

# Fly Specking In The World Of Philately

By Stan Cronwall

You have probably heard or seen the term “fly specking” as it may apply to literature or other disciplines where people squabble over nit-picking subjects such as punctuation or arguing about such trivial matters as how many fairies can dance on the head of a pin.

Maybe we stamp collectors should do a bit of fly specking with our own collections.

Warning: In all likelihood it is not going to suddenly make your collection worth a king’s ransom.

But a careful examination of what you have set aside as “dups” or material that is going to Eugene Smoots for the penny-boxes may turn up something special that only your collection will include.

You have probably already checked to make sure those potential discards are not true color changelings, or have plate flaws, or other issues well publicized in the usual catalogs.

If not, better start with those.

Then, strike off on your own to find something else that so far has not been reported.

You are a treasure hunter looking for a previously unrecognized variation.

There are two reasons to invest some time in the hunt. First, if you make the discovery yourself, you won’t have to buy it. Second, some other fly specker may want to buy it from you. Happy hunting!

*Stan Cronwall's collecting interests include Germany: Third Reich 1933-45 and the areas it occupied (stamps, covers & cards). He also collects U.S. World War II Patriotic Covers and Cards; Civil War Patriotic Covers (both U.S. and CSA); U.S Naval Covers; DDR stamps; and, Post WW II Soviet Zone Hitler Head Obliteration stamps, covers & cards.*

**Editor:** Since Stan did not provide any images, I spent some time locating one interesting stamp with some great possibilities for flyspecking.

In 1980 the USPS (along with the Italian Post) issued a commemorative stamp to honor the 280th anniversary of Philip Mazzei’s birth.

The stamp exists in two different perforations: 11x11 and 10½x11¼. The second perf. variety is catalogued 10 times the price of the perf. 11. In addition, this stamp has plenty of easy-to-find flyspeck varieties. They are nothing valuable or rare, but enough to catch the eye of a casual stamp collector.



1980 Philip Mazzei 40¢ airmail postage stamp. Scott C98 - notice how the end of word "Airmail" floats separately in two latter stamps.



US 1980 Philip Mazzei 40¢ airmail postage stamp.  
Airplane silhouette with "shadow"

Notice the airplane silhouette has an additional blue shadow caused by so called "kiss print."

This is only one example of some stamps that are lurking in the penny box at 2¢ per stamp.

None of these varieties are listed in the *Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue*.