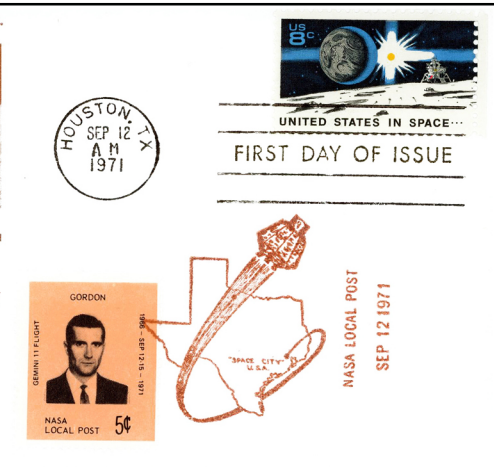


← ERROR



**“First Day of Issue” ERROR CANCEL**

By John Johnson, SU#2013

Those members who collect covers from the Space City Cover Society (SCCS) are probably aware of this error cancel. For those who do not collect SCCS I will describe the cover.

The SCCS created a 5th anniversary cover for the Gemini 11 mission. The cover was cancelled in Houston, Texas on September 12, 1971 and featured the SCCS NASA Local Post. Apparently, at the time the envelopes were serviced, the Houston post office was still cancelling “First Day of Issue” covers for the 8c Decade of Achievement pair. In error, a postal clerk ran about 25 of the anniversary covers through the cancelling machine with the “First

Day of Issue" slug still in place. Note that the anniversary date is correct. Only the use of a "First Day of Issue" killer is in error. Eight years passed before the SCCS noticed this error cancel while sorting their Gemini anniversary covers.

I nominate the cover for the title "oddest cancel on a space related cover". Can you top this with any cover from your collection?

#### **POSTAL SERVICE SLIP-UP CREATES SCCS "FIRST DAY OF ISSUE"**

When our covers for Gemini XI Fifth Anniversary were cancelled, the clerk made a goof on about 25 but did not say anything to anyone and just put them back in the box with the others. Undoubtedly he discovered the incorrect die and changed it after running a few with the incorrect die. Here is the story:

The Decade of Achievement 8c se-tenant pair was issued at three different cities on August 2, 1971, one of the three being Houston. Usually, the Postal Service starts cancelling the covers on hand a few weeks before the first day but could not do it on this issue. The first day of issue was not announced until early the morning of August 2 as David Scott cancelled the first one on the surface of the Moon during the Apollo 15 mission.

By late September, first day covers in the possession of the First Day Cover Unit in Houston were still being cancelled. We had our Gemini XI anniversary covers cancelled on September 12 and the philatelic cancelling machine used to cancel space covers at the main Houston Post Office was in use by the First Day Cover Unit. The clerk changed the date correctly but failed to notice the "First Day of Issue" slug still in the machine until a few had gone through. Then that slug was lifted out and the regular "four-bar slug put in.

We did not discover this error until now when we were sorting out the remaining sets on hand of our Gemini anniversary covers. This eight-year-old error is the only instance that any of our NASA Local Post covers (of an event other than a first day) have been postmarked "First Day of Issue". This unintentional error on the part of the postal clerk has resulted in a major variety for our NASA Local Post covers.

