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WORLD'S LARGEST WEEKLY STAMP NEWS AND MARKETPLACE

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U.S. stamps below 8¢ face value being issued without tagging

By Wayne L. Youngblood
The 4¢ Steam Carriage Transportation coil stamp (released Jan. 25), as well as the 4¢ Father Flanagan stamp of the Great Americans definitive series (released in 1986), are now known with and without phosphorescent tagging. More varieties of other stamps are likely to surface soon.

For the first time in nearly 23 years (since the 1968 Christmas issue), United States postage stamps have been intentionally produced in both tagged and untagged formats. Phosphorescent tagging, which glows under exposure to shortwave ultraviolet light, has been applied to most U.S. stamps since 1963.

In the early years of tagging, many stamps were released first without tagging

and later with. The reverse is true in the current situation, where both stamps now known untagged existed in tagged form first.

The first reports of the untagged Steam Carriage coil stamps, from Jim Courter, Al Haake and others, were of untagged errors.

As these reports began to surface in wide geographical areas, Haake and Linn's began to suspect that perhaps the printing was intentional.

Linn's staff members examined some non-philatelic mail originating from all parts of the country and found that about 30 percent of all 4¢ Steam Carriage stamps examined were untagged. The percentage increased for dates after mid-February. The distribution is wide.

The earliest date for untagged Steam Carriage stamps seen by Linn's to date is Feb. 5.

The Father Flanagan stamps also were found on the examined envelopes originating from Maryland and Ohio. The earliest untagged Flanagan stamp known so far is Feb. 19.

Don McDowell, director of the U.S. Postal Service's Office of Stamp and Philatelic Marketing, told Linn's that, effective on a certain date shortly after the first of the year and in conjunction with the rate change, all new stamps with face values of less than 8¢ will be produced untagged only. The current stamps that go back to press, such as the Steam Carriage and Flanagan stamps, also will be produced untagged. This will create varieties for collectors to pursue.

McDowell also told Linn's that the recent change is primarily related to revenue protection.

During the past several years, Linn's has reported on the subject of short paid postage scams where the perpetrators cite a long-outdated postal regulation as the basis for a non-existent 2¢ or 6¢ postage rate.

Since all U.S. stamps in recent years have been tagged, the presence of a single tagged stamp is enough to send underpaid mail through highly automated equipment without detection.

When such mail reaches a potential victim of the scam, it is not difficult to convince

the gullible that such inexpensive postage rates not only exist, but are legal.

Untagged low-value postage stamps will change this.

When an untagged postage stamp on an envelope is run through automatic facing and canceling equipment, it is rejected and often receives scrutiny by what the USPS refers to as a nixie clerk, whose job is often related to revenue protection.

Why 8¢? According to McDowell, 8¢ was decided upon in cooperation with the USPS' Postal Inspection Service. The 8¢ breakpoint will help assure that fewer short-paid mail pieces are processed, while reducing the likelihood of counterfeits, since it is not profitable to counterfeit low-value stamps.

McDowell told Linn's that the 8¢ figure is not set in stone and will be reviewed from time to time and possibly changed.

This recent USPS policy change is likely to affect collectors in several ways.

First, since none of the new stamps have been announced or first-day canceled, collectors are forced to scramble to find earliest-known uses of each new type that appears. This will no doubt delight some collectors and frustrate others.

McDowell told Linn's that it is unlikely that those stamps already printed and distributed will have first-day dates assigned. This may also be the case for future varieties as well, in the interests of getting the stamps out when needed.

Second, like early tagged issues that are listed and priced in specialized catalogs in both tagged and untagged forms, the new types will need to be examined by catalog editors and listed. These stamps will no doubt be collected in both forms.

Finally, collectors of tagged stamps, particularly those who collect untagged errors, will find their untagged errors of the affected stamps to be indistinguishable from the standard variety in most cases.

The USPS' decision to



The 4¢ Steam Carriage Transportation coil, as well as the 4¢ Father Flanagan stamp, were both intentionally released as untagged versions by the USPS.

leave low-value stamps untagged is similar to a decision made by Canada Post several years ago.

No current low- or high-value Canadian stamps are tagged.

On low values this serves the same function as the USPS decision — to protect revenue.

On high values it serves a dual function.

First, since untagged stamps receive more visual scrutiny, high-value stamps that are being illegally re-used are much more likely to be detected.

Second, it helps ensure that special-service mail pieces truly receive some of the special service paid for. USPS may wish to consider this move as well.

Look for untagged stamps that were previously known tagged during the next few months. Their appearance under normal light will be somewhat brighter than the tagged versions.

Some of the stamps that are likely to be affected are the following:

From the Transportation coil series, look for untagged 1¢ Omnibus, 2¢ Locomotive, 3¢ Conestoga Wagon and 5¢ Circus Wagon.

From the Great Americans series, look for untagged 1¢ Margaret Mitchell, 2¢ Mary Lyons, 3¢ Paul Dudley White and 5¢ Luis Munoz Marin stamps.

Look closely, the earliest reported dates for these stamp varieties could be important. ■



19¢ Fawn stamp

A United States 19¢ postcard-rate stamp picturing a fawn will be released March 19 in Washington, D.C., without a first-day ceremony. For details, please turn to page 12.

Imperf errors discovered on recent U.S. stamps

Major errors, occurring on three different recent United States issues produced by different printers, have been reported to Linn's.

Fully imperforate F-series non-denominated coil stamps have been found by a non-collector in Pennsylvania.

A single pane of 25¢ Eisenhower stamps



was found imperforate, and a pane of non-denominated 4¢ makeup-rate stamps was discovered horizontally imperforate.

A full coil of 100 F-series non-denominated stamps, containing 38 imperfs, was purchased in mid-February by Tom Freeman of Erie, Pa. A single plate strip, bearing cylinder Nos. 1111, exists from the roll, produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

Freeman, an architect who purchased the stamps for his business, noticed the error after tearing the first one off to mail a Valentine's Day card to his girl friend.

After dropping the card in the slot, Freeman realized what he had found. "I hope she understands how much her card really cost. Please turn to page 30



A jagged-edge pair of imperforate F-series coil stamps (from a partial roll containing 38 imperfs) and an imperforate plate block of Eisenhower stamps (from a full pane). Both errors were discovered and privately sold by individuals in Pennsylvania and California.

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Juliette Low, scout leader

Juliette Gordon Low was the daughter of a prominent Georgia family. She was educated at private schools in Virginia and New York City. In 1886, she married Wil-

liam W. Low, and the two divided their time between the United States and England. While she was in England, Low met the Boer War hero, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who, in 1907, founded the Boy Scouts in England. Baden-Powell's sister had founded a similar organization, Girl Guides.

Who's Who on U.S. Stamps

By Richard Thomas



Juliette McGill Kinzie Gordon Low
Scott 974
Born: Oct. 31, 1860, Savannah, Ga.
Died: Jan. 17, 1927, Savannah, Ga.

Low contributed her time and money to the new organization and was its national president until 1920. She received the title of founder.

Low became interested in this organization and organized several Girl Guide companies in Scotland.

On March 12, 1912, in Savannah, Ga., Low held the

first meeting of a group of girls on a tennis court at her home and called them the Girl Guides of America. A year later, the name changed to Girl Scouts.

By 1927, the membership of Girl Scouts grew to more than 140,000. Since then, more than 52 million girls and adults have participated in this world's largest voluntary organization.

In 1950, Congress granted to the Girl Scouts a charter, which protects the scout uniform, insignia and program, and defines the responsibilities of the group.

Girl Scouts are divided into four age group levels: Brownie, Junior, Cadette and Senior.

Today, nearly 90 nations participate in scouting through membership in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.

Juliette Low is pictured on a 3c stamp issued in 1948. ■

Foundation seminar at Expo

The Philatelic Foundation has scheduled a day-long seminar to be held at World Columbian Stamp Expo '92, scheduled May 22-31, 1992, in Rosemont, Ill.

May 24, 1992, will focus on classic United States material. The program will consist of a series of lectures, plus a luncheon for all participants.

The show, which will be held under the patronage of the United States Postal Service, will take place at the Rosemont O'Hare Exposition Center.

Details and speakers for the seminar are still being arranged. Anyone interested in attending the seminar at World Columbian Stamp Expo '92 should request information now.

Further details and registration forms will be sent at a later date. For more information about the seminar, write to the Philatelic Foundation, 21 East 40th St., New York, NY 10018.

Other information regarding World Columbian Stamp Expo '92, 7137 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60656. ■

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