

tween the thumb and second finger use the pick as a shovel, the fore finger being free to aid in holding and raising the stamp after the pick is carefully pushed under it.

Examination.—Scrutinize the backs of all your stamps, If there is paper upon the back, especially from an envelope, carefully moisten the paper by dropping the stamp into a small dish of water, or better by moistening a strip of blotting paper and placing the stamps back down upon this for a few minutes. Remember that stamps are always worth more with gum on their backs. In attempting to free the stamp from all paper, do not peel the stamp from the paper but the paper from the stamp. This method prevents tearing to a great extent. While the stamp is of moderate dampness it is a good time to straighten out bent perforations and corners which are turned under. A deep crease can often be entirely removed by straightening the stamp out when moist and holding the two opposite edges of the stamp, parallel with the crease, hard down on a smooth surface until the stamp is thoroughly dry. While slightly dampened, especially with alcohol or benzine an almost imperceptible watermark is often made to brighten into view. But watermarks are best made out by holding the stamp between the eye and a window receiving the light from a bright sky or reflected sun light. Indistinct watermarks cannot be made out by gas or electric light. More will be said about watermarks under remarks on advanced collecting in a future paper.

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