

**This Stamp News Online
Feature Article was Sponsored
by Gary Posner, Inc.**

**GaryPosnerInc@aol.com
www.garyposnerinc.com**

***"Give me a call and let's
talk about the goals for your
collection—or anything else
on your mind...."***



***"...I'm available anytime for
a toll free chat with you!"***

And by the way...

You can also visit us at our website,
www.garyposnerinc.com—where you
also will find our vast up to date stock. It's
a User-Friendly site with jumbo images and
'easy-on-the-pocket' prices. See for yourself
that it is 'a site with a difference.'

Gary Posner

Bobby Prager

What our clients think:

*"Of all the dealers I have encountered, you
two are clearly the most professional. I
know that when I buy from you the material
is legitimate and the quality is as adver-
tised..."***Lawrence Eagleburger, former U.S. Secy. of State**

Your hobby is alive and well at...



GARY POSNER, INC.

30+ years in business • 800.323.4279 • Fax 516-599-2145
265 Sunrise Highway, Ste. 1-308, Rockville Centre, NY 11570
Cell: 917-538-8133 • **GaryPosnerInc@aol.com**

If you're selling...

We'd rather pay a
more than fair price
and buy 90% of the
collections offered
to us than make a big
score on 10% with
low-ball offers.

***Visit us and view our fabulous stock at
www.garyposnerinc.com***

From the Stamp Specialist: **A Study of the Post Office Seals of the United States**

by Prescott Holden Thorp

*From The Stamp Specialist Blue Book, #1,
published in 1939, with images added*

(We invite updates to this study, which was printed as it originally appeared with the exception in [brackets], primarily of Scott catalogue updates. All Scott numbers are 2015 numbers. JFD.)

Note from the original article: Primarily this study of Post Office Seals has been made possible through the kindness of A. Hatfield who made available his magnificent collection of seals. With this unparalleled material at hand and constant reference to the notes of the late John N. Luff, I was able to grasp a basic understanding of my subject. It remained to another friend, George B. Sloane (who has independently made research in this field), to make my task easy by turning over to me all of his notes and material painstakingly gathered during the last decade. I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to both Mr. Hatfield and Mr. Sloane and to the memory of John N. Luff.

* * * * *

In 1902, my friend, the late John N. Luff, included in his monumental work *The Postage Stamps of the United States*, a chapter on Official Seals, opening his remarks as follows:

“Beginning in 1872, there have been used in the postal service various adhesive labels, commonly termed ‘official seals’. They do not bear any expression of value, have no claim to a place in a work devoted to that subject. But—probably because they are in the form of stamps and are affixed to letters—many collectors have thought them to be of interest and have admitted them to their albums. In deference to these collections I shall briefly describe the several varieties of the seals.”



1872 Registry Seal, Sc. OXF1



Registry Seal, Sc. OXF1, used to seal a large Post Office Department, Stamp & Envelope Agency envelope from New

York, with October 31 rimless registry cancel (circa 1875), to Lower Squankum, Monmouth County, N.J. Signed E.W. Barber, Third Assistant Postmaster General and D.M. Boyd Agent (Stamp & Envelope Agency). As explained at www.poseal.com, a great site where this cover was found, "This is one of a handful of reported examples of registry seal usage on an envelope from the Postage Stamp Agency in New York. When the use of these seals was discontinued in 1875, postmasters had been directed to return all unused stocks to Washington. The green registry seal had been supplied for use only with...Registered Package Envelopes...and any non-standard usage such as this is rather unusual.

Mr. Luff then proceeded to outline with the same meticulous style which characterized his study of postage stamps the historical events connected with the issuance of the seals and listed all varieties known to him at that time. For many years thereafter the listing of these items in the catalog followed his original work with occasionally such changes as Mr. Luff considered necessary to keep the catalog listing in line with additional knowledge that had manifested itself since the publication of his book.

These frequent changes in the listings indicated that Mr. Luff was not altogether satisfied with his original ideas regarding the seals and, in 1915, we have definite knowledge of his dissatisfaction when he wrote in *Scott's Monthly Circular* for April of that year, "I do not think there was ever an edition of the catalogue...in which the list of the official Seals quite satisfied me."

In that article (*Scott's Monthly Circular*) Mr. Luff attempted to straighten out the existing inconsistencies of previous catalog listings stating, "the more I studied the list the less I liked it. I showed repeated changes from one style of printing to another without any apparent reason for doing so or any improvement in the work. One lot was as poor a job as the others and nothing was gained by the changes. Was it possible the catalog was still wrong?"

His own answer to that query was in the affirmative and thus in the 1916 edition of the catalog the seals were listed in accordance with Mr. Luff's wishes and represented for the first time his complete satisfaction with the listings.

Some few years later A. Hatfield, of New Canaan, Conn., the eminent philatelist who plated the New York Postmaster stamp, casually mentioned to Mr. Luff his own collection of seals and these two gentlemen decided to merge their collections; Mr. Hatfield acquiring all of Mr. Luff's seals together with his notes and comments regarding them.* These Mr. Hatfield preserved intact and more recently turned them over to H. L. Lindquist with the suggestion that the collection would be an excellent basis for an interesting article. The writer is indebted to Mr. Lindquist for the assignment to perform this work.

(Since this work was started, Hugh M. Clark has acquired Mr. Hatfield's collection of seals and thus they will become again a part of John N. Luff's world famous Reference Collection which Mr. Clark is preserving for the benefit of future students of philately.)*

* * * * *

Stripped of minor varieties, Mr. Luff's catalog listings for the year 1916 were as follows:

	REGISTERED
1872	Perf. 12 green
	OFFICIALLY SEALED
1877	Perf. 12
	<i>Engraved</i>
	brown ("Post Obitum" in background)
1879	brown
	<i>Typographed</i>
	light brown (Imperf.)
	Bistre brown (Perf. 12)
1892	light brown (Rouletted)
1888-90	<i>Type Set</i>
	Imperf.
	Black on pink
	black
	blue
	black (Rouletted)
1901	<i>Lithographed</i>
	Type of 1879
	Yellow brown (Perf. 12)
1903	Red brown (Perf. 12)
1904	Orange brown (Perf. 12)
1907	Stamps smaller
	Blue (Perf. 12)
1912	Blue (Rouletted)
1913	Blue (Perf. X Roulette)

With the exception of the catalog numbers, which of course must be changed to conform with the present edition, this list was substantially correct and was followed in all catalogs until 1935 when the word "Typographed" was inserted to designate the seals of 1907 and later.

Through a typographical error the listings were thrown into confusion in the "Exhibition Edition" of the catalog (1936) and remained unintelligible until the new 1939 catalog† was published which followed in a measure the information developed by this study. So much for Catalog listings.

(† The writer has referred to the “catalog” indiscriminately. Until 1920 Post Office Seals were listed in the Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue. From 1920 to 1935 they were dropped from the Standard Catalogue and listed in the Supplementary Catalogue. From 1935 they have been listed in the United States Stamp Catalogue—All published by Scott Stamp & Coin Co., Ltd., or Scott Publications, Inc.)

Registration Seals

The first “Official Seal” was the large green Registration seal. Cat. (OXF1) issued in 1872 and discontinued in 1875, and is illustrated herewith (page 1).

This seal was engraved on steel and printed by the National Bank Note Co. Mr. Luff notes that it exists on a variety of papers with either yellowish or brownish gum. Examples shown in Mr. Hatfield’s collection are on white wove paper and horizontally laid paper (Cat. #OXF1c). The laid lines of the latter appear to have been pressed into the paper and differ from a true laid paper. I am of the opinion that this variety is really the result of a worn blanket on the drying rollers of the paper making machine and as such should be deleted from the catalog.” *

(This variety has been deleted from the 1940 catalog listing.)* [Since this note in the original order, it was restored, and is listed in the 2015 Specialized. JFD.]

There are also shown examples of the reprint, called “Special Printing” in the catalog (OXF3) of 1880. These were printed by the American Bank Note Co., and are on the soft porous paper which characterizes the postage stamps printed by this company. [Scott now also lists a Continental Special Printing, Sc. OXF2, same design as OXF1. JFD.]

Hugh M. Clark has shown me proof impressions, in two sizes, and several shades, of what is stated to be special printing and on paper claimed to be the same as used for various other printings. These present a puzzle which I have been unable to solve so, for want of a better explanation, I have decided to allocate as some sort of essays.

There are no examples of the other varieties listed in the catalog and there are no notes referring to them. George

The Registered Seals were issued to Postmasters in equal quantities with specially designed registration envelopes and were for the sole purpose of sealing these envelopes. The seals were discontinued when a new envelope, which did not require seals, was adopted.



Registry Seal, Sc. OXF1, with March 7, (1874) Wells, Vt. circular datestamp, used to seal Registered Package envelope; other side of envelope was used as a record of the package in transit.

[illegible]

Quoting from Mr. Luff we learn. "The plates for this issue were made by the National Bank Note Co. At least two are known to exist. The first had thirty seals, arranged in ten rows of three; the second had nine seals, in three rows of three. The smaller plate had neither imprint nor plate number. I have never seen a full sheet from the large plate so cannot say whether it had imprint or dot, but records show that it had no number."

Varieties of this seal with straight edge at either top or bottom are common, which led Mr. Luff to comment, "from these and fragments of sheets which I have seen, I conclude that many of the sheets were not perforated along these two edges. I have never seen any evidence that they were imperforated at the sides." The straight edge seals are from the large plate.

I could find no evidence that the reprint made by the American Bank Note Co., supposedly in the year 1880, was printed from the original National plate or a new plate made as was the case for some of the reprints of the postage stamps. [Scott now gives different formats for each of the regular and two Special Printing sheets. JFD.]

**Seals Intended To Be Used For Re-Sealing Letters
Opened at the Dead Letter Office.**

In January 1877 the first of the familiar seals used by the post office to re-seal opened letters made its appearance. Apparently intended for the use of the Dead Letter Office this group of seals seems almost from the first to have been distributed to Postmasters for use in sealing letters that had been opened by mistake or damaged in transit. The first of these seals (Cat. OX1) was engraved on steel and printed by the National Bank Note Co. It is easily distinguished by the words “Post Obitum” which make up the background.

There would seem to be several shades running from dark brown through light brown though none I have seen are so marked as to war-



*Proof of 1877
Post Office Seal,
Sc. OX1P3, with
magnified view
of “Post Obitum”
from the back-
ground.*

rant serious attention. They were printed from plates of 100 subjects arranged in ten rows of ten. There was no plate number and it is doubtful if an imprint was used in-as-much as the name “National Bank Note Company, New York,” appears at the bottom of each stamp printed.

In May, 1879, a new seal [Sc. OX2] made its appearance. This resembled in every respect the previous issue with the exception that the words “Post Obitum” were omitted from the background and a series of interlocking circles substituted. There does not seem to have been any valid reason for a new design, though one is suggested by Luff as follows: “It is said that the words ‘Post Obitum’ were placed on the first seals as a joke. Either the joke ceased to be amusing, or it was decided in poor taste.”



1879 engraved second issue, Sc. OX2, on reverse of 1881 cover from London, England to New York that was incompletely addressed and "opened by Mr / C.T. Jones 78 Bway" (the wrong addressee) per manuscript notation, also with blue double-ring oval "D(irectory).S(earch). / No 1", red oval "NEW YORK POST OFFICE / ADV(ertised). 20 / DUE 1 CENT", and purple straightline "UNCLAIMED" handstamps. Seal is tied by black Washington, DC "DEAD LETTER OFFICE / JAN / 30 82" triangle.

My own opinion is that the change was made in keeping with the change in the use of the seals. It will be remembered that the first seal was originally intended for the use of the Dead Letter Office and that this idea was quickly abandoned as a more general use was found for the seals by issuing them to postmasters. The words "Post Obitum" mean "after death" which is, I think, a clear indication that the original seals were intended for the Dead Letter Office.

Though these seals bore on each design the words "National Bank Note Company, New York," exactly as their

predecessors, they were actually printed by the American Bank Note Co., and plate number “2” (there were only two plates), bears at the top, bottom, and either side, the imprint of the latter firm. As the year 1879 was that in which the old Continental and National Bank Note Companies were merged with the American Bank Note Company, and because of the early period of the year in which the seals were issued, it seems reasonable to assume that the plates, or at least the die from which the plates were made, was the work of the National firm, even if the printing was done by the American.

In fact it seems quite possible to this writer that the National Bank Note Co. actually printed some of the seals. Possibly from plate “1” (which bore no plate number or imprint) for many of these seals are printed on paper which closely resembles that used by the National firm; quite unlike the soft porous paper of the American Bank Note Co. Mr. Hatfield’s collection contains a complete sheet from plate “2” bearing the American imprint and the paper is of the soft porous variety while many of the singles in this collection seem to be on the hard “National” paper.

Several shades are noted among the seals in Mr. Hatfield’s collection which have been incorporated in the 1940 Catalog listings.

A Reprint?

The [Hatfield] collection also includes one seal in dark brown on extremely white paper, quite different from any of the other seals I have seen of this issue. Mr. Luff notes this as “Reprint?” and the statement, “I bought this as a reprint but have no positive proof that it is such.” As there is no mention in his article in *Scott’s Monthly Circular* in 1915 nor any mention in the catalog of a “Special Printing” it is probable that the query over this stamp in his collection was never answered to Mr. Luff’s complete satisfaction. On the other hand it is not unreasonable to suppose that this seal was reprinted (or shall we say a “special printing” was made) in 1880 along with the reprints of the green Registration seal. There is no official reason for the existence of the latter, why then must we produce an official

reason for the former? Indeed the whole question of the 1880 “special printings” (of postage stamps) remains as much a mystery today as when Mr. Luff wrote in 1902, “we have yet to learn the reason for thus adding to a stock which was already abundant.” Mr. Sloane agrees with my theory and verifies my conclusion that the seal on white paper in Mr. Hatfield’s collection is actually a “reprint” made at the time of the other “special printings” of 1880. I am pleased to see that Hugh M. Clark also agrees with my findings and has listed this seal in the 1940 Specialized Catalogue (#OX4).



OX4, the Special Printing. Notice that the “Post Obitum” background in OX1 (shown last week) has been replaced by a series of interlocking circles, shown above in a magnified, computer enhanced image. Note as well the computer enhanced imprint that will be referred to later.

The Typographed Seals of 1888-94

In 1888 the Government Printing Office undertook the printing of the Post Office Seals; the reason being given in the *American Philatelist* for January 10th, 1890 in the following paragraph.

“The two previous issues were finely engraved and comparatively costly. Being without an appropriation sufficient for their manufacture, the department had the present wretched transfers made and printed at the Government printing office. They were first issued imperforate and were sent in that condition to the Dead Letter Office and to a few postmasters, but the bulk of them were sent to the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to be perforated.”

This and the succeeding group of seals proved a puzzle to students for many years and it was not until 1915 that Mr. Luff, by studying the cancellations on used specimens, determined their true status and solved the tangle between the typographed and the, later, lithographed seals. The first seals of this type and all others issued up to 1900 were photoengraved and typographed. In 1901 the lithographed seals made their appearance and as this time coincided

with that in which Mr. Luff was completing his book on United States Postage Stamps it is quite natural he would have been misled and confused between the two issues which at that time he tried to fit into one series.

The seals of 1888 [Sc. OX5-OX10] resemble the earlier engraved seals in their general design excepting the imprint of the National Bank Note Company has been removed from the bottom panel of the design and in its place there is substituted the lathe work of the other panels. Otherwise they appear to be poor imitations of the previous issues. They are surprisingly similar to the Lithographed seals, which were issued in 1901 though several points of difference can be detected. One unmistakable method of identifying the typographed seals of this issue as given by Mr. Luff is that the short line at the left of the inner curve in the lower left corner is broken on the typographed and complete on the lithographed seals. [Scott now more correctly states that the outer frame line at top and left is thick and heavy on the typographed vs. being thin on the lithographed; and that they are “otherwise similar”.]

As stated previously the imperforate seals were issued first (Cat. OX6) to be followed by the perforated series. [Scott now states these imperfcs, OX6, OX7, OX10 and OX13 are printer's waste.] The catalog notes only a shade variety of the imperforate seal; attesting to the sloppy printing of these seals I have noted several blocks showing, (a) no impression on the face but a strong off-set on back, (b) impression on



Imperforate variety of the 1888 Typographed Seal, Sc. OX5a. Note that the imprint at bottom has been removed.

1900 Lithographed dark brown, Sc. OX11b with 'Ravenswood Station' straight line cancel. Note that the outer frame lines at top and left are thinner than on OX5a, above.



face with offset on back, (c) several impressions, obviously printers waste, on some sort of circular relating to Southern Pacific bonds, (d) printed on exceedingly thick paper, almost cardboard, (e) printed on thick paper.

Of the perforated seals of this issue I do not discover in the Hatfield collection the variety #1755g [now Sc. OX7e] "Vertical pair imperf. between." However, this series is characterized with such poor perforations so haphazardly applied I have no doubt of the existence of these varieties or any other possible oddity of perforation.



Sc. OX7e

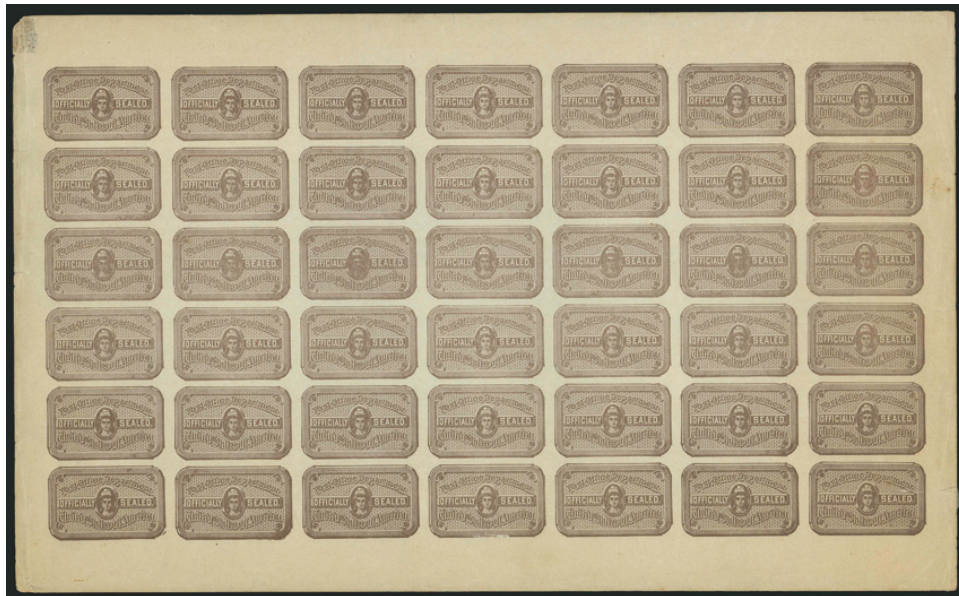


Two 1889 issue seals (Sc. OX7) affixed over top left corner of badly damaged for-

warded registered 1896 cover from Calcutta, India to Albany, N.Y. bearing magenta "Received in Bad Condition" and "Have contents examined on delivery." handstamps at lower left corner.

The seals are printed on thick, thin and medium paper and exist in a variety of shades not covered by catalog listings. It is noted that on some sheets the perforations are applied so as to leave no straight edge copies while on other sheets the outer rows of perforations are missing leaving straight edges on all four sides of the sheet.

I have not been able to determine the size of the plate from which the seals were printed. Mr. Luff notes a plate of 72 subjects, 9x8, while the “complete” sheets in Mr. Hatfield’s collection are of 42 seals arranged in six horizontal rows of seven. [Scott states OX5 came in sheets of 72, OX6-10 in sheets of 42.] No imprint of any kind appears on the margins of these sheets and there is no way of determining whether these are complete sheets or merely panes from a sheet twice or four times as big. The absence of guide lines leads one to accept the theory that the plate was no bigger than the 42 stamps before us.

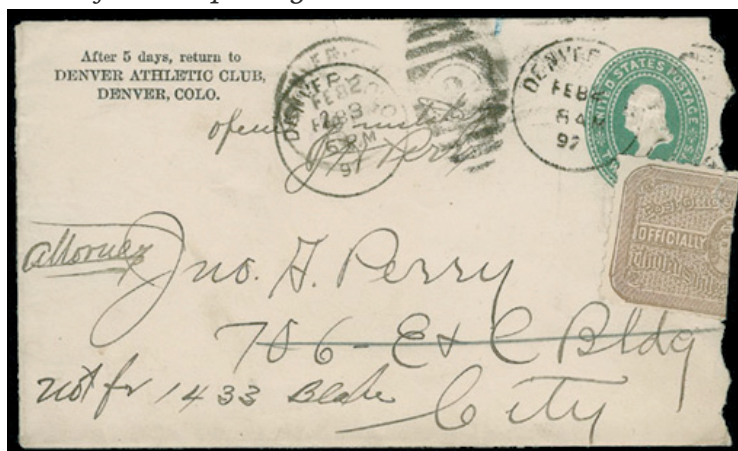


1888, Official Seal Imperf (OX7 variety). Full pane of 42,

1892 Rouletted Seals

There are two varieties of the roulette, 7 [Sc. OX9] and 5-1/2 [Sc. OX8]. A sheet of the roulette 5-1/2 shows the roulette around the outer edges so as to leave no straight edges. Single copies of the rouletted 7 which I have seen sometimes show straight edges. This might indicate the

Right, 1895 Rouletted, showing Hyphen Hole perf 7, visible around edges of this Sc. OX9 block of four; below, Hyphen Hole Perf 7 (Sc. OX9), used to seal right edge of 2¢ Green entire with Denver Col. Feb. 2 and Feb. 3, 1897 duplex datestamps—earliest documented use of OX9, seal torn as usual from reopening.



method followed when applying the roulettes, but the material at my command for study was so meager I should not like to draw conclusions.

The catalog notes the roulette 7 as “Hyphen-hole” but this I think is an error [Scott still designates it as “Hyphen Hole”. Close examination of the few copies at my command indicates that the incisions of the roulette are “L” shaped slits which, when separated, leave protuberances suggesting the hyphen-hole roulette.

There are several shades noted in the catalog, but otherwise there would not seem to be any varieties of note among the rouletted stamps. Quite remarkable when one considers the imposing list of varieties among the perforated series.

The Lithographed Seals of 1901-04

These seals resemble in every way the typographed seals just described and are easiest identified by the test of the unbroken line previously described and illustrated.

The stone from which they were printed “bore one hundred and forty-three transfers, arranged in thirteen rows of eleven stamps each. It had neither imprint nor plate number.” So states Mr. Luff and, although he fails to state how he arrived at this decision, I would assume that he had sufficient material at hand to speak with authority.

The lithographed seals were first issued in 1900 (Cat. OX11) and were yellow brown in color running through to grey brown. In 1930 the red brown seal made its appearance (Cat. OX11) and in 1904 an orange brown seal was issued (Cat. OX11c). All are printed on soft porous paper. There are many shade variations of each seal and it is often difficult to the point of impossibility to distinguish between some of the shades of the red brown seal of 1903 and the orange brown of 1904. I do not believe there should be a catalog distinction between the two, it being my opinion that the 1904 seal was occasioned merely by a new batch of printing ink and not an attempt to issue a distinctive seal for that year. [Scott also lists a gray brown as OX11a and dark brown as OX11b, image page 11].



1900 red brown Official Seal (Sc. OX11), two copies with purple “Macon, Ga.” straightline precancel, used to reattach two halves of German postcard torn in mailing, with red “Accidentally torn by Stamping Machine.” two-line handstamp.

An interesting feature of the lithographed seals appears in the bottom label where the words “National Bank Note Company, New York,” have been removed (see page 16). When substituting the lathe work to replace these words a transfer was taken of the corresponding lathe work in the upper label, which was stripped in where the words had been removed. This stripping in has not always been well done and very often a decided break in the design will be noticed where the new insert does not properly match into the old design.

The Typographed Seals of 1907 to 1917

In 1907 a new seal was issued by the department in design similar to the earlier lithographed seals but in much reduced size. At first these seals were printed in blue on white paper, but in 1916 a seal was printed in black on pink paper [Sc. OX17, see top of next column]. In 1917 the seal was printed in black [Sc. OX18d, see top of next column]. Regarding their printing Mr. Luff has noted in the Hatfield collec-



Above, 1916 black on pink, Sc. OX17, on locally delivered 1916 window envelope “Received in Bad Condition/ at St. Louis, Mo.” and repaired with three official seals; Right, 1917 gray black on white, in a vertical pair imperf between, Sc. OX18d.

A pane of ten of the 1919 indigo, perf 12 (Sc. OX19). This stamp is not listed with a watermark.

tion: “these seals appear to have been printed in sheets of twenty which were bound in books. Some post offices were supplied with sheets of ten which were probably made by cutting the larger sheets in two.” Sheets of ten are imperf top and bottom and sometimes show signs of perforations on the cut margins.

The blue stamp, (Cat. OX12-OX16) is known printed on paper with a sheet watermark consisting of the Seal of the U.S. covering 12 stamps [Sc. OX13a, OX14a, OX15b, OX16a]. No varieties not listed in the catalog are noted.



Typographed Seals of 1919-1937

In 1919 [Sc. OX19] the design of the seals was again changed by the simple method of removing the network from the background of the seals. As before they were printed in black on white paper in sheets of twenty and bound into books. All varieties known are listed in the catalog.



Sc. OX19

This seal is a complete mystery to the writer. As may be seen from the illustration, it is similar in design to the 1907 seals issued by the Post Office but has an added inscription reading “Mail and Record Section—Officially Sealed—Quartermaster General’s Office.” I am without information as to how this seal was used or for what purpose it was issued but believe it may have made its appearance during the World War and have been necessary for use in the censorship department of the army. The few copies I

have seen are printed in indigo on unwatermarked paper and are perforated 12.

[Scott now states: "Nos. OX19-OX20 were used on mail to and from the Procurement Division of the Quartermaster General's Office. After five weeks of use the seals were withdrawn when the Mail and Records Section became a full branch of the Quartermaster General's Office." JFD.]



A Registered cover from Kansas City, Mo. to Sacramento, Cal., recovered from July 28, 1933 air crash, with three-line "DAMAGED AT KANS CITY / JUL. 28.33



WHEN PLANE / FELL IN THE RIVER" cachet applied at top right where postage has floated off. Three official seals, Sc. OX21, were affixed on the reverse at Denver, Colo., all tied by July 29th "Denver Terminal, R.P.O." datestamps.

The Type-Set Seals of 1888-90

In many respects this is the most interesting group of all the seals. There is practically no information available concerning their origin. The group includes the rarest of the seals, and the catalog listing, because of the government regulations which prohibited illustrations, was practically worthless as a means of identifying them. Even Mr. Luff's listing in 1916 does not by any means follow

his own notes nor does it include all of the varieties in his own collection! To attempt to describe these seals without the aid of illustrations is confusing to the nth degree and is the pitfall which has so far blocked an intelligent listing in the catalog.

To begin with, we do not have knowledge whether any of these seals were issued by the Post Office Department or if individual postmasters were required to provide their own seals. That many postmasters did provide their own seals is a known fact for there are many varieties of type-set seals which bear the names of individual post offices and, sometimes, the name of the postmaster. One school of thought holds to the theory that the postmasters were authorized to provide their own seals from Post Office Supply houses who provided standard forms put up in pads. A second school claims the Department itself issued the seals direct to the postmasters as was previously done with the engraved and typographed seals. If this be true it is difficult to understand why the use of type-set seals was continued concurrently with the better designed typographed seals which were issued in 1892 (Cat. OX8 to OX11). Still another theory is that a shortage of department seals forced postmasters to supply their own and that supply houses, taking advantage of this situation, made up standard seals which were purchased by postmasters until such time as the department seals would be forthcoming. This theory is an attempt to explain the concurrent use of typographed seals and the type-set group.

[In the 2015 Specialized, the Typeset seals are listed separately as LOX1-LOX45 with the note, "These seals were privately printed for sale mostly to Fourth Class Post Offices. Many are extremely rare. Unquestioned varieties are listed. Many others exist." JFD.]

None of these theories are entirely satisfactory and one can raise serious objections to all, but whatever is the correct solution of the problem there is definitely one group of type-set seals which would seem to have been prescribed by the department if not actually issued from

this source. This group is listed in the catalog. All of them have general characteristics of design which distinguishes them from the seals prepared by individual postmasters. With the sole exception of one, (old Cat. OX38), the words "U.S. Post Office Department" and "Opened through mistake by..." are used. The locally issued seals usually have the word "U.S. Postoffice" and "opened by mistake by..." For this reason I am in doubt as to the advisability of the catalog listing of OX38).*

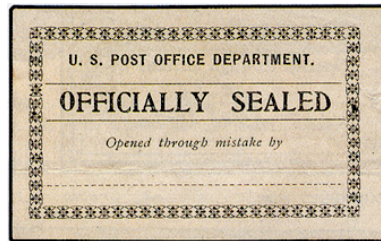
** In the 1940 catalog this seal has been allocated with the others of similar character noted at the end of this article.*

[More than one with the characteristics of the old No. OX38 described above are found, for example LOX16, LOX28, et al. JFD.]

In the interests of clarity we illustrate each seal as they are listed in the catalog and included whatever notes or observations which could be made from studying Mr. Hatfield's collection.

Rouletted

This seal [Sc. LOX1] though not listed in the previous catalogs, nor mentioned by Luff, has now been recognized in the 1940 Specialized Catalogue. I have only seen one copy and other than the fact that it is printed in black on white wove paper I am without any information concerning it.



Another seal listed, for the first time, in the 1940 catalog is Imperf printed in black on white stock [Sc. LOX3]. I have seen one or two individual specimens but am without knowledge concerning the sheet make up or other details.



There would seem to be but one variety of this seal, that printed in black on pink paper and listed in the catalog as (LOX4, page 21)). So far as I am aware no pairs are known and the generally accepted theory is that this seal,

and the two which immediately follow, were printed singly. They were probably made up in pads and supplied to postmasters in that form. The seal measures 47 x 29 mm.



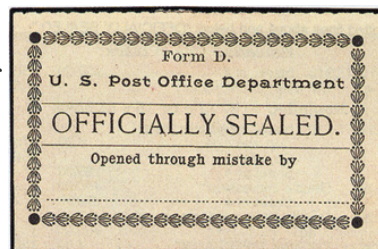
The [next] seal which we illustrate is catalog (LOX5) and is printed in black on white wove paper. It is similar to the preceding seal, but differs as to border and the size is 50 1/2 x 29 mm.



Left, LOX5, black on white wove; right, LOX5A, black on pink

Rouletted 9 1/2 Horizontally

This seal was not listed in the catalog nor mentioned by Luff though several examples are noted in the Hatfield collection. The border is entirely different than any of the other seals and a new line, reading "Form D" has been added [Sc. LOX7]. The letters, however, are of the same type face as appears on the imperforate seal (Cat. LOX2).

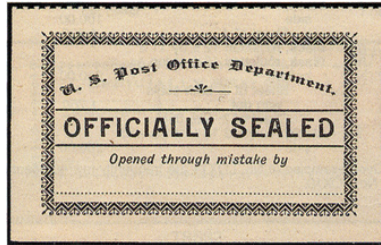


The roulette is not in colored lines and the seals seem to have been printed in strips. The largest piece I have seen, a pair, shows the roulette at the top, between the stamps and at the bottom, indicating that it is only a part of a large strip. Unlike the preceding seals this seal was not printed tete beche.*

** This observation is made from very little material which was available for study. Perhaps future research will unearth considerable more information regarding these type-set seals.*

Rouletted at Top or Bottom and One Side

This seal was not listed in the catalog. [It is now listed as LOX8, “rouletted at top & side”.] It is printed in black on white wove paper in blocks of four, in tete beche pairs, similar to the preceding seals, and would seem to be a modified design of same. The border is changed and the lines inclosing the words “Officially Sealed” are now solid. The period [after Officially Sealed] is missing entirely from the few copies I have seen. Mr. Luff ascribes this seal as issued in 1889-90. There is a block in the Hatfield collection and the seal is fairly common. I am without knowledge as to why it was not listed in the catalog or mentioned in Luff’s article published in 1915. No varieties.



Rouletted 13 at Top or Bottom

This seal, of which I have only seen one copy, that in Mr. Hatfield’s collection, was not listed in the catalog. [It is now LOX9, “Rouletted 12-1/2 or 16-1/2 in black between”.] It is a sort of “missing link” which connects the preceding seals with those that follow. It is printed in black on white wove paper and the border is a modification of the “Greek” pattern of seal (LOX5) and the same as used on the seals which follow, from which it differs only in that the lines inclosing the words “Officially Sealed” are solid. Apparently this seal was printed in vertical pairs with a colored roulette separating them. The roulette is actually printers rule “set high” so it will pierce the paper as it prints. The seal measures 50 x 29 mm.



Rouletted 11 1/2 or 16 1/2 at Top or Bottom

Not listed in the catalog. [It is now listed as LOX10-LOX11.] The design is a modification of the preceding seal with the lines inclosing the words “Officially Sealed” consisting of a row of dots. A round period between the words instead of following “Sealed” [LOX10a, LOX11c]. Black on

white wove paper. Printed in vertical pairs separated with printers rule. Varieties: tete beche “Y” of “Officially” with broken leg at right.

Sc. LOX11f, tete-beche pane of four, rouletted at top and side of stamps, one stamp (upper left in this image) with dot between “Officially and Sealed”.



Same Design

These seals are similar in every respect to the preceding issue excepting that they are printed in blocks of four in tete beche pairs, the colored roulette separating the four seals in two straight lines which cross at center. Thus all seals are imperforate at top or bottom and one side with the opposite edges showing the roulette.

The catalog lists two varieties as follows:

Black on pink paper (LOX10)

Black on white paper (LOX11)

I have only seen one of the so-called pink paper, that in the Hatfield collection, and the color of the paper is more cinnamon color than pink. (It is Ridgway's "Light Pinkish Cinnamon." 15 Y.O.D. Plate XXIX.) The paper is colored through. Of this seal there is no period after or between the words "Officially Sealed."

Of the black seal the following varieties are noted:

No period

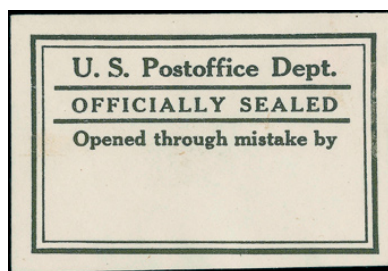
Tete beche pair

Period between words

Tete beche pair in combination with seal without period

The seal with the period shows the broken leg of the letter “Y” and occurs only once in the block of four.

[See the 2015 Specialized for currently listed varieties.]



Sc. LOX12



Sc. LOX13

The two seals illustrated [LOX12 and LOX13] have never come to my attention. They were not in the Hatfield collection and I have never seen any description of them until they were illustrated in the new 1940 United States Stamp Catalogue of which Hugh M. Clark was kind enough to furnish me proof sheets.

Grouped under the description "United States Post Office" which distinguishes the following seals from those previously described, the new 1940 Catalogue illustrates and lists several seals which I have not been so fortunate as to examine. One of them, (old No. OX38), was previously listed as (1759), I have already mentioned this seal and questioned its eligibility for catalog recognition. Perhaps Hugh M. Clark is right in grouping this and other seals of similar type heretofore unknown to me, in the new catalog.

Imperf.

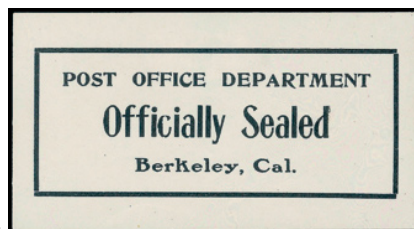
Catalog (old No. OX38), differs considerably from all other type-set seals both in design and paper. It is printed in blue on a hard thin paper and the wording differs from any of the others [Sc. LOX16]. I have already commented on the advisability of the catalog listing of this seal.



Local Seals

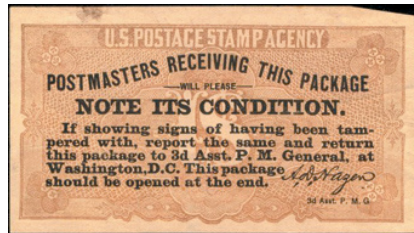
[There also are] seals which were obviously issued locally by authority of individual postmasters. There are probably many

Scott now lists Local Seals LOX19A-LOX40, including LOX21A, shown

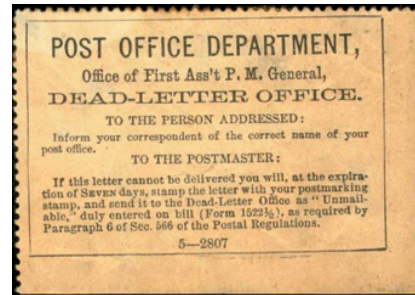


other seals of this type though the [only ones I have seen] are U.S. Postoffice, Petaluma, Cal., Black on blue paper [Sc. LOX22]. Officially Sealed by Birmingham, Ala., Post Office. Black on light green [Sc. LOX20, LOX21]. U.S. Post Office, Northfield, Mass., black on white [Sc. LOX25].

* * * * *



Sc. OXF5



Sc. OXA4

[Note: Scott now also lists as OXF4-OXF17 Postage Stamp Agency Seals “Used to seal registered pouches containing stamps for distribution to Post Offices.” and OXA1-OXA9 and OXB1-OXB5 Dead Letter Office Seals “Nos. OXA1-OXA9 were used only on mail that could be forwarded to the intended recipient, after examination in the Dead Letter Office. Nos. OXB1-OXB5 were used only on mail returned to the originating post office.”]