

## 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 8¢ 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.

A Houston dealer offered to buy all of the lot of error covers from us (at more than the price indicated below) but the offer was declined. These will be offered to you that are currently collecting our covers as this seems a more equitable way of doing it.

When we revise our catalog of the NASA Local Post Issues this item will be listed at \$37.50 as it certainly is a major variety. Right now we offer it at \$20.00 and please send a separate check for it if you wish to order one. This way, if we are out when your order arrives we can easily return the check. WE MUST LIMIT IT TO ONE PER CUSTOMER. (The only exception will be those that order two or three of all covers and if this is your case we will note the number here \_\_\_\_). Please abide by this so that everyone will have the same opportunity you have. Your help is appreciated.