



Dummy News and Views

the Newsletter of the United States Stamp Society - Dummy Stamps Study Group

Issue Number 49

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Welcome to the Dummy Stamps Study Group's Forty-Ninth Newsletter

This newsletter is produced quarterly by the United States Stamp Society's - Dummy Stamps Study Group for your information and pleasure. We hope that the information included in this newsletter will be informative, useful and encourage your enjoyment of collecting dummy/test stamps. Our goal is to keep you up-to-date with the latest information available to our group. Questions, comments and articles proposed for publication should be directed to Terry R. Scott, Chairman of the Dummy Stamps Study Group at terryrscott@comcast.net

Constant Test Stamp Varieties Occurring Every Other Stamp

by Terry R. Scott & Michael O. Perry

In the Test Stamps section of the 2018 *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers*, there are several examples listed of a constant variety occurring on every other stamp in a coil strip. For example, TD34 and TD36A with alternating perforation gauges, and TD38A with every other stamp 1 mm taller than the other. But, there are also other varieties that repeat on every other stamp that are not listed in the catalogue.

The recent series of twelve articles in *The United States Specialist* written by Larry Weiss illustrated some reoccurring varieties found on every other stamp on some of the TD23 offset Hamilton Head vertical coils. The article also showed that all known pairs of TD23 have misplaced horizontal perforations that result in different height stamps. One stamp is 23 mm tall and the next stamp is 25 mm tall, and then another 23 mm tall stamp. A vertical strip of the TD23 coil is shown on page 2 of this newsletter to illustrate two of the three known constant plate defects and the alternating perforation spacing. It is worth noting that in every case, the plate defect is only found on the same size stamp.

Following the images of the TD23 coils, we will show several illustrations of other private test coils that show a constant feature that repeats every other stamp. There are others that we were unable to show since we don't have any examples at this time.

The point of all this is that very little is known about how or who printed the early coil test stamps. At that time, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) only used line engraved intaglio printing for postage stamps. In 1910, the BEP appears to have experimented with typographic (letterpress) printing

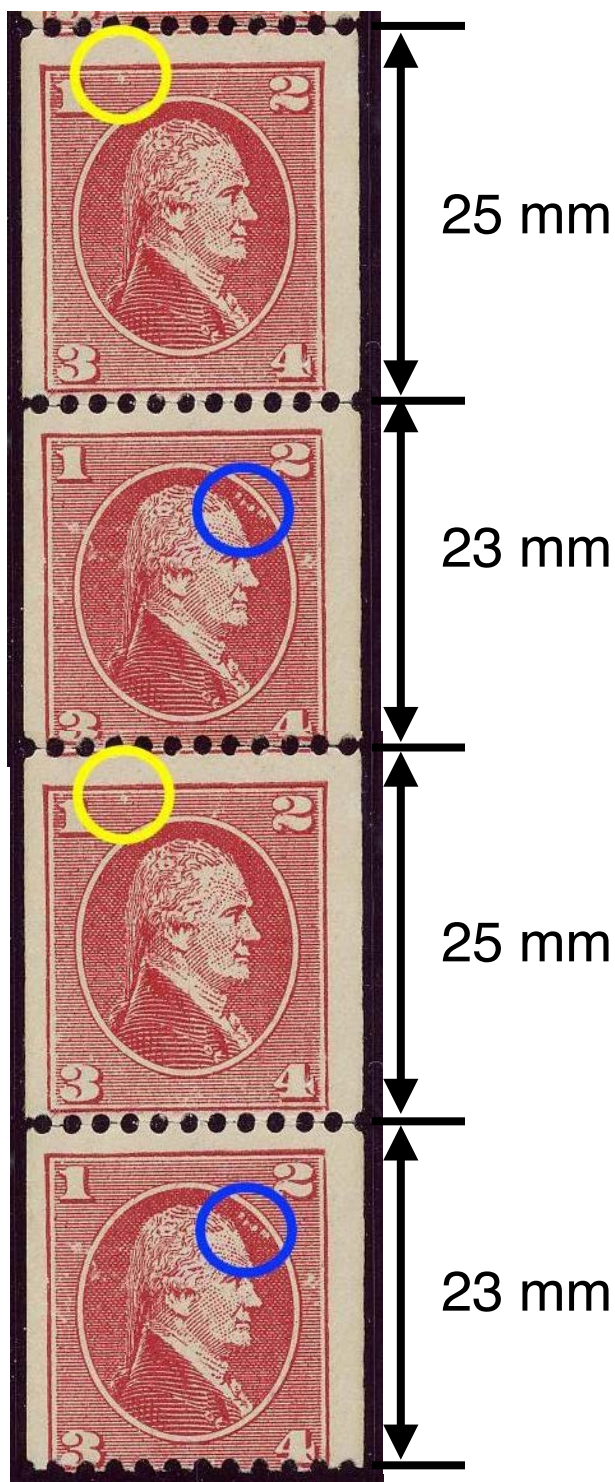
for some test stamps (TD20, 21 & 22). A third Hamilton Head test coil was printed on an offset press in 1910 (TD23), but since the BEP didn't have any offset presses until 1914, it appears they were printed by someone else, using a modified Hamilton Head design.

The purpose of this article is to suggest that it is possible that TD23, and many of the early private test coils, may have been printed by a small diameter plate (or roll or cylinder) that was just two stamps around, and perhaps just three or four stamps wide. This theory would explain why some of the constant plate defects repeat on every other stamp. The fact that so many of the early test coils have plate defects that repeat every other stamp might indicate they were all printed by the same company, or at least on a similar small printing press built just for that purpose. The printing press could have used the offset or the typographic (letterpress) process. But, it is hard to imagine a printing press so small it only printed from plates that were just two stamps around (less than 2" in circumference, or between 1/2 and 3/4" in diameter).

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TD23 - Offset stamp printed in 1910

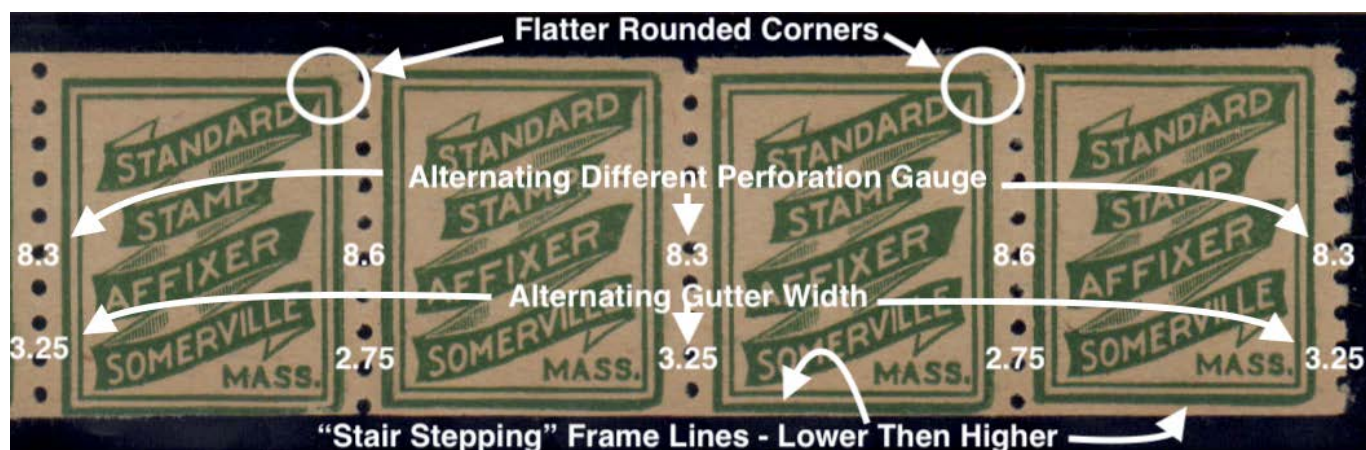
Strip of four showing alternating perforation spacing and repeating constant plate defects

Another possibility is that all the early test coils were printed on offset presses, and that the printing plates were four, six, eight, ten or more stamps around. Offset plates were made by a photographic step and repeat process, so if the master negative was two stamps tall and “x” number of stamps wide, any defects on a stamp design would be reproduced as the master negative was moved up to create the next two rows of stamp images. The problem with this is it seems odd that a master negative would contain so many small defects. In any case, we know that these test coils were not up to the standards of the BEP, so all we can do at this point is speculate since no records exist of how they were produced.

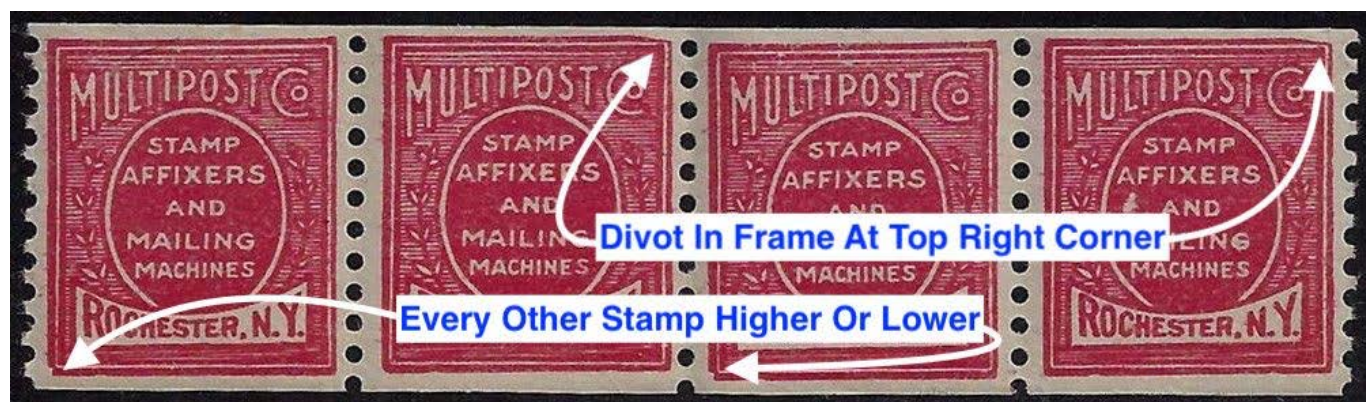
The vertical strip of four TD23 Hamilton Head coil test stamps at the left not only shows two different repeating plate flaws, but also shows the alternating different distance between the horizontal rows of perforations on every other stamp. It is important to point out here that not every vertical pair, or longer strip, shows these two particular repeating plate flaws every other stamp, but the difference in distance between every other horizontal perforation row is on all known examples of TD23.

As mentioned above, not every vertical pair or longer strip of TD23 shows these repeating constant plate defects; some coils are known with a scratch in Hamilton’s hair on every other stamp, and some coils are known with no obvious plate defects. This indicates the plate (or roll) that printed TD23 was at least three stamps wide. And, the fact that each of the constant plate defects is only known on the “short” or “tall” stamp indicates the coils were perforated by a stroke perforator that punched two rows of perforations at a time (spaced either 23 or 25 mm apart) before the printed web advanced 48 mm before the next set of holes was punched. It is possible, but unlikely, that the perforations were applied at the same time the coil stamps were printed. More likely, the stamps were perforated in a separate operation on a stroke perforator.

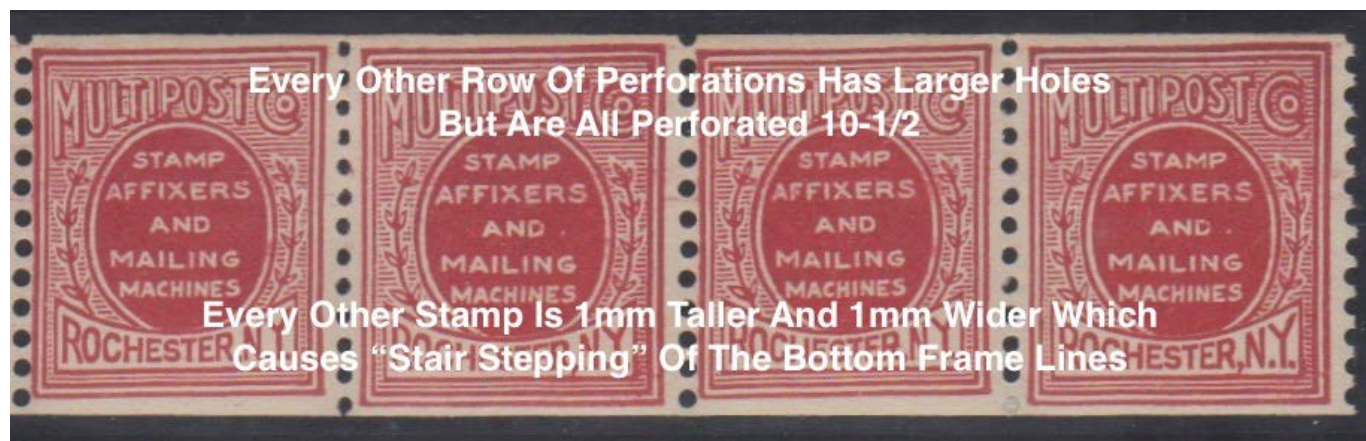
please turn to page 3 ➤



The TD34 cropped strip of 4 shown above has a slightly flatter rounded corner at the top right of every other stamp and a flatter rounded corner at the bottom right of every other stamp. This is hard to see on the scan above but is more obvious when seen in front of you. The TD34 cropped strip of 4 shown above has different vertical gutter widths between stamps, alternating 3.25mm and 2.75mm. In addition, the perforation gauge alternates every other stamp; it is 8.3, 8.6, 8.3, 8.6 and so on. Every other stamp has a "stair stepping" effect of the printed frames, lower then higher.



The TD37 strip of 4 shown above has a small part of the top right corner with a divot in the frame line on every other stamp. Also every other pair of stamps is entered slightly sloping upwards to the right and entered below the bottom of the stamps of the pair to the left. Thus, every other stamp has a "stair stepping" effect of the printed frames, lower then higher.



The TD38 Variety shown above is perforated 10.5 vertically. Note that every other vertical column of perforations has slightly larger diameter holes. Also note that the dimensions of the stamp design alternates 1mm taller and 1mm wider for every other stamp.

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Enlarged detail of the ink mark at the top left corner of every other stamp.

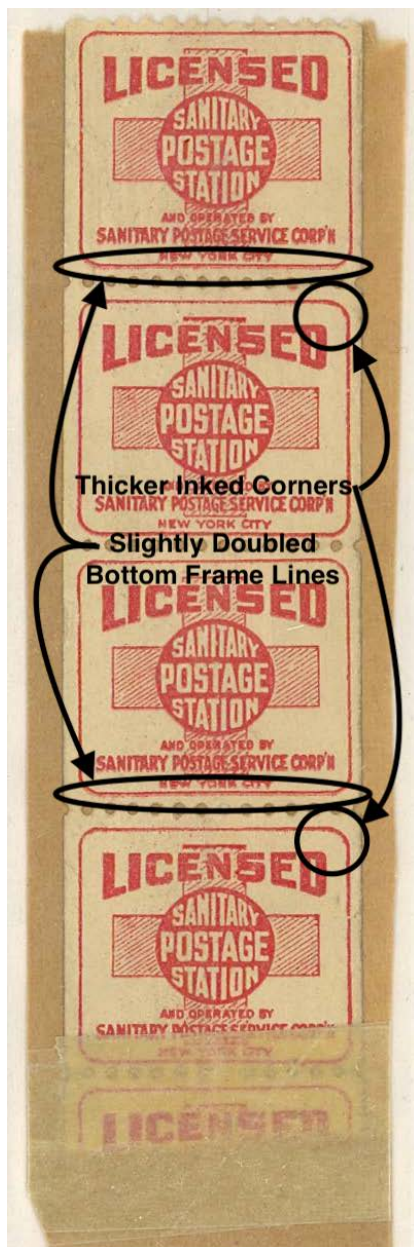
The TD39 vertical strip of 4 shown at the left has an ink mark at the top left corner of every other stamp. Enlarged detail is shown above. Also note that the dark blue printed image shifts up every other stamp. See the bottom of the image that reads: "POSTAGE STAMP AFFIXER" where it has a larger white unprinted gap every other stamp between it and the red "90 WEST ST. NEW YORK". This is most likely due to having to make two different press runs for the two colors used on these stamps.



On the TD61A strip of 3 shown above, the shading in the knuckle of the operator's left hand is different on every other stamp. One shows a complete line across the finger at the knuckle and the alternating stamps show a dot where the line is complete on the other stamps. Enlarged details are shown below that may help see the difference in the knuckles.



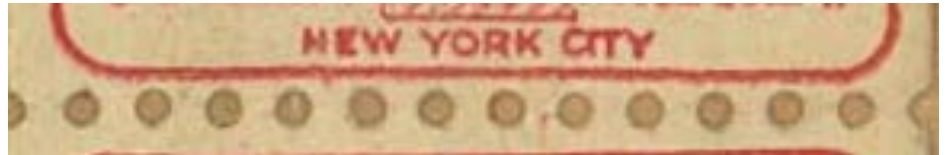
please turn to page 5 ➤



TD64 vertical strip of 4 with leader strip attached shown at the left has slightly thicker curved lines in the upper right corner of every other stamp. Also, on the alternating other stamps, every other stamp shows a slightly doubled or wider horizontal frame line at the bottom.



Slightly Doubled Bottom Frame Line



Normal Bottom Frame Line



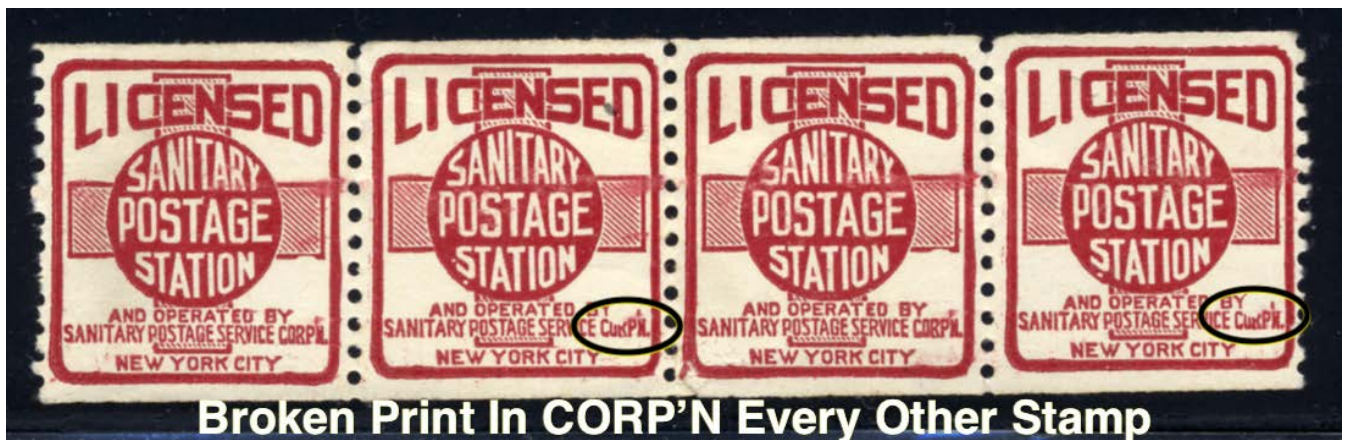
Thicker Inked Corner



Thinner Inked Corner

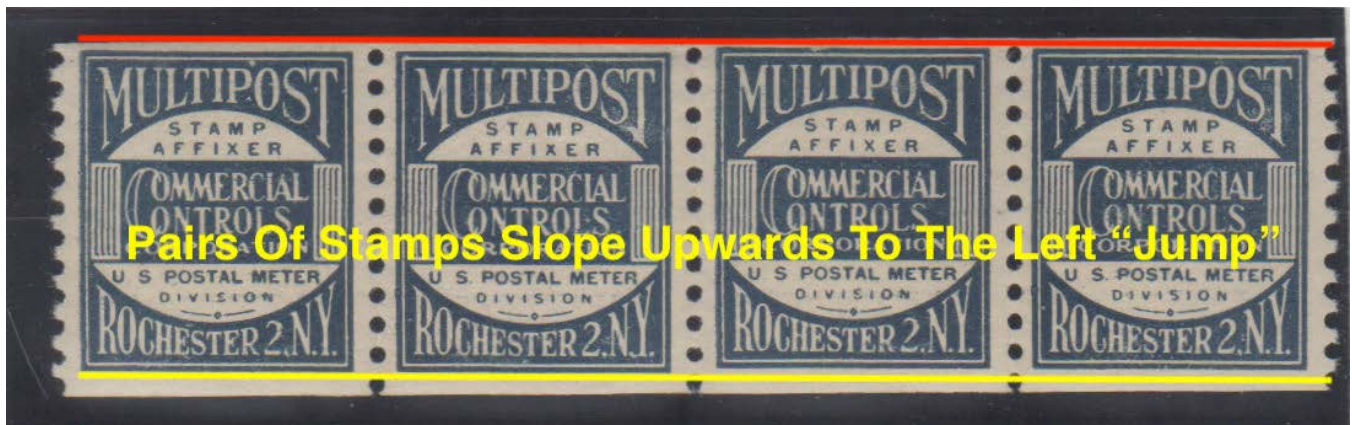


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Note that on the TD65 strip of 4 shown above, every other stamp shows the plate flaw of the "OR" partially missing in "CORP'N". The other strip shown at the bottom of Page 5 does not show that plate flaw, concluding that not every coil strip will show this plate flaw.

Shown at the left is an enlargement of the plate flaw of the "OR" partially missing in "CORP'N".



The TD88 strip of 4 shown above illustrates that the two pairs of stamps have different vertical alignment, with the left pair slightly lower than the right pair.

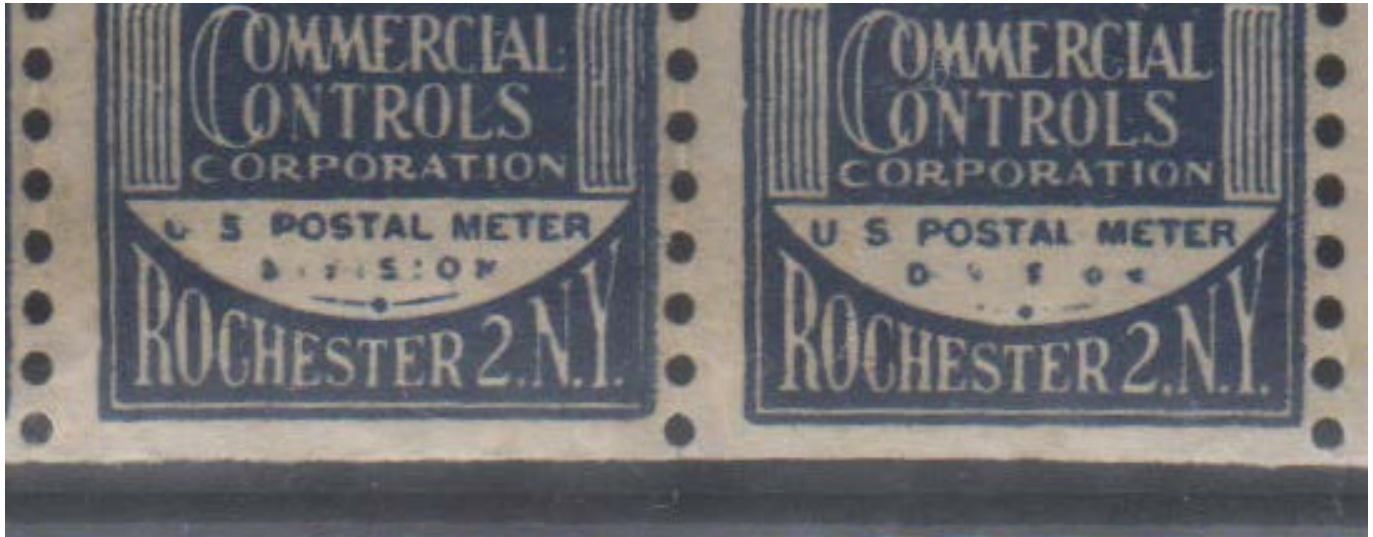


The TD90 pair shown at the left shows a "jump" in the alignment for the stamp on the right.

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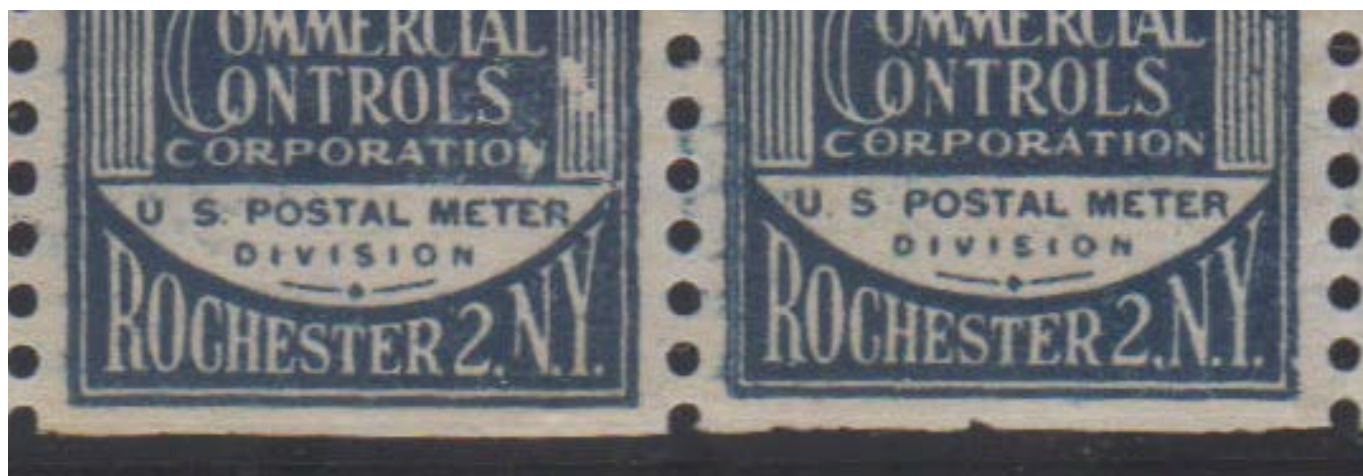


The TD90 cropped strip of 4 shown above has a constant plate variety every other stamp. Beneath the central "COMMERCIAL / CONTROLS / CORPORATION" banner, in the next two lines of print "U. S. POSTAL METER / DIVISION" the letters "I" are missing from the word "DIVISION" making it "D V S O N" on every other stamp. Also, note that on the stamps adjacent to the stamps with the missing "I", the "U" of "U S POSTAL METER" is partially missing at the top, most noticeably in the UR corner. Both of these plate varieties can be seen better in the enlarged image below.

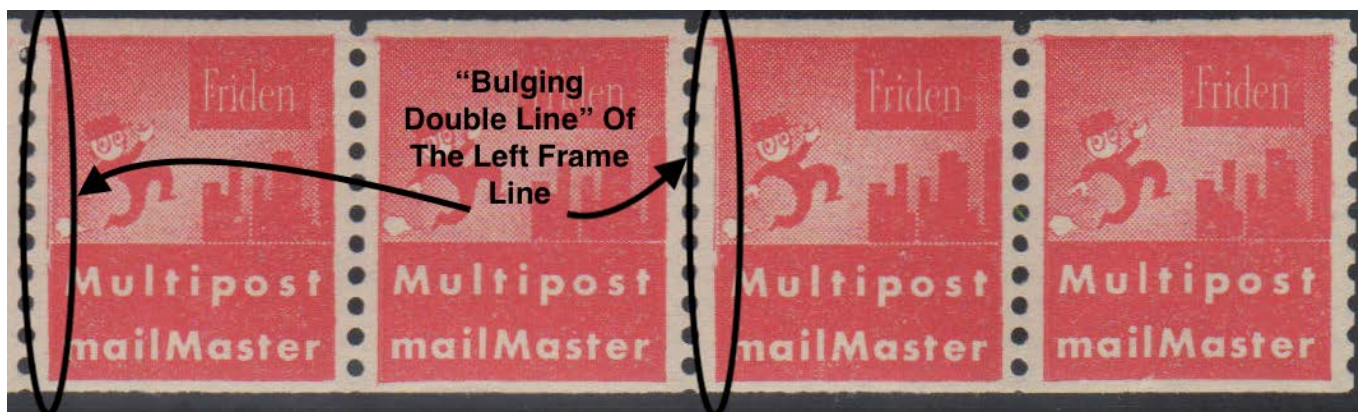


The TD90 cropped strip of 4 shown above has a constant plate flaw every other stamp. At the right end of the central "COMMERCIAL / CONTROLS / CORPORATION" banner, there are small spots of missing print in the vertical lines and on the letter "N" in "CORPORATION" on every other stamp. It can be seen better in the enlarged image shown on Page 8.

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The TD91 strip of 4 shown above has a missing ink spot in the building on every other stamp as shown.



The TD93 cropped strip of 4 shown above has a double frame line at the upper left of every other stamp as shown. An enlarged image of this double frame line is shown below.



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The following items are not in the same category as the title of this article "Constant Test Stamp Varieties Occurring Every Other Stamp" indicates, but are worth illustrating for the reasons indicated in the captions explained below.



The TD60A strip of 4 shown above shows the two left stamps somewhat in the "normal" position then the third stamp drops 1mm or more then the fourth stamp "jumps" back up to the top. Is this an example of the stamp design repeating every third or fourth stamp, and not every other? Also, the strip shown above has alternating vertical gutter widths between stamps which are clearly visible.



Shown above is a very unusual strip of 4 Scott TD88 Multipost test stamps which was illustrated previously in the Summer 2014, DSSG Newsletter No. 36. For the lack of a better description of this unusual strip, I am calling it a "jump print strip". The following was written in that newsletter but is worth repeating here.

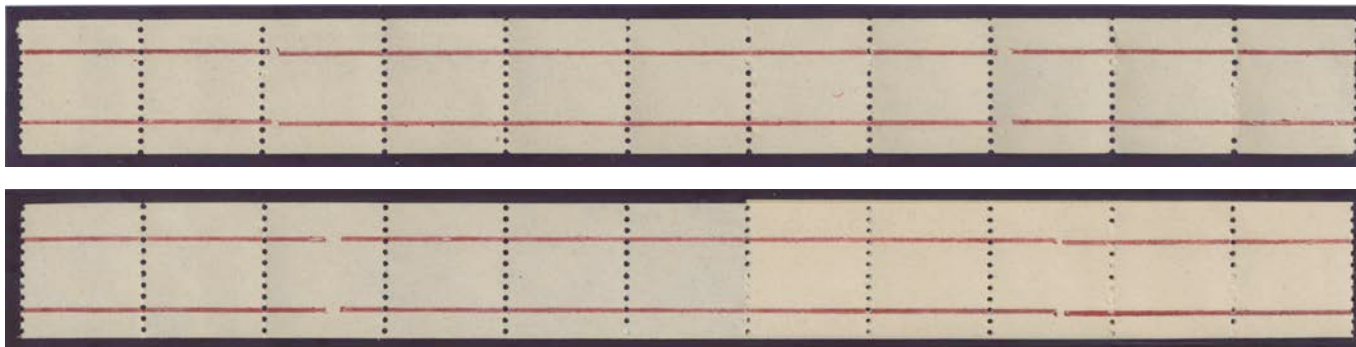
"I consulted both John Hotchner and Ken Lawrence about a possible explanation for this unusual item and basically both of them agree on how it may have happened.

John Hotchner had the following to say about his idea of how this may have occurred. "The perforations are where they belong all across the strip. My best guess is that the press was stopped because of a problem with the paper up ahead, when it was started up again, the tensioning of the web was interrupted and there was a momentary back up that straightened itself out between the misplaced images and the next images. Since the web was completed, and the perforations were normal, the pressmen did not notice this and it got out. A very unusual variety that I have not seen with any regular postage stamps. Given that the web was probably 20 subjects or more wide, there should be more of these out there."

Ken Lawrence had the following to say about this item and John Hotchner's comment. "I think his explanation is right, but that is two subjects horizontally. We don't know how many rows were printed vertically."

It is apparent that the printing plate was 2 stamps in width but it is unknown how many rows of stamps were on the plate. I have noticed that on quite a few of the private printed test stamps they show constant plate varieties every two stamps. Some have actual plate flaws, some just seem to be mis-aligned every two stamps."

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The two TD76 strips of 11 shown above do not fit into the theme of this article but they do show the alternating narrow (2mm) and wide (3mm) gaps in red precancellation lines. They alternate every 6 stamps. The red line gaps also move along the stamps and can be found in the center of the stamps (as shown bottom strip) or the far right. The whitish 5 stamps at the right are due to 5 stamps folded back under the strip of 11. □



Recent Auctions of Interest to Dummy Stamp Collectors

by Terry R. Scott

On October 13-15, 2017 Schuyler J. Rumsey Philatelic Auctions held Sale #75 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2607 * **Test Stamp Collection, 1906-2006.** Well formed collection neatly displayed mounts and identified in Scott album; starting with early 20th century coil types including private perf tests and most in pairs, #TD75 leader strip of five, TD76 pairs and strip showing large and small line gaps, 1930's Zeigle colored coil pairs complete, TD84A blocks showing the blue, green and red defacement markings, 1944-49

Multipost pair sets, 1950's framed rectangle issues including on cover tests, 1954 Nebraska Experimental's near complete with better, scarce Avery pair TD115 (cat \$500), much of the later issues present including better with TD109b, TD128, TD129A-D, TD132, 1998 Octagon experimental shade varieties, the unlisted 1995 Antique Automobile booklet tests, including a section of test booklet and panes starting with the scarce TDB3 booklet x2, TDB5 & TDB5a and a nice run of later "Dummy" booklets with variety, better blank booklets, 1988 Jack London booklets including mismatched numbers and unlisted blank cover, good Daffodil booklets with unlisted variety, scarce TDB48, etc.; an excellent foundation for continuation, inspection highly recommended. Ex photo. Estimate; \$2,000.00 - \$3,000.00 Realized \$4,000.00.

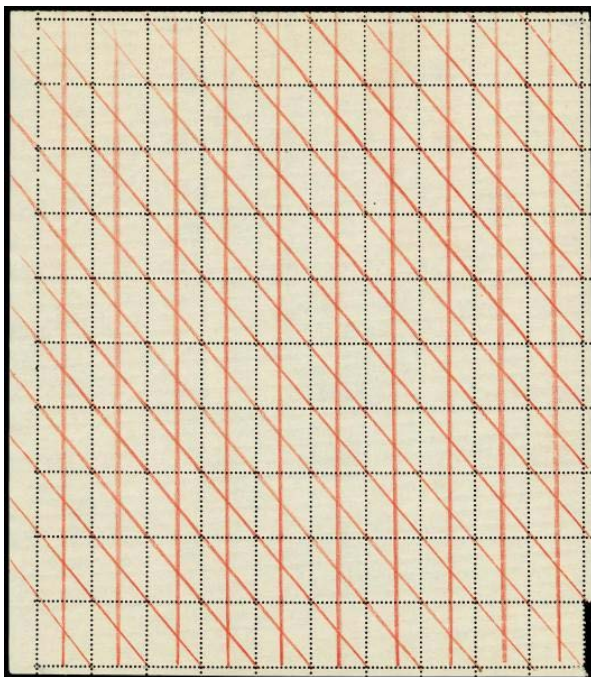


On October 26-28, 2017 H.R. Harmer, Inc. held Sale #3017 that contained the following test stamps. There is an 18% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

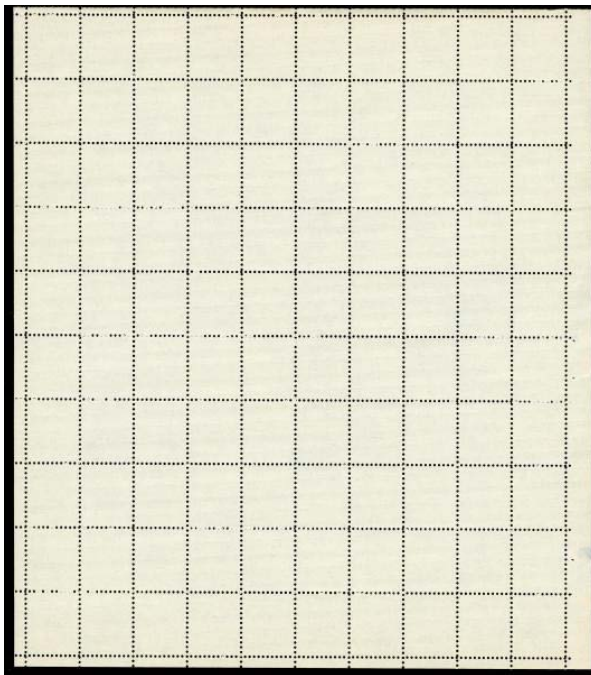
Lot 3507 ** **TD84A, 1956 "Blank" with Gum Breaker Ridges Alternating Between 5mm and 6.5mm Apart**, full pane of 100 with vertical and diagonal red defacing lines, NH, tiny bit of selvage missing at bottom right, F-VF (Scott \$1,250 as 25 blocks of four) Photo. Cat. \$1,250.00 Realized \$250.00.

Please see illustration of Lot 3507 on the following page.

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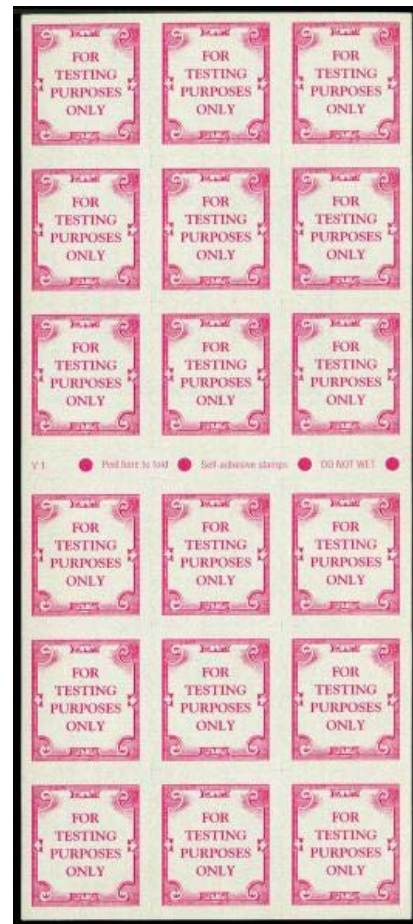
Lot 3507



Lot 3508 ** TD84A, 1956 "Blank" with Gum Breaker Ridges Alternating Between 5mm and 6.5mm Apart, full pane of 100, NH, F-VF. Photo (Scott \$1,250 as 25 blocks of four) Cat. \$1,250.00 Realized \$200.00.

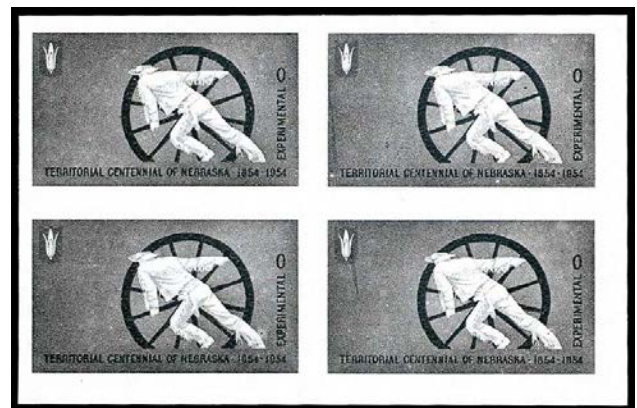
Lot 3509 ** TDB92a, 1997 "FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY" Self Adhesive Booklet pane of 18 in magenta, lot of four panes, Very Fine. Photo Cat. \$1,000.00 Realized \$150.00.

Please see illustration of Lot 3509 at the top of the right column on this page.



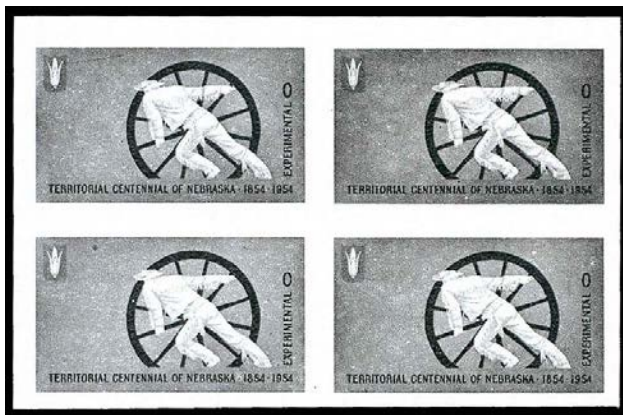
Lot 3509

On 2017.10.28-29 Michael E. Aldrich Auctions held Sale #92 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 1194 **TD100** Black, Block of Four, OG, NH, Extremely Fine, Photo. Cat. Val. \$120.00 Realized \$40.00.

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Lot 1195 **TD100A** Gray, Block of Four, OG, NH, Extremely Fine. Photo. Cat. Val \$300.00 Realized \$80.00.

On 2017.11.01-02 Cherrystone Auctions held Sale #1117 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



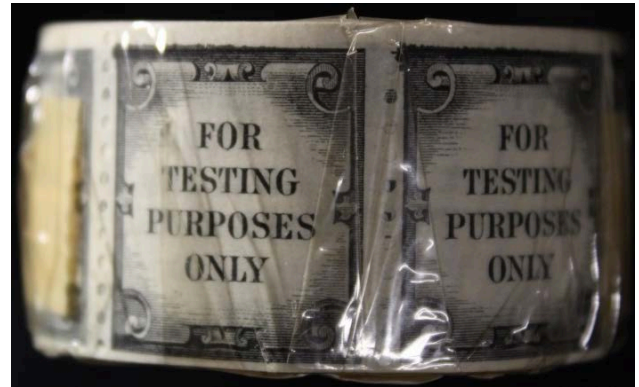
Lot 43 **TDB92a** 1993 Test stamps books, 10 unexploded booklets, v.f., Photo. Cat. \$2,500.00 Realization unknown.

On November 8, 2017 Downeast Stamps held Sale #310 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 10% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



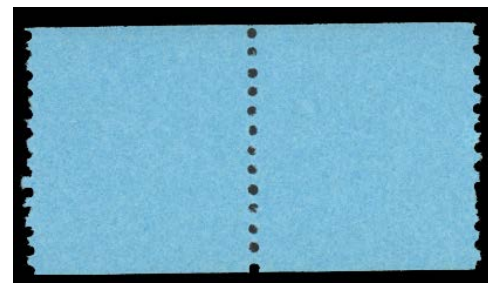
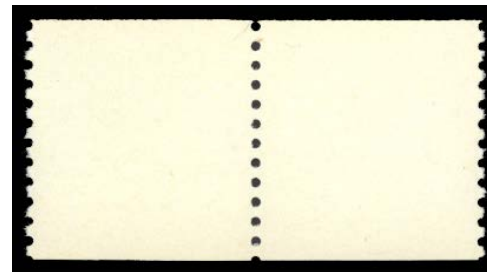
Lot 663 ** TD95, purple test coil, misperforated. Photo. Est. \$15.00 Not sold.

On December 9, 2017 Emerald Ventures, LLC (Alan Blair Auctions) held Sale #164 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 941 ** #TD107d Unopened roll of 500 Mint NH Test Stamps 1962-66 block tagged with dull gum, quite a gem Photo CV \$1320.00 Estimate \$160.00 Realization unknown.

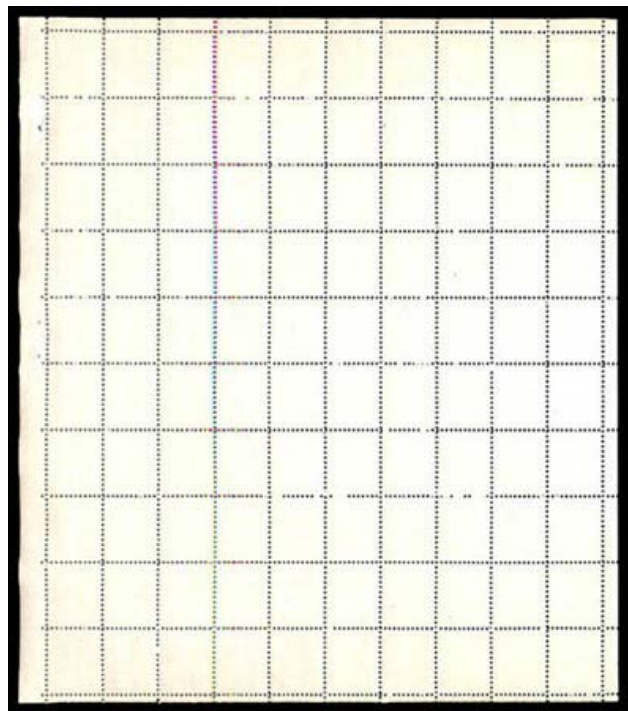
On December 11, 2017 Paradise Valley Stamps Company held Sale #H111 that contained the following test stamps. There is no Buyer's Premium for this sale.



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Lot 1028 ** TD79 1930s, ELECTRIC VENDORS (ZEIGLE), INC. BLANK WHITE RESP. BLUE COIL PAIRS NH, #TD79, mint never hinged, very fine, Photo. Cat. \$60.00 Minimum Bid \$30.00 Not sold.

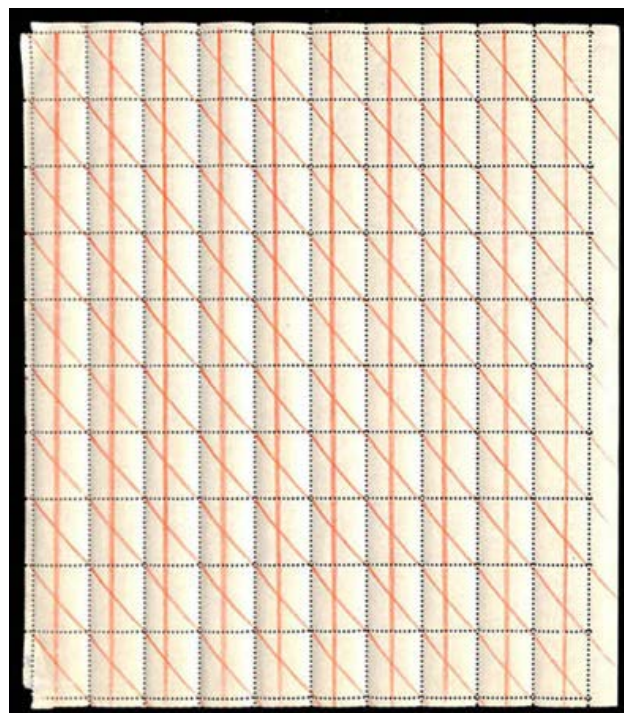
On December 11-13, 2017 Daniel F. Kellerher Auctions, LLC held Sale #709 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2544 TD84A Test Stamp, 1920's-50's, B.E.P. blank design, gum breaker ridges 5mm to 6.5mm apart (Scott TD84A), complete sheet of 100, o.g., never hinged, without usual defacement markings; some light thinning in left selvage, otherwise Fine to Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$2,500.00 as singles. Estimate \$500.00 - \$750.00 Not sold.

Lot 2545 TD84A Test Stamp, 1920's-50's, B.E.P. blank design, gum breaker ridges 5mm to 6.5mm apart (Scott TD84A), complete sheet of 100, o.g., never hinged, with usual red defacement markings, criss crossing the pane; some light crayon offset on gum, thins on top left and bottom left stamps, some selvage damage at left, otherwise Fine to Very Fine. Photo Scott \$2,500.00 as singles. Estimate \$500 - 750.00 Not sold.

Please see illustration of Lot 2545 at the top of the right column on this page.



Lot 2546 TDB90 (Ed. note: This is not TDB90, it is a private issue) Test Booklet (Scott TDB90), complete sheet of 20 panes, o.g., never hinged, Very Fine. Photo Estimate \$1,200.00 - 1,800.00 Not sold.



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Requests for Articles for The United States Specialist

Leonard Piszkiwicz, Editor of *The United States Specialist*, is always looking for articles of interest for inclusion in our society's monthly publication. The type of articles Len needs most are the shorter ones, one or two-page articles. If you are considering writing an article for *The United States Specialist*, please contact him for instructions. If the article is regarding dummy stamps, I would appreciate knowing

about it also. Many members of the DSSG have written articles on dummy stamps and other stamps for this publication. It is rewarding and other USSS members benefit greatly from the information that is published in *The United States Specialist*.

Leonard can be reached by e-mail at: lenp@pacbell.net □

Proposed Future DSSG Projects

Updating Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets

Work is progressing, very much still at a snail's pace, on updating *Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets*. The last update by Earl McAfee, Dummy Booklets Study Group Chairman, was in 1998. Since then there have been many new discoveries. Many of them have been written up in articles in *The United States Specialist*. Now the time has come to document and illustrate them in a new updated version of Research Paper Number 3. I am in charge of this update project and knowing that it will take quite a bit of time to complete, have no

estimated completion date in mind. I will be asking all of you to join me in this project as I am not able to do it all, nor would you want me to do it all. It is a DSSG project and all members should have a chance to provide their input. Several illustrations are needed and a listing of these will be sent to you when I compile it. Scans at 300 dpi are necessary for clarity. It is anticipated that this publication will be in color. It has not yet been determined if it will be available on CD. □

The Other Projects

There are several other projects currently being worked on by various members of the DSSG. They are as follows:

- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of dummy test stamp roll sizes, box and roll labels. There are many different styles of labels sometimes found on the same test stamps. This is especially true of Bureau of Engraving and Printing products
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive record of auction appearances and prices realized for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive listing of references for test stamps
- Compiling a complete and comprehensive list of plate numbers printed on test stamps and the frequency in which they appear and the frequency of joint lines on test coils when they appear. □

This issue and all past issues of the Dummy Stamps Study Group Newsletter - Dummy News and Views may be found at:

<http://www.usstamps.org/dssg.html>