

# Herst's Outbursts – Reflections

Vol. XXIX-No. 2, Whole No. 124, dated Spring 1969, Page 12

Provided by Robert Dowrick

## Coil Stamps

Stamps issued in complete coils in this country do not go back quite as far as one might think. The first one, Scott #348, a 1c stamp, was issued for the first time on December 29, 1908.

We had coil stamps earlier than that, but they were privately made, rather than government produced. The manufacturers of various types of stamp affixing machines were supplying their products to large mail users, and since these machines only took stamps in full rolls, these rolls had to be privately manufactured. Complete imperforate sheets were purchased from the Post Office, and these were then processed into rolls of coils to be put into the machines.

As these machines became more and more popular, and increased demands made on the Post Office for coil stamps, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing finally relented and began to produce the coils.

The largest user of the coil stamps prior to the Bureau's going into production was the machines manufactured by the Schermack Co. of Detroit, whose name was later changed to the Mailometer Co. Years later, some of these companies were merged into the Pitney Bowes Co., which continues to manufacture automatic stamp affixing machinery today.



A year ago, we had a very popular offer in this publication, offering a small collection of mint, unhinged private perforations at advantageous prices, and it was impossible to avoid disappointing a large number who ordered too late. We no longer can reproduce that offering, but we have one similar to it which should appeal. These consist of just the one cent and two cent imperforate stamps of the 1902 issue, Scott #314 and #320. We can offer mint pairs with Schermack perforations of each of these (Scott value is \$7.75) for almost one fourth of catalog, or \$2. Many people collect these in strips of four, and these are priced at just under the pro rata price, or \$3.75. We believe that even at this very low price we should be able to take care of a considerable number of friends.

Schermack continued processing its private perforations until 1927, by which time the manufacture of coils by Uncle Sam was so efficient, there was little need for the private companies to continue. Today's machines all accept the Bureau-produced coils. When the Offset Issue appeared in 1918, these stamps were processed just as the earlier ones were. Those who would like an example of this (Scott #534) may add \$1.25 to their remittance for a pair, or make it \$6 for strips of four for #314, #320 and #534. (The #534 catalogs at \$4.50 per pair; so it's quite a bargain, catalog-wise and interest-wise.)

# FLOREX Memories

by Michael Rogers

Orlando's premier stamp show FLOREX is held the first weekend of December. Years ago, I owned stamp companies which were based in Central Florida that participated in FLOREX. Winter Park Stamp Shop held a FLOREX table every year until its closing in 2009. The auction company Michael Rogers Inc conducted a public auction at the show for many years until I sold the company to Daniel F Kelleher Auctions in 2014.

FLOREX was held at the Central Florida Fairgrounds in the Main Exhibit Building, a large cavernous hall with a hard-concrete floors and soaring rafters. Winter Park Stamp Shop and Michael Rogers Inc booths were facing each other, right in front, separated by a yawning 20 feet. Lots of walking back and forth.

Holding a public auction at a stamp show called for exacting coordination of the staff. Everything must pull together without delays. A calendar was mounted on the office wall which noted deadlines. After all, we couldn't ask the show to be postponed to accommodate late consignments. Late arrival consignments went into the next auction.

We knew a few slackers would wait days or longer past our deadline and be offended that we couldn't include their material. At FLOREX, we were limited in our number of lots so the auction would not run too long Saturday night.

Because the show dates were Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Thursdays were reserved for the transfer of inventory and auction lots. Sure enough, folks would show up at the office for a last peek at a lot, just to get turned away. There was no way we were going to unpack a box on Thursday when it could be seen at the auction site. At the show, we set up the booths so come Friday morning we would be free to show auction lots or do business.

We had excellent staff on hand. Setting up at a show means doing on the spot competent appraisals plus speaking knowledgeably about the auction lots. Temper that with a sense of humor and large doses of patience. Long days ahead on hard floors.

FLOREX will have more than forty dealers holding booths at the show. Some dealers will have inventories of great sophistication and some seem to have been in the trade a short time. Working a show booth and overseeing a public auction can be stressful. I would take breaks and visit with the dealers.

Come FLOREX 2008, I stopped at a dealer with a sloppy display under his plexiglass. Oh, how I hate it when I am interested in an item which is not priced. My feeling is the seller is looking at the buyer to determine what he can pay. Creepy.



What I wanted to buy was the Canal Zone 1951 31 cent horizontal pair with sheet margin, vertically imperf, cataloguing \$1250. Darn scarce item, only 98 pairs known. When I asked for a price, the dealer sneered "You can't afford it." How rude. But he had something to sell and a willing buyer. The guy quoted me \$900 and after I examined the error, I asked whether he was OK with cash. That impressed him. Then in a lowered voice, he asked whether I would be interested in the 1877 Buffalo Balloon tete-beche pair.



Hello! This is an iconic piece, with only 11 known, almost every one faulty. Sure, I wanted one, but there's a big difference between spending \$900 and whatever the Buffalo Balloon would cost.

He told me of his knowledge of a Buffalo Balloon tete-beche with a certificate, priced at \$12,000 available immediately – if I was interested. A little while later I was viewing the item -- however, this one was without gum and heavily faulted. Everything in my collection is in the finest condition. I passed, explaining I needed to do my research of what was available. The dealer cautioned I would never find anything to satisfy me. Isn't that what a seller always says?

Mid 2009, an auction catalogue arrived containing an 1877 Buffalo Balloon tete-beche pair with original gum and a slight corner crease. My research showed this was as good as I was likely to find. Scott catalogue was \$22,500 then as now. I bid through an auction agent \$16,000 meaning that with the 15% buyer's premium, the pair would cost me \$18,400. However, with competitive bidding, the pair cost \$9,500 + the 15% = \$10,925.

That was great news! FLOREX is a wonderful show, full of surprises for any visitor.