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**Article: A New Discovery - Double Transfer Variety on Scott #569a "Special" Booklet Paper**
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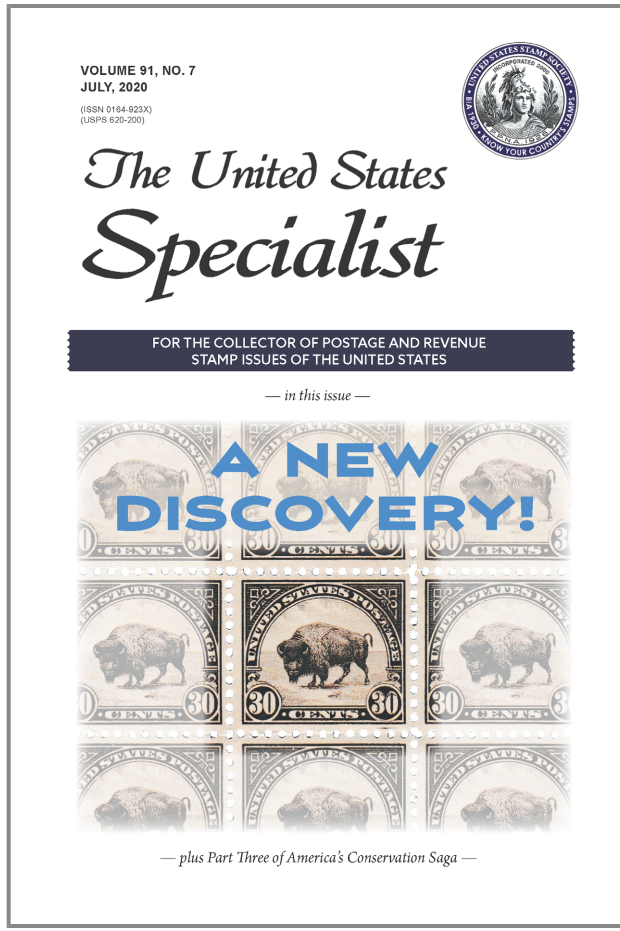

# A NEW DISCOVERY!

## Double Transfer Variety on Scott #569a "Special" Booklet Paper

*Figure 1. Certified example of 569a, SBP, with Double Transfer, Plate 16065, Pos UR52, cropped and enlarged, twice, with Double Transfer detail circled in yellow.*

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The well-known Double Transfer variety on the 1922 Fourth Bureau 30¢ Bison stamp has been discovered on Scott #569a, the "Special" Booklet Paper (SBP) variety of this stamp. The recent listing in the latest edition of the *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers* of eleven stamps printed on "Special" Booklet Paper has led to new research in this area. Of perhaps greater significance than the Double Transfer, this discovery represents the existence of a new plate number not previously reported, #16065, for Scott #569a, since it was only from this plate that the Double Transfer is known. Subsequently, and shortly thereafter with diligent searching, another previously unreported plate number, #16068, was discovered on "Special" Booklet Paper, and it opens the door to search for other "possible" plate numbers which may have been printed on this paper variety!

## Background

The pursuit of this subject was conceived in part as a tribute to the late Wallace Cleland, who first hypothesized that the 1928 U.S. Special Handling issues were printed on "Special" Booklet Paper. Having researched and proven Wallace's speculation true,[1] it was logical to pursue the listing of these varieties for specialists, as is routinely accorded other paper varieties when discovered. This has also been accomplished.[2] The eleven sheet stamp issues printed on "Special" Booklet Paper in 1928, are identifiably different from stamps printed on regular paper, not unlike listings with different catalog numbers for horizontal versus vertical watermarks of otherwise, the same stamps. These paper varieties have been familiar to US specialists since 1939 when brought to the attention of the collecting public by Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) researcher and reporter, Hugh Southgate.[3]

In Southgate's seminal reporting of the known plate numbers at press in mid- to late-1928 when BEP was printing sheet stamps with the last remnants of paper intended for booklets, he published a list of the known plate numbers that were supplied by the BEP. See Table 1 on page 301. For the 30¢ Bison stamp, these Plate Numbers were 17446, 17447, 17448 and 17449 – all wide gauge margins, no stars.[4] He also speculated that other plate numbers, not confirmed by BEP, were known to be at press in this time frame, and may have utilized "Special" Booklet Paper. For the 30¢ Bison stamp, these Plate Numbers were 16065, 16066, 16067 and 16068, and they were all at press on the same dates in mid-August, 1928.[5] See Table 2 on page 301.

## Identification – Dimension Measurement and Template Overlay

While I had not pursued these additional plate numbers specifically, I have been in the habit of measuring every mint single of these stamps as availability and time permit. At stamp shows and with stamps in hand, one can easily measure "patients" with templates of known paper variety. Online acquisition is more challenging, as stamp images are often poorly scanned, or worse, not scanned at all. Shown side by side in Figure 2 are examples of Scott #569 and #569a, on regular paper and "Special" Booklet Paper, respectively.


***Figure 2. Certified examples of 569 and 569a, respectively.***

The template technique is demonstrated in Figure 3, showing a corner-cut regular paper control stamp, in this example a poor quality, inexpensive Scott #569, overlaid on the patients, with frame lines aligned at left and bottom. For clarity in the demonstration, the control stamp template overlay is shown inverted, and in yellow. Horizontal format stamps, Scott #567, 568 and 569 on "Special" Booklet Paper are slightly taller, and very-slightly narrower than the regular paper counterparts. The Plate Number Single (PNS) #16068 example (top and bottom-right in Figure 3) is the discovery copy of this number on "Special" Booklet Paper, Scott #569a.

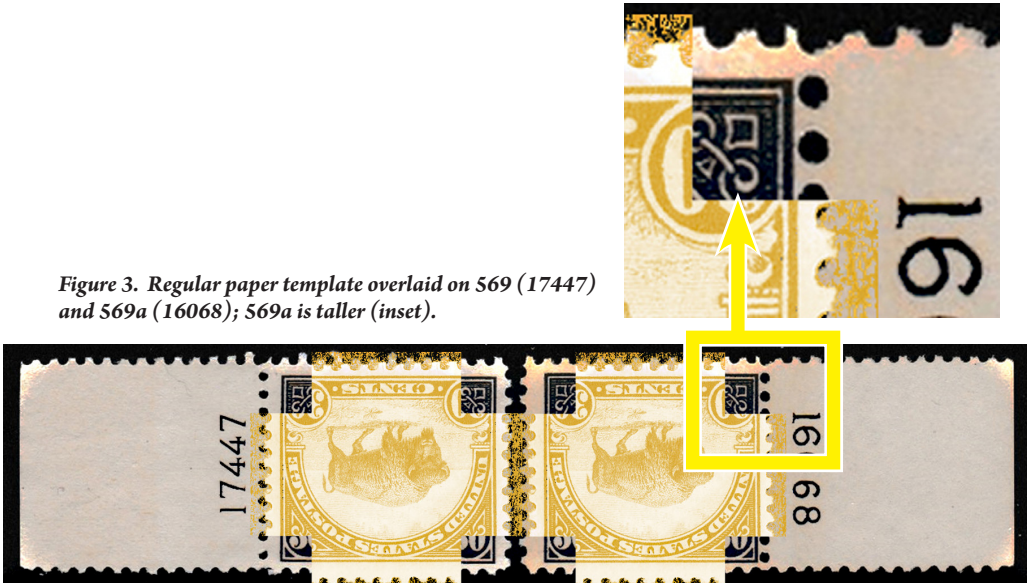


*Figure 3. Regular paper template overlaid on 569 (17447) and 569a (16068); 569a is taller (inset).*

## Identification – Paper Grain Direction and Shrinkage

The dimensional variation of these stamps is the result of a 90° difference in grain direction for "Special" Booklet Paper vs. regular paper, and was ordered specifically for the production of booklet panes in order to improve stamp centering. Stamp paper shrinks approximately four times more across the grain than with the grain, meaning that as the stamps dried after printing, they shrank more in one direction than the other. An easy way to observe paper shrinkage, and thereby the grain direction of the paper, is to view the curling of stamps under humid conditioning – taking appropriate precautions not to damage the gum of mint stamps. The stamps pictured above were placed on a perforated plastic disk above a dish of warm water, providing elevated humidity, but intentionally less severe than a sweat box, and the resulting shrinkage observed. See Figure 4.

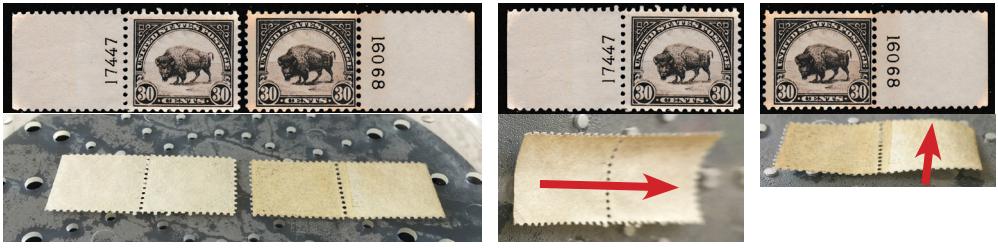


*Figure 4. Humidity Demonstration with Certified examples of 569 and 569a, respectively. Horizontal format stamps, grain direction is horizonal on regular paper; grain direction is vertical on "Special" Booklet Paper.*

## Serendipity

This discovery came "out of left field." This research project has been focused on finding "Special" Booklet Paper stamps on plate numbers not confirmed by the BEP. See Table 2 on page 301. In fact, many collectors are still looking for examples of these unreported plate numbers. Enter serendipity. Not considering the value nor rarity of the

Double Transfer variety, I performed a computer graphic analysis of the dimensional properties on the Block of 9 in Figure 1. It showed sufficient promise as a "Special" Booklet Paper variety to warrant its purchase and evaluation in hand. Voilà! It is the special paper variety. Shown below (Figure 5a), it displays wonderfully in direct comparison to a regular paper stamp block, also with the same Double Transfer, which I found online. In Figure 5b it is shown overlaid with Scott #569a (from Figure 1) using the similar inversion and coloration techniques used in Figure 3.

*(a)* *(b)*

***Figure 5. #569 Regular paper Block of 9 with DT on left. #569a "Special" Booklet Paper on right. Template "overlay" is identical for comparison: 569a is taller and slightly narrower than #569.***

## Identification – Aspect Ratio

An additional concept related to the measurement of stamp design is aspect ratio, or the width of the design divided by the height of the design, as measured from the edges of the design frame lines, side to side, and top to bottom. As an example of the concept, the aspect ratios of the Double Transfer regular paper and "Special" Booklet Paper stamps from Figure 5 were measured after digitally cropping the center stamps – Figure 6. A study of the examples of single stamps measured by Hugh Southgate of regular paper stamps resulted in an average aspect ratio of 1.169; for his studies of "Special" Booklet Paper stamps, the aspect ratio averaged 1.136. From my experience, if the aspect ratio is greater than 1.15, the stamp will have been printed on regular paper; if less than 1.14, "Special" Booklet Paper.

***Figure 6. Regular paper Aspect Ratio (1.158) vs. "Special" Booklet Paper (1.136). Both are the center stamps from the block directly above in Figure 4.***

In his 1939 report Southgate also measured plate block dimensions, frame to frame, for tops and bottoms – 3 stamps wide, 2 stamps high – and reported that regular paper plate block dimensions were 2.815 x 1.600 inches, and "Special" Booklet Paper blocks were 2.780 x 1.630 inches. His dimensions yield aspect ratios of 1.759 and 1.706, respectively. My in-hand measurements of the double transfer block examples from Figure 5 agree favorably at 1.767 and 1.716, respectively, using the upper blocks of six out of the nine. These are shown in Figure 7.

*Figure 7. Blocks of 6: Regular paper Aspect Ratio (1.767) vs. "Special" Booklet Paper (1.716).*

With both blocks of 9 as shown above in hand, it was a worthwhile exercise to apply the humidity demonstration to both (Figure 6), as a confirmation of the properties discussed in the text related to Figure 6.

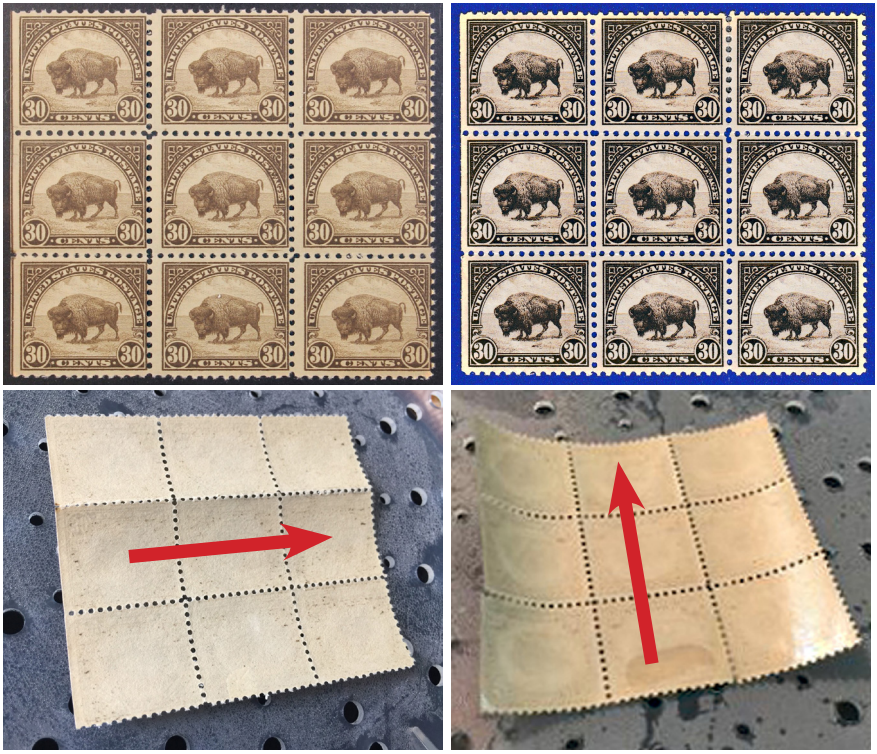

*Figure 8. Humidity demonstration for double transfer blocks of 569 and 569a, respectively. As illustrated in Figure 4, grain direction on regular paper is horizontal; grain direction on "Special" Booklet Paper is vertical.*

## Conclusion

Eighty years after the "Special" Booklet Paper printings of 1928 were first reported by Hugh Southgate in 1939, new discoveries are still being made. It was unquestionably easier to research these paper varieties when the issues were more current, but specialists did not know all the plate numbers which may have been printed on "Special" Booklet Paper. Southgate reported the plate numbers as given to him by BEP, but there were other plates at press, such as 16065, and 16068, now coming to light, that were printed on this remnant paper.

You are encouraged to examine your plate block and plate number single holdings to determine if you have any of those listed in Appendix Table 2, and whether any of them might be on "Special" Booklet Paper!

## Tables

**Table 1. Plates Used with "Special" Booklet Paper confirmed by BEP (Southgate)**

| *Known Plate Numbers at Press on "Special" Booklet Paper from BEP Records (per Southgate)* | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Scott Number*** | ***Denomination*** | ***Plate Numbers and Notes*** |
| *563b* | *11¢* | *17617, 17618, 17619, 17620 - All narrow gauge margins* |
| *564b* | *12¢* | *18921, 18922, 18923, 19442 - All wide gauge margins, no stars* |
| *566a* | *15¢* | *17430, 17431, 17432, 17433* - All wide gauge margin, 5-point star plates* |
| *567b* | *20¢* | *18673, 18674, 18675 - Wide gauge, star plates* |
| *568a* | *25¢* | *14062, 14063, 14064, 14065* - All narrow gauge margins* |
| *569a* | *30¢* | *17446, 17447, 17448, 17449* - All wide gauge margins, no stars* |
| *C11b* | *5¢* | *Red (Frame) Nos. 19571; 19585//19626; Blue (Vignette) Nos. 19545//19619* |
| *E13a* | *15¢* | *16833*, 16834*, 16835, 16836* |
| *QE1b* | *10¢* | *19553, 19554, 19555, 19556* |
| *QE2b* | *15¢* | *19557, 19558, 19559, 19560 Note: All Plate Nos. also on Regular Paper* |
| *QE3b* | *20¢* | *19541, 19542, 19543, 19544 * = Unreported Plate Number (Durland)* |

**Table 2. Additional Plates Used in Period, but not confirmed on SBP (Southgate)**

| *Plate Numbers at Press from BEP Records (per Southgate) - Not Reported by BEP as on "SBP"* | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Scott Number*** | ***Denomination*** | ***Plate Numbers after July, 1928*** |
| *563b* | *11¢* | *17414, 17415, 17416, 17417* |
| *567b* | *20¢* | *18672, 18688 thru 18691; 18925 thru 18931* |
| *569a* | *30¢* | *16065 thru 16068 (16068 discovered on SBP in 2020)* |
| *C11b* | *5¢* | *Red (Frame) Nos. 19549 thru 19552; 19565 thru 19570; 19572* |

**References**

1. Rufe, Robert G., "Special Handling Stamps on Special Booklet Paper – Who Knew?" *The United States Specialist*, March 2014, pp. 103-112.

2. Rufe, Robert G., "1928 Era 'Special' Booklet Paper Variety Stamps Now listed in the Scott catalogue," *Scott Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps and Covers*, 2020, pp 66-69.

3. Southgate, Hugh M., "The "Special" Paper Printing of 1928 – A Study of Shrinkage." *American Philatelic Congress Book*, Vol 5, 1939, p. 27.

4. Stars were used on some Fourth Bureau plates to indicate a slightly wider-than-normal spacing in the margins between stamps in an attempt to manufacture stamps with better centering. The star alerted workers that adjustments needed to be made in perforating these sheets. Juell, Batdorf and Rod, *Encyclopedia of United States Stamps and Stamp Collecting*, Second Edition, 2016, p. 741.

5. Cleland, Wallace B., *The B. I. A. Plate Number Checklist*, Revised, 1990.

## COVID19 and New Zealand


You may have heard that New Zealand recently announced that it had eradicated COVID-19 in that country. How did they do it? Perhaps a small clue can be found in Figure 1.

The United States Stamp Society has two members in New Zealand. Their May issues of *The Specialist* were returned to us. Mail service to that nation had been suspended.

There are two stickers affixed to each envelope. One reads "MAIL SERVICE SUSPENDED / RETURN TO SENDER / TO REQUEST A POSTAL REFUND: / GO TO: USPS.COM/HELP/CLAIMS / CLICK ON INTERNATIONAL SHIPMENTS / TAB FOR INSTRUCTIONS".

The other sticker reads "RETURN TO SENDER / REFUSED / UNABLE TO FORWARD / RETURN TO SENDER."

So, as your Executive Secretary, I went to the website as instructed. The message that came up on the USPS website read "File or Page Requested Not Found."

What to do next? I inquired at the local post office and was told by the clerk, "Just take off the stickers and thrown them back in the mail." That is what I did. Hopefully they are on their way to a COVID-19-free New Zealand.