

The Pennsylvania Philatelist

Hal Klein: Zip Codes-1963 and 1964

The year was 1963. Gas was 29 cents per gallon. A loaf of bread was 22 cents. The nation was shocked by the assassination of President Kennedy. A stamp was a nickel, and the Post Office launched its promotional campaign to “USE ZIP CODES.”

Looking back on those days, I think every postal clerk in the **Lebanon Post Office** wanted to go “on break” when they saw me coming in the door. I was the kid who pestered postal clerks to pull plate blocks from their full sheets of stamps. I collected stamps, plate blocks, zip blocks, and full sheets. I admit it; I collected ANYTHING postal or postal related from anywhere.



For months the Post Office lobby was plastered with promotional material announcing the use of ZIP CODES. Fortunately for the Post Office, this poster ↓ was under glass.



I went to my favorite clerk and asked if the Poster was available. His answer was a disappointing, “No, they are never given out. They are destroyed after use as required by Regulations.”

It was January, 1964, a few days into the New Year. I

walked into the Post Office lobby, and the poster was gone. I was heartbroken. I went to my favorite clerk to get a few new issues. I think he knew I wasn’t happy. He sandwiched my purchase between a few pieces of “new issue” cardboard (as was the practice of the day), and I noticed he placed what looked like an additional piece of paper underneath the last sheet of stamps and the bottom piece of cardboard. After I paid for my purchase he said, “I have something for your collection-you’re not to say anything to anyone-don’t look until you get outside.” I nodded and said. “OK.”

My heart raced with excitement. Was it possible? I got outside and peaked inside. It was! I got it! I got my Dick Tracy Poster.”

