

Source: Linn's Stamp News

Accessories: Various products and tools commonly used by the stamp collector, including hinges, mounts, stamp tongs, perforation gauges, stock books and magnifiers. Stamp albums, catalogs and philatelic literature can also be regarded as accessories.

Adhesive: 1) The gum on the back of a stamp or label. Some stamps have been issued with no adhesive. Stamp adhesive may be water-activated or pressure-sensitive (self-adhesive). 2) A word generally referring to a stamp that may be affixed to an article to prepay postal fees, in contrast to a design printed directly on an article, as with postal stationery. An adhesive can also refer to a registration label or other label added to a cover.

Admirals: A nickname for three British Commonwealth definitive series, those of Canada, 1912-25 (Scott 104-34); New Zealand, 1926 (182-84); and Rhodesia, 1913-19 (119-38). These stamps depict King George V of Great Britain in naval uniform.

Aerogram: A postage-paid airletter sheet with gummed flaps that is written on and then folded to form an envelope. Aerograms are normally carried at less than the airmail letter rate. No enclosures are permitted.

Aerophilately: A specialized area of collecting concentrating on stamps or covers transported by air.

Agency: 1) An extraterritorial post office maintained at various times by a government within the territory of another government. Examples are the post offices maintained by many European powers in the Turkish Empire until 1923. 2) An organization authorized to publicize or sell new issues of stamps on behalf of a stamp-issuing entity.

Air labels: "Air labels, or etiquettes, are used by Universal Postal Union member nations to denote airmail carriage. They are inscribed "'Par Avion" (French for "'By Airmail"). The text usually includes the same message in the language of the country of origin. Air labels also are adhesives issued by private organizations for specific, unofficial flights."

Airmail: The carriage of mail by air. The first regular airmail service began in 1870, when mail was carried from Paris-then besieged by German forces-over enemy lines by balloon. Many countries have issued postage stamps, stamped envelopes, postal cards and aerograms specially designated for airmail use. The first airmail stamp was issued by Italy in 1917 (Italy Scott C1).

Albino: An uninked impression made by a printing plate. Such errors are scarce on stamps. They are found more frequently on postal stationery.

Album: A binder and pages designed for the mounting and display of stamps or covers. Many early albums were permanently bound books. Albums come in many sizes, styles and themes. See the Album section in this almanac.

Album weed: In general, a forged stamp. It also refers to unusual items that resemble postage stamps but were not intended to pay postage, like publicity labels and bogus

issues. **Album Weeds** is the title of a reference book series on forged stamps, written by the Rev. R. Brisco Earle.

Aniline: Ink with a coal-tar base. Aniline inks are very sensitive and may dissolve in water or other liquids or chemicals. To prevent the erasure of cancellations and reuse of stamps, aniline inks were used to print some stamps.

Approvals: Priced selections of stamps or covers sent to collectors by mail. The collector purchases the items he chooses, returning the rest to the approval dealer with payment for the purchased items.

Army Post Office: An official United States post office established for use by U.S. military units abroad. An army post office (APO) or military post office is set up to distribute mail to and from military personnel. The APO is indicated by numbers during wartime to prevent revealing personnel locations. The locations become generally known after the conflict ends.

Arrow: On many sheets of stamps, V-shaped arrowlike markings appear in the selvage, generally serving as guides for cutting the sheets into predetermined units. Some collectors save stamps or blocks displaying these marks.

As is: "A term written in auction descriptions, or spoken or written during a retail transaction. It indicates that an item or lot is sold without guarantee or return privilege. Stamps are usually sold "as is" when they are damaged or are possibly not genuine."

ATM: "1) In the United States, panes of self-adhesive stamps on a liner the approximate size and shape of U.S. currency, designed for dispensing from automatic teller machines. 2) "Automatenmarken," automatic stamps produced individually by a machine; see also Framma."

Auction: A sale of stamps, covers and other philatelic items where prospective purchasers place bids in an attempt to obtain the desired items. The highest bidder for each lot (described item or items) makes the purchase. Auctions are generally divided into mail sales, where bids are accepted by mail, and public sales, where mail bids are combined with live bidding from individuals present at the auction or participating by telephone.

Authentication mark: A marking, such as initials, placed on the reverse of a stamp examined and certified to be genuine by an expert. Such markings do not detract from the value of the stamps when they represent the endorsement of recognized authorities.

APO: Army Post Office. An official United States post office established for use by U.S. military units abroad. An army post office or military post office is set up to distribute mail to and from military personnel. The APO is indicated by numbers during wartime to prevent revealing personnel locations. The locations become generally known after the conflict ends.

B

Backprint: Printing on the reverse of a stamp. Some stamps have numbers, symbols, advertising or information about the stamp subject printed on the reverse of the stamp.

Backstamp: A postmark applied to mail by the receiving post office or by a post office handling the piece while it is in transit. Backstamps are usually on the back of a cover, but they can be on the front.

Bank mixture: A high-quality mixture of stamps. It generally represents clippings from the mail of banks or other businesses with extensive overseas correspondence, and thus includes a relatively high proportion of foreign stamps of high face value. See also Mission mixture.

Bantams: The nickname of the South African definitive series of 1942-43 (Scott 90-97). Wartime economy measures prompted the manufacture of stamps of small size to conserve paper.

Batonne: A wove or laid paper with watermarklike lines deliberately added in the papermaking process and intended as a guide for handwriting.

Bicolor: Printed in two colors.

Bilingual: Inscribed in two languages. Most Canadian stamps include both English and French text. South African stamps from 1926-49 were printed alternately with English and Afrikaans inscriptions in the same sheet.

Bisect: A stamp cut or perforated into two parts, each half representing half the face value of the original stamp. Officially authorized bisects have often been used during temporary shortages of commonly used denominations. Unauthorized bisects appear on mail from some countries in some periods. Bisects are usually collected on full cover with the stamp tied by a cancel. At times, some countries have permitted trisects or quadrisects.

Bishop mark: The earliest postmark, introduced by Henry Bishop in England circa 1661. A Bishop mark was used to indicate the month and day that a letter was received by a post office. It encouraged prompt delivery by letter carriers.

Black Jack: The nickname of the United States 2¢ black Andrew Jackson stamp issued between 1863 and 1875.

Blind perforation: Intended perforations that are only lightly impressed by the perforating pins, leaving the paper intact, but cut or with a faint impression. Some stamps that appear to be imperforate really are not if they have blind perfs. Stamps with blind perfs are minor varieties carrying little, if any, price premium over normally perforated copies.

Block: A unit of four or more unsevered stamps, including at least two stamps both vertically and horizontally. Most commonly a block refers to a block of four, or a block of stamps two high and two wide, though blocks often contain more stamps and may be irregularly configured (such as, a block of seven consisting of one row of three stamps and one row of four stamps).

Bluenose: The nickname for Canada Scott 158, the 50¢ issue of 1929, picturing the schooner Bluenose.

Bogus: A fictitious stamplike label created for sale to collectors. Bogus issues include labels for nonexistent countries, nonexistent values appended to regularly issued sets and issues for nations or similar entities without postal systems.

Booklet: A unit of one or more small panes or blocks (known as booklet panes) glued, stitched or stapled together between thin card covers to form a convenient unit for mailers to purchase and carry. The first officially issued booklet was produced by Luxembourg in 1895. For some modern booklets of self-adhesive stamps the liner (backing paper) serves as the booklet cover.

Bourse: A meeting of stamp collectors and/or dealers, where stamps and covers are sold or exchanged. A bourse usually has no competitive exhibits of stamps or covers. Almost all public stamp exhibitions include a dealer bourse, though many bourses are held without a corresponding exhibition.

Bull's-eyes: "1) The nickname for the 1843 first issue of Brazil, Scott 1-3. The similar but smaller issues are called goat's eyes. 2) A bull's-eye cancel refers to a "'socked-on-the-nose" postmark with the impression centered directly on the stamp so that the location and date of mailing are shown on the stamp."

Burelage: A design of fine, intricate lines printed on the face of security paper, either to discourage counterfeiting or to prevent the cleaning and reuse of a stamp. The burelage on some stamps is part of the stamp design.

Burele: Adjective form for burelage, meaning having a fine network of lines. Some stamps of Queensland have a burele band on the back. Also called *moir*.

C

Cachet: In French, cachet means a stamp or a seal. On a cover, the cachet is an added design or text, often corresponding to the design of the postage stamp, the mailed journey of the cover, or some type of special event. Cachets appear on modern first-day covers, first-flight covers and special-event covers.

Canceled-to-order: "Stamps are "'canceled to order," usually in full sheets, by many governments. The cancels may be printed on the stamps at the same time that the stamp design is printed. A stamp with a cancel and with full gum is likely a CTO stamp, as CTOs do not see actual postal use. CTO stamps are sold to stamp dealers at large discounts from face value. Most catalogs say whether they price CTO stamps or genuinely used stamps."

Cancel: A marking intended to show a stamp has been used and is no longer valid as postage. Modern cancels usually include the name of the original mailing location or a nearby sorting facility and the date of mailing. Most cancellations also include a section of lines, bars, text or a design that prints upon the postage stamp to invalidate it. This part of a cancel is called the killer.

Cantonal stamps: Issues of Switzerland's cantons (states) used before the release of national stamps. The cantonal issues of Basel (1845), Geneva (1843-50) and Zurich (1843-50) are among the classics of philately.

Cape Triangles: Common name for the triangular Cape of Good Hope stamps of 1853-64, the first stamps printed in triangular format. The distinctive shape helped illiterate postal clerks distinguish letters originating in the colony from those from other colonies.

Catalog: A comprehensive book or similar compilation with descriptive information to help identify stamps. Many catalogs include values for the listed items. An auction catalog is published by the auction firm in advance of a planned sale to notify potential customers of the specific items that will be offered.

Catalog value: The value of a stamp as listed in a given catalog for the most common condition in which the stamp is collected. Some catalogs list stamps at a retail value, though actual dealer prices may vary substantially for reasons of condition, demand or other market factors. Most catalogs have a set minimum value for the most common stamps.

Censored mail: A cover bearing a handstamp or label indicating that the envelope has been opened and the contents inspected by a censor.

Centering: The relative position of the design of a stamp in relation to its margins. Assuming that a stamp is undamaged, centering is generally a very important factor in determining grade and value.

Certified mail: A service of most postal administrations that provides proof of mailing and delivery without indemnity for loss or damage.

Chalky paper: A chalk-surfaced paper for printing stamps. Any attempt to remove the cancel on a used chalky-paper stamp will also remove the design. Immersion of such stamps in water will cause the design to lift off. Touching chalky paper with silver will leave a discernible, pencil-like mark and is a means of distinguishing chalky paper.

Changeling: A stamp whose color has been changed-intentionally or unintentionally-by contact with a chemical or exposure to light.

Charity seals: Stamplike labels that are distributed by a charity. They have no postal validity, although they are often affixed to envelopes. United States Christmas seals are one example.

Charity stamp: see Semipostal.

Cinderella: A stamplike label that is not a postage stamp. Cinderellas include seals and bogus issues, as well as revenue stamps, local post issues and other similar items.

Classic: An early issue, often with a connotation of rarity, although classic stamps are not necessarily rare. A particularly scarce recent item may be referred to as a modern classic.

Cleaning (stamps): Soiled or stained stamps are sometimes cleaned with chemicals or by erasing. The cleaning is usually done to improve the appearance of a stamp. A cleaned stamp can also mean one from which a cancellation has been removed, making a used stamp appear unused.

Cliché: The individual unit consisting of the design of a single stamp, combined with others to make up the complete printing plate. Individual designs on modern one-piece printing plates are referred to as subjects.

Coil: Stamps processed in a long single row and prepared for sale in rolls, often for dispensing from stamp-vending and affixing machines. Some coils, including most U.S. coils, have a straight edge on two parallel sides and perforations on the remaining two parallel sides. Some coils are backprinted with sequence or counting numbers.

Collateral material: Any supportive or explanatory material relating to a given stamp or philatelic topic. The material may be either directly postal in nature (post office news releases, rate schedules, souvenir cards, promotional items) or nonpostal (maps, photos of scenes appearing on stamps).

Combination cover: Cover bearing the stamps of more than one country when separate postal charges are paid for the transport of a cover by each country. Also stamps of the same country canceled at two different times on the same cover as a souvenir.

Commatology: Specialized collecting of postmarks. This term was invented before World War II to describe postmark collecting. It is rarely used. Usually, collectors refer to postmark collecting or marcophily.

Commemorative: A stamp printed in a limited quantity and available for purchase for a limited time. The design may note an anniversary associated with an individual, an historic event, or a national landmark. See also Definitive.

Compound perforations: Different gauge perforations on different sides of a single stamp. The sides with the different gauge measurements are usually perpendicular.

Condition: The overall appearance and soundness of a stamp or cover. Positive condition factors include fresh full color, full original gum on unused stamps, and so on. Damage such as creases, tears, thinned paper, short perforation teeth, toning and so on negatively affect condition.

Controlled mail: A system in which the mailer selects philatelically desirable issues for outgoing mail, arranges for a specific manner of cancellation and secures the stamps' return by the addressee. In some cases such controlled mail operations may provide rare examples of specific rate fulfillment, or other similar postal use.

Copyright block: Block of four or more United States stamps with the copyright notice marginal marking of the United States Postal Service. The copyright marking was introduced in 1978 and replaced the Mail Early marking.

Corner card: An imprinted return address, generally in the upper-left corner of an envelope, from a commercial, institutional or private source, similar to business card or letterhead imprints.

Counterfeit: Any stamp, cancellation or cover created for deception or imitation, intended to be accepted by others as genuine. A counterfeit stamp is designed to deceive postal authorities.

Cover: An envelope or piece of postal stationery, usually one that has been mailed. Folded letters that were addressed and mailed without an envelope and the wrappers from mailed parcels are also covers.

Crash cover: A cover that has been salvaged from the crash of an airplane, train, ship or other vehicle. Such covers often carry a postal marking explaining damage or delay in delivery.

Crease: A noticeable weakening of the paper of a stamp or cover, caused by its being folded or bent at some point. Creases substantially lower a stamp's value. Creases particularly affect cover values when they extend through the attached stamp or a postal marking. Stamp creases are visible in watermark fluid.

Cut cancellation: A cancellation that intentionally slices into the stamp paper. Often a wedge-shaped section is cut away. On many issues, such cancellations indicate use of postage stamps as fiscals (revenues) or telegraph stamps rather than as postage. Cut cancellations were used experimentally on early United States postage stamps to prevent reuse.

Cut square: A neatly trimmed rectangular or square section from a stamped envelope that includes the imprinted postage stamp with ample margin. Collectors generally prefer to collect stationery as entire pieces rather than as cut squares. Some older stationery is available only in cut squares.

Cut-to-shape: "A nonrectangular stamp or postal stationery imprint cut to the shape of the design, rather than cut square. Cut-to-shape stamps and stationery generally have lower value than those cut square. One of the world's most valuable stamps, the unique 1856 British Guiana "Penny Magenta" (Scott 13), is a cut-to-shape stamp."

Cylinder: A curved printing plate used on a modern rotary press. The plate has no seams. For United States stamps, cylinders are used to print gravure stamps. See also Sleeve.

Cancellation: A marking intended to show a stamp has been used and is no longer valid as postage. Modern cancels usually include the name of the original mailing location or a nearby sorting facility and the date of mailing. Most cancellations also include a section of lines, bars, text or a design that prints upon the postage stamp to invalidate it. This part of a cancel is called the killer.

CTO: "Canceled-to-order. Stamps are "canceled to order," usually in full sheets, by many governments. The cancels may be printed on the stamps at the same time that the stamp design is printed. A stamp with a cancel and with full gum is likely a CTO stamp, as CTOs do not see actual postal use. CTO stamps are sold to stamp dealers at large discounts from face value. Most catalogs say whether they price CTO stamps or genuinely used stamps."

Charity stamp: "A stamp sold at a price greater than postal value, with the additional charge dedicated for a special purpose. Usually recognized by the presence of two (often different) values, separated by a "+" sign, on a single stamp."

D

Dead country: A former stamp-issuing entity that has ceased issuing its own stamps. Also, the old name of an active stamp-issuing entity that has changed its name, so that the old name will no longer be used on stamps.

definitive: Stamp issued in a large indefinite quantity and for an indefinite period, usually several years or more. The United States Presidential issue of 1938 and the 1995 32¢ Flag Over Porch stamps are examples. Definitive stamp designs usually do not honor a specific time-dated event.

Deltiology: Picture postcard collecting.

Denomination: The face value of a stamp, usually indicated by numerals printed as part of the design. Some modern U.S. stamps produced for rate changes are denominated with a letter. A numerical value is assigned when the letter stamps are issued. An example of this is the H-rate Hat stamp of 1998, which represented the first-class rate of 33¢.

Die: The original engraving of a stamp design, usually recess-engraved in reverse on a small flat piece of soft steel. In traditional intaglio printing, a transfer roll is made from a die and printing plates are made from impressions of the transfer roll. When more than one die is used in the production of an issue, distinctive varieties are often identifiable.

Die cut: A form of separation usually employed on self-adhesive stamps. During processing, an edged tool (die) completely penetrates the stamp paper on all sides of the printed stamp, making the removal of the individual stamps from the liner possible. Die cuts may be straight, shaped in wavy lines to simulate perforation teeth, or take other forms.

Directory markings: "Postal indication of failed delivery attempt, stating the reason for failure. Examples are "No Such Number," "Address Unknown" and "Moved."

Duck stamp: Popular name for the United States Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamp, issued for use on hunting licenses. Each annual stamp depicts waterfowl. Also used to describe similar issues from the various states for use by hunters or for sale to collectors.

Dummy stamp: Officially produced imitation stamp used to train employees or to test automatic stamp-dispensing machines. Dummy stamps are usually blank or carry special inscriptions, blocks or other distinguishing ornamentation. They are not valid for postage, nor are they intended to reach the hands of stamp collectors. Some do by favor of postal employees.

Duplex cancel: A two-part postal marking consisting of a canceler and a postmark. The canceler voids the stamp so it cannot be reused. The postmark notes the date and place of mailing.

Duplicate: An additional copy of a stamp that one already has in a collection. Beginners often consider stamps to be duplicates that really are not, because they overlook perforation, watermark or color varieties.

Earliest known use: The cover or piece that documents the earliest date on which a stamp or postal stationery item is known to be used. New discoveries can change an established EKU. The EKU for a classic issue may be after the official issue date. Because of accidental early sales, the EKU for modern stamps is often several days before the official first day.

Embossing: The process of giving relief to paper by pressing it with a die. Embossed designs are often found on the printed stamps of postal stationery (usually envelopes and wrappers). Selected stamps of certain countries have been embossed.

Encased postage stamp: A stamp inserted into a small coin-size case with a transparent front or back. Such stamps were circulated as legal coins during periods when coins were scarce.

Entire: An intact piece of postal stationery, in contrast to a cutout of the imprinted stamp. This term is sometimes used in reference to an intact cover or folded letter.

Error: A major mistake in the production of a stamp or postal stationery item. Production errors include imperforate or imperforate-between varieties, missing or incorrect colors, and inversion or doubling of part of the design or overprint. Major errors are usually far scarcer than normal varieties of the same stamp and are highly valued by collectors.

Essay: The artwork of a proposed design for a stamp. Some essays are rendered photographically. Others are drawn in pencil or ink or are painted. Most essays are rejected. One becomes the essay for the accepted design.

Etiquette: A gummed label manufactured for application to an envelope to designate a specific mail service. Airmail etiquettes are most common.

Europa: "The ""United Europe" theme celebrated annually on stamps of western European nations since 1956. The original Europa stamps were issued by the nations in the European coal and steel association. Today, European nations that are members of the postal and telecommunications association (CEPT) issue Europa stamps."

Expertization: The examination of a stamp or cover by an acknowledged expert to determine if it is genuine. As standard procedure, an expert or expertizing body issues a signed certificate, often with an attached photograph, attesting to the item's status.

Exploded: A stamp booklet that has been separated into its various components, usually for purposes of display. Panes are removed intact: individual stamps are not separated from the pane.

Express mail: Next-day mail delivery service in the United States, inaugurated in 1977.

EKU: The cover or piece that documents the earliest date on which a stamp or postal stationery item is known to be used. New discoveries can change an established EKU. The EKU for a classic issue may be after the official issue date. Because of accidental early sales, the EKU for modern stamps is often several days before the official first day.

Face: The front of a stamp; the side bearing the design.

Face value: The value of a stamp as inscribed on its face. For letter-denominated or nondenominated stamps, the understood postal value of the stamp.

Facsimile: A reproduction of a genuine stamp or cover. Such items are usually made with no intent to deceive collectors or postal officials. Catalog illustrations may also be considered facsimiles.

Fake: A stamp, cover or cancel that has been altered or concocted to appeal to a collector. In a broad sense, fakes include repairs, reperforations and regummed stamps, as well as painted-in cancels, bogus cancels or counterfeit markings. Sometimes entire covers are faked.

Fancy cancel: "A general term to describe any pictorial or otherwise unusual obliterating postmark. More specifically, the term is used to describe elaborate handmade pictorial cancels of the 19th century, such as the Waterbury ""Running Chicken"" of 1869 or the many intricate geometric shapes used during that period in post offices around the country."

Farley's Follies: During 1933-34, U.S. Postmaster General James A. Farley supplied a few imperforate sheets of current commemorative issues to Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt and other government officials. The resulting uproar from U.S. collectors forced the government to release for public sale 20 issues in generally imperforate and ungummed sheets. They are United States Scott 752-71. Numbers 752-53 are perforated.

Fast colors: Inks resistant to fading.

Field Post Office: A military postal service operating in the field, either on land or at sea. Frequently abbreviated FPO.

Find: A new discovery, usually of something that was not known to exist. It can be a single item or a hoard of stamps or covers.

First-day cover: A cover bearing a stamp tied by a cancellation showing the date of the official first day of issue of that stamp.

Fiscal: A revenue stamp or similar label denoting the payment of tax. Fiscals are ordinarily affixed to documents and canceled by pen, canceler or mutilation. Because of their similarity to postage stamps, fiscals have occasionally been used either legally or illegally to prepay postage. See also Postal fiscal, Revenues.

Flat plate: A flat metal plate used in a printing press, as opposed to a curved or cylindrical plate.

Flaw: A defect in a plate that reproduces as an identifiable variety in the stamp design.

Fleet Post Office (FPO): An official United States post office for use by U.S. military naval units abroad. Frequently abbreviated FPO.

Forerunner: "A stamp or postal stationery item used in a given location prior to the issuing of regular stamps for that location. Turkish stamps before 1918 canceled in Palestine are forerunners of Israeli issues. So are the various European nations' issues

for use in Palestine, and the subsequent issues of the Palestine Mandate. The term ""forerunner"" is also used to describe a stamp issued before another stamp or set, if the earlier issue may have influenced the design or purpose of the later issue."

Forgery: A completely fraudulent reproduction of a postage stamp. There are two general types of forgeries: those intended to defraud the postal authorities (see also Counterfeit), and those intended to defraud the collectors (see also Bogus).

Frama: A general name used for an automatic stamp, derived from the name of the Swiss firm, Frama AG, an early producer of such issues. Automatic stamps are produced individually by a machine on demand in a denomination selected by the customer. There normally is no date on the stamp, as there is on a meter stamp. Also called ATM, from the German word Automatenmarken.

Frame: The outer portion of a stamp design, often consisting of a line or a group of panels.

Frank: An indication on a cover that postage is prepaid, partially prepaid or that the letter is to be carried free of postage. Franks may be written, hand-stamped, imprinted or affixed. Free franking is usually limited to soldiers' mail or selected government correspondence. Postage stamp and postage meter stamps are modern methods of franking a letter.

Freak: An abnormal, usually nonre-petitive occurrence in the production of stamps that results in a variation from the normal stamp, but falls short of producing an error. Most paper folds, overinking and perforation shifts are freaks. Those abnormalities occurring repetitively are called varieties and may result in major errors.

Front: The front of a cover with most or all of the back and side panels torn away or removed. Fronts, while desirable if they bear unusual or uncommon postal markings, are less desirable than an intact cover.

Fugitive inks: Printing inks used in stamp production that easily fade or break up in water or chemicals. To counter attempts at forgery or the removal of cancellations, many governments have used fugitive inks to print stamps.

FPO: Field Post Office. A military postal service operating in the field, either on land or at sea. Also Fleet Post Office. An official United States post office for use by U.S. military naval units abroad.

FDC: First-day cover. A cover bearing a stamp tied by a cancellation showing the date of the official first day of issue of that stamp.

Franking: An indication on a cover that postage is prepaid, partially prepaid or that the letter is to be carried free of postage. Franks may be written, hand-stamped, imprinted or affixed. Free franking is usually limited to soldiers' mail or selected government correspondence. Postage stamp and postage meter stamps are modern methods of franking a letter.

G

Ghost tagging: The appearance of a faint image impression in addition to the normal inked impression. This is caused by misregistration of the phosphor tagging in relation to the ink. Sometimes, a plate number impression will have an entirely different number from the ink plate, giving the impression of an error: one dark (normal) number and one light (ghost) number.

Glassine: A thin, semitransparent paper that is moderately resistant to the passage of air and moisture. Envelopes made of glassine are commonly used for temporary stamp storage. Glassine is also used in the manufacture of stamp hinges.

Goldbeater's skin: A thin, tough, translucent paper. The 1886 issue of Prussia was printed in reverse on goldbeater's skin, with the gum applied over the printing. These stamps are brittle and virtually impossible to remove from the paper to which they are affixed.

Granite paper: A paper with small colored fibers added when the paper is made. This paper is used as a deterrent against forgery.

Gravure: A printing process utilizing an intaglio printing plate created by photographic and chemical means, rather than by hand engraving. See also Intaglio.

Grill: A pattern of parallel lines (or dots at the points where lines would cross) forming a grid. A grill is usually: 1) the impressed breaks added to stamps as a security measure (United States issues of 1867-71 and Peru issues of 1874-79); or 2) a grill-like canceling device used on various 19th-century issues.

Gum: The mucilage applied to the backs of adhesive postage stamps, revenue stamps or envelope flaps. Gum is an area of concern for stamp collectors. It may crack and harm the paper of the stamp itself. It may stain or adhere to other stamps or album pages under certain climatic conditions. Many collectors are willing to pay extra for 19th- and some 20th-century stamps with intact, undisturbed original gum.

Gutter: The selvage separating panes on a sheet of stamps. The gutter is usually discarded during processing. The gutter may be unprinted, or bear plate numbers, accounting or control numbers, advertising or other words or markings.

Gutter snipe: One or more stamps to which is attached the full gutter from between panes, plus any amount of an adjoining stamp or stamps. This term is typically used in reference to U.S. stamps. Gutter snipes are freaks caused by misregistration of the cutting device or paper foldover.

H

Handstamp: Cancellation or overprint applied by hand to a cover or to a stamp.

Highway Post Office (HPO): Portable mail-handling equipment for sorting mail in transit on highways (normally by truck). The last official U.S. HPO ran June 30, 1974.

Hinge: Stamp hinges are small, rectangular-shaped pieces of glassine paper, usually gummed on one side. Folded with the gummed side out, the hinge is used to mount stamps. Most modern hinges are peelable. Once dry, they may be easily removed from the stamp, leaving little trace of having been applied.

HPO: Highway Post Office. Portable mail-handling equipment for sorting mail in transit on highways (normally by truck). The last official U.S. HPO ran June 30, 1974.

I

Imperforate: Refers to stamps without perforations or rouletting between the individual stamps in a pane. The earliest stamps were imperforate by design, but after about 1860 most stamps were perforated. Modern imperforates are usually errors or are produced specifically for sale to stamp collectors.

Impression: Any stamped or embossed printing.

Imprimatur: "Latin for ""let it be printed." The first sheets of stamps from an approved plate, normally checked and retained in a file prior to a final directive to begin stamp production from a plate."

India paper: A thin, tough opaque printing paper of high quality used primarily for striking die proofs.

Indicium: The stamp impression of a postage meter or the imprint on postal stationery (as opposed to an adhesive stamp), indicating prepayment and postal validity. Plural: indicia.

Inscription: The letters, words and numbers that are part of a postage stamp design.

Intaglio: "Italian for ""in recess." A form of printing in which the inked image is produced by that portion of the plate sunk below the surface. Line engraving and gravure are forms of intaglio printing."

International Reply Coupon: A redeemable certificate issued by member nations of the Universal Postal Union to provide for return postage from recipients in other countries. IRCs are exchangeable for postage at a post office.

Invert: The term generally used to describe any error where one portion of the design is inverted in relation to the other portion(s). An overprint applied upside down is also an invert.

Inverts: The term generally used to describe any error where one portion of the design is inverted in relation to the other portion(s). An overprint applied upside down is also an invert.

IRC: International Reply Coupon. A redeemable certificate issued by member nations of the Universal Postal Union to provide for return postage from recipients in other countries. IRCs are exchangeable for postage at a post office.

J

None

K

Keytype: A basic stamp design utilized for the issues of two or more postal entities, usually differing in the country name and inscription of value. Many of the earlier colonial issues of Britain, France, Spain, Germany and Portugal are keytypes.

Kiloware: A stamp mixture consisting of miscellaneous postally used stamps on envelope corner paper from various sources. Kiloware is sometimes sold by the kilogram (about 2.2 pounds).

L

Label: Any stamplike adhesive that is not a postage stamp or revenue stamp.

Laid paper: One of the two basic types of paper used in stamp printing. Laid paper is distinguished from wove paper by the presence of thin, parallel lines visible when the paper is held to light. The lines are usually a few millimeters apart. See also Batonne.

Letterpress: Printing done directly from the inked, raised surface of the printing plate.

Line engraving: Printing done from an intaglio plate produced from a hand-engraved die and transfer roll rather than by photographic or chemical means. See also Gravure.

Line pair: A pair of coil stamps with a printed line between them. Stamps produced on a flatbed press have a line from the guideline between panes. Stamps produced on a rotary press have a joint line from the space where ink collects between the sections of curved rotary plates.

Liner: Coated paper used as a backing for mint self-adhesive stamps. The liner allows the release of the stamp, which may then be applied with pressure to envelope paper.

Linerless: An experimental form of self-adhesive coil stamp that requires no liner. The mint stamps are rolled upon each other in a manner similar to adhesive tape. See United States Scott 3132, 3133.

Lithography: Printing from a flat surface with a design area that is ink-receptive. The area that is not to print is ink-repellant. The process is based on the principle that an oil-based design surface will attract oily ink.

Locals: Stamps valid within a limited area or within a limited postal system. Local post mail requires the addition of nationally or internationally valid stamps for further service. Locals have been produced both privately and officially.

M

Machin: The name given to a well-known series of British definitive stamps first issued in 1967. The design of the stamp depicts a plaster portrait of Queen Elizabeth II created by artist Arnold Machin.

Mail Early block: "U.S. marginal marking block with the selvage bearing the inscription ""Mail Early (in the Day)."" This first appeared on U.S. marginal selvage in 1968. It was subsequently replaced by the copyright notice. ME blocks typically consist of four or six stamps."

Makeshift booklets: U.S. stamp booklets manufactured using stamps normally issued in individual panes, packaged in generic blue cardboard covers and dispensed by vending machines.

Marcophily: Postmark collecting.

Margin: 1) The selvage surrounding the stamps in a sheet, often carrying inscriptions of various kinds. 2) The unprinted border area around the stamp design. The collectible grades of stamps are determined by the position of the design in relation to the edge of the stamp as perforated or, in the case of imperforate stamps, as cut from the sheet.

Mat: A hard rubber plate used to apply overprints on postage stamps.

Maximaphily: Maximum card collecting.

maximum card: A picture postcard, a cancel, and a stamp presenting maximum concordance. The stamp is usually affixed to the picture side of the card and is tied by the cancel. Collectors of maximum cards seek to find or create cards with stamp, cancel and picture in maximum agreement, or concordance. The statutes of the International Federation of Philately (FIP) give specific explanatory notes for the postage stamp, the picture postcard, the cancel, concordance of subject, concordance of place and concordance of time. (See Exhibiting chapter.)

Meter: The mechanical or digital device that creates a valid denominated postage imprint known as a meter stamp. Postage is prepaid to the regulating postal authority. Meters were authorized by the UPU in 1920. They are used today by volume mailers to cut the cost of franking mail.

Microprinting: Extremely small letters or numbers added to the designs of selected United States stamps as a security feature. In most cases, 8-power magnification or greater is needed to read microprinting.

Miniature sheet: A smaller-than-normal pane of stamps issued only in that form or in addition to full panes. A miniature sheet is usually without marginal markings or text saying that the sheet was issued in conjunction with or to commemorate some event. See also Souvenir sheet.

Mint: A stamp in the same state as issued by a post office: unused, undamaged and with full original gum (if issued with gum). Over time, handling, light and atmospheric conditions may affect the mint state of stamps.

Mirror image: An offset negative or reverse impression.

Mission mixture: The lowest grade of stamp mixture, containing unsorted but primarily common stamps on paper, as purchased from missions or other institutions. See also Bank mixture.

Missionaries: The first stamps of Hawaii, issued 1851-52, considered among the great classics of philately.

Mixed perforation: See Compound perforation.

Mixed postage: The franking on a cover bearing the stamps of two or more stamp-issuing entities, properly used.

Mixture: A large group of stamps, understood to contain duplication. A mixture is said to be unpicked or picked. A picked mixture may have had stamps removed by a collector or dealer.

Mobile Post Office: Portable mail-handling equipment and personnel, generally in railroad cars, streetcars, trucks or buses.

Mount: Acetate holders, clear on the front and with some sort of adhesive on the back. Collectors use mounts to affix stamps or covers to album or exhibit pages.

Multicolor: More than two colors.

Multiple: An unseparated unit of stamps including at least two stamps, but fewer than the number included in a full pane.

ME block: "U.S. marginal marking block with the selvage bearing the inscription "'Mail Early (in the Day)." This first appeared on U.S. marginal selvage in 1968. It was subsequently replaced by the copyright notice. ME blocks typically consist of four or six stamps."

MPO: Mobile Post Office. Portable mail-handling equipment and personnel, generally in railroad cars, streetcars, trucks or buses.

N

Native paper: Crude, handmade paper produced locally, as opposed to finer, machine-made paper.

Never hinged: A stamp without hinge marks. A never-hinged (NH) stamp usually has original gum, but this is not always the case.

New issue service: A dealer service that automatically supplies subscribers with new issues of a given country, area or topic. The issues provided are determined by a prearranged standing order that defines the quantity and types of issues.

Newspaper stamps: Stamps issued specifically for the prepayment of mailing rates for newspapers, periodicals and printed matter.

Nondenominated: A stamp with no numerical inscription designating the face value. The value of some nondenominated stamps are marked by a designated letter. Others may have a service inscription that indicates the rate the stamp fulfills.

NH: Never Hinged. A stamp without hinge marks. A never-hinged (NH) stamp usually has original gum, but this is not always the case.

O

Obliteration: 1) A cancellation intended solely to deface a stamp-also called a killer. 2) An overprint intended to deface a portion of the design of a stamp, such as the face of a deposed ruler.

Obsolete: A stamp no longer available from post offices, although possibly still postally valid.

Occupation issue: An issue released for use in territory occupied by a foreign power.

Off-center: A stamp design that is not centered in relation to the edges of the stamp. Generally, off-center stamps are less desirable than stamps more nearly centered in

relation to the edges. Stamps that are extremely off-center may be added to collections as production freaks.

Offices abroad: At various times, many nations have maintained post offices in other countries, usually because of the unreliability of the local postal system. In China and the Turkish Empire, especially, many foreign nations maintained their own postal systems as part of their extraterritorial powers. Usually, special stationery and stamps were used by these offices. Most consisted of overprints on the regular issues of the nations maintaining the offices.

Official: Stamp or stationery issued solely for the use of government departments and officials. In many countries such items may be available to collectors in unused condition from the postal authority.

Offset: 1) A printing process that transfers an inked image from a plate to a roller. The roller then applies the ink to paper. 2) The transfer of part of a stamp design or an overprint from one sheet to the back of another, before the ink has dried (also called set off). Such impressions are in reverse (see Mirror image). They are different from stamps printed on both sides.

OHMS: Abbreviation for On His (or Her) Majesty's Service. Used in perfins, overprints or franks to indicate Official use in the British Commonwealth.

Omnibus issue: An issue released by several postal entities to celebrate a common theme. Omnibus issues may or may not share a keytype design.

On paper: Stamps (usually postally used) that are affixed to portions of original envelope or wrapper. Often used to describe stamps prior to soaking.

On piece: A stamp on a portion of the original envelope or wrapper showing all or most of the cancel. Stamps on piece are usually saved that way.

Original gum: The adhesive coating on a mint or unused stamp or envelope flap applied by a postal authority or security printer, usually before the item was issued. Upon request of stamp collectors, postal authorities have at times offered to add gum to items first issued ungummed. See also Regummed.

Overprint: Any printing over the original completed design of a stamp. An overprint that changes the value of a stamp is also called a surcharge.

Oxidation: Darkening of the ink on certain stamps caused by contact with air or light. Some inks used to print stamps, especially oranges, may in time turn brown or black.

OG: The adhesive coating on a mint or unused stamp or envelope flap applied by a postal authority or security printer, usually before the item was issued. Upon request of stamp collectors, postal authorities have at times offered to add gum to items first issued ungummed. See also Regummed.

P

Packet: 1) A presorted selection of all-different stamps, a common and economical way to begin a general collection; 2) a ship operating on a regular schedule and contracted by a government or post office to carry mail.

Packet letter: A letter carried by a ship operating on a regular schedule and carrying mail by contract with a government or a post office.

Pair: Two unseparated stamps.

Pane: "The unit into which a full press sheet is divided before sale at post offices. What a post office customer may refer to as a ""sheet of stamps"" is more properly called a pane. Most United States full sheets are divided into four or more regular panes or many more booklet panes before they are shipped to post offices."

Paquebot: Cancellation indicating an item was mailed aboard a ship.

Par Avion: "A French phrase meaning ""By Air," it appears on airmail etiquettes of most countries, along with a similar phrase in the predominant language of the country of origin."

Parcel post stamps: Special stamps created for payment of parcel post fees.

Part-perforate: A stamp with all perforations missing on one or more sides, but with at least one side perforated.

Paste-up: The ends of rolls of coiled stamps joined together with glue or tape.

Pelure paper: A strong, thin paper occasionally used in stamp printing. Pelure paper is translucent and resembles a slightly dark, thin onion-skin paper.

Pen canceled: Stamps canceled with an ink pen or marker pen rather than a handstamp or machine cancel. Many early stamps were routinely canceled by pen. A pen cancel may also indicate that a stamp was used as a fiscal. Modern stamps may be pen canceled if a sorting clerk or delivery carrier notices a stamp has been missed by a canceling machine.

Penny Black: The black 1-penny British stamp issued May 6, 1840, bearing the portrait of Queen Victoria. It is the world's first adhesive stamp issued for the prepayment of postage.

Perfins: Stamps perforated through the face with identifying initials, designs or holes in coded positions. Perfins are normally used by a business or government office to discourage pilferage or misuse of stamps by employees. Perfins may be either privately or officially produced.

Perforation: The punching out of holes between stamps to make separation easy. 1) Comb perforation-three sides of a stamp are perforated at once, with the process repeated in rows. 2) Harrow perforation-the entire sheet or unit of stamps is perforated in one operation. 3) Line perforation-holes are punched one row at a time. Line perforations are distinguished by the uneven crossing of perforation lines and irregular corners. Comb and harrow perforations usually show alignment of holes at the corners. Some forms of perforation may be difficult to distinguish.

Perforation gauge: A scale printed or designed on metal, transparent or opaque plastic, cardboard or other material to measure the number of perforation holes or teeth within the space of 2 centimeters.

Permit: Franking by the imprint of a number and additional information that identifies a mailer's prepaid postage account, thereby eliminating the need to affix and cancel stamps on large mailings. The mailer must obtain a document (permit) that authorizes his use of this procedure.

Phantom philately: The collection of bogus stamps. The name is derived from Frederick Melville's book *Phantom Philately*, one of the pioneer works on bogus issues.

Philatelic cover: An envelope, postal card or other item franked and mailed by a stamp collector to create a collectible object. It may or may not have carried a personal or business message. A nonphilatelic cover is usually one that has carried business or personal correspondence and has had its stamps applied by a noncollector. Some stamps are known only on collector-created covers. It is impossible to say whether some covers are philatelically inspired or not. See also *Used* and *Postally used*.

Philately: The collection and study of postage stamps, postal stationery and postal history.

Phosphor: A chemical substance used in the production of selected stamps to activate machines that automatically cancel mail. The machines react to the phosphor under ultraviolet light. In 1959, Great Britain began to print phosphor lines on some of its stamps. See also *Tagging*.

Photogravure: A modern stamp-printing process that is a form of intaglio printing. Plates are made photographically and chemically, rather than by hand engraving a die and transferring it to a plate. The ink in this process rests in the design depressions. The surface of the printing plate is wiped clean. The paper is forced into the depressions and picks up the ink, in a manner much like the line-engraved printing process.

Pictorial: Stamp bearing a picture of some sort, other than a portrait or coat of arms.

Plate: The basic printing unit on a press used to produce stamps. Early stamps were printed from flat plates. Curved or cylindrical plates are used for most modern stamps. See also *Cylinder* and *Sleeve*.

Plate block: A block of stamps from the corner or side of a pane including the selvage bearing the number(s) of the plate(s) used to print the sheet from which the pane was separated. Some stamp production methods, like booklet production, normally cut off plate numbers. In the United States, plate number blocks are collected normally as blocks of four to 20 stamps, depending on the press used to print the stamps. When each stamp in a pane is a different design, the entire pane is collected as the plate block.

Plate number: Numerals or an alphanumeric combination that identifies the printing plate used to print postage stamp images. In the United States, plate numbers on sheet stamps often appear in corner margin paper or side margin paper. Plate numbers on

coil stamps were commonly trimmed off until about 1980; since then the number appears on stamps at specific intervals. Booklet plate numbers are often found on selvage attached to the pane.

Plating: The reconstruction of a stamp pane by collecting blocks and individual stamps representing various positions. This is possible for many older issues, but most modern issues are too uniform to make the identification of individual positions possible.

Plebiscite issue: A stamp issue promoting a popular vote. After World War I, a number of disputed areas were placed under temporary League of Nations administration, pending plebiscites to determine which nation the populace wished to join. Special issues note the upcoming vote in several of these areas; among them, Allenstein, Carinthia, Eastern Silesia, Marienwerder, Schleswig and Upper Silesia.

PNC: 1) A plate number coil stamp; that is, a stamp from a coil that is inscribed with a plate number. The abbreviations PNC3 and PNC5 identify strips of three or five coil stamps with the PNC located in the center position of the strip. 2) A philatelic-numismatic combination: a cover bearing a stamp and containing a coin, medal or token. The coin and stamp are usually related in such cases; often the cover is canceled on the first day of use of the coin.

Pneumatic post: Letter distribution through pressurized air tubes. Pneumatic posts existed in many large cities in Europe, and special stamps and stationery were often produced for the service.

Postage dues: Stamps or markings indicating that insufficient postage has been affixed to the mailing piece. Postage dues are usually affixed at the office of delivery. The additional postage is collected from the addressee.

Postal card: A government-produced postcard bearing a stamp imprint in the upper-right corner representing prepayment of postage.

Postal fiscal: Revenue or fiscal stamps used postally.

Postal history: The study of postal markings, rates and routes, or anything to do with the history of the posts.

Postal stationery: Stationery bearing imprinted stamps, as opposed to adhesive stamps. Postal stationery includes postal cards, lettercards, stamped envelopes, wrappers, aerograms, telegraph cards, postal savings forms and similar government-produced items. The cost to the mailer is often the price of postage plus an additional charge for the stationery item.

Postally used: "A stamp or cover that has seen legitimate postal use, as opposed to one that has been canceled-to-order or favor-canceled. The term ""postally used"" suggests that an item exists because it was used to carry a personal or business communication, without the sender thinking of creating an item to be collected."

Postcard: A small card, usually with a picture on one side and a space for a written message on the other. Postcards have no imprinted stamp, so the mailer must also purchase postage to mail the postcard. See also Postal card.

Postmark: Any official postal marking. The term is usually used specifically in reference to cancellations bearing the name of a post office of origin and a mailing date.

Precancel: "Stamp with a special overprint cancellation allowing it to bypass normal canceling. In some cases the precancel also designates a specific mail-handling service, such as ""Presorted First-Class."" Other precancels may include the city and state of the issuing post office. Precanceled stamps are used by volume mailers who hold a permit to use them. U.S. precancels fall into two categories: 1) Locals have the mark or text applied by a town or city post office; 2) Bureaus have the mark or text applied by the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. See also Service inscribed."

Prestamp covers: Folded letters or their outer enclosures used before the introduction of adhesive postage stamps or postal stationery.

Prestige booklet: A stamp booklet with oversized panes, descriptive information and stamp issues commemorating a special topic. Prestige booklets often include panes with no stamps that instead bear labels or additional information, along with panes bearing stamps.

Prexies: The nickname for the U.S. 1938-54 Presidential definitive series, Scott 803-34, 839-51.

Printer's waste: Misprinted, misperforated or misgummed stamps often created during the normal process of stamp production. Printer's waste is supposed to be destroyed, but such material enters the philatelic market through carelessness and theft.

Printing: The process of imprinting designs on paper from an inked surface.

Processing: Steps that finish a printed stamp sheet. Processing includes perforation, trimming, dividing the sheet into individual panes, and packaging for distribution.

Pro Juventute: Latin, meaning for the benefit of youth. Switzerland has issued Pro Juventute semipostals nearly every year since 1913.

Proofs: Trial impressions from a die or printing plate before actual stamp production. Proofs are made to examine a die or plate for defects or to compare the results of using different inks.

Provisional: A postage stamp issued for temporary use to meet postal demands until new or regular stocks of stamps can be obtained.

Plate number block: A block of stamps from the corner or side of a pane including the selvage bearing the number(s) of the plate(s) used to print the sheet from which the pane was separated. Some stamp production methods, like booklet production, normally cut off plate numbers. In the United States, plate number blocks are collected normally as blocks of four to 20 stamps, depending on the press used to print the stamps. When each stamp in a pane is a different design, the entire pane is collected as the plate block.

Press sheet: A complete unit of stamps as printed. Stamps are usually printed in large sheets and are separated into two or more panes before shipment to post offices.

Q

Quadripartition: A block or strip of four stamps that together complete a single entire design. See United States Scott 1448-51, the 1972 Cape Hatteras National Seashore issue.

R

Railway Post Office: Portable mail-handling equipment for sorting mail in transit on trains. The last official U.S. RPO ran June 30, 1977. RPOs were used in many countries. See also Mobile Post Office.

Receiving mark: A postmark or other postal marking applied by the receiving, rather than the originating, post office. See also Backstamp.

Redrawn: A stamp design that has been slightly altered yet maintains the basic design as originally issued.

Re-engraved: A stamp with an altered design as the result of a change made to a transfer roll or printing plate prior to a later printing, thereby distinguishing it from the original die.

Regional: Stamp sold or valid in a specific area of a stamp-issuing entity. Great Britain has issued stamps for the regions of Guernsey, Jersey, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Regionals are usually sold only in a given region but are often valid for postage throughout a country.

Registered mail: First-class mail with a numbered receipt, including a valuation of the registered item, for full or limited compensation if the mail is lost. Some countries have issued registered mail stamps. Registered mail is signed for by each postal employee who handles it.

Registration labels: Adhesive labels indicating the registry number and, often, the city of origin for registered articles sent through the mail.

Regummed: A stamp bearing adhesive from an unauthorized source.

Reissue: An official reprinting of a stamp from an obsolete or discontinued issue. Reissues are valid for postage. See also Reprint.

Remainders: Stocks of stamps remaining unsold at the time that an issue is declared obsolete by a post office. Some countries have sold remainders to the stamp trade at substantial discounts from face value. The countries normally mark the stamps with a distinctive cancel. Uncanceled remainders usually cannot be distinguished from stamps sold over the counter before the issue was invalidated.

Repaired stamp: A damaged stamp that has been repaired in some way to reinforce it or to make it resemble an undamaged stamp.

Replica: A reproduction of a stamp or cover. In the 19th century, replica stamps were sold as stamp album space fillers. Replica stamps are often printed in one color in a sheet containing a number of different designs. Replicas can sometimes deceive either a postal clerk or collectors.

Reprint: A stamp printed from the original plate, after the issue has ceased to be postally valid. Official reprints are sometimes made for presentation purposes or official collections. They are often distinguishable in some way from the originals: different colors, perforations, paper or gum. Private reprints, on the other hand, are usually produced strictly for sale to collectors and often closely resemble the original stamps. Private reprints normally sell for less than original copies. Reprints are not valid for postage. See also Reissue.

Retouch: The repairing of a damaged plate or die, often producing a minor, but detectable, difference in the design of the printed stamps.

Revenues: "Stamps representing the prepayment or payment of various taxes. Revenues are affixed to official documents and to merchandise. Some stamps, including many issues of the British Commonwealth, are inscribed "'Postage and Revenue" and were available for either use. Such issues are usually worth less fiscally canceled than postally used. In some cases, revenues have been used provisionally as postage stamps. See also Fiscal."

Rocket mail: Mail flown in a rocket, even if only a short distance. Many rocket mail experiments have been conducted since 1931. Special labels, cachets or cancels usually note that mail was carried on a rocket.

Rotary plate: A curved or cylindrical printing plate used on a press that rotates the plate to make continuous impressions. Flat plates make single impressions.

Rouletting: The piercing of the paper between stamps to make their separation more convenient. No paper is actually removed from the sheet, as it is in perforating. Rouletting has been made by dash, sawtooth or wavy line.

Rural Free Delivery: System for free home delivery of mail in rural areas of the United States, begun just prior to the turn of the 20th century.

Rust: A brown mold resembling the rust in iron. Rust affects stamp paper and gum in tropical regions.

RPO: Railway Post Office. Portable mail-handling equipment for sorting mail in transit on trains. The last official U.S. RPO ran June 30, 1977. RPOs were used in many countries. See also Mobile Post Office.

RFD: Rural Free Delivery. System for free home delivery of mail in rural areas of the United States, begun just prior to the turn of the 20th century.

S

SASE: A self-addressed, stamped envelope. An unused envelope bearing the address of the sender and sufficient return postage. Enclosed with correspondence to make answering easy.

Secret mark: A minute alteration to a stamp design added to distinguish later printings from earlier printings by a different firm. Secret marks may positively distinguish genuine stamps from counterfeits.

Seebeck: The nickname for various Latin American issues produced 1890-99 in contract with Nicholas Frederick Seebeck, the agent for the Hamilton Bank Note Co. of New York. Seebeck agreed to provide new issues of stamps and stationery each year at no charge, in return for the right to sell remainders and reprints to collectors. The resulting furor destroyed Seebeck and blackened the philatelic reputations of the countries involved.

Self-adhesive: Stamp gum that adheres to envelope paper by the application of pressure alone. Most self-adhesive stamps are sold on a coated paper release liner. See also Liner, Linerless, Water-activated.

Selvage: The marginal paper on a sheet or pane of stamps. Selvage may be unprinted or may contain printer's markings or other information.

Semipostal: "A stamp sold at a price greater than postal value, with the additional charge dedicated for a special purpose. Usually recognized by the presence of two (often different) values, separated by a "+" sign, on a single stamp."

Series: A group of stamps with a similar design or theme, issued over a period of time. A series may be planned or may evolve.

Service inscribed: "A stamp with wording as part of the initial printed design that identifies the mail-handling service for which the stamp is intended, such as "Presorted First-Class." See also Precancel."

Set: Stamps sharing common design elements, often issued at one time and usually collected as a group.

Se-tenant: "French for "joined together." Two or more unseparated stamps of different designs, colors, denominations or types."

Shade: The minor variation commonly found in any basic color. Shades may be accorded catalog status when they are very distinctive.

Sheet: A complete unit of stamps as printed. Stamps are usually printed in large sheets and are separated into two or more panes before shipment to post offices.

Ship letter: Mail carried by private ship.

Short set: An incomplete set of stamps, usually lacking either the high value or one or more key values.

Sleeper: Stamp or other collectible item that seems to be underpriced and may have good investment potential.

Sleeve: 1) A seamless cylindrical printing plate used in rotary intaglio printing. 2) A flat transparent holder, often specifically for protecting and storing a cover.

Soaking: Removal of stamps from envelope paper. Most stamps may be safely soaked in water. Fugitive inks, however, will run in water, and chalky-surfaced papers will lose their designs entirely, so some knowledge of stamps is a necessity. Colored envelope paper should be soaked separately.

Souvenir card: A philatelic card, not valid for postage, issued in conjunction with some special event. The souvenir card often illustrates the design of a postage stamp.

Souvenir page: An announcement of a new United States stamp issue created by the U.S. Postal Service, bearing a copy of the new stamp tied by a first day of issue cancellation.

Souvenir sheet: A small sheet of stamps, including one value or a set of stamps. A souvenir sheet usually has a wide margin and an inscription describing an event being commemorated. Stamps on a souvenir sheet may be perforated or imperforate.

Space filler: A stamp in poor condition used to fill the designated space in a stamp album until a better copy can be found.

Special delivery: A service providing expedited delivery of mail. Called Express by some nations.

Special handling: A U.S. service providing expeditious handling for fourth-class material.

Special printing: Reissue of a stamp of current or recent design, often with distinctive color, paper or perforations.

Specialist: A stamp collector who intensively studies and collects the stamps and postal history of a given country, area, or time period, or who has otherwise limited his collecting field.

Special stamps: Regular postage stamp issues that fall outside the traditional definitions of commemorative and definitive stamps. In the United States, holiday issues such as Contemporary Christmas, Traditional Christmas, Hanukkah and the like are considered special stamps. They are printed in substantially greater quantities than commemorative stamps, and sometimes return to press for additional printings. Love stamps are also considered special stamps.

Specimen: "Stamp or stationery item distributed to Universal Postal Union members for identification purposes and to the philatelic press and trade for publicity purposes. Specimens are overprinted or punched with the word "SPECIMEN" or its equivalent, or are overprinted or punched in a way to make them different from the issued stamps. Specimens of scarce stamps tend to be less valuable than the actual stamps. Specimens of relatively common stamps are more valuable."

Speculative issue: A stamp or issue released primarily for sale to collectors, rather than to meet any legitimate postal need.

Splice: The repair of a break in a roll of stamp paper, or the joining of two rolls of paper for continuous printing. Stamps printed over a splice are usually removed and destroyed before the normal stamps are issued.

Stamp: An officially issued postage label, often adhesive, attesting that payment has been rendered for mail delivery. Initially used as a verb, meaning to imprint or impress; as in, to stamp a design.

Stampless cover: A folded sheet or envelope carried as mail without a postage stamp. This term usually refers to covers predating the requirement that stamps be affixed to all letters (in the United States, 1856).

Stock book: A specially manufactured blank book containing rows of pockets on each page to hold stamps.

Straight edge: Flat-plate or rotary-plate stamps from the margins of panes where the sheets were cut apart. Straight-edge stamps have no perforations on one or two adjacent sides. Sometimes straight-edge stamps show a guideline.

Strip: Three or more unseparated stamps in a row, vertically or horizontally.

Surcharge: An overprint that changes or restates the denomination of a stamp or postal stationery item.

Surface-colored paper: Paper colored on the surface only, with a white or uncolored back.

Surtax: The portion of a semipostal stamp purchase price exceeding the postage value. The surtax is designated for donation to a charity or some other purpose.

Sweatbox: A closed box containing dampened spongelike material, over which stuck-together unused stamps are placed on a grill. Humidity softens the gum, allowing separation of stamps. In some cases, the sweatbox may be used to help remove a postally used stamp from envelope paper.

T

T: "Abbreviation for the French ""Taxe." Handstamped on a stamp, the T indicates the stamp's use as a postage due. Handstamped on a cover, it indicates that postage due has been charged. Several countries have used regular stamps with a perforated initial T as postage dues."

Tagging: Phosphor material on stamps used to activate automatic mail-handling equipment. This may be lines, bars, letters, part of the design area or the entire stamp surface. The tagging may also permeate the stamp paper. Some stamps are issued both with and without tagging. Catalogs describe them as tagged or untagged.

Teeth: The protruding points along the outer edge of a perforated postage stamp when it has been removed from the pane.

Telegraph stamp: Label used for the prepayment of telegraph fees. Telegraph stamps resemble postage stamps.

Tete-beche: "French for ""head to tail." Two or more unsevered stamps, one of which is inverted in relation to the other."

Thematic: A collection of stamps or covers relating to a specific topic. The topic is expanded by careful inquiry and is presented as a logical story. See also Topical.

Tied: A stamp is said to be tied to a cover when the cancel extends over both the stamp and the envelope paper. Stamps can also be tied by the aging of the mucilage or glue that holds them to the paper.

Tong: Tweezerlike tool with rounded, polished tips, used to handle stamps. Tongs prevent stamps from being soiled by dirt, oil or perspiration.

Topical: 1) Stamp or cover showing a given subject. Examples are flowers, art, birds, elephants or the Statue of Liberty. 2) The collection of stamps by the topic depicted on them, rather than by country of origin. See also Thematic.

Transit mark: A postal marking applied by a post office between the originating and receiving post offices. It can be on the front or back of a cover, card or wrapper.

Triptych: A se-tenant strip of three related stamps forming one overall design. See United States Scott 1629-31, the 1976 Spirit of 76 issue.

Type: A basic design of a stamp or a set. Catalogs use type numbers or letters to save space. Catalogs show a typical design of one type rather than every stamp with that design or a similar design.

U

Underprint: A fine printing underlying the design of a stamp, most often used to deter counterfeiting.

Ungummed: A stamp without gum. Ungummed stamps are either stamps issued without gum or an uncanceled gummed stamp that has had its gum soaked off. Many countries in tropical climates have issued stamps without gum.

Unhinged: A stamp without hinge marks, but not necessarily with original gum.

Universal Postal Union: An international organization formed in Bern, Switzerland, in 1874, to regulate and standardize postal usage and to facilitate the movement of mail between member nations. Today, most nations belong to the UPU. (See UPU section of this almanac.)

Unused: An uncanceled stamp that has not been used but has a hinge mark or some other characteristic or defect that keeps it from being considered a mint stamp. Uncanceled stamps without gum may have been used and missed being canceled, or they may have lost their gum by accident.

used: A stamp or stationery item that has been canceled by a postal authority to prevent its reuse on mail. In general, a used stamp is any stamp with a cancel or a precanceled stamp without gum. See also Postally Used and Philatelic Cover.

UPU: Universal Postal Union. An international organization formed in Bern, Switzerland, in 1874, to regulate and standardize postal usage and to facilitate the movement of mail between member nations. Today, most nations belong to the UPU.

V

Variety: A variation from the standard form of a stamp. Varieties include different watermarks, inverts, imperforates, missing colors, wrong colors and major color shifts. See also Freak, Error.

Vignette: The central part of a stamp design, usually surrounded by a border. In some cases the vignette shades off gradually into the surrounding area.

W

Want list: A list of needed stamps or covers, identified by catalog number or some other description, submitted by a collector to a dealer, usually including requirements on condition and price.

Water-activated adhesive: Stamp gum designed to adhere to envelope paper only if the gum is moistened. All gummed stamps before 1963 used water-activated adhesive.

Watermark: A deliberate thinning of paper during its manufacture to produce a semitranslucent pattern. Watermarks appear frequently in paper used in stamp printing or envelope manufacture. See also Batonne.

Web: A continuous roll of paper used in stamp printing.

Wing margin: Early British stamps from the side of a pane with selvage attached. British sheets printed before 1880 were perforated down the center of the gutter, producing oversized margins on one side of stamps adjacent to the gutter. Such copies are distinctive and scarcer than normal copies.

Wove paper: A paper showing few differences in texture and thickness when held to light. In the production of wove paper, the pulp is pressed against a very fine netting, producing a virtually uniform texture. Wove paper is the most commonly used paper in stamp production.

Wrapper: A flat sheet or strip open at both ends that can be folded and sealed around a newspaper or periodical. Wrappers can have an imprinted stamp or have a stamp attached.

Z

Zemstvo: A local stamp issued by Russian municipal governments or zemstvos, in accordance with an imperial edict of 1870.

Zeppelins: The stamps issued for, or in honor of, zeppelin flights. Cacheted covers carried on such flights are Zeppelin covers.

ZIP block: "U.S. marginal marking block with the selvage bearing the image of the "Mr. ZIP" cartoon character and/or an inscription urging the use of ZIP code. This first appeared on U.S. marginal selvage in 1964. Typically a ZIP block is a block of four stamps."

ZIP code: The U.S. numerical post code used to speed and mechanize mail handling and delivery. The letters stand for Zoning Improvement Plan.