The Dag Hammarskjold invert stamp error

Though errors on stamps are usually rare and expensive, there are luckily few exceptions. The United States "Dag Hammarskjold invert" error of 1962 was the first invert error to occur on any United States stamp since 1918 Inverted Jenny. And AFAIK, it is the second deliberately mass-produced error stamp worldwide (the first one I believe is DDR 5-year plan 20/24pfg definitive stamp).

Normal stamp

The 4c (standard letter rate at the time) commemorative honoring Dag Hammar- skjöld, late Secretary General of the United Nations, was issued on Oct 23 1962. The stamp was printed on the Glori Press in a yellow, black and brown design on white paper. The print run was 121,440,00 stamps.

1962 US - 4c Dag Hammarskjold commemorative stamp. Catalog value 0.30€

The invert error and reprint

In early November 1962 a New Jersey jeweler named Leonard Sherman received stamps containing inverted center. The invert had occurred when some sheets of stamps were fed into the press backwards. At first there existed only 400 copies of "Hammarskjold inverts".

But the Post Office Department did not wish to produce rarities to collector markets. In lead of postmaster general J. Edward Day, a special printing of 40,270,000 Dag Hammarskjold stamps identical to the invert errors was ordered. The reprint was issued to the public on 16 Nov 1962.

The value of newly found error melted away as there is no way to differentiate reprint from original error. The only exceptions are very few inverted copies having (clear) early date cancels and first day covers with inverted stamps - these are very scarce and fetch high prices.

1962 US - Dag hammarskjold commemorative stamp with inverted background. This is from special (re)print ordered by postmaster general. The invert has several subtypes, this is the most common of them (Michel 883 Iia). Catalog value 0.30€