

38 LINN'S STAMP NEWS APRIL 9, 1984

Nonchemical watermark

By Fred Boughner

A new electrically operated, optic watermark detector called "Signoscope" is now being offered to collectors as a safe, nonchemical method for checking watermarks on stamps.

Marketed in the United States by Safe Publications, Inc. of Southampton, Pa., and manufactured by the Safe firm in Germany, "Signoscope" will define watermarks, grills, thin spots, paper textures, repairs and forgeries.

Stamp fibers and reperforations can also be exposed.

Linn's tested one of the new detectors on stamps of the U.S. 1902 definitive series, the Pan Americans of 1901 and some Washington-Franklin issues.

Both the single and double line "USPS" watermarks of those periods showed clearly, in both full-letter and part-letter printings on paper supplied the Bureau of Engraving and Printing for those issues.

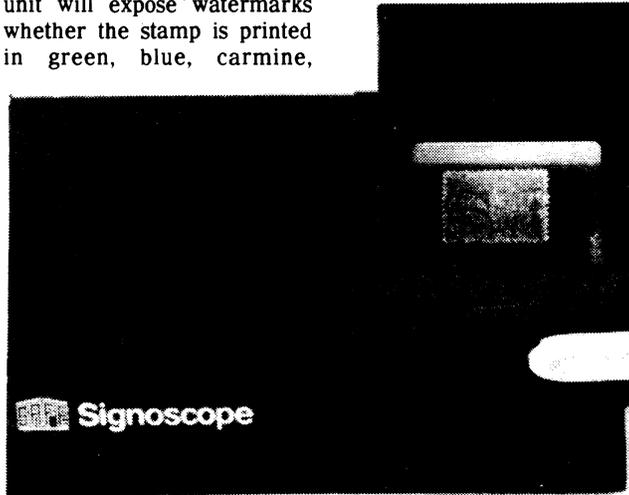
The "USPS" markings are scattered across those stamps, and collectors are advised to check catalog details to know exactly what to look for.

Thin and paper inclusions also appeared in the viewing lens of Signoscope.

Unlike a few other electric light based detectors, no changing of colored filters is necessary with Signoscope; the unit will expose watermarks whether the stamp is printed in green, blue, carmine,

Linn's found that a thorough reading and understanding of the instructions enclosed with Signoscope is necessary for proper operation and good results.

Adjustments can be crucial,



Even under normal light, the double-line "S" from the "USPS" watermark on a 2c 1901 Pan-American issue stands out.

brown, yellow or orange inks.

Finding watermarks in watermark fluid can be a challenge with some of those ink colors.

and with used and very thin stamps, it is often necessary to insert one or two of the vinyl inserts provided to bring out the watermark clearly.

Available from:

SAFE PUBLICATIONS, INC. P.O. Box 26

the first optic-electronic **Watermark Detector.**

rk detector on market

The thickness of the stamp being checked also can affect watermark clarity. For that reason, Safe advises against viewing mint and used stamps together.

All hinges or paper remnants should be removed before placing a stamp in the viewing tray and sliding it under the lighted lens.

Mint stamps with a hinge must be inserted in such a way that the hinge or remnant is outside the projection glass. It also may be best to readjust the position lever, easily done, when checking very thin or very thick stamps.

The machine comes from the factory set for a stamp of normal, medium thickness.

Once we got the hang of it, the Safe Signoscope was certainly easier to use than electric watermark detectors which rely on a trial-and-error method of changing colored filters.

The company claims the device also works on older European and continental stamps with hard to see watermarks. However *Linn's* did not check any such stamps.

The unit can be operated from regular household alternating current with an AC adapter, which is provided. It also runs from five "AA" batteries, making it extremely portable.

While *Linn's* testing verified all manufacturer's claims for

the device, Signoscope's price of \$199 may deter many collectors.

It would seem to be of most use to specialists and dealers who frequently must determine the presence or absence of a watermark on almost a day-by-day basis. ■

Actual Size 8 x 4 1/4 x 5 3/4" H

Price:

SIGNOSCOPE (without batteries or adapter)

	No. 9886	\$ 199.00
AC Adapter	No. 9887 SP	12.00
Dustcover	No. 9891 SP	6.00
5 Alkaline Batteries	No. 9888SP	4.50

Prices and specifications subject to change without notice.



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