



Book Reports

Sept. – Oct. 2012* Volume 9, Issue 4



Color Error or a Freak? An Update

Charles Neyhart

In the November 2009 issue of *Book Reports*, I told the story about how my colleague, Steve Chown, acquired two identical plate number coil strips of five of the 29-cent Flag Over White House, Scott 2609, in which the intended blue color on these stamps looked very dark and very wrong! He traded me one of those strips in exchange for some other stamps with the understanding that I would investigate the color difference. Was this an error resulting from using the wrong color ink or a freak involving an irregularity? Despite presenting what I believed was a strong case for treating this as a catalog-worthy color variety, a subsequent 2008 APEX certificate on my strip stated that the irregular color was probably due to ink contamination in an ink fountain; thus, it was simply a freak.



As I wrote back in 2009, “Errors arguably have more philatelic prestige than freaks; yet there is often a fine line between them.” So, after some initial disappointment, Steve and I put the matter behind us and moved onto other things. But, we didn’t forget and, as it turned out, we weren’t done with this quite yet.

SCOTT 2609

Scott 2609 was part of the American Flag Series started in 1968 and printed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The basic design in each showed the American flag in the upper portion of the stamp and a noteworthy building or geographic feature in the lower portion.

Scott 2609, issued in 1992, was printed in two colors: blue [Pantone 295] and red [Pantone 185]. The red appears only in the stripes of the flag. The stamp was intaglio printed on the C and D presses using interchangeable seamless printing “sleeves” rather than two paired curved plates that had been used earlier on the Stickney and Cottrell presses. Scott 2609 was issued only in coil format, being finished into rolls of 100, 500, and 3,000 stamps. The initial printing order was 7,035,928,000 stamps; 17 printing sleeves were used to print the stamps.

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* **Editor’s Note:** *Over the summer, Book Reports took an unplanned hiatus. There was no July–August issue. We apologize for the delay.*

A normal coil strip is on top; my subject color strip is below, both from printing sleeve 8.



The presses used to print Scott 2609 used an ‘inking-in’ roller system, whereby each color in a stamp design had a dedicated inking roller that was cut-out to deliver only that color ink to the part of the stamp design calling for that color. Each inking roller had a companion ink fountain, usually a trough mounted above the roller that mechanically fed ink to the roller [the respective ink fountains were in a vertical alignment]. This explains why multiple colors could be printed during a single revolution of the printing sleeve.

COLOR PROBLEMS WITH THE FLAG SERIES

The American Flag series produced four color errors from using the wrong color ink, with each receiving catalog recognition as a minor variety: Flag Over Supreme Court, Flag Over Capitol Dome, Flag Over Yosemite, and Flag Over Mt. Rushmore.

Our particular subject strips of Scott 2609 were not the first to show this irregular darker color, which collectors had earlier dubbed “indigo blue,” described as being blacker than blue. That color had generated interest among coil collectors in *The Plate Number* and in *Coil Line* in the mid-1990s. Indigo blue had been reported at that time from printing sleeves 6 and 7 and, inasmuch as sleeve 8 shared some 1993 press time with sleeves 6 and 7, we thought it possible that that our subjects could also exhibit the same color. We eventually did determine that our color compared favorably to other known examples. Even so, at that time, indigo blue was not catalog-listed.

In my November 2009 article, I offered five “plausible” reasons to explain how the irregular color of our subject coil strips could have resulted. Two of these I subsequently judged as unlikely, one I deemed impractical, and a fourth, despite having strong intuitive appeal, really couldn’t be reliably tested. That left the fifth reason – ink contamination. As I explained it then,

... a gravity transfer from too much ink in the fountain, an improperly timed ink release mechanism, or a leaky fountain could have caused the red ink to mix with the blue ink in the fountain immediately below.

This, ultimately, was the APEX position on my subject strip. All of that notwithstanding, there were still things about this that just didn't seem to add up.

A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The 2012 Scott catalog includes a new minor color variety, 2609c, indigo blue. Both Steve and I were quite surprised to note its existence, and equally perplexed because we didn't know what brought about this change after all these years.

I resubmitted my subject strip of five for certification as the color variety. The APEX opinion, dated May 18, 2012, states, in part, that the strip was **Scott 2609c, indigo blue** and red.

Of course I was pleased to add this newly-minted "color variety" to my collection as more than something that was just "interesting;" yet, the question still remains: What caused the irregular indigo blue color?

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing stopped producing U.S. postage stamps in 1995 and its Office of Research and Technical Service, to my knowledge, never did take a position on the indigo blue claims. Early discussions in the philatelic literature tried to answer this question, but interest faded in the late 1990s with no consensus. Collector interest flared again in 2008 with most observers questioning the validity of the then prevalent theory that red ink contaminated the blue ink in its fountain. While that discussion was lively and mostly informative, no single explanatory answer emerged from it. Nonetheless, this is a question that ought to be explored more fully and transparently.

American Philatelic Society

Expert Committee Report

Members of the American Philatelic Expertizing Service have examined the item submitted and it is their opinion that it is:

United States, Scott No. 2609c, indigo blue and red, PNC strip of 5, Plate 8, unused, full original gum, never hinged, genuine in all respects.



Wayne R. Martin
(APEX Authorized Signatory) No. **200088**

C. M. ...
(Administrative Signatory) Date: **5/18/2012**

The American Philatelic Expertizing Service
A Service to Philately Since 1903
100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823 USA
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Website: www.stamps.org

A cooperative service offered by the American Philatelic Society (APS) and the American Stamp Dealers Association (ASDA).

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New on our Shelves

Recently the NPL acquired a large selection of catalogs to enhance our resources available to members and other collectors. These included a number of Michel catalogs as a result of a successful bid in Harmer Schau's auction at PIPEX.

2013 Scott Catalogue Vol. 1, 2, & 3

2012 Brookman Catalogue

2005 World Factbook (see review on page 4)

Follansbee, Nicholas, **The Stamps of the Mexican Revolution 1913-1916**, Chicago, the Collectors Club of Chicago, 1996

Michel Europa-Katalog 2006/2007, Volumes 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7.
[If anybody can donate Volumes 3 and 6, they would be appreciated.]

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Mittel und Nordamerika 1991

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Mittel und Ostasien 2006

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Australien, Ozeanien, Antarktis 2005/2006

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Süd und Zentralafrika 2007

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Westafrika 2007

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Südamerika 2005

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Asien (A-J) 1994

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Asien (K-Z) 1994

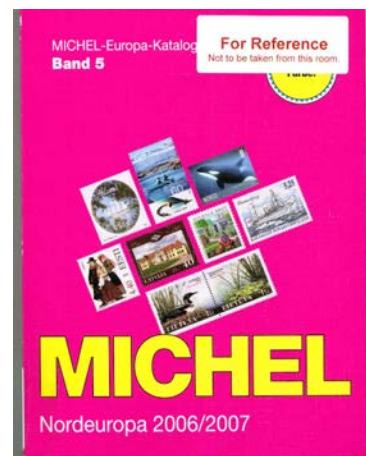
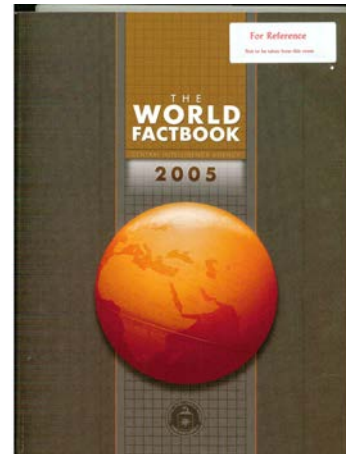
Michel Übersee-Katalog, Süd und Südostasien 2003

Michel Übersee-Katalog, Nord und Ostafrika 1997

Gulf States Catalogue 2006

Handbuch Katalog Deutsche Feldpost 1937-1945

Deutschland-Spezial 2007, Volumes 1 & 2



Skandinavien-Katalog 1998/99

Bildpostkarten und Motivganzsachen Katalog Deutschland 1991

Spezial Katalog der deutschen Privatpostmarken

Ganzsachen Katalog Deutschland 1972

Block Katalog 1985

Skandinavien/Baltikum 2003

Automatenmarken Spezial Katalog 1994

Briefmarken Katalog Deutschland 1985/86

Book Review: The World Factbook

Orlie Trier

The World Factbook 2005, Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C., 2005

I believe this is the only book in our collection authored by the CIA. The book contains no philatelic information regarding the countries, just information to provide the reader a detailed background.

Factbook begins with twenty eight pages of “Notes and Definitions,” explaining the terms used throughout. The book contains facts about every country in the world plus other territories and jurisdictions; there is an entry for Israel, with separate entries for Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Each of these 272 entries includes a map, as well as information regarding geography, people, government, economy, communications, transportation, military, and transnational issues. How many of you know where Akrotiri is? I had never heard of it before. It is located in south Cyprus. When the UK gave Cyprus its independence it retained full sovereignty of this 123 square kilometer portion of land on the southern coast of Cyprus as the “Sovereign Base Area” also referred to as the “Western Sovereign Base Area.”

The book also includes a “Political Map of the World, April 2005” and a “Physical Map of the World, April 2005.”

Need some quick information about a country? Stop by the Library bookshelf next to the catalogs and spend a few minutes looking through **The World Factbook 2005**.

Lembke Literature Donation

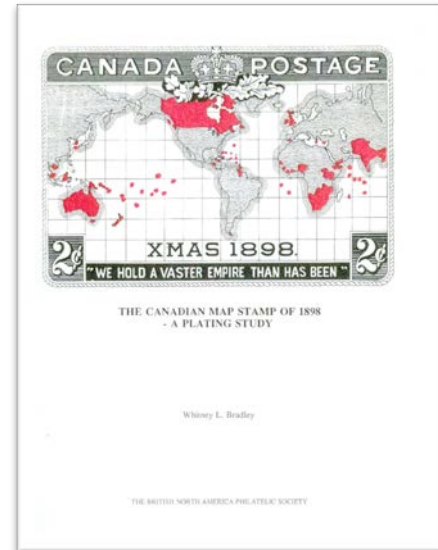
Collectors of British North America should be thrilled to learn that, in addition to the new acquisitions above, the NPL received a significant literature donation from the Robert Lembke collection, primarily covering Canadian topics. Included are several rare titles and a great many useful references.

Arfken, George B. and William S. Pawluk, **A Canadian Postal History 1897-1911**, British North American Philatelic Society, Ottawa, 2006

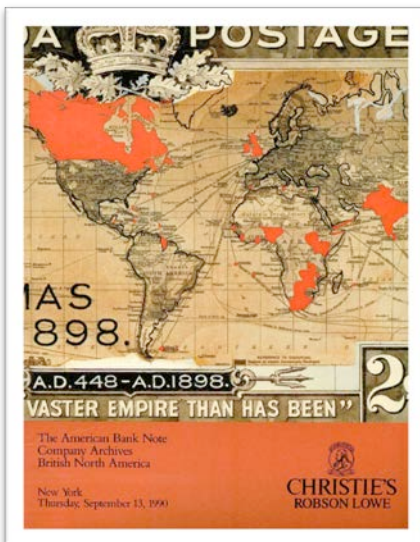
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Bargholtz, Percy, **Peru: The 1858 Medio Peso Error of Colour, an Inventory**, A Mainsheet Special Edition, No.1, Brian Moorhouse, Peterborough, England, 2001

Bradley, Whitney, **The Canadian Map Stamp of 1898 – A Plating Study**, British North America Philatelic Society and Saskatoon Stamp Centre Ltd., Saskatoon, 1999



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Campbell, Frank W., **Canada Post Offices – 1755/1895**, Quarterman Publications, Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1972

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Christie's Robson Lowe Auction, **the American Bank Note Archives, British North America**, 1990

Collins, Peter, **Thailand: The Waterlow Proof Sheets, 1917-1960**, Robson Lowe, London

Dickson, John, **The Design and Engraving of Perkins Bacon Stamps Based on the Chalon Portrait**, The Royal Philatelic Society, London 2000

Duckworth, H.E. & H.W., **The Large Queen Stamps of Canada and their Use 1868-1872**, Handbook #3, Vincent G. Greene Philatelic Research Foundation, 1986

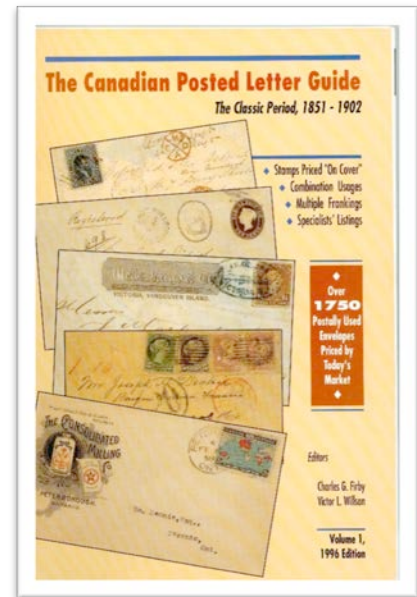
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Firby, Charles G. & Victor L. Wilson, **The Canadian Posted Letter Guide: for letters mailed 1851-1902**, Charles G. Firby Publications, Waterford, Michigan, 1996

Fraser, Colin & Robson Lowe, **The Die Proofs of Waterlow & Sons: Part 1, Great Britain & The Empire to 1960**, Christie's Robson Lowe, London, 1985

Hillson, John, **Canada Small Queens Re-Appraised**, the Canadian Philatelic Society of Great Britain, 1999

Irwin, Douglas C., & Murray H. Freedman, **Canada, The 1967-73 Definitive Issue**, 2nd Edition, George S. Wegg Limited, Toronto, 1984



Latin America: Waterlow Die Proofs, Colour Trials, Sample Stamps, Robson Lowe Ltd., London, 1969

Lowe, Robson & Carl Walske, **The Work of Jean de Sperati II**, The Royal Philatelic Society, London

Marler, George C., **The Admiral Issue of Canada**, APS Handbook Series, State College, Pennsylvania, 1982

Marler, George C., **Canada: Notes on the 1911-1925 Issue**, A Handbook of the APS, J.W. Stowell Printing, 1949

McCann, Bill, **Standard Catalogue of Canadian Booklet Stamps**, 3rd Edition, Unitrade Press, Toronto. 1996

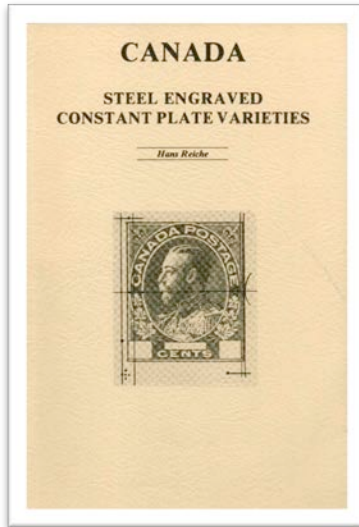
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Morris, Richard M., **Color Guide System for Large & Small Queens & Widows Weeds & Registration Stamps of Canada 1868 to 1897**, Pittsboro Philatelics, Norfolk, Massachusetts, 2000

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Negus, James, **Philatelic Literature: Compilation Techniques and Reference Sources**, James Bendon, Limassol, Cyprus 1991

Numerical Cancellations of British North America, Jim Hennock Collections, Easter Auctions, October 28, 2005



Pacific 97 Handbook, the Congress Book 1997, Dover Litho Printing Company, Dover Delaware, 1997

Postage Stamps of the United States 1847-1957, United States Post Office Department, Washington, D.C., 1957

Reiche, Hans, **Admiral Cancels**, 2nd Edition, Unitrade Press, Toronto, 1983

Reiche, Hans, **Admiral Colour Identification**, Fretz Brothers, Zurich

Reiche, Hans, **Canada: Steel Engraved Constant Plate Varieties**, Unitrade Press, Toronto, 1982

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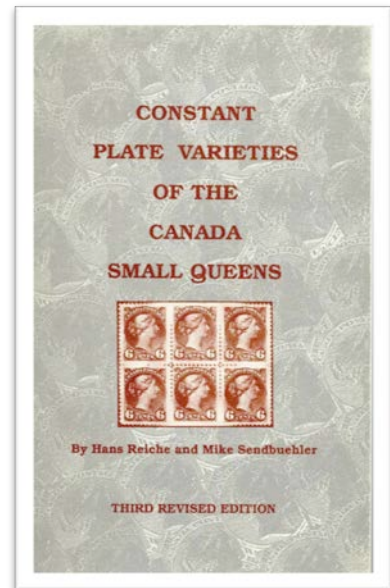
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Shaw, T. P. G., **Catalogue of Canadian Railroad Cancellation**, Canada, 1944



Siegel, Robert A., **The Honolulu Advertiser Collection: The Stamps and Postal History of Hawaii**, Auction Galleries, 1995

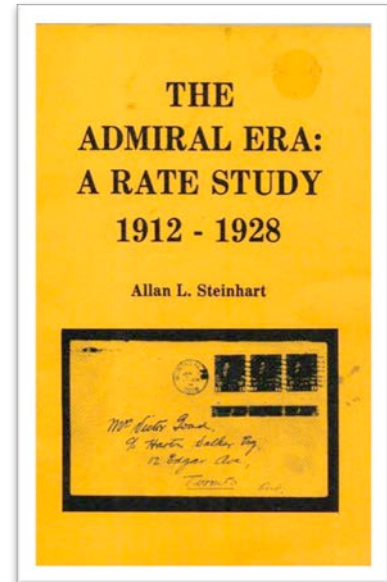
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LIBRARY NOTES

Orlie Trier, NPL President

Northwest Philatelic Library at PIPEX

PIPEX was held May 11-13 at the Lloyd Center Doubletree. The Northwest Philatelic Library had a table in the entry way and we had the opportunity to meet a number of stamp collectors – a few found treasures at our table. I also want to thank the Library board members for their time and assistance in making the show a success, with a special thanks to those who helped me with the frames.

American Philatelic Research Library visit

Tara Murray, the Director of APRL, was in Portland for PIPEX. I had the privilege of spending some time with her and inviting her wisdom regarding our library. We discussed our joining Union Catalog, which presently includes a number of philatelic libraries from around the world. We will keep you posted as we attempt to move in that direction.



APRL Director Tara Murray took time to visit the stacks of the NPL while she was in town.

Sharing your philatelic experiences

We are always looking for articles (from a short paragraph to multiple pages) to include in *Book Reports*. If you have ever researched a stamp, a cover, or a philatelic topic, here is a great opportunity to share this with our readers. Maybe there's a great book from our shelves that you'd like to review for the benefit of other collectors. Often times when I read an article it provides me with a new thought or idea and leads me to research a new area.

IN APPRECIATION

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

Jerry Lobb
Michael Dixon
Kari Lackstrom
Toni Wawrukiewicz

Jack Tremblay
Anthony Rocha
Helen Williams

THANK YOU all for your support!