The 8.4 Cent Americana Piano Coil

The 8.4 cent Americana piano coil was designed by the graphic design firm Kramer, Miller, Lomden, and Glassman. The stamp was issued for bulk rate use. It came in a coil of 500 or 3,000 stamps. The stamp was available unprecanceled, with a standard 2-bar precancel or a city/state precancel.

This exhibit presents varieties of the precancel, the imperforate and imperforate between errors, problems that occurred in the printing process (freaks), and usage of the stamp.

Highlights include the Wayne, Pennsylvania precancel; the Newark, New Jersey imperforate pair; and the rare Brownstown, Indiana imperforate pair.

The first day of issue for the 8.4 cent Americana piano stamp was July 13, 1978.
Issued Stamps

The stamp depicts a Steinway grand from 1857.

Package label from original coil

Complete coil in original packaging (Property of exhibitor)

A seam between the two plates used to print the stamps produces a joint line every 24 stamps.

The stamp was issued in a coil of 500 or 3000. The equipment used to produce the stamp produced a joint line.
Issued Stamps

2-bar precancel

City/state precancel

The unprecanceled stamps were tagged, while the precanceled stamps were not. Property of the exhibitor.

Shiny gum (corn dextrin)

PVA dull gum (pregummed paper)

Precancel gap

Joint line occurring in the precancel gap

Shifted precancel

The stamp was issued with both a 2-bar and a city/state precancel. Only the unprecanceled stamp was tagged. As the shift from shiny gum to pregummed paper occurred the year that the stamp was being manufactured, the stamp can be found with both gum varieties.
The stamp was primarily issued precanceled for use on bulk rate mail.
There were a total of 144 different city/state precancels used.
On September 21, 1978, the Postal Service stopped offering city/state precancels for individual towns and switched to just the 2-bar precancel. As a result, some city/state precancels were only produced in small quantities and are scarce, such as Marion, Ohio; Hicksville, New York; and Wayne, Pennsylvania.
Imperforate

Imperforate pair

Joint line in center of missing perforations

Imperforate, miscut

Newark, NJ precanceled imperforate

Brownstown, Indiana precanceled imperforate

In some instances, perforations were omitted entirely, resulting in the imperforate error.
Imperforate Between

Imperforate between, strip of 4

Joint line on the missing perforations

Missing perforations to the right of the joint line

Missing perforations to the left of the joint line

Missing perforations to the right of precancel gap

During the production of the stamp, a line of perforations was sometimes missed. This results in the imperforate between stamp. The placement of the missing perforations varies around other features of the stamp such as the joint line and precancel gap.
Misperforation and Missing Perforations

Misperforated through the I of “In”

Misperforated showing precancel gap

Missing all but two perforations

One full perforation and one blind perforation, joint line to the right of missing perforations

One perforation, occurring in conjunction with the precancel gap

During the production of the stamp, the paper was not always lined up perfectly in the perforator, resulting in the misperforated freak. Other times individual perforations were sometimes missed, producing a partially perforated stamp.
Miscut

Miscut with portion of adjoining stamp visible

Miscut with electric eye markings showing

Miscut, plate numbers 38715 and 38725

Miscut, plate number 38752

Miscut, plate numbers 38725 and 38715

Multiple varieties of miscuts exist. 16 different plates were created for the printing of the stamp, only 9 of which have been reported.
The ordinary usage of the stamp was sending bulk rate commercial items. From May 29, 1978 to January 27, 1979, 8.4 cents was the regular third-class bulk rate, and from January 28, 1979 to March 21, 1981 8.4 cents was the basic presort rate.
As the precancel gap was a regular feature of the stamp, it can be found on covers.
Bulk Rate Use-Joint Line

Please sit down and read this now. It contains news of serious interest for YOU!

Veterans

Commercial use, stamp with joint line

The joint line occurred regularly and can therefore be found on covers.
Bulk rate mail could be forwarded without additional charge.

First Class Use

The unprecanceled stamp was primarily used on philatelic mail.
First Class Use

Circa 1980
Pair overpays first class rate of 15 cents
Damaged in handling

April 22, 1980
Pair overpays first class rate of 15 cents

Although unusual, the stamp can be found used to send first class mail.
May 7, 1983
2 ounce certified letter
20 cents for the first ounce, 17 cents for the second ounce, 75 cents for certified mail

Even after the stamp could no longer be used for its intended purpose, the stamp remains valid for postage.