



Dummy News and Views

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

Issue Number 63

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Welcome to the Dummy Stamps Study Group's Sixty-third 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 United States Stamp Society's Dummy Stamps Study Group at terryrscott@comcast.net

Examining a Scott TD85 Blank Commemorative Size Test Stamp Bottom Right Corner Sheet Margin Block of 4

by Michael O. Perry and Terry R. Scott

In the August, 1997 issue of the *Scott Stamp Monthly* magazine, on page 36, there was article by Ken Lawrence titled "THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON UNITED STATES sheets and booklet format dummy stamps". There were several United States test stamps covered in this nice article and is well worth reading if you have access to a copy of that magazine.

Within that article there was an illustration and information about an unprinted bottom right corner sheet margin block of 4 commemorative size stamps. Recently I was able to purchase that same block of 4 and wanted to share my findings. Shown on the following page is an illustration of that bottom right corner sheet margin block of 4 which I have identified as a TD85. The block I purchased can be identified as being the same block illustrated in Ken's article due to the missing horizontal perforations between the top and bottom pairs of stamps as well as what appears to be a black dot on the top right stamp near the bottom. That black dot is actually a small hole in that stamp. In the article the stamp is described "The Figure 4 corner margin block of unprinted dummy stamps has gauge 10-1/2 by 11 perforations. On the back, ribbed gum breaker ridges spaced at 12-mm intervals". The current Scott Catalog lists a similar blank test stamp as TD85, but it has 11-1/4 x 10-1/2 perforations, and it has gumbreakers with ridges alternating between 5 and 6.5mm apart. Thus, the block in Ken's article appeared to be a new, previously

unreported variety... one that several serious collectors of test stamps have been seeking for over 20 years.

Upon close examination of the block I purchased (that is the same block Ken wrote about), we have determined the description in the 1997 article is incorrect. The perforation gauge is actually 11-1/4 x 10-1/2 (which is the same as listed in the Scott Catalog for TD85). In Ken's article he had the perforation gauge as 10-1/2 x 11 which was simply reversed and the 1/4 difference is easily due to different perforation gauges used. Furthermore, the gumbreakers on the reverse side of this block were obviously ridges that alternated between 5 and 6-1/2 mm apart - which is what is shown in the listing for TD85.

In this issue:

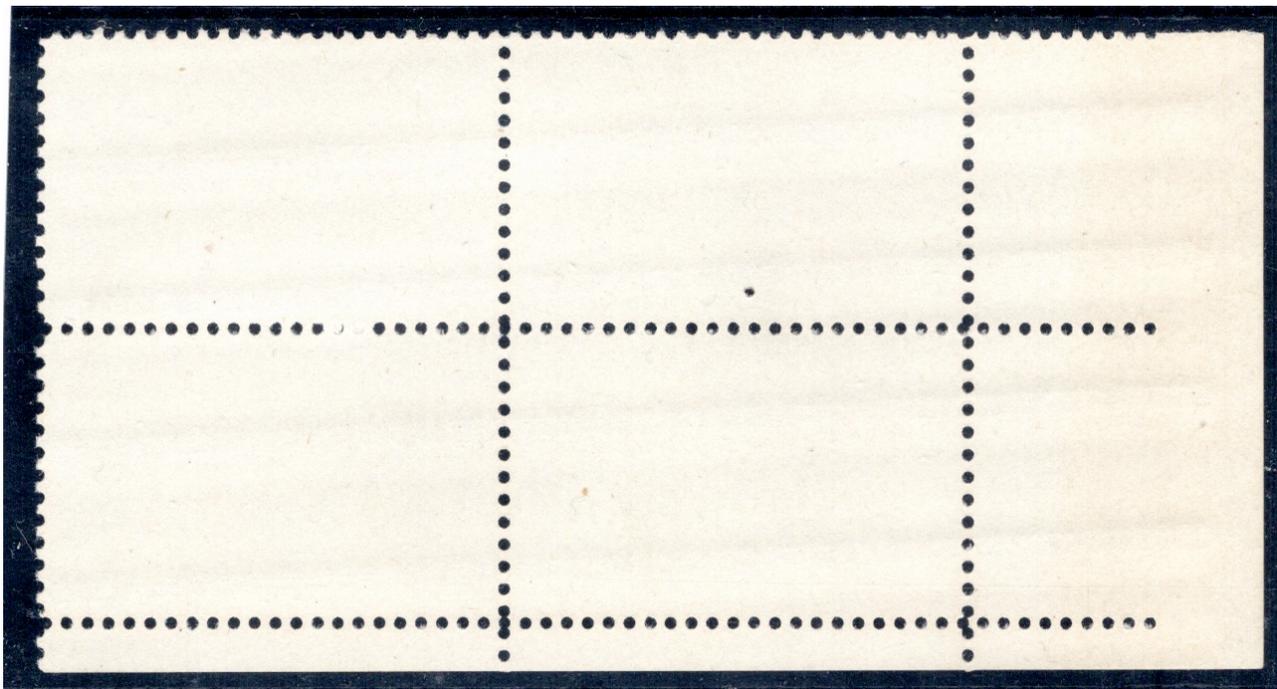
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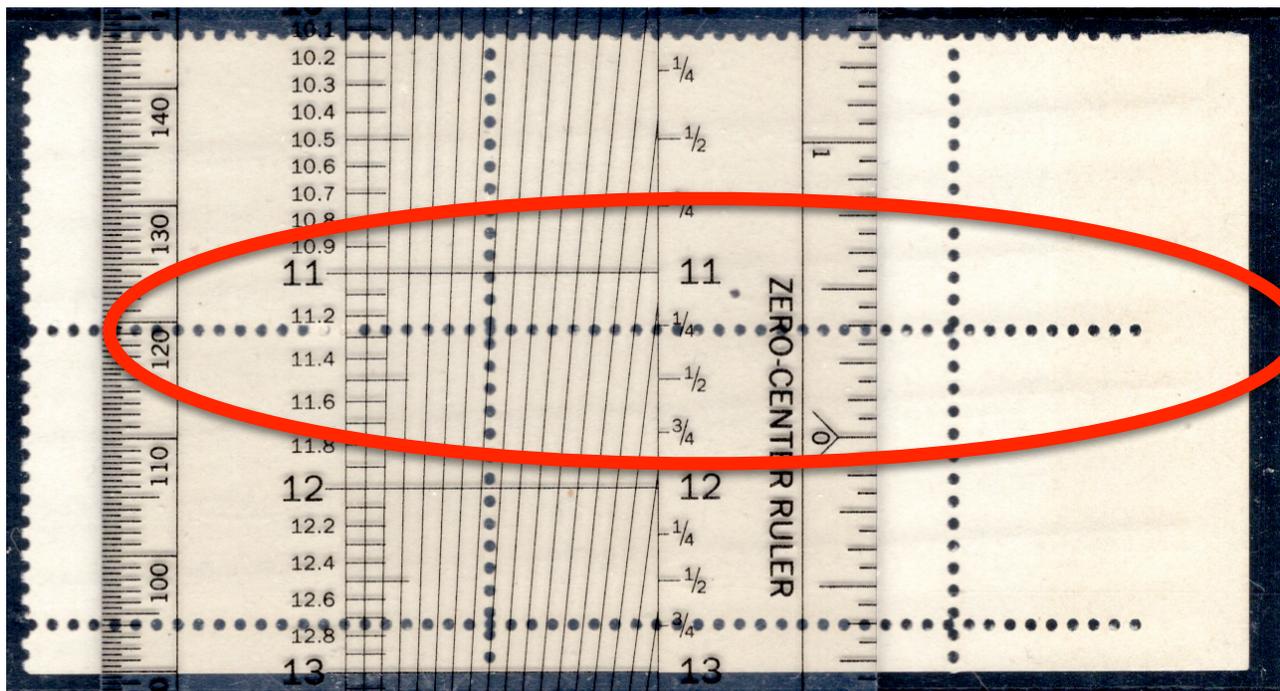
See the illustrations below for the perforation gauge measurements and Page 4 for the gum breakers photo.

It is to be noted, that several years ago, Mr. James Kloetzel, Michael O. Perry and myself took some time to actually compare different perforation gauges while we met at the annual WESTPEX Stamp Show in San Francisco. We

were quite surprised to find noticeable differences between the different gauges we compared. Most of them were the familiar plastic style. We found that even some perforation gauges made by the same company had noticeable differences when placed on top of each other. This certainly could be the reason for the difference in recorded perforation gauge for the stamp in the article.

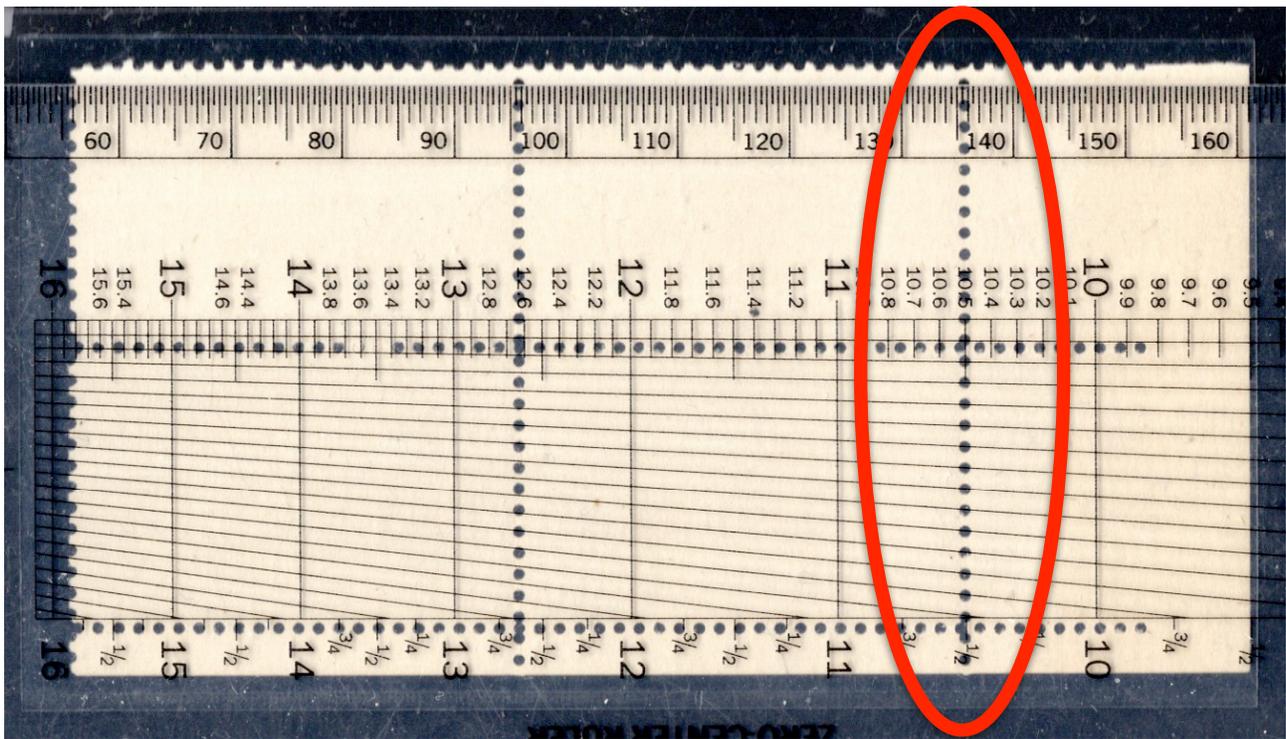


Shown above is the TD85 test stamp bottom right corner sheet margin block of 4

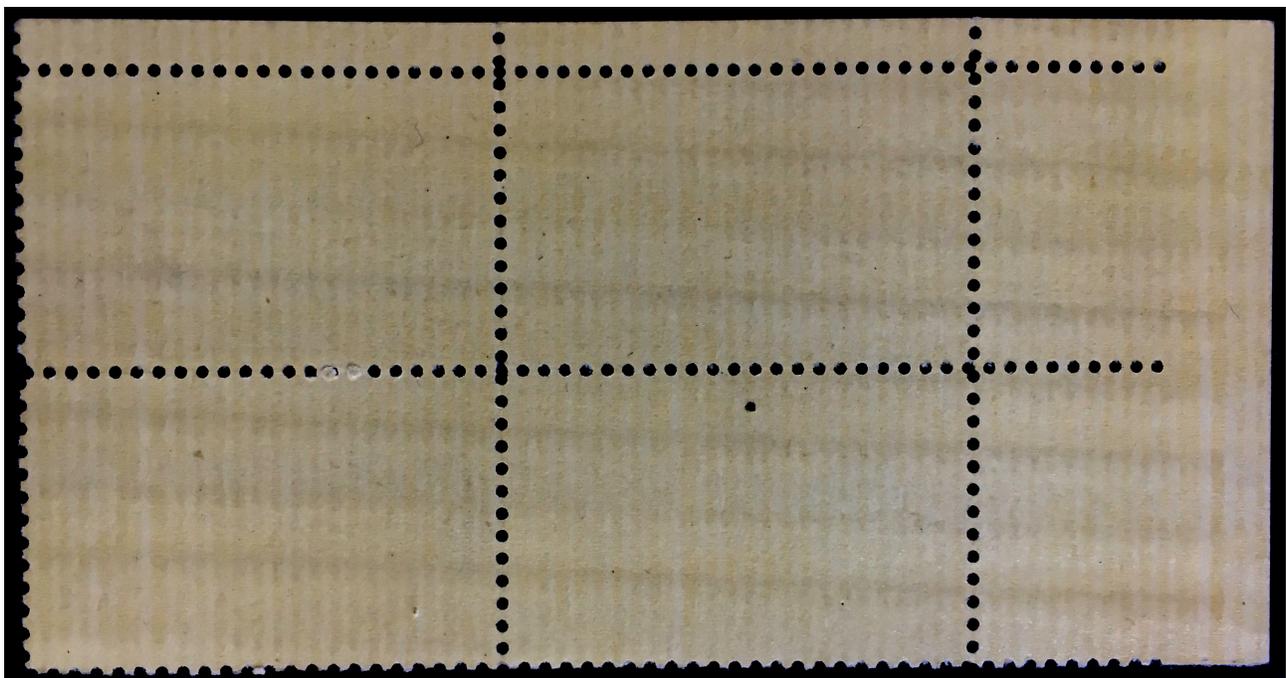


Shown above is the horizontal perforation gauge of 11-1/4 using a Linn's Multi-Gauge

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Shown above is the vertical perforation gauge of 10-1/2 using a Linn's Multi-Gauge



Shown above is an enhanced image to more clearly show the sloping horizontal gum breakers with alternating spacing of 5 mm and 6-1/2 mm apart

On the following page is a photocopy of the first page of the article by Ken Lawrence that was in the August, 1997 issue of the *Scott Stamp Monthly* magazine, on page 36. The article is titled "THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON UNITED STATES sheets and booklet format dummy stamps"

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THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON UNITED STATES sheets and booklet format dummy stamps

▼ KEN LAWRENCE

The *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps* includes a back-of-the-book chapter titled "Test Stamps," that includes a comprehensive listing of dummy coil stamps and rotary press coil stamp forerunners manufactured by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). An editorial headnote states, "There are other formats and designs of official U.S. test stamps than those currently listed here, including sheets and booklets. The editors are assembling data to correct, clarify and expand these listings, and they would welcome information and examples of stamps from interested individuals."

Actually, the editors have already begun to expand the listing by including one type of dummy sheet stamp — the imperforate red Minerva Head and Shield design of 1910, Scott 385a-E2a, shown in Figure 1. A mirror image print of the same design is Scott 385a-E2b. The numeral of value three has been interpreted by the editors as three cents in the listing, but I think it is a placeholder only; three-cent stamps had few uses in 1910.



Figure 1: Imperforate Minerva Head and Shield dummy sheet stamps are remnants of Harris offset press tests in 1910.

Although the Minerva Head design is a knockoff of the 2¢ George Washington and Shield stamp of 1903, Scott 319, the dummy is 50 percent larger than the postage stamp. These dummy prints were tests of a Harris offset press, to determine its suitability for stamp production. At the time of those tests, the Post Office Department chose not to abandon line-engraved intaglio printing of postage stamps, but from 1918 to 1920, similar Harris offset presses were used to print

1¢, 2¢, and 3¢ Washington-Franklin sheet stamps, Scott 525-536.

CLASSIC ERA DUMMY STAMPS

Obtaining information about other early dummy stamps is difficult, and the items themselves are much scarcer than many rare postage stamps. In order to verify that they are not simply stamp-size pieces of gummed, perforated selvage, unprinted dummy stamps should be collected in blocks.

Only the sheet format existed in the 19th century; coil and booklet stamps had not yet been invented. The earliest U.S. dummy item in my collection is a margin block of large Bank Note stamp paper with brown gum and gauge 12 perforations (Figure 2).

The white wove paper is thick and soft, but glows bluish under long-wave ultraviolet light, indicating rag content. It is probably the stamp paper introduced by Continental Bank Note Co. in the late summer or fall of 1878, and used by that firm's successor, American Bank Note Co., until the summer of 1879.

Although I have been unable to find a documentary reference to these dummy stamps, they coincided historically with a burst of activity among inventors who sought to build the first coin-operated stamp vending machines, and others who strove to create practical plunger-driven stamp affixing machines that loaded stacked sheet stamps. Tests on models of either or both of these could plausibly account for this example.

THE FIRST BEP DUMMY STAMPS

My second type of dummy sheet stamp, shown in Figure 3, has a more solidly documented history. It is a block of definitive-size unprinted gummed stamp paper with double-line USPS watermark, used on all ordinary postage stamps printed by the BEP from 1895 to 1910. If records had not survived, it would be difficult to pinpoint the origin of these within that 15-year time frame. Fortunately, documentation is avail-

able that shows that the Bureau shipped samples of gummed, perforated stamp paper to the Post Office Department in 1907 for distribution to stamp vending machine firms.

Cecelia Wertheimer, curator of BEP's Historical Research Center, sent a copy of PO. Order #22 of Oct. 26, 1907, that read, "In compliance with the request of the Honorable the Postmaster General dated the 24 instant, you are authorized and directed to deliver five hundred (500) sheets of Postage Stamp paper, perforated and gummed, but not printed, to Mr. F.E. McMillan, Room 225 Post Office Department Building. It is understood by the Postmaster General that the price for this paper will be \$1.42." The dummy stamps were delivered on October 31, and are reported in the BEP director's 1908 fiscal year report.

Before the distribution of these dummy stamps, inventors had used actual one-cent postage stamps to test their equipment, at substantial cost. Research by Douglas Kelsey turned up two envelopes from a Dec. 8, 1905, test of Arthur Pitney's Pitney Postal Machine Co. envelope sealing device. Both have 1¢ Benjamin Franklin stamps of the 1902-1903 series, Scott 300, affixed by Pitney's equipment.

Although the quantity of 1907 dummy stamps was large — 50,000 (500 sheets of 100) — they are rare today. The illustrated example, from the estate of dummy stamp specialist Leo Stawecki, is the first I've seen in 20 years of study.

ROTARY PRESS DUMMY SHEET STAMPS

From 1927 to 1934, production of large commemorative-size stamps gradually moved from flat plate to rotary press pro-

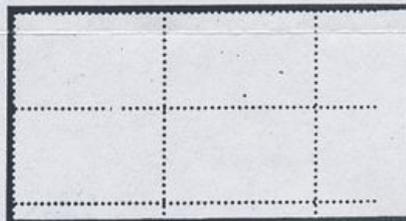


Figure 4: A commemorative size rotary press corner block, with gauge 10-1/2 by 11 perforations and Type III gum breakers.

duction. The 10¢ gray violet Motorcycle Messenger special delivery stamp of 1927, Scott E15; the 3¢ deep violet Mothers of America commemorative of 1934, Scott 737; and the 6¢ dull orange Winged Globe air mail stamp, Scott C19, are examples of rotary press stamp designs that had been issued earlier as flat-plate prints.

The Figure 4 corner margin block of unprinted dummy stamps has gauge 10-1/2 by 11 perforations. On the back, ribbed gum applied by the Stickney rotary press has breaker ridges spaced at 12-millimeter intervals. That is Type III spacing, which replaced earlier breaker styles early in 1930, and remained standard from then until the Stickney rotary presses were retired in the late 1950s.

Here again I have a dummy item that lacks documentation. Because it is uncommon as a collectible, I suspect it was used to test production equipment at the BEP, probably a perforator, perhaps to check the anticurl ability of the perforator's gum breaker bar. I have examined similar blocks of definitive-size dummy stamps with the same gauge perforations and gum breaker configuration, so at least two varieties exist.

OVERRUN COUNTRIES DUMMY PANE

The Figure 5 pane may be unique, but it has an impeccable provenance. It belonged originally to George Hahn, author of a book on the 1940 Famous Americans commemorative series. After Hahn, it was owned by Sol Glass, who chronicled U.S. stamps in the *Bureau Specialist* from 1944 to 1961. Scientist and philatelic editor Phillip Rochlin acquired it in the Sol Glass estate, and Cinderella specialist Dr. Herbert Trenchard, the next owner, passed it on to me.

This is a sheet layout sample for the set of 5¢ Overrun Countries stamps of 1943 and



Figure 3: The Post Office Department distributed double-line watermarked stamp paper to manufacturers of stamp vending machines in 1907.

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A New For Testing Purposes Only Test Coil Discovery



Dummy Stamps Study Group member Scott Smith recently reported another new United States dummy coil stamp. The new test stamp is a privately printed self-adhesive item and it is reported to come in rolls of 3,000. Shown above is an image of a strip of 6 of the newly reported Kirk-Rudy test stamp.

The new test stamp was made for Kirk-Rudy, Inc. by an unknown printer. The Kirk-Rudy company manufacturers innovative equipment made for the printing and packaging industries. Machinery for applying postage stamps to envelopes is one of their many different lines of equipment.

The new test stamp was submitted to Mr. James E. Kloetzel, Editor Emeritus, to be listed in the *2022 Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* as TD141, image (TE71).

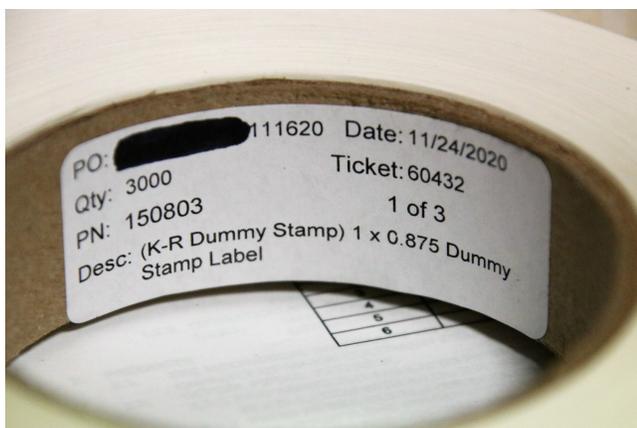
The proposed TD141 is a self-adhesive test stamp on backing paper. The TD141 has four straight edge sides with a small radius in each of the four corners. The TD141 measures 22.5 mm x 25.5 mm. The backing paper is 29 mm in height.

There is a 3 mm gap between the stamps on the backing paper. It is hard to see in the above scan but the areas that are white color are all backing paper. The stamp design is full color to the edges of the stamps.

The stamp design has simulated printed perforations around the design that imitates a postage stamp. It has “kR” within two black circles at the top right and has a printed 4-line black wavy line cancellation. The bottom part of the stamp has “FOR TESTING PURPOSES ONLY” printed in four lines.

Mr. Smith examined a long strip of these new TD141 test stamps and reported he did not see any counting numbers or other markings on the back of the backing paper. There is no tagging on the stamps. These have been seen listed for sale on eBay.

Shown below are a couple of photos of the new Kirk-Rudy test stamp roll labels. Note the two different printing dates “11/17/2020” and “11/24/2020”.



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Recent Auctions of Interest to Dummy Stamp Collectors

by Terry R. Scott

On March 23, 2021 Michael E. Aldrich held Sale #103 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2078 (TD109), PR, NH, sharp color, fresh and VF. Photo. Catalog Value \$180.00. Not sold.



On March 30, 2021 Daniel F. Kellerher Auctions, LLC. held Sale #755 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 2019 (*) TD19  Test Stamp, 1910, B.E.P. (numerals & Hamilton design, engraved), red, imperf (Scott TD19), right margin block of 4, unused without gum; light creases or light wrinkles, Very Fine, *extremely rare*. Photo. Scott \$600.00. Realized \$650.00.



Lot 2020 (*) TD19  Test Stamp, 1910, B.E.P. (numerals & Hamilton design, engraved), red, imperf (Scott TD19), block of 4, unused without gum; vertical crease along left stamps, Very Fine, *extremely rare*. Photo. Scott 600.00. Realized \$1,300.00.



Lot 2021 ** TD108 Test Stamp, 1970, B.E.P. "For Testing Purposes Only", carmine, tagged (Scott TD108), pair, o.g., never hinged, Very Fine to Extremely Fine. Photo. Scott \$1,600.00. Realized \$800.00.



Lot 2022 ** TD108 Test Stamp, 1970, B.E.P. "For Testing Purposes Only", carmine, tagged (Scott TD108), pair, o.g., never hinged; blunted perforations along the left, Very Fine to Extremely Fine centering, with 2015 Weiss certificate. Photo. Scott \$1,600.00. Realized \$550.00.

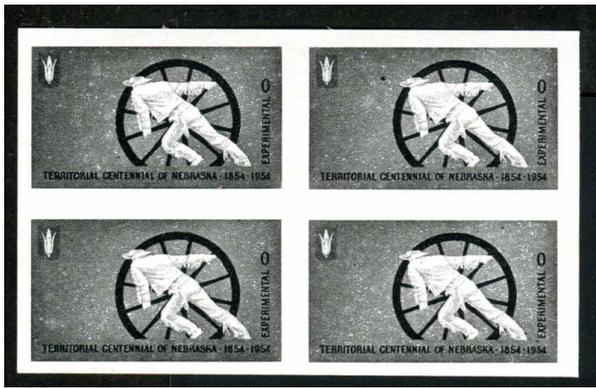


Lot 2023 ** TD110 Test Stamp, 1975, B.E.P. "For Testing Purposes Only", orange on gray, tagged (Scott TD110), pair, o.g., never hinged; tiny inclusions on right stamp, Fine to Very Fine, *rare*. Photo. Scott \$2,000.00. Realized \$850.00.



On March 31, 2021 Downeast Stamps held Sale #332 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 12% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

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Lot 579 **  TD100, Black, 1954 Test Stamp, Imperf block of four, VF, OG NH. Photo. Catalog \$75.00. Realized \$38.00.



On April 4, 2021 Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions LLC held Sale #5144 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



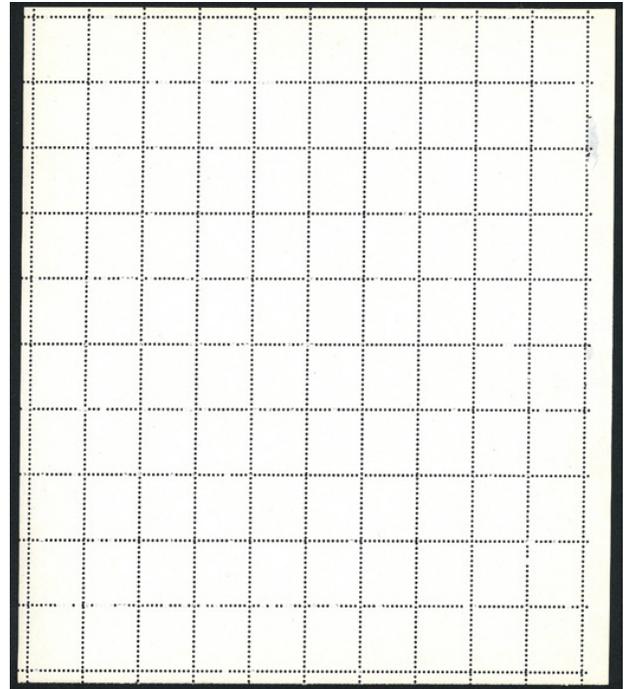
Lot 5918 ** Test Stamp, 1962, B.E.P. "For Testing Purposes Only", black, tagged, pebble-surfaced gum, imperf (Scott TD107c), pair, o.g., never hinged; small gum skip at top of left stamp, Very Fine. Photo. Scott \$250.00. Realized \$180.00.



On April 25, 2021 Michael Rogers Online, a Division of Daniel F. Kelleher Auctions, LLC held Sale #5147 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 20% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 10010 * TD84A U.S., Test Stamp Sheets blank design, gum breaker ridges (Scott TD84A), 10 pristine sheets as produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing between 1920-1970; unlike many, these sheets are flawless, Fine to Very Fine, Photo. Cat. \$10,000.00. Not sold.



Lot 10013 * TD84A U.S., Test Stamp Sheet blank design, gum breaker ridges (Scott TD84A), complete sheet of MNH blank perforated stamps in fresh condition; undisturbed gum with breaker ridges on reverse; attractive and seldom seen; selvage thin not affecting stamps, Fine to Very Fine. Photo. Cat. \$1,000.00. Not sold.

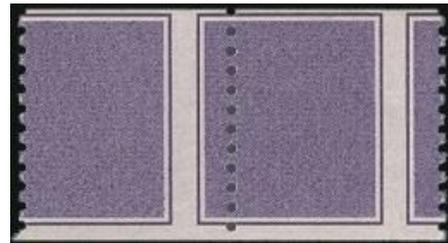


On April 28, 2021 Sam Houston Philatelics held Sale #3081 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

Lot 225 ** TD96/TD133 **TD96//TD133, Accumulation of Test stamps (59)**, F-VF NH, includes pair of TD96, TD107 single, pairs and strips (48), TD119 Strip of 5, TD120 pair and TD133 pair. The TD107's tagging not checked and all appear to be shiny gum. Photo. Cat. \$83.00. Realized \$16.00.

See the photo of this lot at the top of Page 8

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Lot 4255 * TD95, TEST coil Pair with MAJOR MISPERF., VF, NH, Photos. Est. \$40.00. Not sold.

On May 26, 2021 Sam Houston Philatelics held Sale #3082 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 15% Buyer's Premium for this sale.



Lot 4256 * TDB92a, self adhesive TEST BOOKLET pane of 18, VF, NH, Photo. Cat. \$250.00. Not sold.



On June 16, 2021 Downeast Stamps held Sale #333 that contained the following test stamps. There is a 12% Buyer's Premium for this sale.

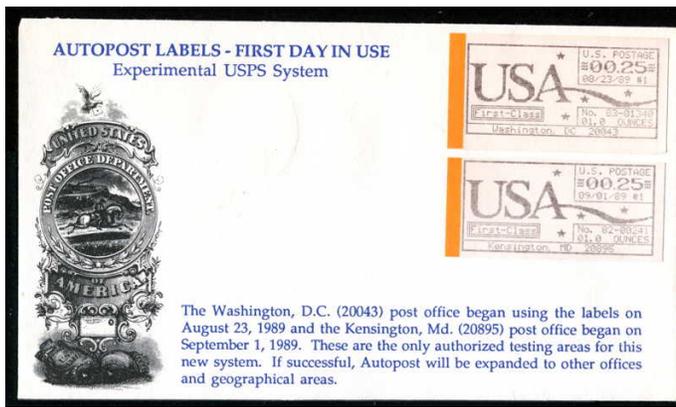
Lot 147 ** TD107e, 1962-88 Black Coil Test Stamps, Roll of 3,000 unopened, centering appears VF-XF, untagged, NH. Photo. Cat. \$3,000.00. Not sold.



Lot 730 ** TD107, Test Stamp, black, horizontal coil strip of 3, with an extra vertical row of blind perfs near left side of each stamp, OG NH. Photo. Cat. \$35.00. Not sold. *(Ed. Note: The "extra vertical rows of blind perforations" most likely are indentations from the coil dispenser machine pins that grip the stamps to dispense them.)*

On June 2, 2021 Vance Auctions Ltd. held Sale #350 that contained the following test stamps. There is no Buyer's Premium for this sale.

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Lot 940 1989, Autopost labels for experimental USPS System, FDC, KMC Venture black cachet, 5-line blue text, unaddressed, VF. Photo. Cat. \$30.00. Realized \$21.00.

Proposed Future DSSG Projects

Dummy Booklets Guide

You may have noticed a change in the title of the project that Mike Perry and I have been working on. At the WESTPEX 2019 stamp show in San Francisco, California Mike and I met several times to discuss and to show both Roger Brody and Nick Lombardi the latest draft of a project that was previously known as the updating of *Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets*.

After several discussions, Roger decided that it would be in the best interest of the *United States Stamp Society* to make this project an actual published book. In making it a book, it was also decided that the title would be changed to *Dummy Booklets Guide*. Needless to say that Mike and I were very pleased at this decision and are working to make it the best possible publication on this interesting subject of dummy stamp books.

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 *Dummy Booklets Guide*.

I ask all of you to join Mike Perry and myself in this project as we are not able to do it all, nor would you want us to do it all. It is a Dummy Stamps Study Group project and all members have a chance, and are greatly encouraged, to provide their input. Any information on new items or any items not listed in the previous 1998 edition of *Research Paper Number 3 - Dummy Stamp Booklets* would be appreciated. While we believe we have most everything necessary to complete this book to include currently known dummy booklets, we may be missing important information that you can provide. This publication will be in full color. □

Requests for Articles for *The United States Specialist*

Martin Kent Miller, the new 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 Martin 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*. Martin Kent Miller can be reached by e-mail at: editor@usstamps.org □

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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>