

# Star Plate: The 1c Third Bureau Coils and Coil Waste Issues From 1908 and 1910 Synopsis

**Purpose of Exhibit:** This exhibit will show the development and production of the third Bureau coils produced on the Star Plate from 1908 to 1910. It will focus on production material, the changes, and the end result of a failed experiment by the Bureau to solve the problem with design spacing and paper shrinkage.

**Organization:** This exhibit is not organized in the typical format of an exhibit as far as arrangement of pages. The focus of the exhibit is to feature the production material, changes, and flat plate coil waste. The pages are arranged in a clockwise format around the center piece of the exhibit. The center of the exhibit is a full size scan of a final plate proof pane of 400, courtesy of the Smithsonian National Museum. On the scan will be large pieces of the flat plate coil waste along with information as to how it was developed and research information about it and the continuing census of how many exist.

**Importance:** This particular exhibit shows what the Bureau was attempting to do to correct a production problem. It is a prime example of what the Bureau was doing at the time in trying to develop an experimental method in the production of coils and searching for the best possible means to do so. The different experiments in production produced a number of varieties unknown to collectors. These varieties sometimes went unnoticed for a number of years. Even as of today, there is new information being uncovered about the coil waste varieties .

**What is Shown:** The focus is on the production material produced by the Bureau and the many different varieties produced from their numerous experiments. Each issue will show the basic production varieties such as paper, watermark varieties, marginal markings, spacing varieties, and coil construction material. There are also a number of unique production varieties as well for each issue. The exhibit ends with the coil waste material, which is the end result of a failed experiment by the Bureau.

**Challenge Factor:** The basic stamp material is not too difficult to acquire. The key is for it to be genuine. This can be a challenge in one sense especially for the 1910 series because a large number of fakes and forgeries are present on the market today. The main reason is a small amount of genuine material exists due to a lack of use by the general public and the fact the stamps themselves were not highly sought after when they were produced. The entire Washington and Franklin issues were the every day domestic postage and were not anything special such as commemorative stamps which celebrated a special event. A great deal of it went into the trash and was not collected. The different production varieties can be a real challenge. Marginal markings such as plate numbers, Bureau imprints, guideline and arrow markings exist in limited quantities. Plate numbers occur once every twenty stamps in a roll, on the average. As of now, there has not been a single example reported of a plate number for the 1 cent perforated horizontal coil from the 1910 issue. Guidelines, or guideline pairs also occur once every twenty stamps in a roll. There are a number of other production varieties which are unique and very difficult to find. The 1c foreign entry is a very interesting production variety. The cause of it and how it occurred is a very interesting story in itself. A Bureau worker mistakenly entered the wrong transfer roll into the two cent plate. When they discovered this the worker tried to erase the engraving marks but could not remove all of them. This production variety is only found on one plate, #5529. Preprinting and post printing paper folds are not usually found on coils. There is one example of each. There is a repair splice of the 1 cent vertical coil from the 1908 issue. When the coils broke, they usually were repaired with a piece of perforated

craft paper. In this case, a perforated piece of stamp paper was used. This is kind of a transitional piece in the sense the first repair splices were done with craft paper and this one was done with stamp paper. This became the usual type of material used to repair a break in a coil from this point forward. The exhibitor has noted this pattern with subsequent examples of repair splices being done with stamp paper on later issues. The Bureau also had a practice of trimming the coil at the paste-up when the hand assembled pieces were out of alignment. There are three examples, one on cover, found in the exhibit. In the 1910 issues an interesting paste-up strip of four has what is now known as a reverse watermark. The strip of four has the usual format of the letters on one pair, and the reversed format of letters on the other pair. Within each issue there is an example of a production marking which is an ongoing research project by the exhibitor. This marking, a pin hole, has been found on hand assembled paste-ups with the guideline and arrow marking. This pin hole has not been found on any other type of paste-up, just on those with the guideline and arrow. It has been determined, or suggested, the mark was made by something that held the paper down on the stripping machine while it was cut. It kept the paper in alignment so it would not move. The last production piece are leader and trailer strips. These pieces are quite difficult to come by. They are not a very collectable item in the first place, and in most cases were discarded since they have little value. The 1 cent horizontal coil on leader strip in the 1910 issue is a real rarity. It is the first example of a perf-12 coil on a leader strip found by the exhibitor in 30 years of searching. As of now, there are two examples which can be documented of a perf-12 horizontal coil with leader strip from the 1910 issue. The coil waste pieces found in the exhibit are very hard as well. The perforated panes of 60 come up in auction once in a great while. The imperforate pieces are even scarcer. As of 2012 there were 3 known examples, one in the Miller Collection, and two in private hands. Since then the exhibitor has documented and found 9 more pieces. In the exhibit are the largest known multiples of mint and used coil waste.

The exhibitor has done personal research and study on two areas of this exhibit. The imperforate coil waste pieces are one, and the second is the new production markings found on hand assembled paste-ups.

**New Additions: Changes,** Prior to assembling the exhibit the flat plate imperforate coil waste was not known on cover in or out of period. Since then the exhibitor has made a discovery of an airmail use. The background of this piece and the significance is very important. The single line watermark issue was printed in 1910 and the excess coil waste pieces were sent to the post office in Washington D.C. and sold up through the early 1920s. The center panes of the Star Plate were cut out with the intention of being used by the United States Automatic Vending machine company. In 1910 when the Bureau discovered the Star plate didn't quite work out they designed a new plate soon after. The "A" plate had uniform spacing of 2.75mm between designs. This new plate solved the spacing problem and the USAV machine company didn't have any need for the panes of 160. So, instead of discarding them, the Bureau decided to sell them. The 1c imperforate stamps were available for sale and as usual a few stamp dealers bought and used them in this case. The new discovery shows a correct use of a plate block of 10 which pays the first class airmail rate for a CAM route of 10 cents per ounce if the distance was less than or equal to 1,000 miles. **This new discovery is the only example in or out of period known at this time.**

### **Exhibit Highlights:**

- 1) Preprinting and Post Printing paper folds on the 1 cent vertical coils from 1908
- 2) The 1 cent foreign entry on the 2 cent plate number strip, #5299, 1 of 6 documented examples.
- 3) Splice repair on the 1 cent strip of 4 from the 1908 issue.
- 4) Paste-up strip of four with reverse watermark orientation
- 5) Production marking, Pin Holes on hand assembled paste-ups with the guideline and arrow.
- 6) Leader strip with the 1 cent horizontal perforated coil from the Auto-Wound process.
- 7) Upper and lower used arrow plate blocks of the 1 cent imperforate coil waste.
- 8) Largest mint multiple of the 1 cent imperforate coil waste, block of 40.
- 9) Largest used multiple of the 1 cent imperforate coil waste, block of 72
- 10) A 1 cent horizontal paste-up single, USAV, United States Automatic Vending machine company, on post card. One of 4 documented examples.