

The PhilateliKid

The newsletter for Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids (SCCFK)

Collect Stamps (The Most Educational Hobby)

www.stampcollectingclubsforkids.org

September 1, 2016

Stamp of the Month



The stamp of the month this month is not a postage stamp. It is actually a sticker that is available from the USPS for free. Normally it is used only on very heavy parcels, so most of us have never seen one of them properly used. Luckily, this month the envelope that contains this month's The PhilateliKid has one of these stickers.

In the May 31, 2016 edition of The PhilateliKid ran a portion of Chapter 5 from the unpublished book *Collecting Stamps?* The following is a continuation of that chapter.

Stage 1. During the printing process. Stamps damaged during the printing process are termed Errors, Freaks, and Oddities.

During the printing process stamps can be damaged by damage to the plate, the paper, the ink, or by foreign objects that are embedded in the press, the paper, or the ink. Damage to the plate commonly results in a crack in the plate, which shows up as a line in the finished print. As the printing procedure progresses the crack may grow larger. The crack will then have different versions as it grows during printing of each subsequent sheet. Sometimes multiple cracks occur. On a single sheet, the crack may extend through more than one stamp, with many other stamps completely unaffected.

Another variety of plate damage is a piece of the plate breaking off. Depending on the type of printing, the missing piece of plate will show up on the final stamp as a colored spot or blotch, or an area where color is completely missing.

Another type of plate damage occurs when a foreign object becomes embedded in the plate. This can be an insect, a paper clip, a piece of paper, or virtually anything else. Once

the problem is detected, the printer will remove the foreign object, or if impossible to remove, retire the plate from service. Already printed sheets are supposed to be disposed.

A seldom seen type of damage occurs when the sheet of stamps is printed on the wrong side of the paper which already had the gum applied, or when the sheet has already been printed on ungummed paper, and the gum afterward is applied on the wrong side.

During the printing the paper may be folded in such a way that a portion of the paper receives no ink. A stamp affected by this type of damage appears to have a white space in the middle of the design, when the fold is expanded. Also the shape of the stamp is affected by the fold, when unfolded.

Occasionally a sheet is missing some of the required space, perhaps due from a tear in the sheet. The tear can be caused at any stage of the preparation for printing. Copies exist where the damage to the paper was repaired prior to printing, resulting in a normally appearing stamp, from the front, but on the reverse side is evidence of the repair. A careful examination of the front will also show evidence of the repair.

Damage can occur in the printing process where a stamp is supposed to have two, or more, colors, yet one or more of the colors is completely missing.

One spectacular form of damage is not considered damage at all. It occurs when the stamp is partially printed, and then is printed again with a different color, but the paper has been rotated 180 degrees, so that the second color is inverted. Although the design may be other than the center of the stamp, these types of misprinted stamps are called "inverted centers."

Stage 2. Handling by the printing firm after being printed.

Damage in the cutting can result in some very nice varieties. One very nice variety occurs when a coil or booklet is miscut enough so that the plate number is partially - or rarely, *fully* visible. The damage can result in a sheet of stamps having the appearance of all the stamps being mis-perforated, with the perforations being so far off center that the stamp is cut in half by the perforations. Cutting errors also can result in huge margins for the stamps along one or two edges of the pane, booklet, or coil. When a paper fold occurs after the printing, a variety of weird shaped stamps is the result.

Damage can occur when the printed stamp sheets are perforated, or die cut. The most common damage is when one or more of the pins used in perforation are damaged or broken, resulting in missing perforation. There can be multiple pins that are missing, even to the extent of more than the entire width or height of a single stamp. There exist some panes of stamps where an entire row or column of perforations is missed, resulting in a pair of stamps that are imperforate between.

The same damage can occur during die cutting.

Missing perforations or die cutting can also occur because the sheet of printed stamps was never perforated or die cut, or was perforated in only one direction.

When a portion of a pin is broken off, some sheets may not receive a complete perforation. The place where the perforation is supposed to be has an indentation, however, but the hole is not completely punched out. This results in what is called "blind perforations. This frequently results in a badly separated stamp by the consumer, where a portion of the stamp is missing, or where a portion of the adjacent stamp is present.

Stage 3. Shipping of stamps.

Once the stamps have been printed, cut into individual panes, and perforated or die cut, the panes are then bundled into packages and shipped to post offices. There is always the chance of some damage that occurs during the packaging and shipping, such as exposure to liquids, being accidentally cut, and having damage as a result of handling and shipping. Damage that occurs in this stage may result in the entire package being rejected for sale, returned by the post office, and then destroyed. When the damage is slight enough that the stamps can still be sold to the public, it is ignored. A careful examination of stamps just purchased can reveal all kinds of small damage that occurred during packaging and shipping. Such as cuts by a knife when opening, and wrinkled or bent panes. Damage such as scuffing and knife cuts, staples through the stamps, stains, and other kinds of damage are not collectible. They simply are damaged stamps and as such have a lesser value to collectors than the same stamp would have if undamaged.

Stage 4. Damage done at the post office, prior or during sale of stamps. Once the package of stamps has arrived at the destination post office it needs to be opened, checked for

damage, counted, inventoried, and stored. Almost any type of damage that is possible could occur at this stage, including knife cuts, staples, stains, wrinkles, fingerprints and damage from liquids such as water coming into contact with the stamps. In cases where an entire pane is not purchased, the postal clerk can damage a stamp in separating it from the remainder of the pane of stamps. This can result in “pulled” perfs, short perfs, and/or tears into the stamp design. In the cases where stamps were imperforate, a method of separating the stamps often was by using a knife or scissors. The use of knives and scissors often resulted in small or no margins around the stamp, or even a stamp which has had part of its design cut off. These types of damages only result in the stamp being less desirable to stamp collectors, but still often not sufficiently damaged to prevent sale to the public.

Stage 5. Damage by the customer once deliver has been accepted but prior to actual use for postage.

Once a customer has purchased the stamps, either as an individual stamp or as a pane of stamps, damage can occur by careless treatment by the new owner of the stamp. Mint stamps can be stored in containers where mice and insects can enter, chew on the stamp paper, and/or leave stains. Mint stamps can be exposed to almost any kind of damage from the atmosphere, such as being stored in a room where a heavy smoker has used tobacco products and given the stamps a smoky smell. Stamps can be exposed to liquids, chemicals, sunlight, excess humidity, excessive pressure, heat, cold, and thousands of different types of agents than result in everything from cracks in the paper, alteration of the colors of the pigments in the stamp, and fading of colors. The owner may subject the stamps in his possession to damage during the process of separating one stamp from the rest of the pane of stamps, resulting in cutting, tearing, and stains. Scuffing and other types of damage by the owner can occur at this stage, prior to the stamp actually being affixed to an envelope. These types of damage result in the stamp being less desirable to collectors.

Stage 6. Damage by the customer once the stamp has been affixed to a letter or parcel but prior to deliver to the post office. (To be continued...)

If you have something relating to stamp collecting that you think might be appropriate for this newsletter, please feel free to send it to Robert W. Martin at the address listed below.

Comments? Write Robert W. Martin, P.O. Box 1809, Kihei, HI 96753-1809.

Stamp Collecting Clubs for Kids is a 501 C (3) organization. All donations of \$10 or more are provided written receipts.

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