



# Book Reports

Jan. – Feb. 2013 Volume 10, Issue 1



## An Early U.S. Rotary Press “Oddball”

Charles Neyhart

The rotary press designed by Benjamin Stickney, with research funded by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and a grant from the U.S. Post Office Department, came online in 1914 to print coil stamps on a continuous roll of paper. The intent was to overcome the inefficiencies and associated costs of the original hand-assembly manner of finishing coil stamps at the Bureau. After only a short time in use, certain officials began to consider the possibility of using the rotary press to also print sheet and booklet stamps. Eventually, a larger Stickney press was constructed and tested for this very purpose.

On May 26, 1920, the first product from this larger press was issued: a one-cent sheet stamp from the Washington-Franklin series, Scott 542. This stamp was printed from 400-subject plates separated into four panes of 100 by horizontal and vertical *gutters* [i.e., there are no straight edges] with side plate numbers. The stamp was printed in a heads-up vertical orientation and the stamp design measures 19 x 22½-22¾ mm. The web of stamps was perforated gauge 10 using



**Figure 1**

Scott 542 with two gum breakers  
[13mm apart]

the Stickney one-way bar perforator normally used to perforate coil stamps. To apply the vertical gauge 11 perforations, each sheet was hand-fed through a different perforator normally used for sheet stamps printed on the flat bed press. Although this large Stickney

press was considered experimental at this stage, 12 plates are recorded in *Durland*. Gum breakers were added late with this stamp as a means of alleviating curling and premature separation along the vertical dimension.

Then, in May 1921, a rotary press printing of sheet stamps resulted in another one-cent stamp from the Washington-Franklin series,

Scott 543. Again, 400-subject plates were separated into four panes of 100 by horizontal and vertical gutters with side plate numbers, which were later moved to each corner.<sup>1</sup> The stamp was printed in a vertical orientation and the stamp design measures 19 x 22½mm. Stickney

Also in this issue –

<b>Christmas Cover a Fake .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Book Review .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>New on our Shelves .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Research Stumpers .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Library Notes .....</b>	<b>10</b>

<sup>1</sup> The Bureau used different rotary sheet layout for Scott 542 and 543 in the vertical gutter to improve perforating alignment and plate number placement. See 2010 *Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog*.

had developed a wheel perforator to apply the vertical perforations, gauge 10, to match the horizontal perforations applied by the bar perforator.<sup>2</sup> *Durland* reports 64 plates for this issue. Gum breakers were also applied to these stamps.<sup>3</sup>

## SHEET WASTE

Because the rotary press printed on a continuous roll of paper, stamp “waste” could result. This would include short ends of a production run, overruns, and salvaged sections of repairs made to the paper web. This material would normally be destroyed, but the Bureau, due probably to demand for one-cent stamps, inventoried the waste from both rotary coil and sheet stamp production.

A one-cent Washington-Franklin rotary press “sheet waste” stamp, Scott 544, was presumed issued in late 1922 based on an earliest documented use date of December 17, 1922. The Post Office Department did not consider this to be a new issue, so no notice to that effect was released. There was once serious controversy about the source of Scott 544; however, that



**Figure 2**  
Scott 543 with two gum breakers  
[13mm apart]

particular debate has largely been settled.<sup>4</sup> Scott 542 and 543 share a common set of printing plates, 12467 and 12468, so it is likely that leftover unprocessed material from printing both Scott 542 and 543 was used to create Scott 544. The first plates used to print Scott 542 first went to press August 15, 1919; the last plates used were last dropped from the press May 6, 1921. The first plates used to print Scott 543 first went to press March 14, 1921; the last plates were last dropped from the press May 3, 1923.<sup>5</sup>

Because the waste was too short to be run through the rotary perforators, it was finished both ways on the flat bed perforator in the then-normal gauge 11. No plate numbers are reported in *Durland*. The size of the post office pane is not given.

Scott 544 was not discovered immediately by collectors. Armstrong reports that less than 100 copies are known. Johl does not separately list this stamp, but does describe a perforated

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<sup>2</sup> Later, the bar and wheel perforators were combined into a single unit to perforate rotary press sheet and booklet stamps beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> Bureau issue - 1922-25.

<sup>3</sup> Scott 542 had gum breakers spaced 20mm apart [one per stamp] and later 13mm apart [two per stamp]; Scott 543 had breakers spaced 13mm apart. See: Martin A. Armstrong, *Washington-Franklins 1908-1921*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [1979].

<sup>4</sup> Early commentators postulated that Scott 544 was made from unprocessed endwise [vertical] rotary coil waste, in this case Scott 486, because it had the same design dimensions. Bureau printing records reveal, however, that endwise coil waste material was never converted into sheet stamps.

<sup>5</sup> *BIA Plate Number Checklist*, Vol. 1, Plates 1 – 20,000 [1990].

11 rotary issue of undefined provenance that fits the characteristics of Scott 544.<sup>6</sup> Sheet waste stamps could have been finished and released in small batches or accumulated and finished in larger batches depending on the availability of perforator machine time and Post Office Department demand for one-cent stamps. Nonetheless, this sheet waste was probably finished in post office panes of one or two common sizes; otherwise, odd sizes would have likely drawn the attention of collectors, which proved not to be the case. Scott [2012] values these stamps at \$22,500 unused and \$3,500 used.

### IDENTIFYING SCOTT 544

The flat plate “counterpart” to Scott 544 is Scott 498 in that both were printed on unwatermarked paper and perforated gauge 11. They will obviously differ in the measurements of their respective designs. A flat plate sheet stamp will measure 18½ - 19 x 22mm. Scott 498 is a common stamp, but how many of us have taken the time to measure the size of the design after first noting it was perforated gauge 11? We know that Scott 544 will be taller than Scott 498 because the plates were curved along the vertical axis of the stamp. Note, too, that Scott 544 will not have any guideline straight edges as is possible for Scott 498.



**Figure 3**  
Scott 498 (*left*) and Scott 543 (*right*)  
Design only

My collecting hypothesis is that large mixtures might just hide a Scott 544 because of the preponderance of Scott 498 examples. With that in mind, I’ve examined many hundreds of copies, including precancels, of what turned out to be the plain Scott 498 looking for Scott 544. I will keep searching, as I will for certain other varieties.<sup>7</sup> If you were to place copies of Scott 498 and Scott 543 [which is the same size as Scott 544] side by side, the difference is dramatic – Scott 543 is taller, and visually so - see Figure 3. Because Scott 543 is inexpensive, you can make a cut-out template from a used copy against which to measure all perforated 11 contenders. This method proves to be much quicker to use. In fact, a similar search can be done for the two other listed, but really scarce, sheet waste stamps: Scott 596, made from Scott 581, and Scott 613, made from Scott 612.

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<sup>6</sup> Max Johl & Beverly King, *The United States Postage Stamps of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, [1941] Quarterman reprint, 1976. Johl describes the 1936 discovery of a single stamp and a horizontal pair with attached sheet margin at the bottom perforated gauge 11 all around. The size indicates these items came from 400-subject rotary plates and confirmed by the spacing between stamps of the horizontal pair, i.e., the vertical row was considerably narrower than on flat plate issues [due to the presence of the gutter]. Johl hypothesized then that these were likely errors of perforation since the BEP had no record of gauge 11 for the rotary press Washington-Franklin sheet stamps.

<sup>7</sup>For example: Despite its availability from dealers and auction houses, I still diligently search mixtures for the \$1 Wilson Prexie printed on USIR watermarked paper.

## Rare Portland Cover Found to be Fake

George Painter

Much excitement was generated in the seal-collecting community in the summer of 2011, with the discovery at the APS show in Columbus, of a 1908 Type 1B roulette Christmas seal tied to an envelope. [*Reported in the Nov.-Dec. 2011 issue of Book Reports.*] This great seal rarity, created in Portland to alleviate a local shortage of the national seal, was the first example found tied to an envelope, rather than a postcard. It also became only the 11th known tied example.

The purchaser, who lives on the East Coast, was working with the cover and the seal partially separated from it, revealing a postmark underneath. Thus, this cover was a fake made by pasting a canceled 1B roulette over another postmark.

When I examined the cover at the show, I was struck by the brown spots under the seal that looked like bleeding glue. However, because the 1B roulette was issued without gum, all tied examples had to be glued or pasted to a mailing. This was just the first I'd seen with any kind of bleed-through.

In learning that this example is a fake, the number of tied examples in the census drops to 10, and all of them are tied to postcards. We are still awaiting the first known *authentic* envelope use of Portland's 1B roulette.





## Orlie Trier

This book is the result of the updating, expanding and re-writing of August Dietz's classic work on Confederate Postal History and subsequent editions of the Dietz Catalog in 1937, 1945, 1959, and 1986. A total of twenty-eight specialists, plus many other resources contributed to the new 516-page volume.

The following quote gives a summary of the authors' intent: "The 21<sup>st</sup> century catalog takes advantage of all of the advances in technology that have occurred in the past quarter century, including publication in color. It is by no means a simple revision of prior catalogs. Much of the material in this catalog can be found in no other catalog or publication. It is a result of a major effort to build a new catalog from the ground up. A guiding principal of the editors was that items in the new catalog had to be confirmed by an image of the item. Information was derived from original period documents where possible, rather than repeated from the often conflicting statements of prior publications" (page vii).

- Independent State & Confederate Use of US Postage [27]
- Confederate Postage Rates [8]
- Stampless Markings: by states [201]
- Arizona Territory [2]
- Indian Nations [2]
- Postmaster Provisionals [67]
- General Issues [50]
- Perforated and Rouletted Stamps [4]
- Fakes and Facsimiles [6]
- Color Cancels [2]
- Atypical and Straightline Cancels [4]



- Confederate Army Camp Markings [3]
- Confederate Generals' Mail [1]
- Official Imprints [8]
- Semi-Official Imprints [22]
- State Imprints: by states [10]
- Confederate Patriotic Covers [22]
- Advertising Covers [4]
- College Covers [12]
- Way Mail [2]
- Confederate Railroad Markings [6]
- Inland Waterway Mail [10]
- Confederate Mail Carrier Services [1]
- Suspension of Mail Across the Lines [4]
- Private Express Company Mail [6]
- Flag of Truce and Censor Markings [12]
- Trans-Mississippi Mails [4]
- Blockade Run Mail [6]
- Covert Mail [2]

Each of the above listings are further detailed in the Table of Contents to assist the researcher by being as specific as possible. For example, under the heading "Official Imprints" are the following sub-sections: Post Office Department, Postmaster General, Appointment Bureau, Auditor's Office, Contract Bureau, Finance Bureau, Third Auditor's Office, Chief Clerk, Trans-Mississippi Agency, and Dead Letter Office.

The values listed in the catalog are for stamps in very fine condition. Values will fluctuate depending on their condition. Prices for covers are also listed for those in very fine condition. The authors describe the various conditions from superb to defective. The book concludes with eight pages of glossary and abbreviations.

Novices to the advanced collectors will find information to assist them in their collecting interests. A vast amount of information regarding stamps, covers, and postal history makes this volume a valuable resource for anyone seeking to learn more about the postal activity of the Confederate States of America.

# # #

## New on our Shelves

*The following resources have been added to our collection:*

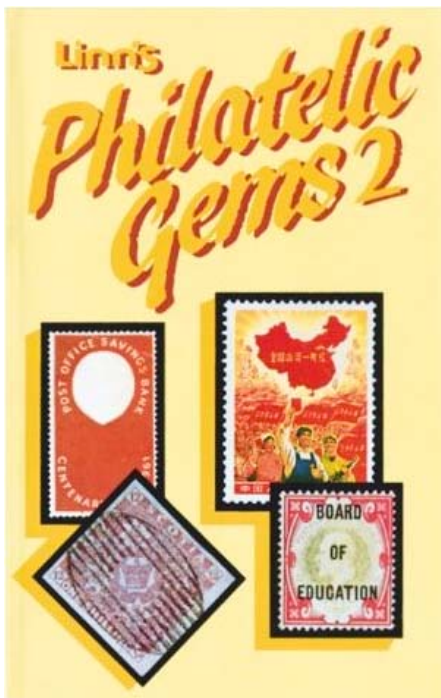
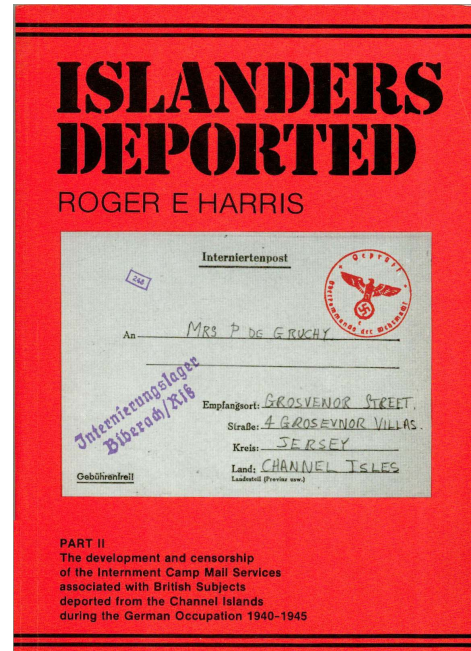
Bonsor, N.R.P., **The Jersey Eastern Railway and the German Occupation Lines in Jersey**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Oakwood Press, Abingdon, Oxford, 1986

Datz, Stephen R., **Collecting Stamps**, Alliance Publishers, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1996

Gibbons, Stanley, **Channel Islands: Specialized Catalogue of Stamps and Postal History**, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Stanley Gibbons, London, 1983

Granzow, Gary W., **Line Engraved Security Printing: the Methods of Perkins Bacon 1790-1935 Banknotes and Postage Stamps**, Royal Philatelic Society, London, 2012

Harris, Roger E., **Islanders Deported, Part 2: The development and censorship of the Internment Camp Mail Services associated with British subjects deported from the Channel Islands during the German Occupation of 1940-1945**, C.I.S.S. Publishing, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex, 1983



Kaufmann, Patricia A., Francis J. Crown, Jr., and Jerry S. Palazolo, **Confederate States of America: Catalog and Handbook of Stamps and Postal History**, Confederate Stamp Alliance, 2012.

O'Keefe, Donna, **Linn's Philatelic Gems II**, Amos Press, Sidney, Ohio, 1985

Piszkiewicz, Leonard, **Chicago Postal Markings and Postal History**, James E. Lee Publishing, Cary, IL, 2006

**Post Office Manual – 1952**, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1952

Villiard, Paul, **Collecting Stamps**, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1974

## Solution: Stumper #11

It took only 16 months, but we finally got around to providing an answer to Stumper #11 from the September-October 2011 issue. It presented a situation in which the design of certain stamp-like images was equally visible front the front and the back. (These items came from our friend Albert Hanson.) The Stumper included examples in dark green, red and blue, all of the same design. This design had “U.S. Internal Revenue” centered in the upper ribbon; “Bank Check” centered on the lower ribbon between “Two” and “Cents,” and the numeral “2” shown above each value tablet. The red example viewed from the front and back is shown below. **The “stumper” was to identify the item and to explain its source.**



Front



Back

These items are examples of plate essays called “**decalcomanias**.” The name correlates with what we now call “decals.” Here’s the back story:

Shortly after the 1862 release of the First Issue of U.S. revenue stamps, the Treasury Department became concerned about the reuse of stamps and the resulting loss of revenues needed to finance the Union during the Civil War. Stamp reuse was possible by cancel washing or the failure to properly cancel a stamp. It was also believed (incorrectly, as it turned out) that stamps issued by the Post Office Department were also subject to widespread reuse. A variety of proposals to mitigate reuse were submitted to the government and, with the exception of grills (then called “embossing”) that were added to postage stamps in 1867, these methods, including decalco-manias, were judged to be impractical, either too cumbersome, costly—or just too bizarre.

Revenue and postage stamp decalcomanias were prepared by Henry Lowenberg from 1864 to 1867 and designed to be tamper proof. They were printed on thin, translucent onion skin paper – sometimes referred to as “goldbeaters’ skin”— so that the design could be viewed from both sides. What made these decalcomanias novel is that the design was printed in reverse on the back of the stamp and the gum applied over top of that. When the stamp was attached to an envelope or document, the design would appear through the paper in normal orientation, though there was no printing on the front of the stamp. Any attempt to remove the stamp would leave the inked design behind on the envelope or document and the stamp paper would come off without the image, thus effectively destroying the utility of the stamp for reuse.

The Scott specialized catalog records Lowenberg’s decalcomania plate essays of the 1861 postage stamp issue printed and patented in 1864, and a number of plate essays of a 3-cent Washington vignette in 1867. Revenue stamp essays exist as well. None of the essays are particularly expensive.



## Research Stumper #15

Every now and then, we are faced with an interesting inquiry. We would like our readers to weigh in on a solution.

The items in question are a number of b/w photographs, all part of the NPL archives. Who took them, when and why are unknown. This was a group of eight small manila photo packets found stashed in the library when NPL assumed responsibility in 2003. Each packet contains multiple copies of the photo plus the matching negative. A cryptic title has been added to the outside of each packet. The assumption, at that time, was that the photos were part of a project undertaken by an OSS member; however, there was nothing in the materials to support that.

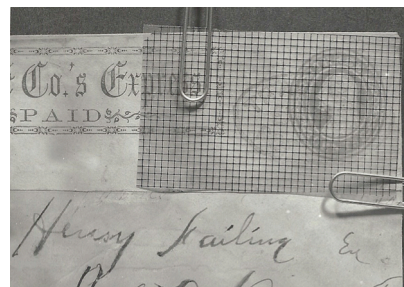
Three of the photos are shown below with their titles on the photo packs.



1-cent Blue



3-cent Cracked Plate



Henry Failing – Portland  
Oregon Territory

**The “stumper” is to identify the items, explain their source and describe their purpose.**

If you have a plausible explanation, please submit it to NPL. We will write it up in a future issue of *Book Reports* and give you full attribution. Document your solution to the extent practicable. The “best” solution will be determined by NPL. Send your solution via email or letter mail at the appropriate address in the table at the end of this issue.

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## Library Notes

Orlie Trier, NPL President

### The Library celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> year!

This year, 2013, the Northwest Philatelic Library as we know it today, celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary; it had been previously known as the Harold D. Peterson Library. We thank Harold for his vision and Charles Neyhart, who was instrumental in forming the NPL as a non-profit entity in 2003. Since then, the library has grown significantly – please drop in and check out what's new on our shelves (see page 7).

### Share your philatelic interests and ideas

As always, we are constantly looking for articles, from a short paragraph to several pages, to include in *Book Reports*. If you have ever done philatelic research this is a great opportunity to share it with our readers. Articles often inspire other collectors to explore new areas of interest. We also welcome suggestions for how to make the Northwest Philatelic Library more visible, not only to our members but to the larger philatelic community and the public. If you have any ideas or thoughts please let us know. You may reach us through the contact information listed below.

## In Appreciation

To the individuals listed below who have made recent donations of literature and other considerations to NPL, we thank you for your generosity. We want to assure you that we will make good use of these resources for our fellow philatelist and collectors.

Rex Bates	George and Brenda Brady
Charles J. Darkins	Michael Dixon
Vivian Derry	Duncan Tanner
Richard Abraham	Charles R. Fagan
Phylliss Redman	Douglas Sponseller.

THANK YOU all for your support!

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