A Philatelic Scavenger Hunt

In pursuit of elusive stamps and covers

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NOTES

Postal Stationery includes:
1) stamp envelopes — envelopes produced by the Postal Service with the “stamp” or indicia printed directly on them. Originally called postal envelopes, these are now often referred to as stamped envelopes.

2) postal cards — post cards with postage or indicia imprinted on them, but not picture post cards that have no postage printed on them. Postal cards are produced by the Postal Service, whereas, post cards are produced by private industry. These are sometimes referred to as Denominated Postal Cards or Stamped Cards.

3) aerogramme — a sheet of paper with the stamp or indicium printed on it that pre-pays airmail postage. After writing a message, the sheet can be folded so when it is sealed the address and postage is on the outside, ready to be mailed. No enclosures are permitted in an aerogramme.
NOTES

**A First Day Cover (FDC)** is an envelope with a stamp and a cancellation that includes the date and place that the stamp was first issued. Postal stationery with a cancellation that includes the date and place that it was first issued also subscribes to the definition of FDC.

A FDC normally will have the words “First Day of Issue” written between the bars of the cancel.

In the 1920s and 1930s, before the interest in FDCs mushroomed, First Day Covers were canceled on the actual date the stamps were issued and at the designated first day site. A notable exception was the FDC canceled for the 1932 Washington Bicentennial series, when the demand for first day cancellations was so great that it took several days to fill customers’ orders. As the interest in FDCs grew, the covers were canceled ahead of time and released into the mail stream on the first day of issue.

In 1977, with the introduction of a grace period — initially 15 and now sometimes up to 90 days to request first day cancellations — the term FDC changed dramatically. Today, FDCs are canceled weeks or months after the stamps are initially issued. And, with the United States Postal Service centralized canceling system, they may be canceled hundreds or thousand of miles from the designated first day site.
Requirement 3h — Cancellation and postmark

NOTES

A cancellation is a postal marking applied to a stamp to prevent its reuse. A postmark is the impression applied to a cover by the postal service that may include the date, time, and place of mailing.

Requirement 3g — Definitive

A definitive is often called the postal workhorse. Definitive stamps are issued for an indefinite period of time and in indefinite quantities. Good examples of definitive stamps are the flag issues.

Requirement 3g — Commemorative

Commemorative stamps are issued to honor an individual, event, or historic site important to the history of the country. Commemoratives are issued in limited quantities for a limited period of time.

Requirement 3g — Semipostal

Semipostal stamps are fund-raising issues. They are sold for more than the face value, with the difference going to a designated charity. In most countries, they are easily identified by the fact that such stamps are printed with two values. Thus, the denomination might read 12¢+2, with the 12¢ paying for the stamp and the 2¢ going to charity.
NOTES

An airmail stamp, as suggested by the name, pays for transporting mail by air. Airmail stamps will have the word "airmail" printed on the face of the stamps. Since 1977 all domestic mail is sent by air, if necessary. Therefore, the only airmail stamps issued since that date are for international air mail.

A meter is the impression printed by a postage meter (machine) showing prepayment of postage. Meters were introduced in 1903.

An overprint is any form of printing applied to an already finished stamp. Overprints may be text or pictorial, and may change the value of a stamp or the country name. An overprint may also be a precancel, a commemorative phrase, or a security feature.

A Surcharge is an overprint that changes the original denomination of the stamp or postal stationery. The main purpose of a surcharge is to adjust the denomination when postal rates increase. Another purpose of a surcharge is to overprint the postal rate when a currency changes.
Requirement 3d — Numbers on a plate block, booklet, coil, or marginal markings

NOTES

A marginal marking is any intentional marking appearing on a sheet or coil of stamps, except for the stamp itself. This may include a plate number, copyright notice, Mr. Zip, or Representative Numbers assigned to the printing of a stamp issue.

A plate number is a marginal marking specific to a printing plate. The number is part of the plate layout, typically appearing at the corner of each pane of stamps.

Requirement 3c — Sheet

A sheet stamp is one that has been pulled from a larger unit of stamps, therefore it will have perforations on all sides. Early sheets of stamps contained two panes of 100 stamps each. In the 1900s, most sheets contained four panes. Modern sheets may contain six or more panes.

Requirement 3c — Booklet

A booklet of stamps is a unit of stamps that traditional have been placed between cardboard covers (stapled or glued together) for selling purposes.
Contemporary booklets — vending machine booklets and convertible booklets — do not have separate covers.
A booklet stamp typically will have either two adjacent or three imperf sides.

Requirement 3c — Coils

Coil stamps are produced in a long strip or roll format. They may be printed in a vertical or a horizontal format, designed for sale from vending machines or for use in stamp dispensers.
U.S. coil stamps have no perforations on two parallel sides — either top and bottom or both sides.
NOTES

A mint stamp is one that is in the original condition as when it was sold at the post office, otherwise in “post office fresh” condition. Sometimes an unused stamp that has been hinged may be considered mint. If a mint stamp still has its original gum intact with no disturbances, it is classified as mint never hinged (MNH.)

A used stamp is one that has been canceled so that it cannot be used again.

A perforated stamp has holes punched around the edges to allow easy separation from other stamps. Perforated and perforation are both typically shortened to “perf.”

An imperforated stamp has straight or smooth edges, or as the name implies — it is without perforations. Early stamps were issued in the imperforate form.
Some stamps beyond the requirements

Revenues

A revenue stamp is similar to a postage stamp in that it is used to show proof that a fee has been paid. However, revenue stamps are receipts for fees or taxes most often levied on government regulated transactions that are taxed to raise revenue. For instance taxes for court fees, tobacco, and alcohol are often noted by a revenue stamp.

Cinderellas

A cinderella is a stamp-like label, but is not a postage stamp. One of the most common cinderellas is the Christmas seal. Other cinderellas include customs labels, etiquettes (such as the airmail stickers), propaganda labels, etc.