

# Washington/Franklin Color Errors

by the Editor

I recently brought this issue up at a meeting – it seems like some further information would be helpful. Without a doubt the error involving the 2¢ - 5¢ has been well documented with vast quantities of ink and reams of paper over the years. The brief story is as follows.

In April 1917, a postmaster in a small Virginia post office opened a pad of new 2¢ Washington sheets. On each sheet he found 5¢ Washington stamps of the identical design and color (the correct 5¢ was supposed to be blue)!

During the production of the 1916-17 series, it was observed that on one 2-cent plate, No. 7942, three of the 400 images had become noticeably worn. Two of these images were a vertical pair, appearing near the bottom of the top-left pane of 100; the remaining image appeared near the top of the bottom-right pane. When replacing these three images, the technician responsible (conceivably confused by the problems of working with mirror-image material, which can make a 5 look like a 2) inadvertently transferred 5-cent images onto the three problem positions of the plate. This error was not noticed for several weeks, and eventually three different carmine-colored 5-cent stamps were distributed by the Post Office: the perforated 10 issue of 1916-17 (Scott #467), the imperforate issue of the same years (Scott #485), and the perforated 11 issue of 1917-20 (Scott #505).



The imperforate version is by far the rarest of these.

The \$2 error is just as interesting in my opinion. According to Johl, the \$2 Orange Red & Black was a color error on the part of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The official description and order for the bi-color stamps specified “Red and Black” for the \$2. When subsequent printings appeared in 1920 and philatelists brought the matter to the attention of the Bureau, they were told “This stamp has always been that color” (Johl, p. 306). From studies of Bureau and Post Office records, it is clear that the originally intended color was not issued until November 1920 (Scott 547), and that the earlier Orange Red stamps issued August of 1918 (Scott 523) were mistakes. The 2015 Scott Specialized lists 523 at \$250 used and \$1,150 MNH, while 547 is \$40 used and \$270 MNH.



[Sources: Johl, Wikipedi.org]

# Why I Collect Fire Related Stamps

By Newton Kulp

I started to collect just United States mint singles and plate blocks in the late 1950s. I had a grandfather who was a rural mail carrier, a mother who was a postal clerk, an aunt who was a postmistress and an uncle who was an urban mail carrier (and also had a very large stamp collection). Thus, stamps were “in-my-blood”. To finance my hobby I started working on a nearby estate as what would be called today a grounds keeper. I would mow the lawns, trim the bushes, weed the gardens and do the many other jobs needed to keep an estate looking good. I did these chores after school, Saturdays and in the summer full time. The money earned bought the stamps for my collection. In the early 60’s my uncle started me collecting United Nations singles and inscription blocks. With the help of my parents I continued collecting through college. After college I expanded my collection to include postal stationery of both venues and booklet panes of the United States. In the early eighties a major decision had to be made -- either continue with my now fairly expensive hobby (at least on my salary) and not save money to send my children to college, or stop buying stamps and start savings. Obviously, the kids won out.

I put my collection into storage with the hope that someday I would again pick up the hobby again. The years passed and other interests always had priority. When I retired I decided to get my collection out of storage and see if I still had interest in the hobby of stamp collecting. I quickly learned that I did. I joined two local clubs, went to local stamp shows and started to purchase stamps to bring my collection up to date. One of the local clubs had interesting presentations by its members, often concerning topicals. I began to think about what topical I may want to consider. At one of the shows I found a couple of pages of stamps showing fire engines which gave me an idea. The above cover showed up recently -- and has a nice tie-in with fire related philately and FLOREX 1975.



A little background first. I had volunteer firefighting in my background. My grandfather was a founding father of the Ottsville, PA Volunteer Fire Department. This was a small rural fire department of which he remained a member until his death twenty-six years later. My father joined shortly after the company was founded. He too remained a member until his death just short of 50 years hence. As a teen I often helped with duties I was allowed to do such as direct cars at functions, clean up equipment after a fire and so forth. At sixteen I became a junior fireman and eighteen a regular member. I remained a member of this company for ten years. In the meantime I had gone to and graduated from college, got married and had one child. I built my first house in a neighboring company’s territory (Plumsteadville) and joined this company. I retained my membership in both companies for the next fifteen years. When I moved to my second home, the area was served by a full-time, paid fire company. Thus, not able to be a volunteer, I ended my fire company experiences.

So, I decided that collecting fire related stamps would be a good topical for me. Naively, I figured my collection would contain maybe five-hundred stamps. As I started to do research and purchase stamps, I soon surpassed the five-hundred mark. As of this writing I have over two-thousand stamps and souvenir sheets and close to one thousand covers. I joined Fire Service in Philately, a special interest group (and an affiliate of the ATA) with the purpose to promote the collection of fire related philatelic materials. This group had been a great help and resource in developing my collection. Another great resource is the ATA’s topical database, one of which is related to my topic.

Thus, my every growing interest and collection of fire related philatelic material.