

# FOLLOW-UP TO STRAW TOOTHPICK VARIETY

by Richard Fleming member #270

Under "Member Finds", on p. 33 Vol. 8 #3, there is a story how Louis Fontaine discovered a new "Head of Wheat" toothpick variety. I would suggest that this could be more appropriately and simply named "Straw" variety.

Oftentimes, we see pictures of farmers with a sprig of timothy or other crop in their mouth. This is so similar as to defy imagination. Needless to say, I became quite excited about this newly discovered variety and have spent some time looking through my main collection of this series as well as a number of smaller holdings that I had not yet integrated with the main body of notes. Great fun!!!! And really rewarding in that I think I can make a solid contribution to the club with the following information. These "shared" pieces of information, seems to me, are some of the real keys to giving the club its vitality and endurance.

It seems to me there is only one of the 40 plates used in the 5 plates x 8 plates printing process for each sheet which has this "Straw" variety. That means that in each "run" of 20,000 10¢ pieces, there are 500 which have this oddity - a rarity factor of 40:1 - at least that's what I estimate based on my examination of the errors recurrence. Louis' discovery gives collectors like myself a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction. It provides us with the incentive to examine our holdings to see what, if any, pieces we may have and what their distribution is like.

In fact, in the "E" series, the error occurs throughout the entire series according to my fairly extensive holdings. I've discovered some 54 examples of the error. They range all the way from 0156697 to 9762476.

In the "F" series, I found 14 examples; again, they appear to run throughout the entire series suggesting that the printer never realized an interesting variety was produced. My range goes from 0603560 to 5678350. Louis has a higher number than I in the "F" series; otherwise, I bracket him in the "E" series and in the lower range of the "F" series (at the moment).

In the "E" series, I have the following of the "straw" variety:

0156697	1493396	1862620
0156875		
	1511216	1951915
0157545		
	1620920	2151484
0268126		
	1641136	2962838
0667886		2962987
	1840496	
0668353		3160456
	1861353	
0669949		3401438

3402103	5033446	
3402190		6484522
	5034193	6704852
3402817		
	5162113	6922818
3403264		
3403493	5384134	7234056
	5384344	
3471574		7454094
	5384856	
3472928		7653556
	5584638	
3692246	5584898	8112203
	5584996	
4151485		8310541
	5694054	
4480099		8990410
	5802345	
4482476		9762476
	5911149	
5032873		

Perhaps this list of "E" series could form a backbone of sorts against which other members could also provide additional information. If there is another member with extensive holdings, these should confirm my hypothesis of the 40:1 rarity factor.

The "F" series, with only 14 examples, should supplement another member's extensive holdings and support the 40:1 occurrence theory.

0603560	1950093	5013894
		5013939
1071657	4787839	
		5678118
1276197	5012657	5678279
1276337		5678350
	5013024	
1728677		

I have deliberately grouped, where possible, numbers within a 500 range (not many possibilities, but enough to suggest that I'm on the right track). I would be very interested in other member's views on this. Now, who among the membership is able to determine the actual position of the offending plate in the 5 x 8 printing pattern? Do we ever give prizes for the solution to such problems? If so, someone with a mathematical bent could solve it and locate the plate with certainty.

Hope this helps contributes to the total picture. As I said earlier, GREAT FUN!