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**Color-Omitted Error Discovered on 41¢ American Flag Self-Adhesive Coil.**  
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# Discovery of Color-Omitted Error on 41¢ American Flag Self-Adhesive Coil Stamp

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A new color-omitted error has been found on the 41¢ American Flag self-adhesive coil stamp produced by Avery Dennison in rolls of 100 stamps. The stamp, which was originally issued on August 15, 2007, was intended to be printed with five colors of ink—beige (PMS 468), gray (PMS 423), blue (PMS 280), red (PMS 193), and light blue (PMS 542).<sup>1</sup> However, the new error stamp is completely missing the light blue ink, which caused the “41 USA” not to appear on the printed stamp. The error stamps, therefore, just show the waving USA flag on the flagpole on the tan background.

The new error stamp has been assigned Scott #4188c and will be listed in the *Scott 2013 Specialized Catalogue of United States Stamps & Covers*. The new listing will appear after Scott #4188a and have the following description: “As ‘a,’ light blue (‘41 USA’) omitted, on cover.”

To date, only two used examples of this color-omitted error have been found (Figure 1). Each example is on a separate cover that was sent to pay consecutive monthly bills to the same address (Figure 2). The two covers were originally purchased on eBay as one lot in December, 2008. Based on the stamps used on each cover, it appears that the two covers originated



**Figure 1.** Digitally cropped images of the stamps and cancellations from the two known covers with the new light-blue color-omitted errors of the 41¢ American Flag self-adhesive coil stamp produced by Avery Dennison.



**Figure 2. Two known covers with the light-blue color-omitted errors of the 41¢ American Flag self-adhesive coil stamp.**

from the same sender. Both covers show evidence in the upper-right corner of a return address label that was torn off.

Both covers are addressed to the same address (Teamsters Benefit Trust / (ID#TBT-DIRECT PAY) / P.O. Box 15546 / Sacramento, CA 95852-1546) and cancelled with a sprayed-on, two-line cancellation noting SAN JOSE, CA 951 / 12 MAY 2008 PM 4 L and SAN JOSE, CA 951 / 03 JUN 2008 PM 2 T, respectively. Both stamps on each cover are tied to the envelope with the six wavy lines that comprise the right side of the sprayed-on cancellation. The earlier cover has a handwritten address, and the later cover has a pre-printed address. Each is franked with a 1¢ Tiffany Lamp self-adhesive sheet stamp (Scott #3749) and one 41¢ American Flag light-blue color-omitted coil stamp, which paid the then-current 42¢ first-ounce letter rate.

In June, 2011, each cover received a separate Philatelic Foundation certificate (Nos. 496896 and 469897) stating that the covers are genuine with “single, light blue ‘41 USA’ omitted, on cover with single 1¢ stamp addressed to Sacramento CA, 2008 San Jose machine cancel.”

### **Identification Process**

The interesting aspect of this error is that it was created by the omission of the light blue ink, which caused the “41 USA” not to appear on the printed stamp. Because the error stamps just show the waving USA flag on the flagpole on the tan background, identification of the intended stamp is not



**Figure 3. Non-denominated and denominated coil stamps based on the same 2007 American Flag design (top row: Scott #4131, 4132, 4133, 4134, and 4135; bottom row: Scott #4186, 4187, 4188, 4188a, and 4189).**

obvious. This same basic design was used on the following five distinct non-denominated “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag coil stamps and five distinct denominated 41¢ American Flag coil stamps (Figure 3):

- “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag produced by Sennett Security Products with water activated gum in rolls of 100, 3,000, and 10,000 stamps (Scott #4131)
- “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag produced by Ashton Potter with pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4132)
- “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag produced by Sennett Security Products with pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4133)
- “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4134)
- “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with pressure sensitive adhesive with spaces in rolls of 10,000 stamps (Scott #4135)
- 41¢ American Flag produced by Ashton Potter with pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4186)
- 41¢ American Flag produced by Sennett Security Products with pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4187)
- 41¢ American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with pressure sensitive adhesive with overall tagging in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4188)
- 41¢ American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with pressure sensitive adhesive with surface phosphor tagging in rolls of 100 stamps (Scott #4188a)
- 41¢ American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with pressure sensitive adhesive with spaces in rolls of 3,000 and 10,000 stamps (Scott #4189)

The specific shape and count of peaks and valleys in the die cut pattern of the simulated perforations along the left and right sides of the error stamps and the blue “2007” year date in the base of the flagpole on the error stamps uniquely identify them as products of Avery Dennison. However the lack of a denomination or inscription caused by the missing ink makes it impossible to use those obvious printing differences to determine whether the error stamps were intended to be the non-denominated “USA First-Class” (41¢) American Flag or the denominated 41¢ American Flag, both issued in pressure sensitive adhesive in rolls of 100.



The clue needed to identify the intended stamp of the color-omitted error stamps properly is actually found in the phosphor coating (“taggant”) applied to the stamps to enable automated postal machinery to locate and cancel stamps on envelopes. The phosphor tagging is invisible in normal light, but it appears as a yellow-green glow on the stamp when it is exposed to shortwave ultraviolet light. The “glow” activates the postal machinery.

The error stamps exhibit uniform, surface phosphor tagging, and the ink of the stamp’s design is on top of the tagging. This indicates that the error stamps were printed on pre-phosphored paper. This type of tagging is a product of mixing the reactive phosphor with the coating that is applied to the surface of the paper during paper production. Coated paper stock, which provides a smooth printing surface, is typically used for modern offset or gravure printed stamps, like the gravure-printed 41¢ American Flag produced by Avery Dennison. In contrast, uncoated paper stock is used for intaglio printed stamps.

Luckily, from the two possible stamps that could have produced the error, “surface phosphor” tagging only appears on the denominated 41¢ Avery Dennison stamps from the printings using sleeve combination V22222 (Scott #4188a). In contrast, the same stamps printed by Avery Dennison using the V11111 sleeve combination have “overall” tagging (Scott #4188). Similarly, the non-denominated (41¢) American Flag produced by Avery Dennison with Pressure Sensitive Adhesive in rolls of 100 stamps were only produced with overall tagging (Scott #4134). Overall tagging, applied to the entire stamp surface on top of the printed ink, typically has an uneven appearance and makes the printed image have a cloudy appearance.

Sleeve combination V22222 of this stamp was first reported being found by Plate Number Coil (PNC) collectors in February, 2008. Shortly after that, on May 12, 2008, the first-ounce, first-class letter rate increased from 41¢ to 42¢. Coincidentally, the earlier of the two covers described in this article was posted on the first day of the new 42¢ letter rate (with the 1¢ Tiffany Lamp stamp added beside the color-omitted error American Flag stamp to pay the proper postage).

Although this issue was produced in rolls of 100 stamps, which are commonly used by households and small business, there is no way of telling if additional rolls with color-omitted error stamps were available and purchased. To date, no unused examples have been reported.

### Reference

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