

Presenting! Stamps for Sale

This month we would like to suggest a way to organize your material for selling in our sales books. We will show you how a sales book page should appear when the items are mounted and the prices entered in order to make the material look most appealing to buyers. Although this is by no means the *only* way to organize your items for selling, we have found it to be a very successful one. The idea here is to have most of the “prep” work done so that you can concentrate on mounting material in several books. This is particularly useful if the seller has multiple copies of the stamps he is selling and prepares several books that are identical in layout and pricing, placing one copy of each of his stamps in each book.

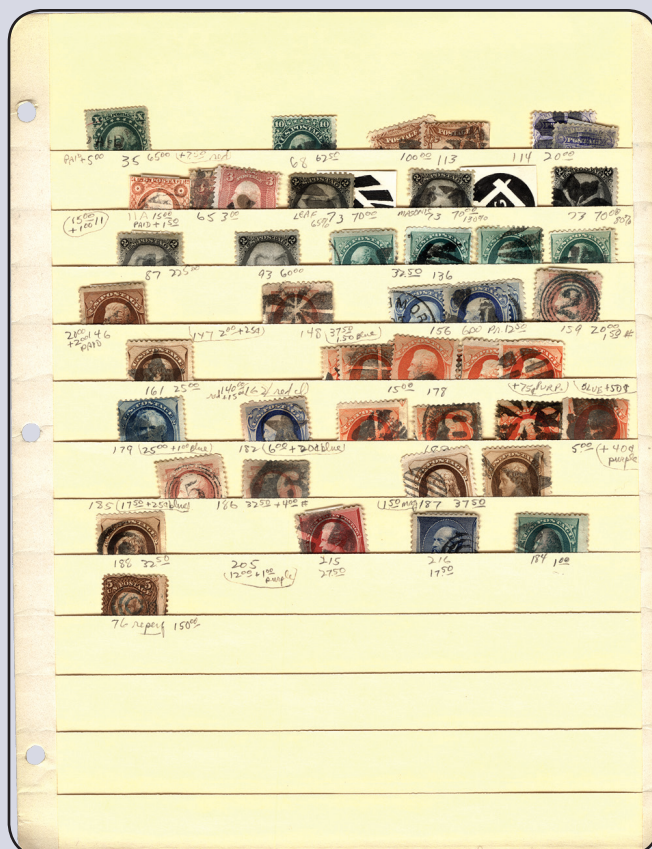
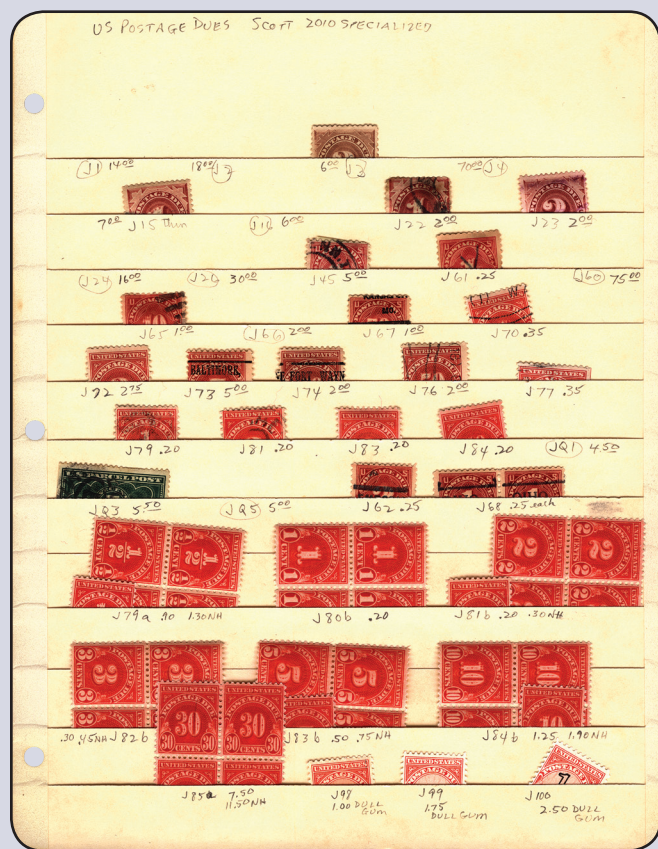
The process begins with stock sheets. The manila cardstock works well for

Presentation, condition, and pricing are all very important in the successful selling of stamps.







noting catalogue numbers and values in pencil, and allows for easy erasure for re-using the sheets. Place your items on the sheet, arranging them by approximate age. Lightly enter catalogue numbers on the strips holding the stamps and enter the appropriate catalogue values for each item. Decide how you want to construct each book — all used, all unused, all mint NH, or a combination of these. Also de-

cide on your pricing policy, which could be an across-the-board percentage or based on the condition of each item. Lightly note the net price on the stock sheet to help you decide the amount you want to reach in each sales book.

Next, decide on the range of catalogue numbers you want to include in the book and keep the net prices in mind while making the decision. Some members start with the lowest catalogue number and mount stamps in order until the desired range is met, thereby narrowing the focus of the material. Others choose to mount examples from many different eras of the particular country's history, offering the buyer a very wide range of material. Regardless, the stamps should be mounted in the sales book in *catalogue numerical order*. Throwing the stamps in the air and mounting the first



Preparation stage.

Total this page \$ <u>41.00</u>		Country <u>US P. DUES</u>		1	
<u>THIN</u> 					
Cat. No. <u>J1</u>	Cat. Val. <u>1.40</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>J2</u>	Cat. Val. <u>1.80</u>
1	Net \$ <u>2.00</u>	2	Net \$.	3	Net \$ <u>5.00</u>
					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>J3</u>	Cat. Val. <u>6.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
4	Net \$.	5	Net \$ <u>2.00</u>	6	Net \$.
					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>J4</u>	Cat. Val. <u>7.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
7	Net \$.	8	Net \$ <u>25.00</u>	9	Net \$.
					
Cat. No. <u>J16</u>	Cat. Val. <u>6.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>J24</u>	Cat. Val. <u>16.00</u>
10	Net \$ <u>2.00</u>	11	Net \$.	12	Net \$ <u>5.00</u>

Total this page \$		31.00		Country		US P. DUES		2	
									
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	J26	Cat. Val.	30.00	Cat. No.		Cat. Val.	
13	Net \$	14	Net \$	8.00		15	Net \$		
									
Cat. No.	J60	Cat. Val.	75.00	Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	J66
16	Net \$	20.00		17	Net \$			18	Net \$
									
Cat. No.	J91	Cat. Val.	4.50	Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	J95
19	Net \$	1.25		20	Net \$			21	Net \$
Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	
22	Net \$			23	Net \$			24	Net \$

Total this page \$		107.75		Country		COLORED FANCY CANCELS		1	
		BLUE							
									
Cat. No.	11	Cat. Val.	15.00	Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	35
		Val.	+1.00			Val.			Val. +7.50
1	Net \$	5.00		2	Net \$	.		3	Net \$ 30.00
						BLUE			
Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	147	Cat. Val.	2.00	Cat. No.	
						Val.	+2.25		
4	Net \$	.		5	Net \$	.75		6	Net \$.
						BLUE			
Cat. No.		Cat. Val.		Cat. No.	148	Cat. Val.	37.50	Cat. No.	
						Val.	+1.50		
7	Net \$	.		8	Net \$	10.00		9	Net \$.
RED				BLUE				PURPLE	
									
Cat. No.	162	Cat. Val.	140.00	Cat. No.	178	Cat. Val.	15.00	Cat. No.	178
		Val.	+15.00			Val.	+1.50		Val. +.75
10	Net \$	50.00		11	Net \$	6.00		12	Net \$ 6.00

Total this page \$ <u>34.50</u>		Country <u>COLORED FANCY CANCELS</u>		2	
					
Cat. No. <u>179</u>	Cat. Val. <u>25.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>182</u>	Cat. Val. <u>6.00</u>
13	Net \$ <u>9.00</u>	14	Net \$.	15	Net \$ <u>2.00</u>
					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>183</u>	Cat. Val. <u>5.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
16	Net \$.	17	Net \$ <u>1.50</u>	18	Net \$.
					
Cat. No. <u>185</u>	Cat. Val. <u>17.50</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>187</u>	Cat. Val. <u>37.50</u>
19	Net \$ <u>7.00</u>	20	Net \$.	21	Net \$ <u>11.00</u>
					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No. <u>205</u>	Cat. Val. <u>12.00</u>	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
22	Net \$.	23	Net \$ <u>4.00</u>	24	Net \$.

The final results.

Total this page \$ _____ Country _____ 1

				Best — Mount with gummed strip folded, closing the opening	
Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____
		Good — Opening at top permits lifting to inspect back.			
Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____
Poor — Opening faces fold of book.		Unacceptable — Opening faces outer edge of book.			
Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____
Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____	Cat. No. _____ Net \$ _____	Cat. Val. _____

Mounting

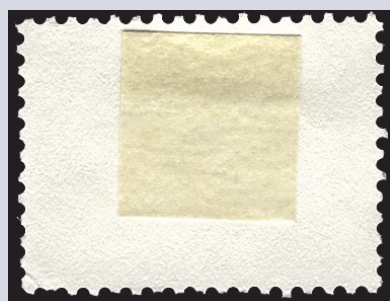


Hinge in middle — cannot lift to inspect back.



Hinge too high — can tear perfs when removing hinge.

Hinges



Correct position for hinge.

one to fall is not a good arrangement of your material. Buyers will skip over books mounted in this way.

As you decide which stamps will be mounted in your next sales book, lightly circle the catalogue number on the stock sheet. You will then know how much space you will need for mounting each item, which is particularly helpful when planning to include large items in the book. Start on page one of the book and mount the items in catalogue numerical order.

Carefully enter the descriptive comments (catalogue number, faults, special notes, etc.) for each item in ink after you mount it. Writing the description immediately after mounting each item forces you to leave the area directly underneath the item blank for the buyer's mark that you hope will eventually take the place of the stamp itself. It also forces you to make the entries visible for photographing. When you are satisfied with the first page, follow the same procedure for the second page, and so on. Mounting stamps on all of the pages first and then entering information may cause some damage to stamps on the next page; for example, accidentally embossing items with the pen impression. Enter page totals on the top of each page and on the last page of the book, inside the back cover.

Entries need to be legible and the net prices should be visible when opening to a page. An item must not cover the net price of another item. To make a nicer presentation of your material, you might want to consider skipping spaces when mounting the stamps. On a page with twelve spaces, mounting six or eight stamps avoids a crowded or messy page. The page is not busy and is pleasing to look at, allowing each item to catch the buyer's eye.

After mounting, describing, and pricing all of the stamps in the sales book, calculate the book total inside the back cover. Then enter your seller information in the middle box on the front cover. Remember to place something behind the front cover so the stamps on the first page are not damaged (embossed) by the penned entries.

Right Way, Wrong Way

Mounting: The sample illustrated above shows four ways to mount items on a circuit book page: Not Acceptable; Poor; Good; Best.

When using our mounts, the preferred or **Best** method involves turning the mount upside down, attaching the gummed strip to the *top* of the space, placing the item into the mount, and then folding the mount down, creasing it near the gummed strip.

The **Good** method (often used for larger stamps when the mount is not large enough to permit additional folding) is to attach the mount with the gummed strip over the "Net \$" line above the space (being sure that you don't have a stamp mounted in that upper space whose information you would be covering up!), and placing the stamp into the mount so that it falls into its proper space below. Keeping the opening at the top allows the buyer to lift the item to inspect its back.

The **Poor** method would be attaching the mount so that its opening faces in towards the fold of the book. A stamp could slide out of the mount and become damaged in the fold.



Overlapping — Covers net prices; covers space of another item so that you can't tell if there was supposed to be a stamp there or if it was removed.



Remedy for Overlapping — Use as many spaces as needed to present a large stamp.

The **Not Acceptable** method would be attaching the mount so that its opening faces the outer edge of the book. It would be all too easy for a stamp to slide out of the mount and become lost.

Hinges: When using hinges, please place the hinge just below the perforations at the *top* of the stamp. Placing the hinge in the *middle* of the stamp does not allow the stamp to be lifted to inspect its back, one of the advantages of buying from sales books. On the other hand, placing the hinge *on the perforations* or higher may cause perf damage when the buyer tries to remove the hinge.

Overlapping Items: Overlapping becomes a problem when one item covers the information about another. In that instance the second item could be removed and the resulting empty space might not be noticeable. In the example shown above, three Israel stamps are mounted overlapping one another. Each has been described and priced separately, but if the middle stamp were removed,

other buyers or even our experienced checkers might not notice its absence.

In that same illustration, two Saar stamps with selvages have been mounted, one above the other. If the top stamp were removed from the page, because the selvedge on the lower stamp covers its information, again, its absence might not be observed.

Sets: There are detailed instructions in each sales book describing the *ideal* method for marking and mounting sets of stamps. This involves mounting *one item per space* and marking the page to show that the items are offered as a set only, and not as individually priced stamps. The illustration on the following page shows two other ways to mount sets of stamps — one acceptable, one unacceptable.

The *unacceptable* method is to stack the stamps and then place them in too small a mount. In the example shown, the stack of eight stamps eventually will split the sides of the mount and the

stamps will fall out. Also, we cannot photograph any of the bottom seven stamps, so the top one is the only one covered against loss, damage, or theft.

An *acceptable* method is to place the stamps in a single large mount but overlapped as little as possible. This way each stamp has enough of its design showing for photographing and the items will not cause stress on the mount itself.

Conclusion: Presentation, condition, and pricing are all very important in the successful selling of stamps. The instructions and suggestions in this column are the best we have to offer with the available products and technology. However, they are not the only way to prepare sales books, and we welcome any suggestions you might care to make to streamline or otherwise improve the process.

Weight Limits for Circuits

Most of the circuit packages we now are sending have been weighed before

Total this page \$ _____ Country _____ 5

					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
49	Net \$.	50	Net \$ 4.75	51	Net \$.

Unacceptable — Stamps stacked in small amounts are not secure.

					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
52	Net \$.	53	Net \$.	54	Net \$.

set of 8

					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
55	Net \$.	56	Net \$.	57	Net \$ 4.75

Acceptable — Overlapped as little as possible.

					
Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.	Cat. No.	Cat. Val.
58	Net \$.	59	Net \$.	60	Net \$.

Buyers Fee Coming in March 2010

Last month, we announced the addition of a buyer's fee of 5 percent on all circuit purchases and explained the reasons for this decision. In March 2010, there will be a line on the report sheets of all types of circuits we offer — multiple-name, direct, chapter, and local visitor circuits — indicating that 5 percent must be added to the purchases recorded on the sheet.

Pricing Guidelines for Sales Division & StampStore

This is a summary of the January 2010 Sales Talk column's notes on pricing:

- In general, pricing of items should be no more than 65 percent of the catalogue values.
- The material submitted by most sellers falls within 40–60 percent of the catalogue values.
- Our more successful sellers price their items below the 50 percent level.
- Faults, such as pulled perfs, thins, tears, scuff marks, no gum on mint stamps, etc., should reduce the asking price considerably.
- Sales books and StampStore items might be rejected if you price your material at higher than 65 percent of catalogue value and we determine that the material will not compete well with other members' material. You may appeal a rejection, but please have supporting information for your pricing policy.

'5 For 10' Categories (Needs)

We need U.S. items, *except* U.S. First Day Covers, U.S. Mint post-1950, and U.S. Used post-1950. You can earn coupons for free blank books and mounts for every ten completed books containing material from a set list of categories. (Each group of ten or more qualifying books must be received at the same time and must contain at least \$50 per book. The coupons are issued when the qualifying books are reviewed soon after arriving.) Each book must be designed to fit one of the categories, exclusively. Details are sent with blank sales book orders. You may also visit www.stamps.org and click Sales Division and How to Sell. [NOTE: Single-country books usually have better sales.] Below are category areas that are usually in very short supply:

Any U.S. Back of the Book areas
 U.S. 19th Century • U.S. Fancy Cancels
 British North America • Bermuda • China
 Ethiopia • Jamaica • Japan • Liberia
 Any European Colonies • Individual Topicals

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placing them in boxes. We are attempting to keep circuits under three pounds. There will be exceptions, including circuits that contain mostly covers or blocks of stamps. Also, some categories have heavier items that appear in sales books regularly and may occasionally add weight to a circuit.

In order to stay within the three-pound weight limit, some circuits may contain fewer books than you are accustomed to seeing. Future chapter circuits will have approximately fifteen books or fewer in them and we have asked chapters to prioritize their categories in order to provide a better focus the contents of each circuit. Sellers are advised that heavy mounts should be avoided for covers and booklets.

For our part, we have been switching to lighter shipping boxes that weigh half as much as the previous boxes and cost half as much. Unfortunately, most of our circuits do not fit in the small, flat-rate priority box from the USPS and we must still supply a box that can be used by members who do not have access to that size box. The sales books contain such a wide variety of material that imposing a uniform thickness on each circuit would severely limit the amount of material placed in the circuits. However, we will continue to monitor postage weights and rates for future decisions on circuit sizes and content.