

SPECIALIZE WITH DUPLICATES

Gene Byers, PSS 225-4853

The following is a portion of an article that appeared in the February 1947 *Forum* and then was reprinted in the November 1976 *Forum*. The title was "SPECIALIZE WITH DUPLICATES."

"When we pick Bureau precancel items for our collections it is nice to see the precancellation as nearly as possible in the center of the stamp. Very often it seems that such centralization is a rare condition. It gives the impression that the City and State are located everywhere except near the center.

But if we study a batch of duplicates a bit we may find it is just as hard to pick items that have the overprint in any specified location. In order to prove the point, just take any common large city Bureau print and sort the duplicates in a manner that will show as many different locations of the precancel overprint as may be possible. The quest for such may surprise the most ardent collector.

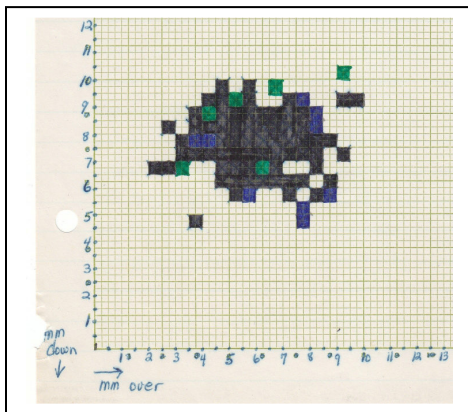
As an illustration let us start out with a batch of Chicago $\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ narrow Presidentials. Measure from the top frame-line of the stamp to the top line of the overprint; and measure from the frame line of the left side of the stamp to the letter 'C' of Chicago. If we decide upon $\frac{1}{2}$ millimeters as our basis and figure all the locations possible across the stamp multiplied by all the possible locations down the stamp there will be something like 441 different positions of the overprint----but how many can be found?

One is very apt to say, at first thought, "That ought to be easy for the overprints seem to be everywhere except in the center." After fooling around a bit with the batch of duplicates, the viewpoint will probably change. There seems to be a scarcity of many locations, and the more one hunts, the more apparent it is that we have something of a job on hand if we are going to locate all of those positions.

In fact, who can say whether or not it is possible to find all of the positions? After delving quite a bit, this writer has found so few different positions, as compared with the total possible, that he can quite thoroughly appreciate how rare a complete collection of such would be.

This whole thought goes to prove once again that the most common precancel can produce hours of fascination if we use the imagination a bit. Most of us are prone to label so much material as plain 'junk,' and yet, there is unlimited fun in the 'junk box' if we will forget for the time that bugaboo of value."

I joined PSS in 1976 and this article was in one of my first issues of *The Forum*. I had a bad cold and cough and had stayed home from work and was reading this article. Somewhere I had a large envelope that was filled with the 1926 STD 1¢ from Chicago. Needless to say----I found that envelope and started measuring. Then, I used a piece of graph paper to record my results. I have not worked on this "collection" for at least 25 years. I thought of it when



Larry asked me to write an article about ways to collect. I am sure that he was thinking that I would write one about collecting "dateds"----but here is a different way to cheaply form a collection. I did find the graph, which is shown to the left. Upon counting, if there could be about 441 different----
--I guess I need 359 more.