

Reunited? A Near Miss

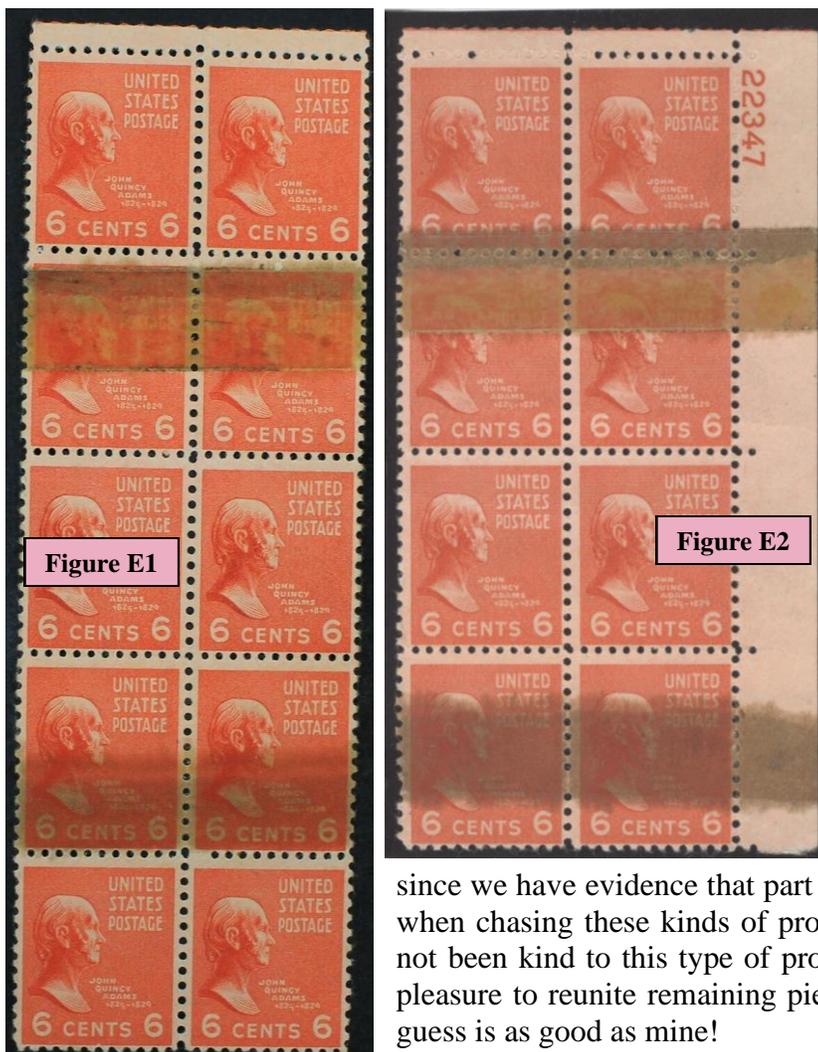
Prexy Pretty Stuff

by Francis Ferguson

As I am trolling almost every day through the listing of eBay, sometimes I find nothing that is of interest and other times there is a whole bunch of stuff. Since I do not have an unlimited bank account a lot of items simply slip through my fingers for the lack of funds to chase the auction to limits that exceed my budget. Occasionally I can actually win an auction without breaking the bank and I get to add a piece to my collection.

When I first laid eyes on this piece **Figure E1**, I thought it was the missing piece that had been separated from the left side of **Figure E2**. Upon arrival of the item, I was disappointed to find out that was not true. There is another piece (or two) between these to complete the spliced block. Maybe I will find it on my future hunts.

These kind of pieces occurred in the production process when two webs of paper (i.e. rolls) were joined on the fly during the actual printing. Since the web results in a sheet of 400 subjects that is then divided into four panes of 100 there should in theory be two full panes of 100 each that show this splice. How many still exist today is unknown. This plate number went to press on August 25, 1941 and was cancelled on January 29, 1947 after recording 1,173,397 impressions. The last 70-80 years has not been kind to pieces like this as the glue of the splicing tape has dried and made this material extremely fragile.



It could be possible to reunite more of this spliced block. There would have been two horizontal blocks of 10x4 stamps (assuming the press sheet of 400 was divided into four panes of 100) -- a UL plate block of #22347 along with the UR plate block of #22347, as this was created by the splicing tape that would have been broken down into two sheets of 100. Those two sheets of one hundred subjects should have been culled out of the finished product. Normally the culling process results in a RED crayon mark on the sheet to indicate that removal needs to be done. There is no evidence of red crayon marks on either piece. The inspection and quality control process obviously failed.

The fun of the hunt makes these kinds of acquisitions highly interesting – and highly frustrating. In theory the remaining pieces mentioned above needed to complete the two blocks of 40 stamps – should exist, since we have evidence that part of the block does. The reality is very different when chasing these kinds of production oddities. As I stated earlier, time has not been kind to this type of production anomaly. It would give me profound pleasure to reunite remaining pieces of this total block. Can it happen? Your guess is as good as mine!

Air Mail Service Comes to Orlando

by A. Stephen Patrick

March 1, 1929 was a high day in Orlando history as the first Contract Air Mail (C-A-M 25) planes were to fly in and out of Orlando Municipal Airport. The *Orlando Sentinel* says that thousands were expected to celebrate the occasion.

The **southbound flight** flew from New York to Miami via Macon, Jacksonville, and Daytona Beach. All went well and on time until Pilot C. J. Faulkner's Pitcairn airplane pitched into the Halifax River near Daytona Beach shortly after takeoff. Relief pilot James G. Ray picked up four soggy air mail bags and delivered them three hours late to Orlando. **Figure E3** is one of those letters.

A 1937 *Sentinel* article for Air Mail Week described how the mail was taken to the Orlando Steam Company where the letters were dried. Many of the letters had the stamps loose from the soaking and agents tried to replace them on the mail. In **Figure E3**, one can see how the five-cent beacon airmail stamp is slightly off from its cancel.



Figure E4

and one pounds of mail from Orlando were added to the 184 from Tampa. When there was not enough room on the plane for all the mail, Kerr threw out his parachute and sat on two bags in the cockpit. **Figure E4** is a letter on the northbound flight meant for Michigan. The enclosed "historical mail" from Dr. Paul Butler of Orlando was sent as a souvenir to his sister who finally received it in Kalamazoo. Both covers received the hand stamped First Flight cachet.

After Ray landed from Daytona Beach, he took on 17 pounds of airmail bound for Tampa, posed for photos in his Super-Mailwing bi-plane, and "gave it the gun" and took off diagonally over Lake Underhill vanishing in a southwest direction.

[The *Orlando Sentinel* subscribers received free access to all historical issues online the weekend of June 20-21 and this is the source for this article.]

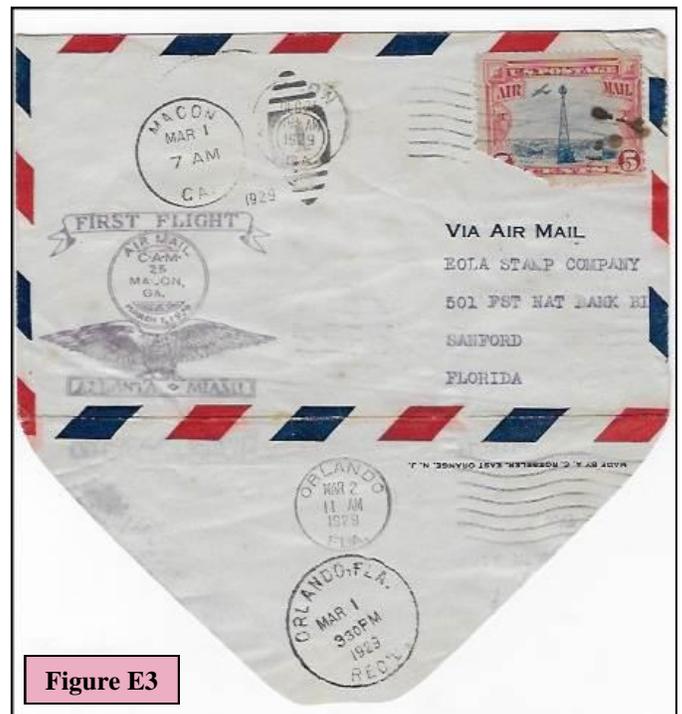


Figure E3