

The "Special" Booklet Paper Printings of 1928

Revision: MILCOPEX 2018 represents the third showing for this exhibit. The exhibitor has met with each of the four principal expertizing organizations in the U.S. All four have confirmed their willingness and capability for evaluating these stamp varieties, and every Special Paper stamp in this exhibit has been certified.

Purpose: This exhibit presents a summary of the eleven U.S. stamp issues produced in 1928 using "Special" Paper, which was leftover paper from stocks specified and purchased for booklet pane production by the BEP. The last flat plate booklets, the C10a Lindbergh airmails, were printed in May of 1928.

The exhibit also demonstrates the frugality of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) by using remnant paper for alternate purposes when flat press sheet supplies were no longer required for booklets.

The exhibit also reveals the lengths to which the BEP had gone to improve centering of images on booklet pane stamps, by specifying paper properties which would control shrinkage of central design images.

Background: Why the "Special" Paper? Sheet stamps were printed on paper whose normal grain orientation was vertical, meaning that after stamps were printed on moistened paper, the designs had a tendency to shrink horizontally as the paper dried. Stamp paper shrinks approximately four times more across the grain than with the grain, meaning that sheet stamps shrink more horizontally than vertically. Accordingly, for producing booklet panes, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) ordered "Special" Paper with the grain running horizontally, to assure greater stability in the horizontal dimension.

As reported by Ken Lawrence, "This factor aided in keeping the sheets registered when they were interleaved, covered, bound, stapled and trimmed. If they fell out of register at the top and bottom, high or low cuts made little difference." This special paper was delivered in packages labeled "P.O. Special Paper," so it would not be confused with paper intended for sheet stamps.

These varieties constitute the little-known and poorly-understood use of "Special" Paper on regular stamp issues in 1928, after booklet stamp production was transitioned from flat plate to rotary press production.

Challenge Factor: This exhibit contains the most comprehensive collection of this material ever presented as a single subject. All of these stamps have been presented as part of traditional, single issue exhibits, such as Scott Nos. 563//569, (The Fourth Bureau Ordinary Issues, Stotts); Scott No. C11 (The 5¢ Beacon Airmail, Hopkins, Bize, MacFarland, et. al.); Scott No. E13 (The 1928 perf. 11, 15¢ Special Delivery, Markovits); and Scott Nos. QE1, QE2 and QE3, (The 10¢, 15¢ and 20¢ 1928 Special Handling Stamps, Rufe).

1. Nomenclature – The "Special" Paper varieties have been included in at least the last two editions of the *Durland Standard Plate Number Catalog*. The *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers* does not currently recognize these stamps.
2. Special Handling varieties – The exhibitor's studies confirmed the differentiation of two paper varieties of the 10, 15 and 20¢ wet-print stamps, "Special (Booklet)" Paper of 1928, and regular, *i.e.*, 1940 and later, paper. (The 1955 Dry Paper is an altogether different category). Research at the USPS library, BEP and the APRL uncovered records which help explain these varieties, and allow the estimation of printing quantities for these varieties, by denomination. Southgate did not report on the Special Handling issue, not realizing the entire run of these new denomination printings in 1928 was on "Special" Paper, having been completed before the dates he was given.
3. Multiples – Since the "Special" Paper varieties were not discovered until about ten years after their production, most of these stamps were used for routine postal purposes. Diligent searching has produced the few examples which appear in this exhibit. Except for the Special Handling stamps, full panes have not been located for these varieties.

Rarity:

- 1) The Scott No. E13 Plate Block of 6 "Special" Paper variety is unique, ex Markovits.
- 2) As above, but a mint Plate No. single, cover photo featured in the article by Wallace Cleland, in the June, 2009 issue of *The United States Specialist* Cleland article below, ex Cleland.
- 3) All eleven of the "Special" Paper variety issues are represented in plate block format, including the E13 plate block cited above. All are scarce except the Special Handling stamps, described below, and the 11¢ Hayes.
- 4) The Special Handling stamps of 1928 are all on Special Paper, and are common. They were not printed again until 1940, at which time they were printed on regular-grained paper.
- 5) Since these Special Paper varieties are unfamiliar to most U.S. collectors, each stamp or multiple in the exhibit has been certified, using each of the four primary expertizing services. There are 29 certificates - 10 by PF, 10 by PSE, 5 by PSAG and 4 by APS.

The exhibit features a number of stamps which are either scarce or the only recorded examples. Most significant items are shown with a **bold red** border.

Missing: There is nothing missing for the issues presented. It may be desirable to present additional formats for these stamps, such as used singles, and/or "Special" Paper stamps on cover.

References – The exhibitor's "Special" Paper article and this exhibit in PDF format are both posted at:
www.SpecialHandling.weebly.com

- Cleland, Wallace B., *The B. I. A. Plate Number Checklist*, Revised, 1990.
- Cleland, Wallace B., "The 'Special' Paper Printings of 1928," *The United States Specialist*, September 2000, pp. 397-401.
- Cleland, Wallace B., "E13 Special Delivery on 'Special Paper'." *The United States Specialist*, August, 2003, pp. 373.
- Cleland, Wallace B., "Size Differences Between Wet and Dry Printings from Flat Plates." *The United States Specialist*, November, 2003, pp. 519-525.
- Cleland, Wallace B., "Wet and Dry Printings of Special Handling Stamps Revisited." *The United States Specialist*, June, 2004, pp. 283-284.
- Cleland, Wallace B., "Special Delivery Plate Single on 'Special Paper'." *The United States Specialist*, June, 2009, p. 283.
- Markovits, Robert L., "The 15¢ Parcel Post Special Delivery Stamp of 1925." *The United States Specialist*, June, 2015, p. 269-282.
- Durland 2000 Standard Plate Number Catalog*, 2000, p. A50.
- Lawrence, Ken, "The Lindbergh Air Mail booklet stamp of 1928," *Scott Stamp Monthly*, September 2004, p. 14.
- Rufe, Robert G., "Special Handling Stamps on Special Booklet Paper – Who Knew?" *The United States Specialist*, March 2014, pp. 103-112.
- Scott Standard, and Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*, 2017.
- Southgate, Hugh M., "The "Special" Paper Printing of 1928 – A Study of Shrinkage." *American Philatelic Congress Book*, Vol 5, 1939, p. 27.

"Special" Booklet Paper Printings of 1928

After the Lindbergh Booklet Pane was Printed on the Flat Plate Press...
... the BEP had a lot of Booklet Paper Leftover. Lindbergh First Day: May 26, 1928.



Remnant Booklet Paper Stocks were Redirected to Ordinary Sheet Stamp Production

● ————— ●
Key Concept: Booklet Paper was Different Than Regular Paper

Purpose of the Exhibit:

This exhibit illustrates the little-known use of "Special" Booklet Paper on regular stamp issues in 1928, after booklet stamp production was transitioned from flat plate to rotary press production.

The exhibit also reveals the lengths to which the BEP had gone to improve centering of images on booklet pane stamps, by specifying paper properties which would control shrinkage of central design images.

It also demonstrates the frugality of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) by using remnant paper when flat press sheet supplies were no longer required for booklets.

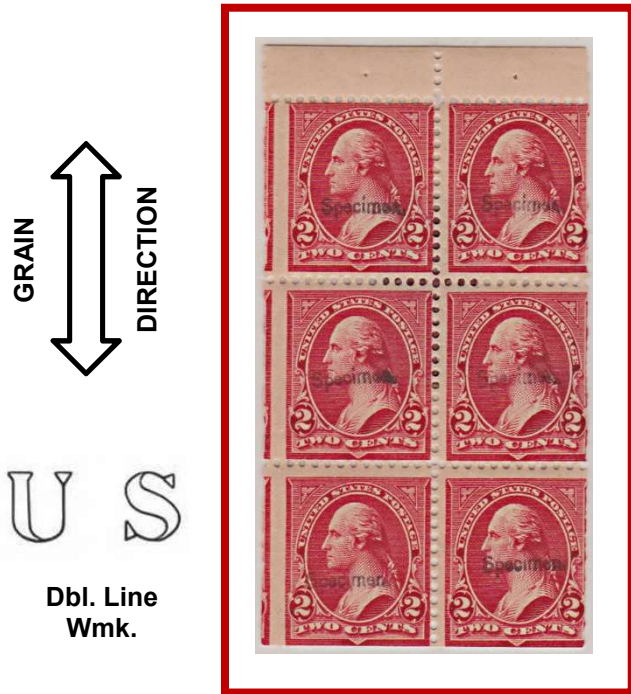
Plan of the Exhibit:

- Row 1: Definition of the "Problem;" Transition of Booklets from Flat Plate to Rotary Press; the Stamps.
- Row 2: The 1928 "Special" Paper Printings of Special Handling, Special Delivery, and Airmail Stamps.
- Row 3: The 1928 "Special" Paper Printings of Regular Issues: the 11¢, 12¢ and 15¢ Stamps.
- Row 4: The 1928 "Special" Paper Printings of Regular Issues: the 20¢, 25¢ and 30¢ Stamps; Conclusion.

Featured items appear in a **bold red** border

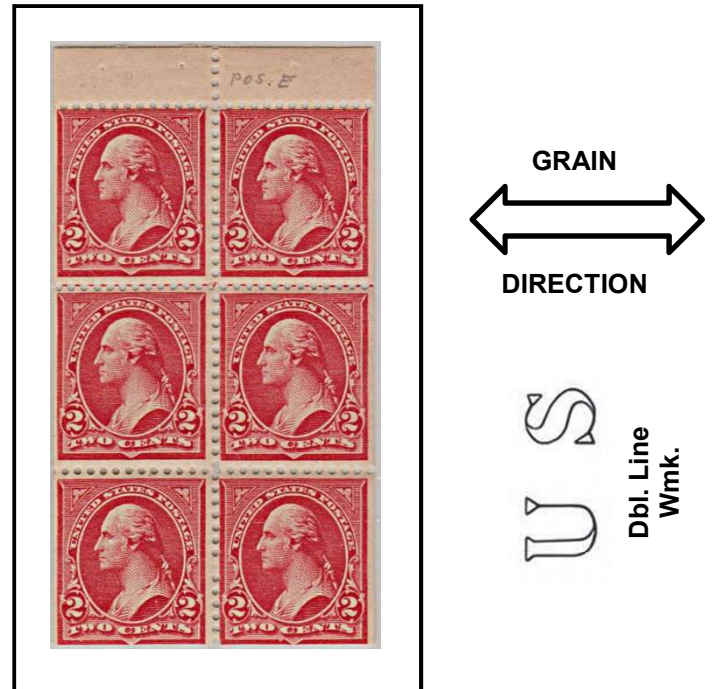
What is “Special” Paper, and Where did it Originate?

From their Beginning in 1900, Booklet Panes Presented a Production Challenge
To Improve Centering, BEP Ordered Special Paper Beginning in 1902



PF Cert No. 0420609 (“Specimen”)

1900 Booklet Pane on Regular Paper
Centering: Very Poor!



1902 Booklet Pane on Special Paper
Centering: Better.

To Improve Centering - Control Shrinkage. Turn the Paper Sideways!

“Stamp paper shrinks approximately four times more across the grain than with the grain, meaning that sheet stamps shrink more horizontally than vertically.” – Hugh M. Southgate

Special Paper was effective!

It had its own specifications - its own “SKU” in today’s terminology.

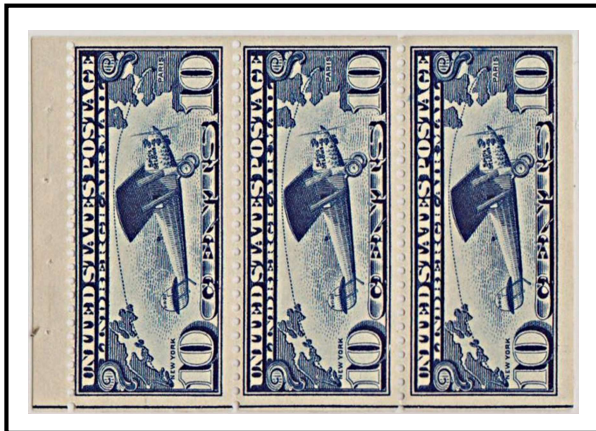
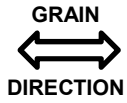
“Horizontally-grained Booklet Paper aided in keeping booklet sheets registered when they were interleaved, covered, bound, stapled and trimmed.

If they fell out of register at the top and bottom, high or low cuts made little difference.” – Ken Lawrence

Special Paper was used for all Booklet Panes from 1902 until 1928

First Booklet on the Rotary Press:

Last Booklet on the Flat Plate Press:



The Lindbergh flat plate booklet stamp was printed on Special Paper from March 14, 1928 to April 10, 1928.

Flat Plate Schematic:



Rotary Press Schematic:

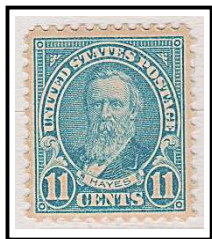


The 2¢ perf. 10 "Ordinary" was the first booklet stamp printed on web-fed paper, beginning July 24, 1925; the booklet stamps were issued August 27, 1926.

Key to Terminology: Visualize Grain Direction for each Stamp Format

Stamp Format – "Vertical" is the standard format of "Ordinary" Stamps:

Vertical



On Regular Sheet Stamp Paper



APS 222504

On Special Paper



Horizontal



On Regular Sheet Stamp Paper



PSAG 0576482

On Booklet Pane Paper



Shrinkage occurs as the paper dries after printing...
... and shrinkage is four times greater across the grain than with the grain.

Here are all the Stamps Printed on Special Booklet Paper (SBP)

All the 1928 Special Handling Stamps were Printed only on Special Paper

Newly Issued – June 25, 1928



Quantity Printed (100% of 1928 Printing): 26,012,750
PSE 01335650

Created for Rate Reduction



20,852,000
PSAG 0576483

"Muddy Yellow-Green" is Distinctive



15,712,800
APS 222505

The Beacon Airmail was issued July 25, 1928 The Special Delivery is the Scarcest of the 11 Stamps

Printed on SBP from October 9 to November 3, 1928



Quantity Printed on SBP – Not Reported (107M total)
APS 222502

Printed on SBP only from August 7 to 13, 1928



Quantity Printed – 2,800,000 (4.9% of 57M total)
PSE 01335655

Ex Cleland

The Fourth Bureau Stamps on SBP are Relatively Scarce – Not Catalog-Listed

Printed from August 13 – September 24, 1928



Quantity Printed – 39,600,000 (13.2% of 299M total)
PSAG 0576479

July 27 – September 24, 1928



64,000,000 (14.3% of 448M total)
PSE 01335651

July 27 – October 8, 1928



84,400,000 (2.6% of 661M total)
PSE 01335652

July 27 – October 2, 1928



Quantity Printed – Not Known (1,077M total)
PSAG 0576481

July 27 – August 27, 1928



13,200,000 (12.2% of 108M total)
PSE 01335653

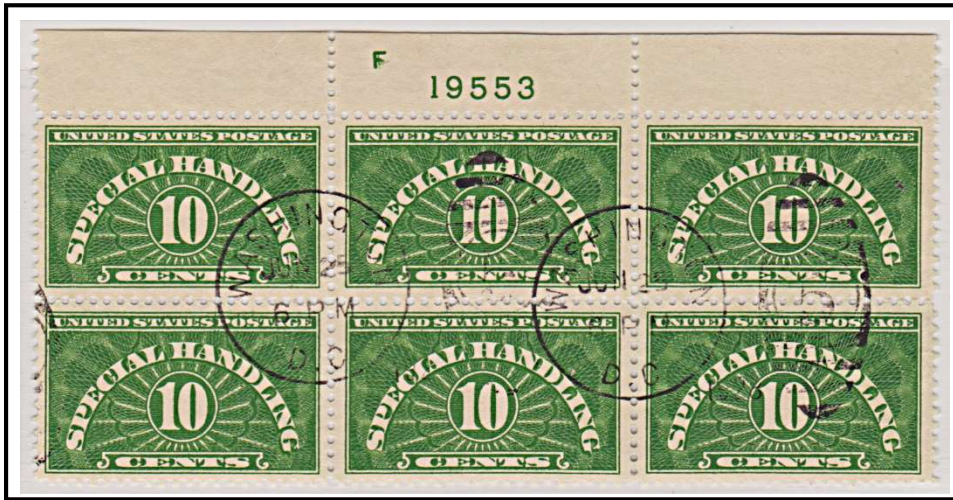
August 14 – September 5, 1928




42,000,000 (14.8% of 283M total)
PSE 01335654

New Special Handling Sheet Stamps - Printed June 22 to July 24, 1928 Only

As discovered and reported in 2014, this entire issue was printed on Special Booklet Paper
Special Handling stamps were the first "non-booklet" sheet stamps printed on SBP



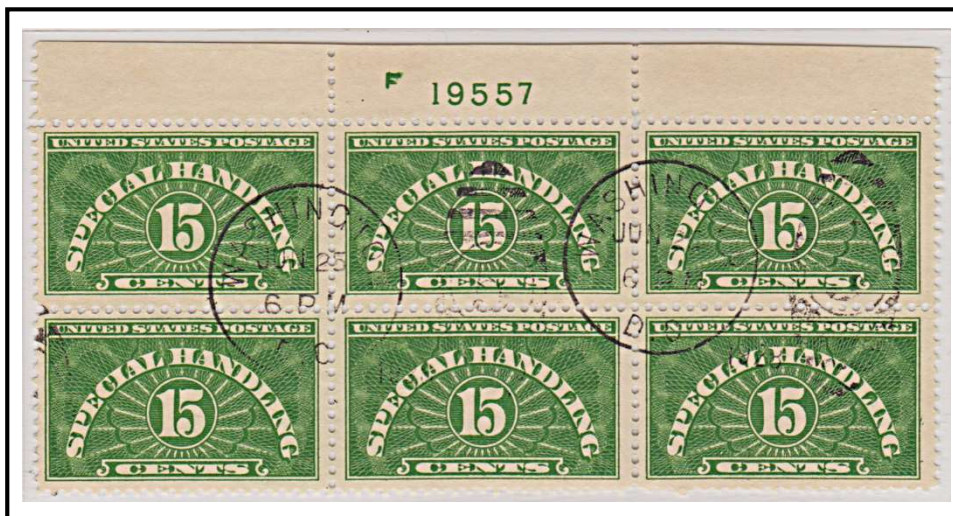
GRAIN

 DIRECTION

Grain Direction is Horizontal
 on Service Stamps
 Special Delivery, Airmail, Special Handling

Lindbergh Airmail
 Last Day of Printing
 May 26, 1928

PSE 01335658

Since these stamps were new denominations, there were no "Regular Paper" stamps to compare



Special Handling
 First Day of Issue
 June 25, 1928

GRAIN

 DIRECTION

PF 546554

These First Day of Issue Plate Numbers were reported by Bureau of Engraving and Printing as on press for the startup of these stamps on June 22, just three days prior to issue.



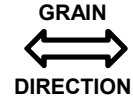
GRAIN

 DIRECTION

PSE1335658

New 15¢ Special Delivery Sheet Stamps - August 7 to 13, 1928 Only

Fewest Impressions (14,000) of all Stamps Printed on Special Paper



Grain Direction is Horizontal on Service Stamps
Special Delivery, Airmail, Special Handling

Only Recorded Example,
Discovery Copy
Ex Markovits

PF 546545

For Comparison, the same sheet stamp printed on Regular Paper



Graphic Comparison
Special Paper Printing (16835)
is Wider and Shorter than
Regular Paper Stamp (F16836).

Scanned at same time.
Prints trimmed for illustration.
All photocopies on black backings.

Measurement
For this individual issue, each
Special Paper stamp design is
approximately 0.5 mm. wider
than the Regular Paper
Counterpart



5¢ “Beacon” Airmail Sheet Stamps on Special “Booklet” Paper (SBP)

Paper Type is NOT restricted by Plate Number

All Beacon SBP examples were also printed on Regular Paper plate numbers.



Grain Direction is Horizontal on Sheet Stamps of Service Issues printed on Special Booklet Paper

Special Delivery, Airmail, Special Handling

Special “Booklet” Paper Plate Nos:
 Frame (red) Plates: 19571 – 19626
 Vignette (blue) Plates: 19545 - 19619

PF 546546

Specialists recommend, and have contrived Templates, to assist identification of Special Paper stamps



Measurement

In this example, a specialist provided a plastic film template, which is shown here with templates from actual stamps cut horizontally, and superimposed on the printed template for comparison – perfect match!

The templates, far left, represent the more common “Regular Paper” stamps.

Template: Ex Bize

Templates may be used to identify Regular Paper compared to Special Booklet Paper

Example: Beacon pair, above left, was cut horizontally from “Normal Paper” stamps with defects, In this case, poorly centered and heavily hinged.

5¢ "Beacon" Airmail Sheet Stamps on Regular Paper for Comparison

These Plate Nos. were also printed on Special Paper stamps; all stamps must be measured



Normal Grain Direction is Vertical
on Service Stamps printed on Regular Paper
Special Delivery, Airmail, Special Handling

Total Beacon Airmail Printing:
Quantity: 106,887,675
On Special Paper: Unknown

Special Paper Printing (top row), superimposed on Regular Paper stamps (bottom row)

SBP is same plate block as prior page; stamps are wider and shorter than regular paper



Graphic Comparison

Scanned at same time.
Prints trimmed for illustration.
All photocopies on black backings.



Above template exemplifies poor choice used to identify Special Booklet Paper compared to Regular Paper
Note the poor centering obscures the framelines which are needed to assist measurement

The 11¢ Hayes "Ordinary" Stamp – on SBP from August 13 to September 24, 1928

There were 99,000 Impressions on SBP for this issue; it seems to be the easiest to find

Technical Note: Plate Nos. 17617, 17618, 17619, & 17620 were printed on both paper types.

Plate 17620 on SBP below, upper plate

Plate 17617 on regular paper at right.

PF 546547



Above: Both Plate Blocks are on Regular Paper to demonstrate that some plate numbers were used with both regular and booklet paper; Plate No. 17617 on SBP is shown on the right side of the next page.

Special Paper Printing Plate No. 17620 is superimposed on Top of the Regular Paper Plate Block No. 14058. The greenish-blue shade is the 1922 color.

Graphics: Cropped and enlarged from above, left and right.

Δ no change, 3 stamps tall



Δ 1.5 mm. 3 stamps wide



The 11¢ Hayes was printed on both "Narrow Gauge" and "Wide Gauge" Plates

Special Booklet Paper printings were only on narrow gauge Plate Nos. 17617, 17618, 17619, & 17620. All Plates on this Page are 2.4 mm. "Narrow Gauge" Plates; Special Paper Dimensions are Obvious

Three of the four plates cited above are shown here – two on Special Paper, one Regular Paper Accordingly - Observe the Stamp Dimensions, not the gauge or "gap" (see template below)



APS 222503

This Page Only:
Regular Paper Printing Plates on Top;
Special Paper Printing Plates on Bottom.



PSE 01335656

This page only: Regular Paper examples at Top;
Special Paper, superimposed, at Bottom (#17619 & 17617)

SBP Grain Direction on Vertical
Format "Ordinaries" is Horizontal

Use an Inexpensive Template to Measure!
 Special Paper Printing (Hayes, #17620, narrow gauge):
 Designs are Wider and Shorter than Regular Paper Stamp
 (½¢ Hale block of 4, wide gauge, superimposed on top).
 Shrinkage is greater across the grain, as seen here.
 Shrinkage in vertical dimension is minimal.



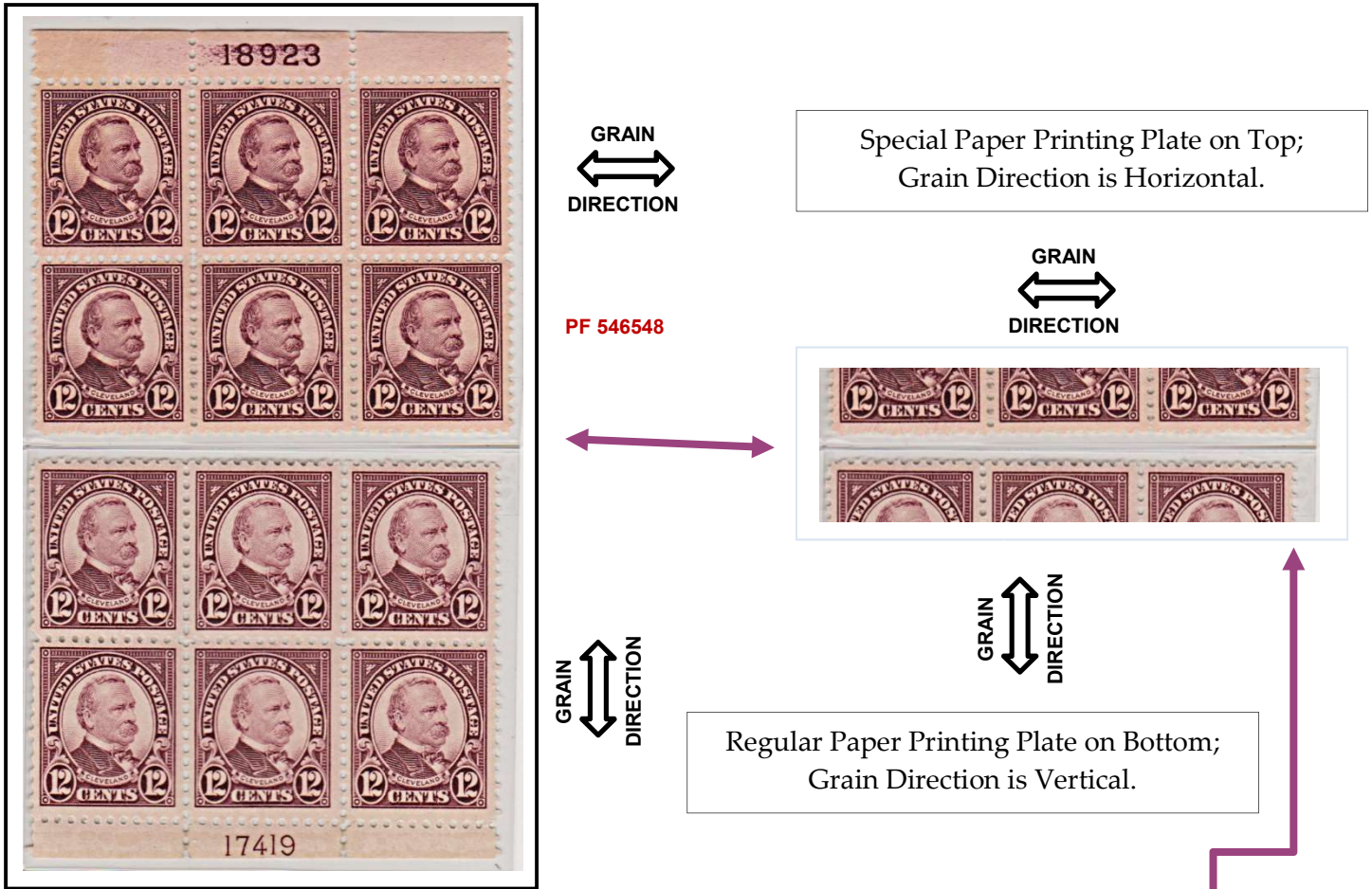
The 12¢ Grover Cleveland Stamp – on SBP from July 27 to September 24, 1928

There were 160,000 Impressions on SBP for this issue, the second largest number reported

Both plates shown here are "Wide Gauge" layout examples.

The moisture content of paper at press varied widely, and thus, so did degree of shrinkage.

The variation in these two plates is dramatic, as the juxtaposition in the graphic depiction demonstrates.



Graphic: Cropped, enlarged, and superimposed from image above, right.

Δ 1.5 mm.
3 stamps wide



"Basic Identification Reminder!"

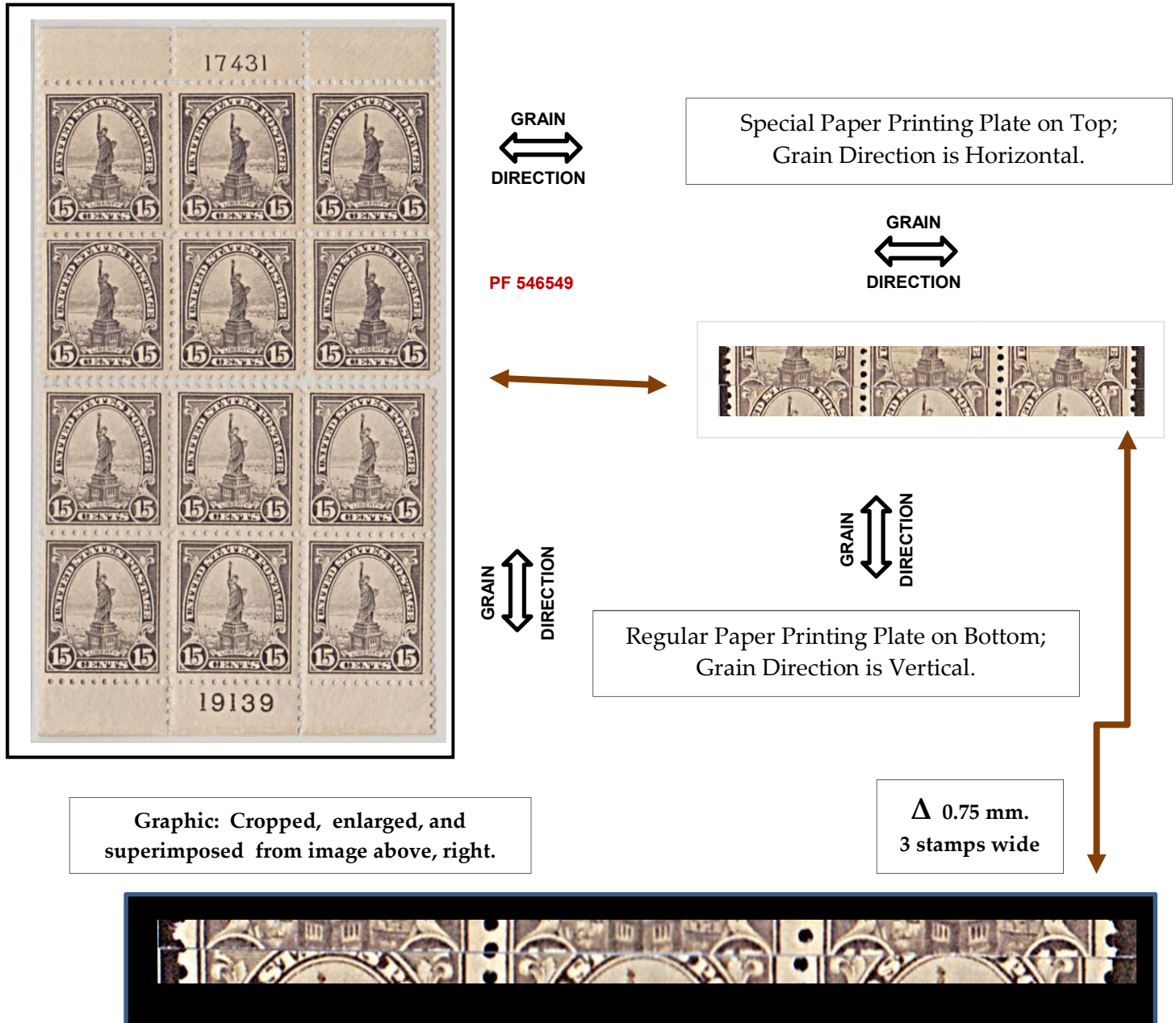
Special Booklet Paper stamps can be identified as singles, used or unused, on or off cover, just as booklet pane stamps may be separated from regular paper flat plate press stamps. One primary reminder is to check perforations to separate flat plate from rotary press issues on the Fourth Bureau issues.

The 15¢ Statue of Liberty Stamp – on SBP from June 22 to July 18, 1928

There were 212,000 Impressions on SBP for this issue; the largest and most variable printing. Slight variability of plate gauge, or “gap” between designs necessitates careful identification.

This example selected to illustrate how slight the difference may be.

Technical Note: Observe the Stamp Dimensions, not the gauge or “gap;” see graphic below.



Graphic: Cropped, enlarged, and superimposed from image above, right.

Δ 0.75 mm.
3 stamps wide

“Measure the Stamps, not the Gauge!”
Note on this enlargement that the designs are clearly wider on the Special Booklet Paper Plate No. 17431, than the Regular Paper Plate No. 19139. Both plates are “Wide Gauge” layout varieties.

The 20¢ Golden Gate Stamp – on SBP from July 27 to October 2, 1928

Similarly as the Beacon Airmail, Quantity is Unknown for this issue on Special Paper



GRAIN
 ↑
 DIRECTION
 ↓

SBP Grain
 Direction on
 Horizontal
 Format
 "Ordinaries"
 is Vertical

PF 546550

Δ 1.0 mm.
 2 stamps wide

Graphic Comparison
 Special Paper Printing (F18689) is
Narrower and Taller than
 Regular Paper Stamp (17228)
 On Horizontal format 4th Bureaus.



Δ 1.5 mm.
 3 stamps high.

Special Paper Above;
 Regular Paper Below.



GRAIN
 ↔
 DIRECTION

Measurement
 For the Horizontal format
 "Ordinaries," each Special Paper
 stamp design is approximately
 0.5 mm. narrower and taller, per
 stamp, than the Regular Paper
 Counterpart.



The 25¢ Niagara Falls Stamp – on SBP from July 27 to August 17, 1928

Slightly Higher than 15¢ Special Delivery, there were only 33,000 Impressions on SBP for this issue



F14062 GRAIN
↑↓
DIRECTION

Reminder:
SBP Grain Direction on Horizontal Format "Ordinaries" is Vertical

PF 546549



Only Recorded Example

Special Paper Above (yellow-green);
Regular Paper Below (deep-green).

Narrow Gauge:
Both Plate Blocks



14064 GRAIN
←→
DIRECTION

Scanned Reproductions shown with black borders (as on all pages) – here at 100% Graphically Cropped – Yellow-Green part of image is the special paper variety

Design Measurements:
For the horizontal format "ordinaries," each special paper stamp (F14062 – light green) design is approximately 0.5 mm. narrower and taller, per stamp, than the regular paper counterpart (14064 – deep green).



The 30¢ American Buffalo Stamp – on SBP from August 14 to September 5, 1928

Although there were 105,000 Impressions on SBP for this issue, it is difficult to find

SBP Grain Direction on Horizontal
Format "Ordinaries" is Vertical



GRAIN
DIRECTION

PF 546552

Special Paper Above;
Regular Paper Below.



Δ 1.0 mm.



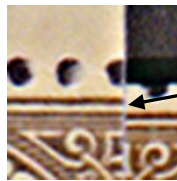
GRAIN
DIRECTION

Graphic Comparison
Special Paper Printing (17446 Top) is Taller and Narrower than Regular Paper Stamp (17446 Bottom); all Special Paper plates also used with Regular Paper.

Measurement
For the Horizontal format "Ordinaries," each Special Paper stamp design is approximately 0.5 mm. taller and narrower, per stamp, than the Regular Paper Counterpart.



Δ 1.0 mm.
2 stamps



"Taller"

Δ 1.0 mm. across
two stamps



"Narrower"

Final Exam **Question:** Which of these two plate blocks is printed on Special Paper? Slight variability due to grain direction and plate gauge margin necessitate careful inspection. Visual observation of the plate blocks below is insufficient for identification. Measurement is required.



PSAG 0576480

PSE 01335657



Graphics cropped and reduced from plate blocks at left. Hale template superimposed. Blocks compared side-by-side.

- Hints:
1. Both plates are the same number; both numbers are known on both paper types.
 2. Star plates are wide gauge plates; the plate on the left is also a wide gauge plate.
 3. From graphic alignments, both are the same height and width, but wider than the Hale template.

Answer: These two plate blocks are BOTH printed on Special Paper!

Star plates on Special Booklet Paper are scarcest of the Fourth Bureau issue.

Special Booklet Paper sheet stamps are identifiable, and listed and priced in some specialty catalogs. All major expertizing services certify the variety.

And, with diligent and careful searching, these stamps can be found on cover!

30c Bison on Special Paper

Zeppelin Flight

26 August 1929

Los Angeles

to

Friedrichshafen

Cancel, copy, on reverse:

