

Prologue

This reference work, and inventory check list is a list of the covers Fred Collins has produced as a cachetmaker from 1978 to 2023. The convenience of your own mailbox makes it possible to easily and systematically expand your personal collection of his individually hand painted First Day Covers. As more collectors “discover” Collins cachets, his back issues will continue to sell out. By receiving this list now, you are in the position of being able to add needed Collins First Day Covers or to acquire extras of those that appeal to you.

Any Collins FDCs you obtain will be significant additions to your collection. As time marches on, these covers will continue to take on historic perspective in terms of both the hobby and Collins. Some collectors are building their collections by adding a few of these “Earlies” each month. This body of covers offers every collector a lifetime of challenges (hunting, finding, acquiring) as bit by bit you fill in needed FDCs. Be organized, be knowledgeable, be persistent, but – most of all – have fun.

Retain this listing and use it as a checklist. It will then be a ready reference for which covers you have and which ones you still need. A good strategy for collectors still missing items is to purchase several at a time as your hobby budget permits, on a regular basis.

COMMITTED TO FIRST DAY COVER EXCELLENCE

Collins First Day Covers are produced by Fred G. Collins: Life Member and former National Board of Directors Member of the American First Day Cover Society; Co-founder and Charter Member of the National Cachetmakers Association; Elected to Earl Planty’s First Day Cover Hall of Fame; Member of the American Philatelic Society; Member of the American Stamp Dealers Association; Charter Member of the National Duck Stamp Collectors Society; and Honorary Lifetime Member of the Molly Pitcher Stamp Club of New Jersey.

Thoughts to Consider

Collins covers have become the most sought-after cachets being produced today. The reasons are quite basic. The individual hand painting of each cachet has brought to the hobby a standard of excellent quality. Today’s high-speed, high-tech society thinks in terms of mass production and “computer generated art.” Fred think in terms of original thought, traditional craftsmanship, and limited production.

Since 1978 Fred has traveled unimaginable miles to obtain philatelically precious and often exclusive First Day of Issue postmarks for Collins collectors. P701 in 1984 was serviced in January of that year in Anchorage, Alaska for the Statehood stamp and then in March was taken across the Pacific to Hawaii for a Captain Cook (a Collins exclusive) First Day cancel for that Statehood issue. P701 is the “most traveled” United States First Day Cover ever made (from

New Jersey to Alaska to New Jersey to Hawaii and back to New Jersey) and is a perfect example of his “on the road” philatelic journeys. By obtaining his 340-page book, you can share many of his past adventures as you join him on the incredible path he have traveled during his first twenty years of cachetmaking.

The quest that he has followed is that of consistent quality and hobby excellence. Since 1978, he “walked the walk” in terms of producing beautiful covers. Consider the countless hours of new issue research. Consider the countless miles in rental cars and airlines. Consider the countless brush strokes. Consider his bulldog commitment to bringing the covers on this list into being. His continued motivation is knowing that covers like those on this list will provide many in our hobby with years and years of fun-filled activity.

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CLASSIC PERIOD -- 1978 -1979

EARLY PERIOD 1980 – 1989

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NEW CENTURY PERIOD -- 2000 – 2023

AWARD WINNERS

In 1992 the American First Day Cover Society began a National Contest open to all cachetmakers. Entries are from covers produced in the preceding calendar year, and awards are announced at the annual AFDCS Convention. During the last decade, Fred has had more winners than any other cachetmaker.

THE BOOK

In 1999, Fred wrote a 340-page book about his first twenty years of cachetmaking, covering the years 1978 through 1997. Within its pages, he relate many of his adventures in securing special Day of Issue postmarks, often Collins exclusives. The book also relates how his cachetmaking business evolved as a true family enterprise. An important part of the book is the illustrated catalog section. In it, he has pictured all of the covers he produced during his first twenty years of cachetmaking. I’m sure you’ll find it an enjoyable “read” as you join him on his twenty-year cachetmaking journey. *Collins Hand Painted First Day Covers • The First 20 Years • 1978 - 1997*

The Milford Ducks

Fred's annual Federal Duck Covers had proved to be such popular covers since the first one was done in 1981, in 1990, he decided to create cachets for state duck stamps as well. There was one dilemma that he had to face immediately. Although most Collins collectors loved his once-a-year Federal Duck First Day Cover, he realized that not all of them would also want the many state issues. In addition, there were collector finances to consider. Some individuals have a limited budget within which they must work. The solution was became clearly apparent; the state migratory bird covers would have to be produced with a different cachet name. He chose Milford.

Milford was chosen because West Milford, NJ was the roots of his life. It seemed like a good name to choose for the cachet designation. Also, the beautiful lakes and ponds there still attract the many species of wild waterfowl that frequent the area. The real-life counterparts of the duck and geese species rendered in the hand painted Milford cachets will forever find quiet sanctuary on serene waters.

When he began his Milford Duck Covers in 1990, the setup was perfect for his collector. Those who were content to concentrate solely on Collins, either due to interest or budget, could continue to do so because the State Duck Covers did not bear the Collins name. For those collectors who wanted to obtain the state migratory bird stamps on limited covers produces could also do so. The Milford cachets made their debut with the 1990 Tennessee and have grown as an ongoing art gallery of migratory waterfowl ever since. Because of the high per cover cost to produce and a specialized and narrow collector base, not many a cachetmaker included state duck covers among their endeavors. With magnificent hand painted cachets of all species of North America ducks and geese, the Milford cachets will always remain scarce and a desirable collection within our cover hobby.