in ZIP Code sequential order my magazine was the top of the pre-sorted 068 bundle. The significance of presorting mail is that if a bundle of journals is known to be going to the three-digit ZIP hub "068" then the entire stack can be placed in the appropriate shipping container rather than having to individually sort each of the journals one by one to that container. It saves USPS time and money, so it reduces shipping prices accordingly.

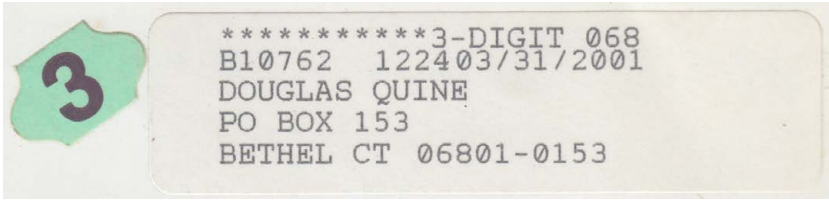

Figure 2. July 2000 12-dot matrix print.

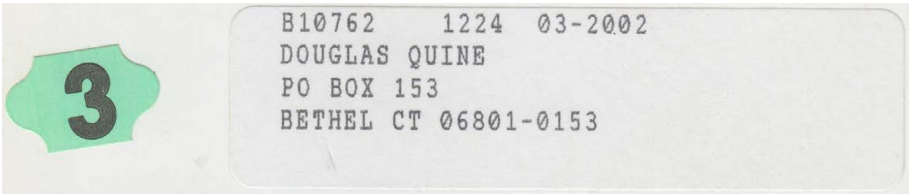

Figure 3. June 2001 with bolder green presort bundle sticker "3".

In June 2002, a modified fluorescent green Presort Bundle Sticker was observed with a thinner, smaller 8–8.5 mm tall "3" (Figure 4) (Table 1, "bundle 8 mm" column 9). It ran until August 2004 with the exception of January 2003, which was missed, and July and September 2003 (possibly August, which I'm missing) when the original 9–9.5 mm tall "3" label returned. Perhaps the printer's mail room was clearing label inventory.

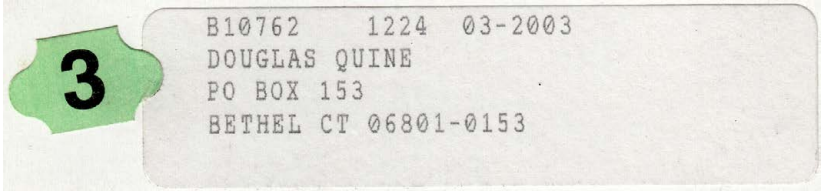

Figure 4. July 2002 with smaller slim green presort bundle sticker "3".

In September 2004, the presort bundle sticker was changed to a pale yellow-green (dead to UV light) with a prominent barcode (Figure 5), which lasted just 4 months until December 2004, when the labels were discontinued (Table 1 "bundle barcode" column 10).

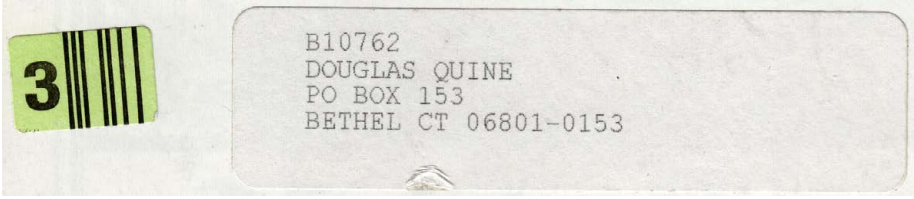

Figure 5. September 2004 with yellow-green barcoded presort bundle sticker "3".

Optional Endorsement Lines

The USPS Domestic Mail Manual (August 10, 2003) section M013 discusses the use of optional endorsement lines (OEL) on the top line of the mailing label to indicate the sortation level of a bundle of mail in lieu of facing slips or pressure-sensitive adhesive labels. In July 2000, a first USPS optional endorsement line appeared on the top of the *US Specialist* mailing label indicating "3-DIGIT 068" in addition to the (redundant) pressure-sensitive "3" label for one month (Figure 2, Table 1 "3 digit 068" column 11). Nearly 5 years later, in January 2005, the "3-DIGIT 068" OEL reappeared without the redundant presort sticker. For 10 years through February 2015, only the "3-DIGIT 068" OEL was used. When the Stamford, Connecticut, hub was closed, processing of my mail moved to White Plains, New York, 105 (Table 1 "ALL FOR ADC" column 12). The OEL text was changed to "ALL FOR ADC 105" (with some reversion to the "3-DIGIT 068" between October 2016 and March 2022) through the present date (March 2025). ADC stands for Area Distribution Center (hub) and suggests that insufficient volume was available in the 068 ZIP Code area to qualify for the three-digit presort, so my journal was being bundled at a slightly less granular level.

Printers

The journal address printers have evolved significantly from the 7-dot tall printer on my earliest label (Figure 1) to the highly readable 12-dot tall print (Figure 2). A staggered 12-dot tall print was then adopted for a long time (Figures 6 and 7), which enabled very precisely formed barcodes but a scattered appearance of the characters. Finally, in recent years, laser printing (Figure 8) has enabled solid barcode bars and very readable print (Table 1: "LOW RES DOT / IMPACT / HIGH-RES LASER" columns 2–4).

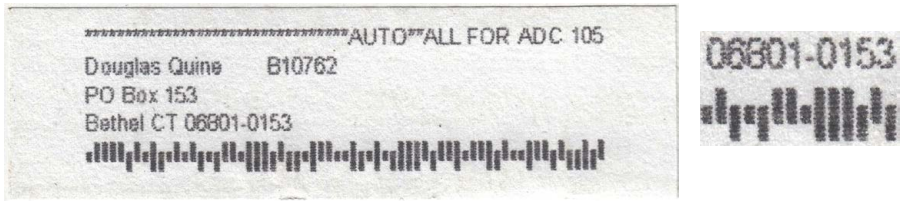

Figure 6. April 2015 with "ALL FOR ADC 105" OEL and print detail.

Figure 7. January 2008 with staggered dot matrix text and ZIP+4 POSTNET and detail.

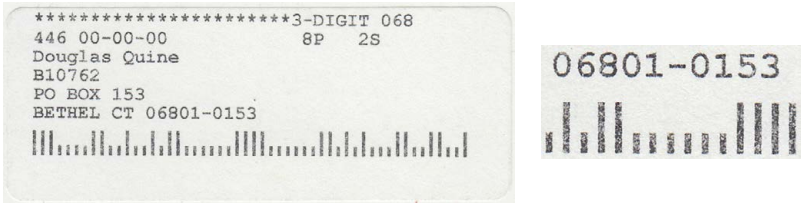

Figure 8. March 2008 with laser printed POSTNET ZIP+4 and detail.

POSTNET Barcodes

From January 2008 for four months, the POSTNET barcode encoding the ZIP+4 destination block was added to the mailing labels (Table 1 "POSTNET" column 6) using the staggered dot matrix printer, which produced quality vertical lines for the barcode and staggered lines for horizontal elements which were less critical (Figure 7). In May 2008, the barcodes were upgraded to ZIP+6 barcodes (Figure 9 shows June because the May label was severely damaged), which encode the individual mailboxes for every delivery point. These barcodes enable USPS automation equipment to sort the journals in delivery sequence rather than requiring slow, expensive hand sorting (Quine, 2016).

Figure 9. June 2008 with ZIP+6 POSTNET.

For just one month in March 2008, the barcoded labels were printed with a laser printer in a smaller font which produced high-quality POSTNET barcodes with square corners top and bottom (Figure 8).

Intelligent Mail Barcodes

In February 2011, the POSTNET barcode (tall and short bars) was finally retired (the USPS-mandated transition dragged out from 2011 to 2013), and the Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) was implemented (Figure 10). When the labels were discontinued in July 2015, direct laser print on the journal enabled extremely high-quality barcodes (Figure 11)(Table 1 "IMB" column 7). With four bar sizes, it could encode much more data and

Figure 10. February 2011 label with IMB barcode and detail.

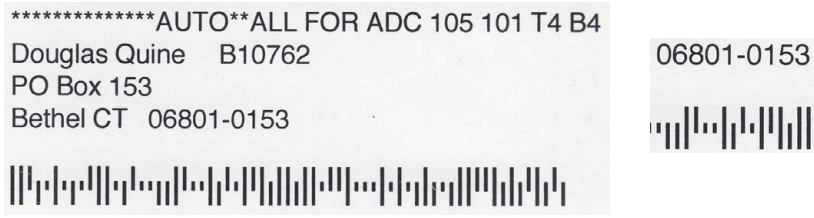

Figure 11. August 2015 direct laser print with IMB barcode and detail.

therefore contained both the delivery point information and tracking information and service information (first class mail, forwarding address requested). Because of the error correcting patterns in the barcode, essentially every barcode is completely different, and therefore, it is not possible to line up a bunch of barcodes to the same address and expect them to match. They cannot be decoded by eye. A free smartphone app (Ashwood Data, 2024), which requires a clear barcode, and a website with manual data entry are available to decode the IMB barcodes (Quine, 2023). Although the printed address shows only the ZIP+4 Code, the IMB barcode on the journal shows the delivery point (ZIP+6), representing the household mailbox to the present day (March 2025).

Flats Mail Identification Barcode System Hiding in Plain Sight

One more barcode appears on 32 issues of my journal covers between April 2005 and April 2023. (Figure 12)(Table 1 "FICS" column 5). Unlike everything else discussed in this article, this barcode was applied by the USPS and not our mailing house. It appears to be an IMB barcode placed on an opaque white label to cover interfering background text. However, none of the IMB 4-state barcode readers I found can decode it. Furthermore, IMB barcodes must have 65 bars, and this one has only 57 bars. For years, I assumed these barcodes, which appeared from time to time on large letters and small flats, were simply partial barcodes—caused by the inkjet printer printing across two overlaid double-fed pieces. My efforts to understand these barcodes spanned 20 years (Quine, 2024) before I finally had a breakthrough when I contacted an equally puzzled Greg Smith, USPS Mail Piece Design Analyst, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and he reached out to his colleagues. They found a *Federal Register* announcement reporting a forthcoming Flats Mail Identification Code Sort (FICS) barcode program, which started deployment in late 2004 for flats and continues to this day. *Unlike* POSTNET and IMB barcodes, the FICS does *not* encode the ZIP Code or any address information. It is simply a unique identifier that must be scanned and looked up in a database that reports the destination ZIP Code for this specific piece keyed in by a remote lookup operator. These barcodes were vitally important because no preprinted barcode existed on the mailing labels in 2005, 2006, or 2007 (Table 1 "FICS" column 5). This barcode was the only means to automate final automated processing of our journals. In the next three years, when my labels were POSTNET barcoded, only a single FICS barcode was seen (March 2009). In my 75 retained covers with IMB barcodes (incomplete 2017–2023), there were just ten that received a FICS barcode.

Conclusions

This review of thirty years of *United States Specialist* mailing labels covers a period of evolving technologies and evolving postal regulations. It is interesting to see where each

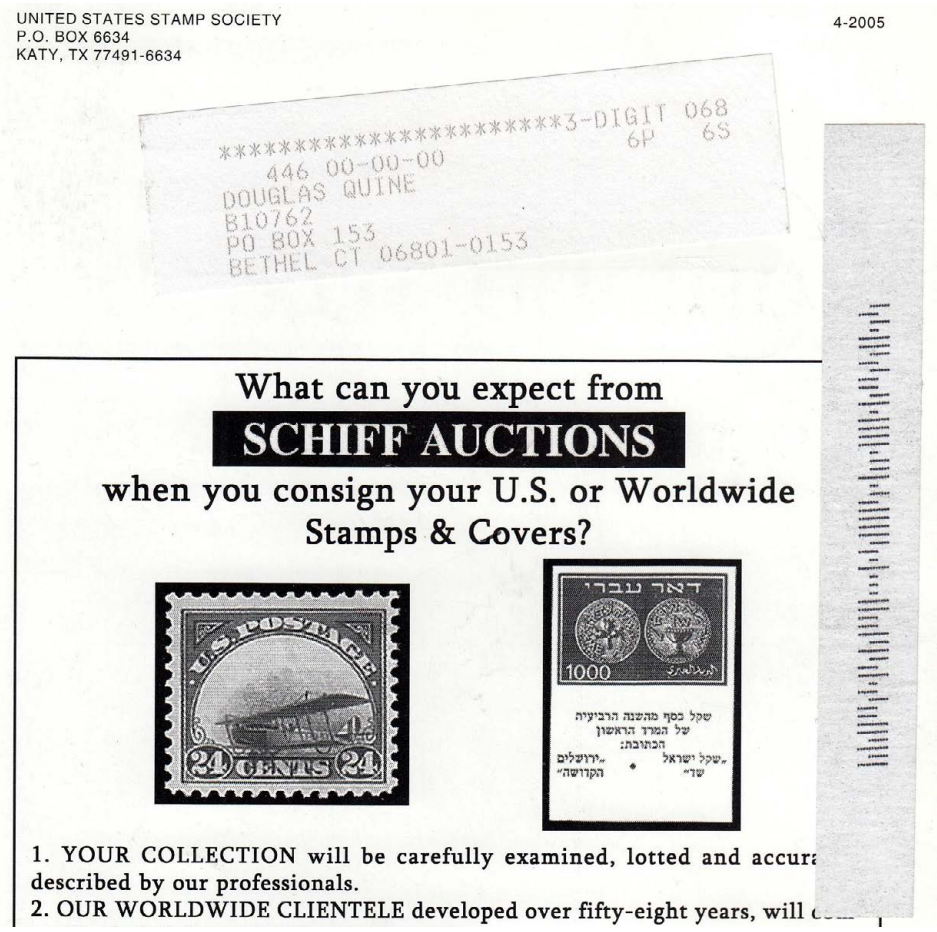

Figure 12. February 2011 cropped cover with FICS barcode.

change occurred. The 30-year timeline is summarized in Table 1—a table compressing a 15-page Excel spreadsheet (14 horizontal × 203 vertical cells) onto a single small page. This study used a chronological set of journal covers to illustrate and explain a postal automation timeline. This approach could be applied to other historical periodical sets in libraries and archives. Finally, I find it remarkable that the conspicuous FICS barcodes hid in plain sight on the back cover of our journal, read by so many postal scholars.

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Vintage Photo of the Month

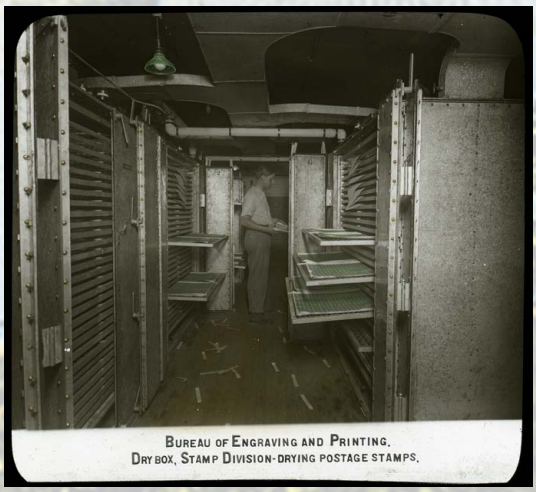
Vintage BEP Photographs

After many years of outstanding contributions, our Vintage Photo "editor," Rodney Juell, intended to step down. After much persuasion, however, Rodney has agreed to resume the popular vintage photo feature in the coming months. In the meantime, here are some classic early twentieth century photos of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) from the National Archives. Thank you to Patrick Lemon for contributing them.

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING
MIXING INKS USED IN PRINTING MONEY, STAMPS, ETC.

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.
INTERIOR OF PLATE VAULT - CONTAINS
60,000 ENGRAVED PLATES.

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.
TYPE OF POWER PRESS FOR PRINTING U.S. POSTAGE
STAMPS.

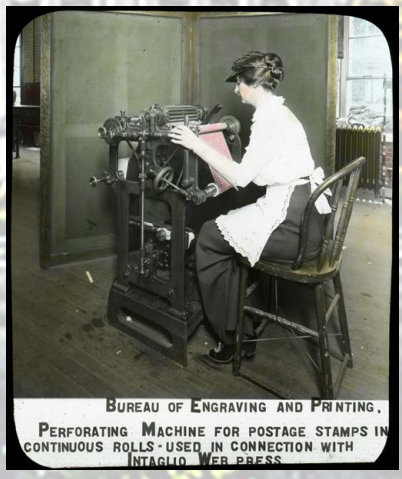


BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.
DRY BOX, STAMP DIVISION - DRYING POSTAGE STAMPS.

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING
POSTAGE STAMP GUMMING MACHINES-DELIVERY END

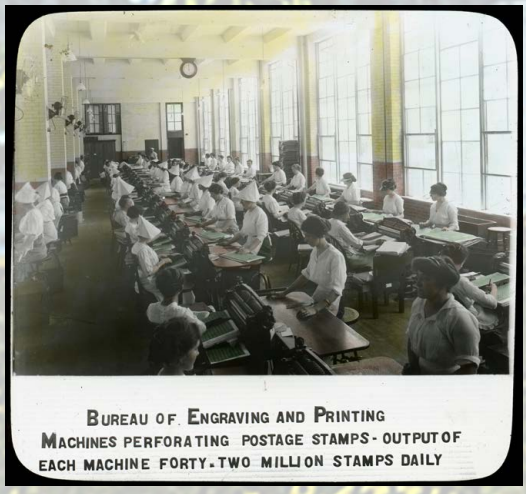
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING & PRINTING.
COUNTING STAMPS AFTER GUMMING-
GUMMING DIVISION.

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING
HYDRAULIC PRESS ROOM FOR SMOOTHING POSTAGE
AND REVENUE STAMPS



BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.
PERFORATING MACHINE FOR POSTAGE STAMPS IN
CONTINUOUS ROLLS-USED IN CONNECTION WITH
INTAGLIO WEB PRESS

BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING.
MAKING COILS OF POSTAGE STAMPS.



BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING
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EACH MACHINE FORTY-TWO MILLION STAMPS DAILY

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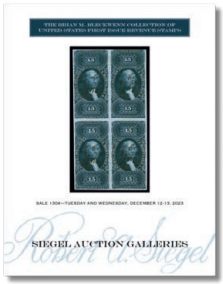
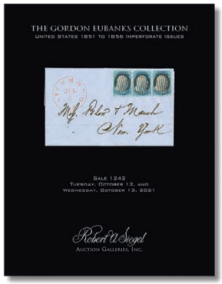
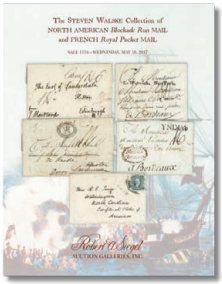


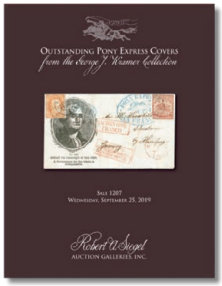
Bleckwenn



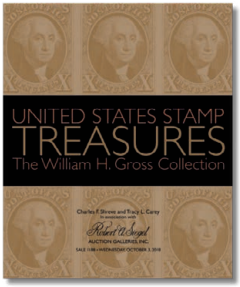
Eubanks



Walske



Kramer



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The Great Americans

Great Americans Issue Part XI—Intentionally Untagged Stamps

by Jay Stotts
USSS #10921 | ✉ stottsjd@swbell.net

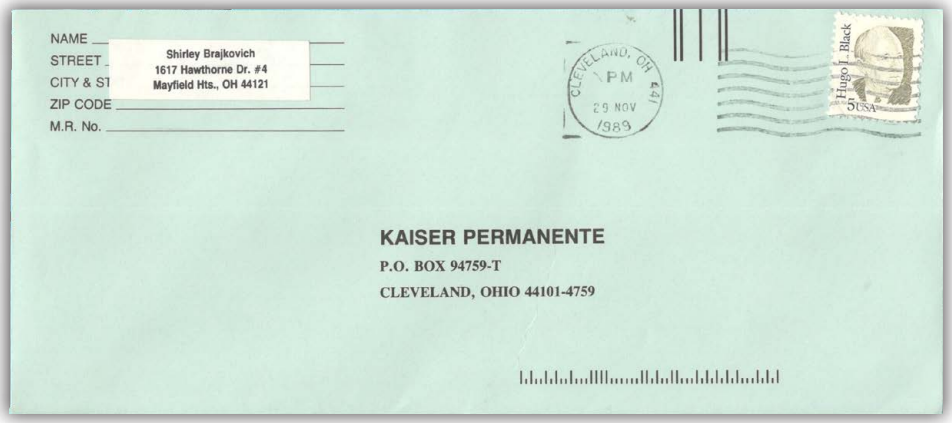

Figure 1. A Hugo Black stamp fulfilled the need for postage.

From a usage standpoint, by about 1990, some postal patrons viewed all stamps as equal. Technically, this meant that every stamp had phosphor tagging unless untagged by error, so every stamp could trigger the United States Postal Service facer-canceler machines to locate the stamp, cancel it, and move it into the mail handling stream. Most postal patrons may not have had a clue about tagging, facer-cancelers and such technology, but they understood that almost any stamp applied to an envelope or card got the piece delivered.

Underpaid Letters

The Pitney-Bowes Mark II and other commercial facer-cancelers were very effective at their job of locating a stamp in one of the eight corners of an envelope and canceling the stamp, but since all stamp values were tagged at the time, even envelopes that were underpaid passed through unmolested. It would have been up to a manual mail handler, such as a mailman or mail carrier, to catch the short-paid piece and assess the postage due. There's no doubt that this happened, but a large portion of underpaid mail slid by undetected.

Once postal patrons figured out that any stamp could get through and deliver the mail, many patrons probably took advantage of the situation and mailed many pieces of under-franked mail. From observing hundreds of pieces of mail from the 1980s and 1990s, a profile of underpaid mail can be described.

Most of the mail we have seen using low values that successfully passed through the mails was used to pay bills such as credit card balances, medical obligations, and utility payments. Mailers were probably not inclined to mail a greeting card, post card or personal letter to a relative using low values in lieu of the proper first class postage for fear of looking like a cheapskate to friends and family, although we have seen a few. But, if you could save a quarter when mailing a payment to the utility provider (whom you may already perceive as a price-gouging nemesis), then why not?

Figure 1 shows a 5¢ Hugo Black stamp, large block tagged and postmarked on November 29, 1989, used to pay the current 25¢ domestic first class letter rate. As with most of the underpaid mailings we have seen, the mailer had no problem including their name and a return mailing address, although they were mailing an underpaid letter.

Figure 2 shows another example, a utility payment, using a window envelope and franked with a 3¢ Paul Dudley White stamp canceled on April 7, 1988. This stamp also has a large block tag.

Figure 2. Utility payment mailing using a Paul Dudley White stamp.

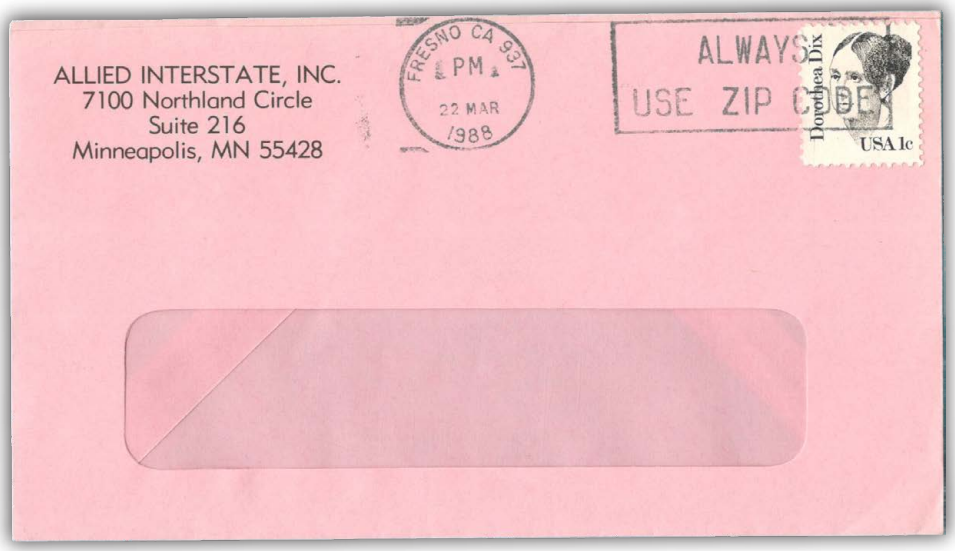

Figure 3. Mailing using a Dix penny stamp.

Of course, the most brazen mailers preferred to use 1¢ Dorothea Dix or Margaret Mitchell stamps. As tagged stamps, these penny stamps served the purpose as well as any other values. Figure 3 shows a Dix stamp, small block tagged, and canceled on March 22, 1988, presumably using a payment return envelope supplied with the original billing. The cancellation of March 22, 1988, was during the domestic 22¢ letter rate. Figure 4 shows the Mitchell stamp, large block tagged, paying the 25¢ domestic letter rate in December 1989.

Figure 4. Margaret Mitchell stamp paying the letter rate.

Lost Revenue

The Postal Service was aware of the lost revenue and often trivialized it. As late as 1997, Dan DeMiglio, a Postal Service spokesman in the San Francisco area, provided a quote published in the August 15 copy of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "This is not a big problem in America. No American sits home and, on purpose, puts 'short pay' on an envelope. Why would you take a chance on your mortgage payment not getting there on time? Overwhelmingly, Americans are honest people, and they're just not going to do that."

Despite Mr. DeMiglio's comment, the Postal Service, by 1990, concluded that there were organized scams where letters were mailed with insufficient postage. Effective January 1, 1991, they issued a policy under which all newly printed stamps with face values less than 8¢ would be untagged. The upper limit was later raised to 9¢.

The Bureau was notified of the policy change on January 9, 1991. One new stamp, the 4¢ Steam Carriage coil in the Transportation Series, was on the B Press at the time. The Bureau immediately stopped tagging these stamps, resulting in both a tagged version (Scott 2451) and an intentionally untagged version (Scott 2451b).

Intentionally Untagged Great Americans

The policy to intentionally issue untagged lower denominations impacted four values of previously printed Great Americans. The first to be deliberately printed without tagging was the 4¢ Father Flanagan stamp. The untagged stamps were printed on the A Press using the previous printing sleeve, sleeve 1. The single-ounce domestic letter rate was going to increase from 25¢ to 29¢ effective on February 3, 1991, so a supply of 4¢ stamps was needed to accompany remaining 25¢ stamps on letters once the rate change became effective.

Figure 5. Printing of untagged Flanagan stamps from sleeve 1.

As with other printing changes to existing stamp values, new stamp versions were made available without specific issue dates because the Postal Service did not regard these changes as "new" issues. We can't report the first day of issue for the Flanagan untagged stamp, but *Linn's 1991 U.S. Stamp Yearbook* reported an earliest known usage date of February 7. Figure 5 shows the untagged Flanagan stamp printed from sleeve 1.

Figure 6. shows the front and back of an envelope franked with an untagged 4¢ Flanagan stamp, postmarked on July 27, 1991, in Akron, Ohio. Note the multiple attempts by a facer-canceler to locate and cancel the affixed stamp. The machine apparently struggled, but the piece still went through without postage due.

Demand for 4¢ stamps led to another printing of Flanagan stamps, but after the heyday of the A Press. The stamps were issued in 1993. A new sleeve, sleeve 2, was started on February 18, 1993, and was used to print stamps without tagging from the D Press. Since this was not considered a new issue, no first day of issue was arranged. Scott assigned number 2171b to the 1993 reissue because it was in a distinctively different

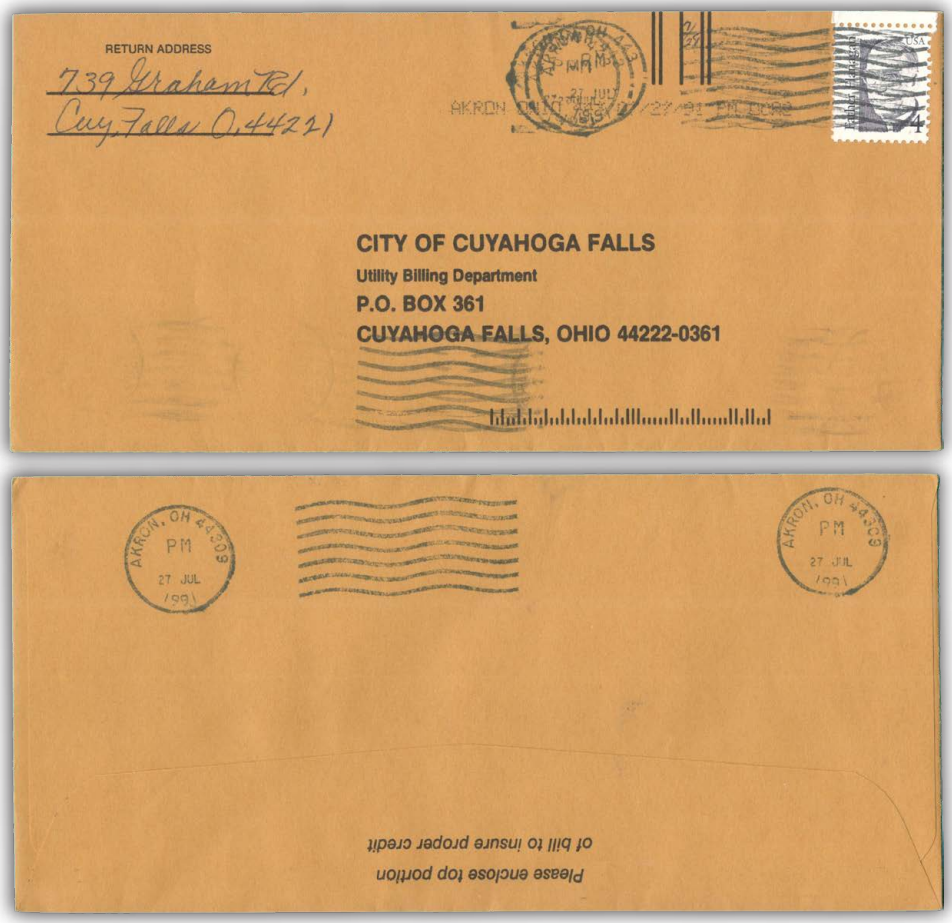

Figure 6. Use of an untagged Flanagan stamp and attempts at canceling it.

Figure 7. The 1993 reissue of the Flanagan untagged stamp.

color shade. Scott calls the color deep grayish blue; a block is shown in Figure 7. Stephen Esrati reported that four additional printings of Flanagan stamps were produced on the F Press during 1994. Sleeve 2 was cancelled on May 13, 1999.

The 5¢ Luis Muñoz Marin stamp also appeared intentionally untagged in 1991, but the issue date was not regulated because the Postal Service didn't consider this as a new issue. A new sleeve, sleeve 2, was assigned on April 16, 1991. The untagged printing was performed on the D Press. Figure 8. shows a plate block from a pane of untagged Marin stamps.

Another domestic letter rate change, effective January 1, 1995, from 29¢ to 32¢, seems to

Figure 8. Corner block of the untagged Marin stamps.

Figure 9. White stamps printed without tagging.

Figure 10. Plate block of Lyon stamps without tagging.

have led to the issue of Paul Dudley White untagged stamps in 1994. The White stamp had a rollercoaster history. The White stamp went off sale on August 31, 1991, when it was replaced by the Eastern Bluebird stamp (Scott 2478) from the Wildlife Series. The White stamp was reactivated in late 1994 in the untagged version, just ahead of the letter rate change. Collectors found the untagged version first with dull gum and then with shiny gum.

The 1994 untagged stamps were printed from sleeve 4, made to be used on the C, D or F Presses. Unfortunately, we can't say which press may have been used each time the stamps went back to press. Postal Service quantities shipped between 1994 and 1998 totaled 2.248 billion stamps. Figure 9 shows a plate block printed from sleeve 4.

The last low-valued Great Americans to be issued without taggant was the 2¢ Mary Lyon stamp, which appeared in late 1995. Sleeve 3 was prepared for the C, D and F Presses to print the untagged Lyon stamps. Figure 10 shows a plate block printed from sleeve 3. Lyon stamps went off sale on June 30, 1997.

The printing of the four untagged low values signaled the end of the line for Great American stamps under 10¢. However, the series was still in full gear as varieties began rolling off the C, D, and F Presses and, with the Bureau's decision of 1990 to produce all future higher value stamps with full coverage tagging, either by applying overall tagging or by using prephosphored paper, more varieties were on the way.

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Civil Aeronautics Stamps

The 1928 International Civil Aeronautics Conference Stamps

by Paul M. Holland
USSS #16849 | pholland.thorleaf@gmail.com

During the first 25 years of aviation, the world was transformed by an explosion of new technology, but the rapid advances in aeronautics seemed to outstrip them all. For me, this is encapsulated on my wall in three special 15 × 19 inch posters sold by the Smithsonian Institution in the early 1980s to help support the Air and Space Museum. Each has a two inch square swatch of original fabric preserved when important aircraft were restored for display at the Museum. These historic mementos include original fabric from the 1911 first transcontinental flight by the Wright EX "Vin Fiz," the 1919 first transatlantic flight by the US Navy's Curtiss NC-4 flying boats, and the 1924 first "Round the World" flight by the US Army's Douglas World Cruiser "Chicago."

By the time the International Civil Aeronautics Conference held December 12–14, 1928, Charles Lindbergh had made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic in the "Spirit of St. Louis" on May 20–21, 1927. Airmail service was becoming routine with some 70,000 miles of air routes having been established worldwide. Lindbergh's feat also highlighted newer approaches for aircraft construction, such as monoplane designs, the use of duraluminum, etc. As an aside, by the time of the conference, FDR had become governor-elect of New York State, and the looming stock market crash of 1929 was less than a year away.

To commemorate the conference, called by President Calvin Coolidge to mark the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' pioneering flight at Kitty Hawk, it was decided to issue a set of 2¢ and 5¢ stamps, depicting, respectively, the Wright Brothers' airplane and a modern monoplane flying over a globe. These stamps were first announced on November 11, 1928. The 2¢ was to pay domestic first class postage. The 5¢ stamp would pay either the international surface letter rate or the domestic airmail rate as long as "Via Air Mail" was clearly indicated, since it was not formally an airmail stamp

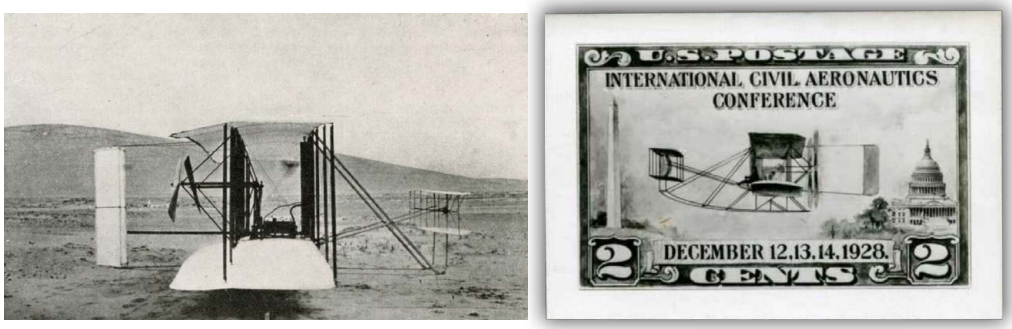


Figure 1. Wright Brother's airplane and C. A. Huston's 2¢ stamp design.

Designs for both stamps employed an identical frame style, with the words "International Civil Aeronautics Conference" above and the dates "December 12, 13, 14, 1928" below. The Washington Monument was depicted at the left and the US Capitol at the right, surrounding the central vignette. The 2¢ stamp designed by C. A. Huston and A. R. Meissner of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP), had a vignette based on a photograph of the Wright Brother's airplane. This is shown in Figure 1 along with its photoessay. Note how the direction from the photo has been "flipped." The engraving was by J. Benzing, E. Hall and L. S. Schofield of the BEP.[1]

A modern monoplane flying over the globe is depicted on the 5¢ stamp designed by C. A. Huston. To me, this shows a superficial resemblence to the "Spirit of St. Louis" used by Lindbergh in his historic flight. Huston's photoessay is shown in Figure 2. Again, the die was engraved by J. Benzing, E. Hall and L. S. Schofield.[1]

Figure 2. Modern airplane and C. A. Huston's 5¢ stamp design.

Production die proofs for the stamps were approved on November 8, 1928, with the archival Post Office Department die proofs shown in Figure 3. These are signed by Postmaster General (PMG) Harry S. New, who served as PMG under both Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge, and initialed by Third Assistant PMG Robert Regar. By the way, FDR later had the only known small die proofs of these stamps in his collection.[2]

Figure 3. Large die proofs signed by PMG Harry S. New (National Postal Museum).

Printing plates for the 1928 International Civil Aeronautics Conference stamps deserve special mention, as these were the last to have siderographer initials in the plate margins (the first were the 2¢ Shield stamps of 1906). Siderographers were skilled technicians at the BEP who "laid out" printing plates for both stamps and paper money, using a transfer press and roller dies to transfer the design into each position on the plate. Their initials typically appear at the bottom of the left margin of the stamp printing plate reading upwards. This can be seen on plate proofs shown in Figures 4 and 5, where C.V.DeB. for Clyde V. DeBinder is shown on printing plates 19654 and 19658. However, DeBinder was not the only siderographer who worked on printing plates for the International Civil Aeronautics Conference stamps. For example, Andrew Black (initials A.B.) worked on plate number 19661 for the 5¢ stamp. In total, 16 plates were employed for the 2¢ stamp and 4 for the 5¢ value.

The first day of issue for the stamps was on December 12, 1928, in Washington, DC. For this, a special cancellation in green ink was utilized. It is said the Second Assistant PMG Warren Glover (whose wife was an avid stamp collector) suggested that a green cancellation "would look good on the new stamp" as reported in *Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News* of November 26, 1928. And so it transpired, as seen on my first day cover shown in Figure 6. This was apparently the first time that a colored cancellation was used for FDCs. Note that a second inverted machine cancel was applied at the bottom, showing details.

A special official cachet was also supplied by the Post Office Department for the unveiling of a monument at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the

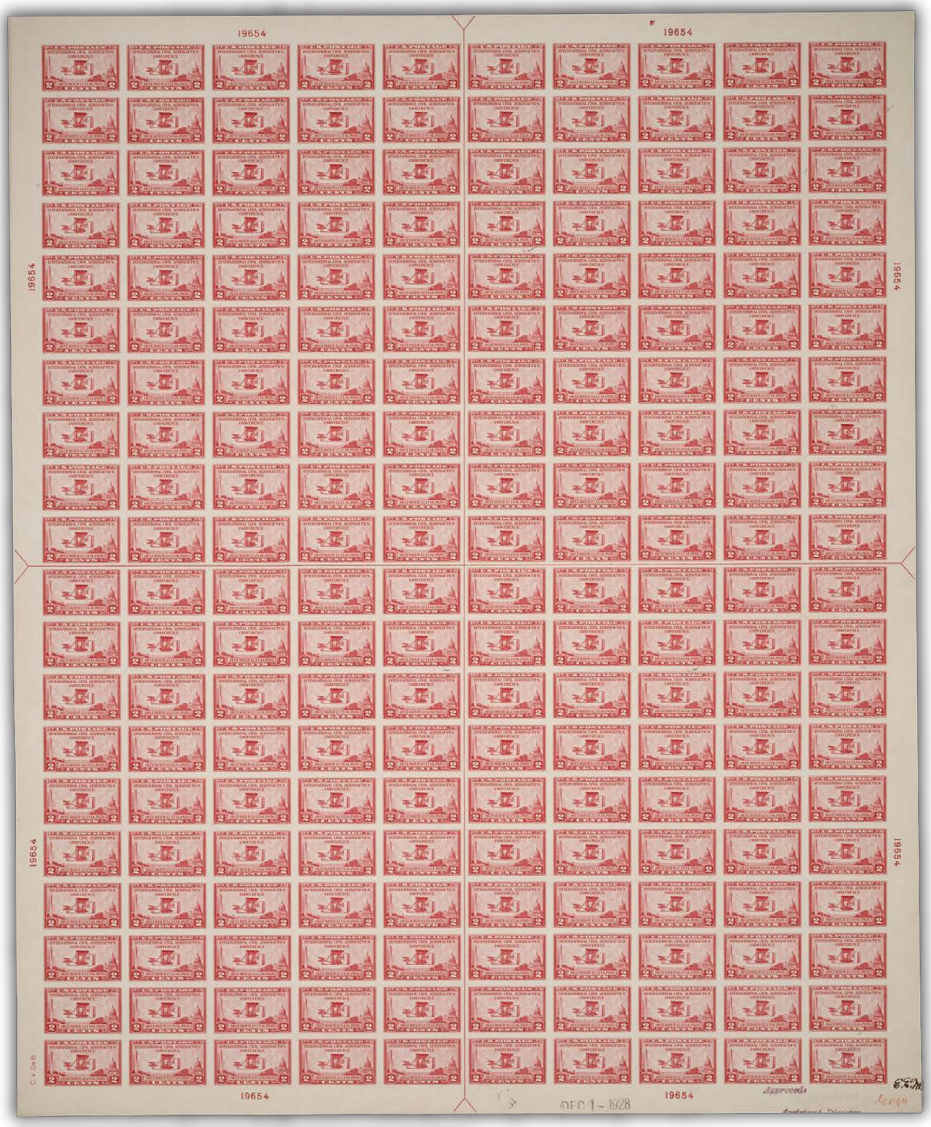


Figure 4. Plate proof for the 2¢ stamp approved December 1, 1928 with enlargement showing the siderographer's initials. (National Postal Museum).

Figure 5. Plate proof for the 5¢ stamp approved November 30, 1928, with enlargement showing the siderographer's initials. (National Postal Museum).

Figure 6. FDC for Aeronautics Conference stamps showing green cancellation.

Wright Brother's pioneering flight on December 17, 1903. This is shown in Figure 4 on my airmail cover franked with a block of four of the 2¢ stamps. Note the machine backstamp applied in San Francisco with the slogan "Mail Early for Christmas." The transcontinental routing of this cover from the East to West coast helps illustrate the scope of airmail service available in December 1928.

Figure 7. Special cachet celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Wright Brother's flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

I'm fortunate in having a Foreign Air Mail route 6 (FAM 6) First Flight cover to Puerto Rico franked with the new stamps that is signed by Postmaster General Harry S. New, himself. Routing is from Miami, Florida, on January 9, 1929 as shown on the official cachet, with the machine backstamp showing arrival in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the following day.

Figure 8. FAM 6 First Flight cover to Puerto Rico signed by PMG Harry S. New.

One of the more curious covers in my collection is shown in Figure 9. This airmail cover is franked with a single 5¢ stamp whose strong vertical guide line clearly shows that it came from the right side of a pane of stamps. The cachet celebrates the World's Endurance Flight Record of 420 hours set at St. Louis in July 1929 by two indefatigable fliers, "Red" Jackson and "Obie" O'Brine, in a Curtiss Robin cabin monoplane named the "St. Louis Robin." Using aerial refueling through a rubber hose, with food, oil, and mail passed to them in metal containers on a rope from the refueling plane, they managed to stay in the air for 17½ days in very cramped quarters, taking turns sleeping on an air mattress on top of a gasoline tank. They flew a total distance estimated to be equivalent to circumnavigating the globe.

Figure 9. Cover celebrating World's Endurance Flight Record set in St. Louis.

In Figure 10, I show my 1933 Presidential Inauguration cover franked with one of the 2¢ International Civil Aeronautics Conference stamps and a pair of ½¢ Washington Bicentennial stamps. Of special note, the selvage on the 2¢ stamp shows the siderographer's initials C.V.DeB. for Clyde V. DeBinder. This only occurs at one position on the 200-stamp press sheet as illustrated in Figure 4. The bi-color Presidential Inauguration cachet displays a portrait of FDR above his reproduced signature. It lists him as member No. 12 of the newly formed and apparently short-lived Empire State Philatelic Association.

As a bonus, on the back of this cover is one of George Linn's "A Stamp Collector for President" labels in dark blue. Linn was an ardent supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the labels were produced shortly after FDR accepted the Democratic nomination for president in early July 1932. The labels were first advertised in the July 9, 1932, issue of *Linn's Weekly Stamp News,* which had the bold headline "A Million Stamp Collectors Want a Stamp Collector for President" on the front cover. Because they were rushed into production, minor printing flaws allow them to be plated,[3] and this example came from plate position 12 on the original printed sheet of 20.

Figure 10. Empire State Philatelic Association's inauguration cover with 2¢ Aeronautics Conference stamp and "A Stamp Collector for President" label on the back.

Finally, the science of aeronautics continued its breathtakingly rapid advancement and by 1953, twenty-five years after the International Civil Aeronautics Conference, the jet age had arrived. In fact, in today's world, even the term "aeronautics" has an archaic ring to it.

References

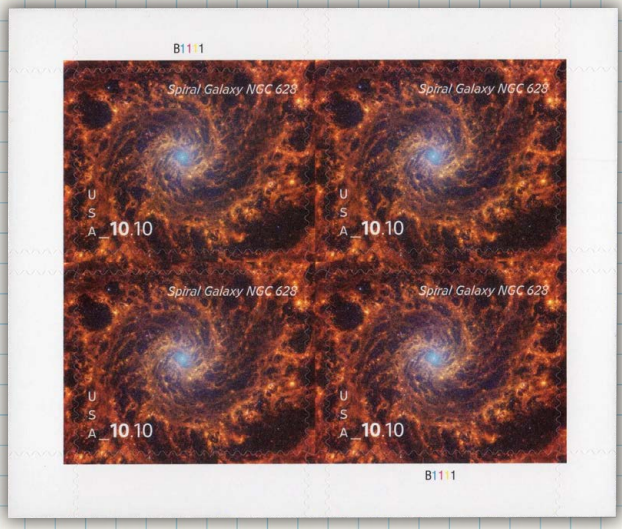
1. Max G. Johl, *The United States Commemorative Postage Stamps of the Twentieth Century: Volume I 1935–1947*, H. L. Lindquist: New York, 1947, pages 168–175.
2. *The President Franklin D. Roosevelt Collection:* H. R. Harmer, Inc., New York, Part One: February 1946, lot 117.
3. Paul M. Holland, "A Stamp Collector for President: George Linn, FDR and the 1932 Election", *The American Philatelist*, May 2016, pages 620–623.

Plate Number Report

compiled by **Kim D. Johnson**
USSS #7335 | ✉ westhome1@aol.com

#444 2¢ Washington Coil
6894

#5956 ($1.65) Compass Rose (illustrated last month)
International rate
P111111 UL UR LL LR
3r x 3c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9*



#5954 ($10.10) Spiral Galaxy
B1111 UL ‡ ‡ LR
2r x 5c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10*

▲ **#5955 ($31.40) Star Cluster**
B1111 UL ǂ ǂ LR
2r x 5c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10*

▲ **#???? (10¢) American Vistas Coil**
Presort rate
P1111

▲ **#???? Appalachian Trail**
P1111 ǂ ǂ LL LR
2r x 4c 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8*

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Report of the Executive Secretary

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17605 Howard Kogan Ashland, MA

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17599–17603

NEW MEMBERS

17595–17598

REINSTATED

13567 Robert F. Bruhn Jr.
15208 David Willig
16868 Tedd Harwood
17504 Dwayne Bagley
17526 Gary Sommer

DECEASED

7690 Jack Reinhard

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

January 31, 2025	**1279**
ADDITIONS:	
New members	4
Reinstated	5
Total	**+9**
SUBTRACTIONS:	
Deceased	1
Total	**-1**
NET CHANGE	**+8**
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	
February 28, 2025	**1287**

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ **Zip+4** _____

Email (required) _____ Contact Phone (optional) _____

References

Note: Current APS members need only provide a membership number. Others should provide a full name and address of two philatelic references.

APS No _____

Or Philatelic Reference #1 _____

Address _____

Or Philatelic Reference #2 _____

Address _____

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

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WANTED TO PURCHASE #1053 HAMILTON $5 Commercial Usages. No simply registered bank tags. Especially need use to foreign destination. Also doing a survey so scans appreciated. Doug Weisz weiszcovers@gmail.com, 773-914-4332. 33 W Ontario St. #48A Chicago IL 60654. www.douglasweisz.com [1152]

SCOTT 1246—5¢ KENNEDY. MAY 29, 1964 postmarks sought. No Boston. Looking for small town postmarks. Uncacheted OK. Henry Scheuer, P.O. Box 535, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159-0535 [1142]

WANTED: 1280c DULL GUM BOOKLET PANES with partial plate number. Buy or trade. Clay Stabler, c.stabler@comcast.net. [note corrected email] [1142]

TRADE: UNFOLDED BOOKLET PANE positions and PLATE NUMBERS. Send want list to Clay Stabler, c.stabler@comcast.net. [note corrected email] [1142]

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WANTED: SCOTT 905 "WIN THE WAR" POSTAL history—No patriotic covers please—Shapiro, P.O. Box 3211, Fayville, MA, 01745 or scans to coverlover@gmail.com. [1141]

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WANTED: SCOTT 532 ON COVER WITHOUT Schermack private perforations. Also, any other unusual Washington-Franklin offset material (Scott 525–536). Please send description and price to Andrew Kelley, stamps@andrewkelley.net [1141]

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WANTED: INDEPENDENT POSTAL SYSTEMS of America (IPSA) operated from 1970s—1980s. Need any USED material and Mint Sheets. Any correspondence, evidence of stamps used on mail, "magazine door hanger bags," uniform items, etc. Contact J. Dale Shively at jdshively@icloud.com [1142]

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