

One of the side benefits of Mr Nylander's discussion was short history of watermarks and demonstration how to look for watermarks on stamps.

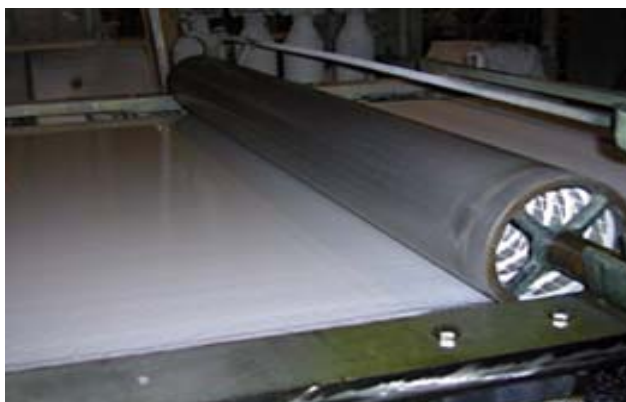
A Dandy Roll watermark is made by impressing a water-coated metal stamp or dandy roll onto the paper during manufacturing. These watermarks were first introduced in Bologna, Italy in 1282; they have been used by papermakers to identify their product, and also on postage stamps, currency, and other government documents to discourage counterfeiting.

The dandy roll is a light roller covered by material similar to window screen that is embossed with a pattern. Faint lines are made by laid wires that run parallel to the axis of the dandy roll, and the bold lines are made by chain wires that run around the circumference to secure the laid wires to the roll from the outside. Because the chain wires are located on the outside of the laid wires, they have a greater influence on the impression in the pulp, hence their bolder appearance than the laid wire lines.

This embossing is transferred to the pulp fibers, compressing and reducing their thickness in that area. Because the patterned portion of the page is thinner, it transmits more light through and therefore has a lighter appearance than the surrounding paper.



Screen Mesh Dandy Roll



"Wet" Paper Receiving a Watermark by Passing Under a Dandy Roll



1895 Double-line USPS Watermark



1910 Single-line USPS Watermark

Two other stamp paper terms can fall out from watermarking process - if these lines are distinct and parallel, and/or there is a watermark, then the paper is termed laid paper and if the lines appear as a mesh or are indiscernible, and/or there is no watermark, then it is called wove paper. This method is also called line drawing watermarks.

The US used watermarks as a security mechanism for postage stamps from 1894 (Scott 265) to 1916. The practice was totally discontinued in 1917 with the exception of some errors – Scott 519 (1917) and Scott 832b (1938).

Further information on the facet of stamp collecting is available from the APRL library:

[*H. A. From's study: "USPS WATERMARKS" and*](#)

[*Winthrop S. Boggs' study "U.S.P.S.: NOTES ON UNITED STATES WATERMARKED POSTAGE STAMPS".*](#)

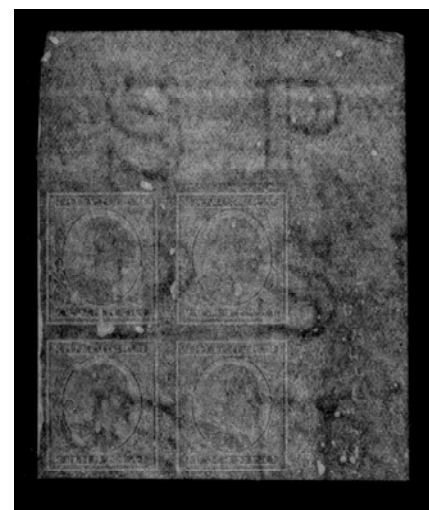
Watermark Detection:

The first step in the determination of whether a stamp has a particular watermark is

- 1) to remove any hinges or other foreign particles if it will not hurt the stamp
- 2) gently place the stamp in your tongs and hold it against a strong light source face forward at various angles (but not too close as to damage the stamp by heat)
- 3) If no watermark is visible, the stamp should be dipped in lighter fluid, preferably face down.

In our demonstration, Mr Nylander used a document protector with a thin puddle fluid to dip the block of stamps in. Single stamps can be dipped into a tray or a saucer.

Note: ensure the place is well ventilated with no open flames or you may be answering tough questions ...



USPS Double-line Watermark