DOUBLE or MULTIPLE IMPRESSIONS:

Also known as double (or doubled) prints or stamps printed twice, a double impression, on monochrome stamps, occurs when the design inadvertently printed two or more times. On multicolor stamps, a double impression occurs when one or more colors are inadvertently printed two or more times. In most cases, the impressions are slightly out of register and appear slightly blurred.

One of the most startling multiple-impression errors occurred on the 29c Christmas stocking issue of 1994, which received an astonishing seven extra impressions: three black, two yellow, and one each of red and blue.

To be considered a true multiple impression, the error must have occurred from two or more actual impressions of the printing plate and not be the result of a plate stutter or blanket offsetting or ghosting.

GRILL ERRORS:

Grills came into use in 1867 as a security measure to prevent the cleaning and reuse of stamps. Grills are waffle-like patterns impressed onto stamps by dies laid out in the same arrangement as stamps. They were designed to break paper fibers so they would more readily absorb ink, making it difficult to remove cancellations. Some stamps are known with grills omitted. Others are known with double grills or split grills. Split grills occur on sheets misaligned so that they receive impressions from two (or more, depending on the position of the misalignment) adjacent grill-embossing dies.

WATERMARK ERRORS:

Between 1895 and 1916, U.S. postage stamps, were printed on paper watermarked “USPS.” Between 1878 and 1958, revenue stamps were printed on paper watermarked “USIR.” The “IR” stands for Internal Revenue. A few 6c and 8c postage stamps of the 1895 definitive series were inadvertently printed on paper watermarked “USIR” instead of “USPS.” Both errors are rare and valuable.

In 1951 a few $1 Wilson Stamps of the 1938 Presidential series were accidentally printed on USIR-watermarked stock, at a time when postage stamps were no longer being printed on watermarked paper. The USIR error is scarce and much more valuable than its normal un-water marked counterpart.