

Stamp Bill Books Of the Post Office Department

Books #1 - #6 Digitizing Notes



Microfilmed from the originals located at the National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 28, (M1918), 2004.

Digitized from the Microfilms located in the American Philatelic Research Library, by:

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Nov 2013

Digitizing Notes

The two microfilm reels containing the six volumes of the USPOD Stamp Bill Books (1870 – 1897) were digitized using a ScanPro®2000 microfilm scanner manufactured by eimage data, which was available at my local public library. The accompanying software was Powerscan 2000, V3.23.

Each of the six volumes was digitized individually. The scanner software allowed the operator to straighten (or de-skew) each page image separately, then crop the page, and save it in a searchable PDF file. The pages were cropped with approximately 0.25 image outside the page retained, primarily to show that no content had been cropped out. Because the Powerscan software had a tendency to “crash” when output files greater than 20KB were compiled, the digitizing process was broken into sequences of 40-50 pages, and once all pages for a volume were completed, they were recombined into a single PDF file.

The software and hardware combination had options to adjust both contrast and brightness, and these were generally adjusted to obtain the best quality image at the beginning of each reel, and then each successive frame was captured with the same settings. During the final examination of the finished PDF files, some pages were noted to be of poorer quality than the average page, and these were re-digitized, and merged into the final version of the PDF.

The original microfilms had various header and informational pages associated with each reel, and with each individual volume. These were digitized originally, but were edited out of the final PDF files. Both microfilm reels had instances of retakes both within the individual volume, and at the end. When these were encountered, they were also digitized, and inserted into the original book at the proper location.

The initial volume (Book 1: 1870-1875) was the only one in which the original pages were numbered. This bound ledger has the initial entry at page “11”, and the invoice data had only been entered on the odd number pages. A number of these numbered pages were not present, and while several were found at the end of the reel, the remaining “missing” pages were either not microfilmed, or more likely, had been removed from the ledger before the microfilming was performed (probably at the time data was recorded). The remaining five volumes were also in bound ledgers, but those pages were unnumbered, and there was no certain way to verify that all pages were present.

The editing of the PDFs as described above was accomplished using the program “PDF Converter Professional 8”, by Nuance software. I acquired this software recently for precisely this type of project, and while it has all of the functionality that I required, the program itself tended to be very unstable, and I experienced a number of program “crashes” while performing the editing. I would be reluctant to recommend this software as an appropriate replacement for Adobe Acrobat.

I also used the PDF Converter Professional 8 software to insert a series of “bookmarks” in each PDF file. Because the organization of the first two ledgers was different than the final four, two styles of bookmarks were used. For volume 1 and volume 2, all of the recorded data was entered chronologically, and book marks were inserted only for the initial entry for January and July of each year present in the volume, with no consideration given to the type of stamped paper being recorded.

For volumes 3 through 6, the data was grouped by type of stamp or stamped paper upon entry, and for each such group, I inserted a bookmark at the beginning of each type of stamped paper, and then date headings for January and July. At the end of these four volumes were summary pages for each Fiscal Year, and there were bookmarks inserted for these as well.

In a few, but not all, instances, I inserted bookmarks where there was an entry recorded for the production of SPECIMEN stamps.

Because all of the text in these ledgers is strictly manuscript, I made no effort to create a searchable PDF file.

I added a two page header to each PDF file, identifying the volume and source. You may remove this if you prefer.

Once all editing was completed, I then made a page-by-page comparison between the microfilm and the final PDF file to insure that I had digitized ALL of the pages. While I feel that I was successful, an independent verification should be made, and if any frames/pages are missing, perhaps you can digitize those and integrate them into my PDF files. In the event that you encounter such omissions, please let me know so I can obtain a copy of the revised PDF file.

I made no attempt to optimize or reduce the final PDF files sizes. You may have software and skills capable of this process, and it may be desirable to do so.

There are two DVDs included with the returned microfilm. These are identical with one exception. The DVD marked "B" has one page of the original NARA headings at page four of Stamp Book#2. I discovered this after burning the DVD, so I deleted the page, and created the second DVD marked as "A". I felt that two copies would be more reliable than one.

The DVDs contain 7 files. Six are the Stamp Bill Books #1 - #6, and there is also a copy of your description of the Stamp Bill Books.

Regards,

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