The Cover Story The TASCO Educational Booklets by Francis Ferguson

It is kind of strange how things come around in one's life to be revisited many decades later. As a very young and inexperienced collector, I recall seeing a TASCO Booklet on the CSA. The booklet at the time was of mild interest, but soon forgotten in favor of more interesting material. If memory is correct that CSA booklet [Figure A1 on front cover and Figures A2 & A3 on front cover of two of the inside pages] was in the material that I was given as an 8 year old – that had been in my father's "collection" when he was a kid. What happened to that booklet – I have not a clue.



Over the years I have read articles on the TASCO Booklets – again with only passing interest. It was at a recent club meeting night, that an offer of seven of the booklets, sparked a more concerted interest in obtaining more. (Thank you Peter!) Now for the story about the TASCO Booklets.

Published and distributed by the Tatham Stamp & Coin Company of Springfield, MA, these educational booklets served to educate those in the philatelic world, but also provided a marketing tool for Tatham to keep the name in the public eye. The name TASCO comes from the business name: **TA**tham **Stamp CO**mpany. From 1938 until 1956, a series of booklets covered topics ranging from "The One Cent Issues of 1870 to 1888 [**Figures A4**]", to "The Three-Cent Issues of 1908 to 1920 [**Figures A5**]" to "The Three cent issues of 1870 to 1887 [**Figures A6**]" appeared. There are up to 17 different types of the booklets – denoted by T1, T2, T3 T15. But it does not end there, as numerous varieties can be found within the types as the information and presentation was changed over the years. While many of the TASCO Booklets can be considered to be reasonable in cost to obtain (under \$75) -- there are a couple, that are on the expensive side between \$150 and \$225. I would estimate all types and varieties with envelopes should be obtainable for around \$1,200 – if they can be found!

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Most all of the booklets are folded with four printing surfaces, however there are a couple of tri-folds with the resulting 6 display surfaces. The CSA booklets have 8 display surfaces and glassine interleaving to protect the facsimile examples mounted on the pages. The booklets are all produced with the same type of off-white card like stock. Most all the booklets contain example stamps and descriptive text. The booklets came in a tight fitting envelope that could be of any number of colors ranging from buff to orange to blue.

PRINTING METHODS ENGRAVED AND OFFSET PRINTING THE THREE-CENT ISSUES of 1908 to 1920 EXPLAINING and ill of types and printing methods employed producing these issues. These stamps very confusing and this booklet should kept intact for reference. Contains FLAT AND BOTARY PRESS The bust by Houdon from which the central de-sign of the three-cent issues of 1908 to 1920 was 1908 1909 1909 TASCO EDUCATIONAL BOOKLETS luish Paper) , Line Wmk, (coil) 12 12 Vert, 8 1/2 Vert, ON UNITED STATES STAMPS 10 10 Vert, 10 Vert, Published and Distributed by TATHAM STAMP & COIN COMPANY Springfield, Mass.

Figures A5

I currently own 8 of the booklets (one being a duplicate) and I am actively seeking more. While I am still learning the idiosyncratic nature of these booklets my guess is there are around 30 different types and varieties. Since each booklet also included an envelope – that adds another dimension to the hunt. So far I have yet to obtain an envelope with any of my purchases.

A brief look see on the world wide web shows a number of types available for sale on eBay and other sites. Prices depend on condition and the perceived value of the seller; some are in the reasonable range while others can only be described as outrageous!

We are by nature collectors; I believe that adding sub-collections like this to my main collecting interests just adds a further dimension of interest to being a philatelic collector – or as some view it – I am a hoarder!

at. No. 136 **Figures A6** THE ISSUE OF 1870-71-Nos. 136 and 147 THE GRILLE THE THREE CENT ISSUES This issue was produced by the National Bank le is an embosed the surface of Note Co. on hard paper. The grille was applied of only intermittently as this device was found to be expensive and was fast losing favor with 1870 to 1887 Post Office officials. This, therefore, gives us th two varieties: No. 136 with grille and No. 147 without grille EXPLAINING and illustrating the varieties Cat. No. 151 due to the awarding of the printing contract to various companies. This is the most confusing of all issues and this booklet should be kept intact for reference. Con-If anyone has any of tains the five stamps properly classified and Wide Shading Outside of Ova these booklets, please completely illustrated. let me know. PRICE Ouly Slight 30c No. 136-If Grilled No. 147-If Not Grilled THE ISSUE OF 1873-No. 158 TASCO When the printing contract was transferred to EDUCATIONAL BOOKLETS the Continental Bank Note Co. they used the same dies that the National Bank Note Co. had used, but in order to distinguish their work from Car, Val. 00 UNITED STATES STAMPS HARD AND SOFT PAPER the National printings they cut heavy shading lines in the lower part of the tail of the left ribbon of "THREE." The stamps were printed on hard paper. also, so the difference from the National Published and Distrit TATHAM STAMP & COIN CO. SOFT PAPER will dark and light spots, through the large Springfield, Mass. appear due the light sp may only be told by the secret mark. COPYRIGHT 1939 TOTAL-5 Stamps Cat. \$0.45