

Amazing amount of info in 1991 Yearbook

We hope you didn't miss our announcement, two weeks ago, that *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1991* is finally available for distribution.

This annual compendium

Editor's Choice

By Michael Laurence

of photos, stories and data, skillfully marshalled by *Yearbook* veteran George Amick, contains an amazing amount of information.

Only last week did I get a chance to spend some time within the *Yearbook's* 448 pages to see for myself. This is by far the fattest *Yearbook* in the nine-year history of the series, because last year the United States Postal Service issued a record 137 collectible varieties of stamps and postal stationery. The *Yearbook* treats all of them in detail.

The visual feature of *U.S. Stamp Yearbook 1991* that has the most immediate impact are the essays that preceded the issued stamps. These are stamps that might have been. Scores of them are illustrated.

Few collectors will resist the temptation to speculate on which essay they might have chosen. And more than a few will find discarded designs that they like better than the issued stamps.

Among the most striking essays are sketches for five-stamp and 16-stamp World At War sheetlets (a 10-stamp

telic Marketing, had piloted at one time.

"I just happened to know where a Piper Cub lived that was owned by somebody who wouldn't scream in outrage if the numbers appeared on the

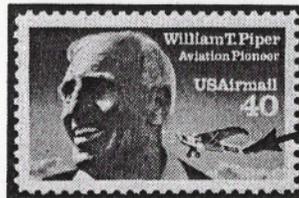


Figure 1. The 1991 Piper airmail stamp (left) uses an identification number on the Piper Cub airplane it depicts — N6233H (right). That's the number of a Cub once piloted by USPS Stamp and Philatelic Marketing head Don McDowell.

stamp,' explained McDowell. 'The last thing in the world we wanted was to run the risk that the designer would take the letter N and pull some numbers out of the air and throw them on there and it would turn out to be, for example, an American Airlines 747's registration number.'

That's a very reasonable precaution. It's certainly one that West Germany postal authorities wish they had taken in 1969.

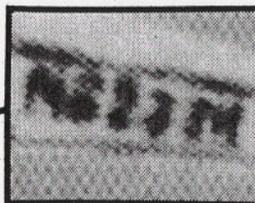
Figure 2 shows one of two stamps issued back then to



Figure 2. The number on the aircraft on this 1969 West German issue caused great embarrassment when its history was later uncovered.

appears in the official WCSE program (included in last week's *Linn's*) is inaccurate in two or three details.

If you're looking for a new collecting challenge, John



Hotchner's weekly *U.S. Notes* column, found on page 6, may offer a solution.

Hotchner often features unusual collecting areas. This week he discusses used plate number singles.

These items, largely inexpensive, are quite challenging to locate.

Another of Hotchner's pet projects is his annual youth essay contest. Amy Cheadle, the high school sophomore who won her age group in Hotchner's 1991 contest (*Linn's*, Dec. 9, 1991), is our Topics and Themes columnist this week. She writes about the people, pomp and pageantry of the Middle Ages. The column appears on page 10.

Frequent contributor Ken Lawrence has discovered two design errors on the recently issued Walt Disney stamps saluting World Columbian Stamp Expo.

The stamps picture Disney characters at various Chicago museums and sites. However, one stamp has a misspelled name, and another names

the wrong museum altogether. For more details, see Lawrence's report on page 2.

On page 22, staff writer Wayne Youngblood continues his exploration of earliest reported uses on current United States stamps.

Many new stamps are now being released before the intended issue date. Youngblood has kept a close watch in this area since early 1991. A table showing this year's early uses accompanies his article.

In the first decade of this century, a special delivery letter was one of the quickest ways to get a message through. Special delivery covers of this era sometimes bear special markings, both postal and private, that show expeditious handling.

In his Postal History column on page 16, Richard

Graham examines clock markings or annotations on special delivery covers, as well as a "Paged" handstamp on a cover to a hotel visitor.

Collectors are enjoying the many stamps being issued to commemorate the Christopher Columbus quincentenary and to note explorers of all ages.

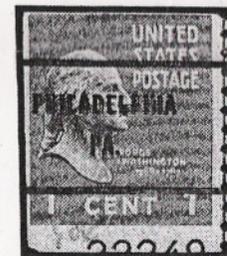
One stamp issuer that heavily promotes the history of its own exploration is French Southern and Antarctic Territories. Staffer Michael Schreiber provides an overview of FSAT stamps in the France and Area column on page 20.

Herman Herst, in his Point of View column on page 36, tells about New Zealand postal cards whereon smokers could vote on the quality of a brand of cigarettes. ■

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Partial plate number..... 6

are illustrated. Few collectors will resist the temptation to speculate on which essay they might have chosen. And more than a few will find discarded designs that they like better than the issued stamps.

Among the most striking essays are sketches for five-stamp and 16-stamp World At War sheetlets (a 10-stamp sheet was actually issued), and no fewer than 28 essays for the widely detested non-denominated 4¢ Makeup Rate stamp.

Variations on "+" and "&," virtually all of the Makeup Rate essays are more visually satisfying than the text-only monstrosity that was finally issued and voted worst stamp design of the year by a landslide in our 1991 Stamp Popularity Poll.

Author Amick has also done a wonderful job unearthing new nuggets of information about 1991's stamps. One of these is the 40¢ William T. Piper airmail stamp shown in Figure 1.

The Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee rejected several designs showing a bespectacled suit-and-tie portrait of the aircraft entrepreneur before settling on the vigorous, mature portrait that appears on the stamp, based on a photograph owned by Piper's son.

But what about the Piper Cub airplane on the stamp, enlarged on the right in Figure 1?

Amick tells the story: "The tiny serial number on the plane's fuselage, distinguishable with a strong magnifying glass, is N6233H. To guarantee authenticity, the artist used the number of an actual Cub — one located in Texas that Donald M. McDowell, director of the USPS Office of Stamp and Phila-



Figure 2. The number on the aircraft on this 1969 West German issue caused great embarrassment when its history was later uncovered.

honor the 50th anniversary of German airmail service.

The illustrated stamp (Scott 993) depicts a 1930s Junkers trimotor bearing the Lufthansa logo on its tail. Working from numerous photographs of the aircraft, the stamp designers chose the number "D-2201."

Outrage and embarrassment followed when it was discovered that the actual airliner that bore that number had ferried Adolf Hitler and his entourage around Germany in the early years of the Nazi regime.

When West Berlin issued a semipostal showing the same type of aircraft a decade later (Scott 9NB154), it took pains to choose a different and adequately documented number.

All of us at *Linn's* are looking forward to World Columbian Stamp Expo. This year, we're trying something new. For nine days of the big Chicago show, various *Linn's* staffers and contributors will be available at our booth on a fixed schedule. The participants and their time slots are spelled out in the box on page 30. So if you've ever wanted to meet a specific *Linn's* staffer or columnist, here's your chance.

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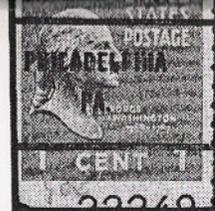
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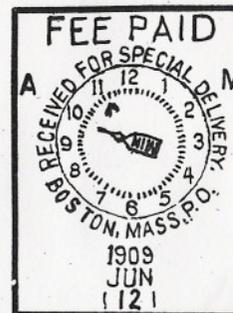
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